

Ten Reasons NOT To Reject Word-of-Faith Teachings

A Response to the tract written by Tricia Tillin Titled “Ten Reasons To Reject Word-of-Faith Teachings”

Reason 1: It Rejects “Cold Intellectualism.”

Most faith teachers do not reject technical knowledge of original Bible languages (Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic) and certainly they make proper use of them. Neither do most of them totally reject other sciences of Bible study (exegesis, homiletics, hermeneutics, exposition, etc.). Nevertheless, many faith teachers reject a dependence upon intellectual knowledge that denies the place of the Holy Spirit in illuminating Scripture and its meaning to the believer.¹

Faith teachers believe that the Holy Spirit gives insight and meaning to God’s Word in this day and age and that He speaks directly to the believer to enable him or her to understand it (John 16:13). Faith teachers refer to this as *revelation knowledge*. Their understanding of this is derived from Eph. 1:17, 18:

*That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and **revelation in the knowledge of him**: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.*

Other passages of Scripture make a case for this biblical principle (2 Cor. 3:6; Rom. 16:25; 1 Cor. 14:26; Col. 1:9, 10; 1 Pet. 1:13; Rev. 1:1). The word "revelation" is not a *mystical* word. It simply means to "reveal." Revelation knowledge is therefore “revealed knowledge” (Deut. 29:29; Matt. 16:17). Yet, Revelation knowledge is NOT *extra-biblical revelation*. Instead it is *a revelation of His Word – the Bible*. Hagin states that:

There are no revelations outside of the Word. Any revelation you have that comes from the Spirit of God is in line with the Word of God. People get off into the devil’s territory when they leave the Word. They say they are following the Spirit, but you can’t follow the Holy Spirit apart from the Word.²

Therefore, *revelation knowledge* is God revealing to us insights directly from the BIBLE itself (Luke 24:25-27). The Holy Spirit is our helper to guide us into His truth and enable our understanding of Scripture. He will reveal to us truth consistent with the SCRIPTURE itself. The great Chinese preacher, Watchman Nee explained this well when he wrote, “By revelation we mean that today God again breathes on His Word, the

¹ Many years before the current Faith Movement, R. A. Torrey wrote the following: “The person who has no technical knowledge of Greek and Hebrew but has spiritual discernment is a far more competent critic of the Bible than the one who has a rare, technical knowledge of Greek and Hebrew but no spiritual discernment. It is unfortunate that more emphasis is often placed on a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew in training for ministry than is placed on the spiritual life and its consequent spiritual discernment.” Torrey, Reuben A. **How To Study The Bible** (Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1985), p. 9

² Hagin, Kenneth E. **The Triumphant Church** (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1993), p. 198

Holy Spirit imparts light to me; the anointing of the Holy Spirit is upon this word so that once again I see what Paul saw in his day.”³

As Hagin stated, anything apart from Scripture should not be considered “revelation knowledge.” Andrew Murray once wrote, “Every exhibition of the power of faith was the fruit of a special revelation from God.”⁴ Murray went on to say that this revelation is based on the Holy Spirit revealing the promises of God:

It was the special revelation of God Himself that gave the promise its living power to enter the heart and cultivate the faith. Because they knew God, these men of faith could not do anything but trust His promise. God's promise will be to us what God Himself is. The man who walks on his face to listen while the living God speaks to him will receive the promise. We have God's promises in the Bible with full liberty to claim them. Our spiritual power depends on *God Himself speaking those promises to us.*⁵ (Italics are his)

Revelation knowledge is not giving us new information to be added to the canon of Scripture. It is giving us insight consistent *with* Scripture. We believe that the Bible is truly a simple book, written in plain language that can be understood as any other book. Nevertheless, Peter reminds his readers that *some* things in Paul's letters (which he equated to Scripture) are hard to understand (2 Pet. 3:15, 16). The Holy Spirit is there to give us understanding of those areas of Scripture that are difficult to comprehend with our intellect.

This is the basic premise promoted by the faith teachers. Kenneth Copeland wrote that “Knowledge that's been revealed directly to your heart by the Spirit of God. I call it revelation knowledge.”⁶ Copeland does not teach that this is knowledge gained by “inward self meditation”⁷ as the Gnostics do. Copeland fully believed that one should meditate on God's Word: “Determine that you're going to meditate the Word until you get a revelation like that.”⁸ Emphasizing the importance of God's word in the revelation process, Copeland writes, “Once you get a revelation from the Word of God, hang onto it. Don't focus on anything else.”⁹ In a similar vein, Kenneth Hagin wrote, “We can find direction in God's Word. If we will listen to the Holy Spirit, He will open the Word of God and direct us.”¹⁰

Like Andrew Murray, the Faith teachers focus on the fact that God reveals His Word to the believer, which enables him or her to walk in the power of God's promises. Faith teachers are adamant concerning the need for any so-called revelation to be consistent with Biblical revelation. Hagin said, “I tell my students that if they can't find where the Bible says something, they shouldn't say it either.”¹¹

³ Nee, Watchman **The Ministry of God's Word** (New York: Christian Fellowship Publishers, 1971), p. 87

⁴ Murray, Andrew **With Christ In The School of Prayer** (Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1981), p. 93

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Copeland, Kenneth and Gloria **From Faith to Faith: A Guide to Daily Victory** (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Publications, 1990), September 2 devotional titled “Go For Revelation Knowledge.”

⁷ Gjorgjievski, Borce T. **Gnosticism: Origins, Beliefs, And Modern Tendencies** (1998-2001), Examining pp. 3-4

⁸ Copeland, *From Faith to Faith*, September 2

⁹ Ibid, January 11

¹⁰ Hagin, Kenneth E. **The Human Spirit** (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1985), p. 24

¹¹ Hagin, Kenneth E. **Learning to Flow with the Spirit of God** (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1986), p. 20

The above statements refute Tillin's erroneous and false statements like the following: "... this revelation knowledge is limited to the few who can receive it; the less intelligent are at a disadvantage. This is elitism." Contrary to this false accusation, the faith teachers believe (along with the writers of Scripture) that *all believers* can have Biblical truth *revealed* to them.

Tillin's charges of "gnosticism" are also proven to be erroneous in light of the above quotes. Furthermore, the faith teachers themselves have disputed Gnostic influences in the church. Frederick K. C. Price said, "God does not intend for His word to be a mystery to us."¹² Price further writes:

The Bible does not have "secret" knowledge, in the sense that only a few have the right "code" or the right "key to unvail its truths." This was one of the beliefs of gnosticism – only a group of "elite," special, above-average people could *really* understand what the Bible said.

However, God's mysteries are open to anyone who will let the Bible interpret itself and who will take the time to read, pray over what is read and study it. By "interpreting itself," I mean looking up all the other references where a certain word or subject is mentioned and seeing what it means in those contexts.¹³

Note that Price is not reacting to the type of false charges against faith teachers that Tillin makes, but against others in the church teaching a need for secret codes to interpret the Bible. Furthermore, a comparison of Gnostic teachings and our knowledge of genuine Word-Faith doctrine will expose the fallacies of Tillin and those like her.

Gnostics taught that one could receive special knowledge by searching within himself. Faith Teachers teach that *revelation knowledge* can only come through meditation upon God's Word (Josh 1:8; Ps. 1:2) and allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal this word to you. Gnostics elevated their type of knowledge above the Word of God. Faith Teachers elevate the Word of God above any knowledge that one might gain, regardless of the source.¹⁴

Finally, Tillin's accusation that faith teachers reject "sense knowledge" has some merit. Yet, this is not a rejection borrowed from "gnosticism." The distinction between "faith" and "sense knowledge" has been a belief held among a number of Evangelicals that no one would consider to be "Word-Faith." In his famous devotional, Oswald Chambers wrote, "Nothing that Jesus Christ ever said is common sense, it is *revelation sense*, and it reaches the shores where common sense fails."¹⁵ (Italics are mine).

¹² Price, Frederick K. C. **The Victorious Overcoming Life** (Los Angeles, CA: Crenshaw Christian Center, 1993), p. 69

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Gjorgjievski, *Gnosticism*, Examining pp. 3-4, anyone who has impartially examined Word-Faith doctrine in comparison to Gnostic heresy will quickly discern the distinctions. This paper can be found on the internet

¹⁵ Chambers, Oswald **My Utmost For His Highest** (Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour Publishing, Inc., 1993), October 30