**An OPEN Approach**by Chuck Northrop

Website

Open approach

Do you have an open mind, an open heart and an open bible, before you say yes to all of these, I want you to really think about this!!

I am known at work for being an idea man. I also have several idea people that work for me. We come up with lots of ideas, some good and not so good. The key to all these ideas are can you really do them. Some are not physically possible, some are not economically possible and some are against city rules or state laws. Before your think anything truly illegal that I would propose, there are lots of work rules that sometimes defy logic. There are also rules about what cities can and cannot do. So at work, I am open to new ideas and love to use them as long as they fit in with the work rules and laws, and make economic sense.

At home, Jennifer will tell you a different story. I am stubborn to change, and new ideas. This is the way my father did it, and maybe my grandfather, so I want to do it too. She can give you a hundred examples although I cannot seem to think of one, but at times I am not open to new ideas.

In almost any task, its success or accomplishment is determined by one's approach. If a person is

unwilling, then the task will probably not be completed, or if it is, it will likely be poorly done. If

a person has an "I can't" attitude, the task will be prone to failure. And if a person has a closed

mind, then the task will cultivate stagnation. But, if approached properly, great accomplishments

can be made. It's all in the approach.

**So, it is with Bible study**. The proper results of Bible Study

can only be accomplished if there are some things that are opened.

Now I have looked at these in many different orders, you need them all so do not look at this as a necessary order.

**OPEN BIBLE**

First, there must be an OPEN BIBLE. For real Bible study to occur, the Bible must be opened

and studied. David wrote, "The entrance [opening, ASV] of thy words giveth light; it giveth

understanding unto the simple" (Psalm 119:130).

In Acts 8:26-40, we read of the conversion of the eunuch of Ethiopia. God had sent Philip the evangelist to "the way that goeth down from

Jerusalem unto Gaza." As the eunuch journeyed, he was reading Isaiah 53. At the Spirit's urging,

Philip came up to the chariot and asked, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" And the

eunuch replied, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" He desired Philip to give him

spiritual instruction. So, "Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached

unto him Jesus." Instruction was accomplished because the Bible was opened.

Notice also the nobility of the Bereans. Luke said, "These were more noble than those in

Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the

scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). In part, they were noble because the

Book of books was opened. They searched the scriptures daily! They examined what they were

being taught by comparing it to the word of God. And when the teaching proved to be scriptural,

they readily accepted it.

Philip, the eunuch, and the Bereans illustrate the need of an open Bible. Paul's admonition of 2

Timothy 2:15 helps us to make the application. Paul wrote, "Study to shew thyself approved unto

God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." The purpose

of handling accurately the word of truth is so that we can be approved of God and an unashamed

workman.

**OPEN MIND**

Not only must there be an OPEN BIBLE, we must also have an OPEN MIND. A person who

has closed their mind to honest evaluation and/or to the word of God are hopelessly lost.

Evaluation of one's self and one's beliefs is of absolute necessity. To Timothy, Paul wrote, "Take

heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save

thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Timothy 4:16).

Open mindedness is the opposite of prejudice. Prejudice comes in many forms. Prejudice can be

based upon race, economics, religion, and a host of other things. Prejudice means to pre-judge or

judge before full examination. Though the word "prejudice" is not used in Scripture, it is clearly

condemned. Peter wrote, "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16). A part of God's holiness is

the fact that He "is no respecter of persons" (Acts 17:34). God is not prejudice. Thus, we should

not be prejudice whether we are speaking of individuals or otherwise. Rather than going to God's

word to prove what we already believe, let us go to God's word to see what God teaches and

accept the truth thereof.

Sometimes a person's beliefs are based upon the conviction of others such as parents or

grandparents. This, too, is the opposite of an open mind. Though we must love and respect our

parents, we must have our own convictions. Judgment will be based upon what we have done in

our bodies (2 Corinthians 5:10). It will not be based upon our parent's or any other person's

conviction whether right or wrong.

Sadly, it is the case that some people base their beliefs upon their own desires. They desire an

adulterous union or some such like thing, and, thus, they decide such is not wrong. In this way,

they justify themselves. Honest people, however, will approach God's word with an open mind

looking to God for His directions as revealed in His word. This was the attitude of the noble

Bereans, and it should be our attitude as well.

**OPEN HEART**

Not only must there be an OPEN BIBLE and an OPEN MIND, we must also have an OPEN

HEART. Jesus said, "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul,

and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12:30). This passage shows that there is

some basic difference between the mind and heart. The mind is the seat of the intelligence

whereas the heart is the seat of the emotions. Acceptance and obedience of the gospel is more

than just intellectual. It is also a matter of emotions. One can intellectually understand and accept

a certain teaching, but not obey it because of some emotional conflict. Thus, holy scripture must

be approached with an open heart.

In the Beatitudes, Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew

5:8). Pure means that the heart is without defilement or hypocrisy. Before one will accept God's

truth on any given subject, the heart of that individual must be pure desiring to do God's will

rather than his or her own will. For this reason, David prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O

God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10). This does not mean that we are passive

in this, and that God somehow does something to change our hearts. We are responsible to make

heart changes. James says, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands,

ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded" (James 4:8).

"An evil heart of unbelief" (Hebrews 3:12) is the opposite of an open heart. It will lead us away

from the living God, and it is "hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:13). Instead of

an evil heart of unbelief, let us open our hearts to God and His word, and let us be so pricked in

the heart that we obey the will of God. Appealing to the heart, the emotions, Peter "with many

other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation"

(Acts 2:40).

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