

# The “Open-Ended” Approach

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It has become popular to take an “open-ended” approach to the truth and the church. This has been the denominational approach to scripture increasingly in direct proportion to the influence of theological liberalism in recent years. By “open-ended” is meant that one does not give concrete, permanent answers to any scriptural question. Truth is left fluid and plastic, ever subject to change. In this approach there is no such thing as propositional truth that is always true and never wavers due to circumstances. It is basically a form of Relativism that denies the existence of absolute truth. There is no more grievous sin to the “open-ender” than to pretend to give a final answer to a scriptural question.

Sad as it is, this human philosophy has captured the fancy of some within the church. Not too long ago, I heard one of my alma maters (Freed-Hardeman College) being criticized because, in the estimate of the critic, “they taught the students to believe they knew all of the answers.” The critic happened to be a classmate of mine, so I was under the same teachers and influence as was he. I did not get the same impression at all; I did not believe I had all of the answers when I left there, nor that my teachers did. I would not have continued my schooling at another college if I had so thought.

However, I believe those Godly men and women had some of the answers and helped me to find some of them. One would have to be insane to some degree to believe he truly knows “all of the answers” in any field of study. But there is something terribly wrong with not knowing any of the answers. A Christian is required to know some answers: “Being ready always to give answer to every man ...” (1 Pet. 3:15).

The “open-ended” approach claims to be the only valid pursuit of truth, but in reality, it is a bitter, militant enemy. It is ever searching, but never finding (2 Tim. 3:7). Only the truth sets us free (John 8:31–32) and it is possible to distinguish truth from error (1 John 4:6). The “open-enders” will destroy the truth if we let them.

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