

The Power of a Spiritual Bias

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A bias is a radar that detects friendlies and ignores enemies.

A Lens That Couldn't Hear

The disciples had a biblical bias that formed the lens through which they interpreted all Jesus said and did. When his words and actions supported their bias, they understood him. When he contradicted a bias, they couldn't hear what he said.

Consider Daniel 7:13-14 where we read, "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed" (NIV).

In the four Gospel accounts the term "the Son of Man" occurs 81 times and was the Lord's favorite reference for himself. In fact, nobody else called Jesus the Son of Man. I find it interesting that apart from the Greek Gospels, there is no record of the term "the Son of Man" used in any other surviving Greek documents.

Such a King Could Not Die

Even a casual reading of Daniel seven makes it clear the "Son of Man" Daniel saw would rule over an "everlasting" dominion and a kingdom that would "never be destroyed." The disciples accurately concluded the king of such an empire would himself be "everlasting." But they falsely concluded such a king could not die. That bias-created-paradigm prevented them from hearing Jesus when he repeatedly (31 times) referred to his death and or resurrection.

The Jesus I Follow

I find the disciples' experience instructive. Like the disciples I often fail to hear what Jesus is saying to me. Why? Because I only hear what I expect him to say, which is based on past understanding—often biblical. In a sense, the Jesus I follow is an aggregation of my experience and study. Yet I wonder how similar that version of Jesus is to the real Jesus.

How many times has the real Jesus said something to me that would explode my understanding of him? How many times have I missed that exploding truth because it didn't align with my biases and the lens through which I viewed him? How many times have I continued to view life through the lens of death and loss rather than through the lens of his resurrection life?

I pray God gives me the grace to hear what Jesus is saying, not what I want him to say.