

Why Heaven's Culture May Shock You

I was born in New Zealand and raised in the wonderful nation of Australia. What this means, however, is that I experienced a little culture shock when I first moved to the U.S. Some differences were obvious. Americans drive on the wrong side of the road. They like everything supersized. They are incredibly patriotic. Certain things took a lot longer for me to adjust to. *I still haven't found a good Aussie fish and chips restaurant yet!*

My culture shock happened because I had ideas about America that were not the result of any actual experience. My perceptions of the U.S. were mostly the result of bad sitcom television and information I learned from tourists who visited Australia. The first time I flew into Los Angeles, however, everything changed. I crossed over from my secondhand knowledge to **experiential knowledge**. What I had only known from a distance, I began to know in reality. The problem is that reality is often very different from perception.

I love this passage from the author C.S. Lewis,

"What you see and what you hear depends a great deal on where you are standing."[1]

Sometimes, what you think is true is far different from what is actually true.

Our circumstances, cultural heritage or even something as simple as our unique personality traits can distort our perception of what is true. The painful life lesson I needed to learn was that a "point of view" is simply that – a view from a point. As soon you move to a different point, the view becomes different.

Here is a perfect example. For thousands of years, people knew for a **“fact”** that the earth was flat (the Flat Earth Society still exists today although its numbers are few). That idea was ultimately debunked the first time somebody circumnavigated the globe. Experience (a real “knowing”) will always expose thoughts and ideas that are actually only speculation.

In the apostle John’s gospel, Jesus is described as the **“Word of God made flesh.”**[2] John used that description to tell us something about the nature of God. *He desired to be known!* This desire was so great that He revealed Himself in the flesh. Jesus was the physical expression of the very nature and character of God[3] and now, He was tangible. In fact, Jesus went as far as to say, **“He who has seen me has seen the Father.”**[4]

We use many words to describe things that we see, touch, taste or experience. These words alone, however, do not equate to actually having touched or tasted or seen.

John describing Jesus as the “Word made flesh” helps us to see what God’s intention was. The very things that God had been trying to tell us throughout history – things about His character, His nature and His plan for creation – **He now revealed in a flesh and blood body.** This physical expression would enable us to access Him, relate to Him and know Him intimately. His desire was to restore to us the place that Adam had when he walked in the Garden of Eden and enjoyed communication, intimacy and friendship with God.

The apostle Paul puts it eloquently like this:

For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would give you, according to the riches of His glory, power to be strengthened by His Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through

faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:14-19).

Paul makes it clear that all of the strengthening with might, all of the rooting in faith and all of the grounding in love are to help us to *know* the love of Christ. As we get to know His love, we will be filled with the fullness of God. Paul understood that it was not enough to simply know Scriptures about God; that knowing had to be translated into an experiential knowledge about God. This was the kind of relationship that God had planned for His people. ***Paul was inviting us to not just know about God, but to also experience God in His fullness!***

This means something amazing has happened. ***You have an invitation to know God!*** You no longer have to wonder what God is like. You no longer have to wonder if God is detached or disconnected from our reality. You were designed to know and experience God.

Now all you have to do is go on the journey.

Find out more in my book You Shall Know The Truth – The Power of Adoration and Proclamation Prayer.

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