

Mysticism in the Church – The Contemplatives – Henry Blackaby

There is an alarming promotion of the mystic contemplatives from Christian ministries lately. One would be wise to avoid Henry Blackaby, Henri Nouwen, Richard Foster, Thomas Keating, Brennan Manning, Thomas Merton, etc. I would recommend reading “A Time of Departing” by Ray Yungen to protect your spiritual life from deception. On the surface these teachings from these men may sound lovely but they are misleading you.

50 Questionable Teachings From *Experiencing God*

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Courses are admitted into evangelical churches, oftentimes without any sort of objective theological review. For *Experiencing God*, I have reviewed the materials from a Biblical viewpoint and noted any teachings that conflict with Scripture, as well as any teaching techniques that are questionable. I found 50 such teachings or techniques in *Experiencing God* that fall into one of the following categories:

- a. Debatable: There are subtle Biblical arguments against a point, but I am not adamant that Blackaby’s point is incorrect; I am simply saying the point is debatable.
- b. Fallacious: Using an argumentative logical fallacy to support a view.
- c. Inaccurate: The usage of Scripture is not completely accurate.
- d. Inarticulate: A carelessly applied word that can be interpreted very badly.
- e. Inconsistent: A teachers’ life choices are inconsistent with what he teaches.
- f. Misapplication: A misapplication of Scripture to a situation.
- g. Misinterpretation: A false impression of the Scripture is given due to poor exegesis.
- h. Self-contradictory: One teaching conflicts with another.
- i. Unbiblical: Directly contradicts Bible teaching.

These teachings have to be addressed in the order they appear in the book because Blackaby builds upon false premises throughout *Experiencing God*. You will find that some of the early teachings that I document seem quite minor, but they build into major doctrinal faults as they grow on the potter’s wheel of Henry Blackaby.

1. Class: Unbiblical. Introduction to Unit 1, page 7. Henry Blackaby teaches that we should “operate our budgets on prayer,” budget for more than we have and hope the money will come in. This is

counter to Luke 14:28, “For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?” The question is not whether he can get the money. The question is whether he *has* it now. Jesus’ words apply to counting the cost of discipleship, not church funding; however, it is plain that Jesus thought that the logic of having the resources at hand before building a tower was a given.

2. Class: Misapplication. Unit 1, page 11. Jesus’ statement, “I am the Way” from John 14:6 is applied to ministry decisions. A quotation is given in the margin that only refers to the statement, “I am the way, the truth, and the life:”, and the inaccurate translation quoted substitutes an unwarranted period instead of the colon from this KJV quotation. No indication is given that this is a partial quotation or a sentence fragment. John 14:6 actually reads, “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” The text has nothing to do with “daily guidance” or ministry decisions, but Blackaby uproots the words from their context to make an application never intended by Christ or the Bible writers.
3. Class: Unbiblical/inarticulate. Unit 1, page 17. “With God working through that servant, he or she can do anything God can do. Wow! Unlimited potential!” This is the first dangerous false teaching in *Experiencing God*. It is not true; for instance, I know of no Christian who can create a baby in the womb. Psalm 139:13 says, “For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother’s womb.” This is also the first teaching of Satan to Eve, that she could be just like God.
4. Class: Fallacious. Unit 1, page 18. King (the man who writes the exercises in *Experiencing God*) poses the question, “When we finish a task and feel frustrated that lasting spiritual fruit is not visible, could the reason be that we are attempting very little that only God can do?” This is what is called a *complex question*. To answer the question, we have to first agree that Blackaby’s principle that “we can do anything God can do” (from point #3) is correct. The question is worded so that you have to accept Blackaby’s principle in order to answer either positive or negative. This is a cultic teaching technique used by the Jehovah’s Witnesses.
5. Class: Unbiblical. Unit 1, page 18. Blackaby’s statement “you come to know God by experience as you obey Him and He accomplishes His work through you” is inarticulate in the extreme and suggests a works salvation. At the most, the text should say, “You come to know God *better* by experience as you obey Him and He accomplishes His work through you.” The initial coming to know God is only by repentance and faith. This teaching itself is the first sign of *mysticism* in *Experiencing God*.

6. Class: Self-contradictory. Unit 1, page 24. “Whenever God gets ready to do something, He always reveals to a person or His people what He is going to do” is self-contradictory with “Many times, as with Abram, God called people just to follow Him... He is more likely to call you to follow one day at a time than He is to spell out all the details before you begin to obey Him.” (Unit 1, page 11.) The teaching also implies that God is not *in* something if what is happening has not been previously revealed to anyone, which is patently ridiculous.
7. Class: Debatable. Unit 2, page 28. “You never find God asking persons to dream up what they want to do for Him.” This point is debatable Scripturally. For example, Philippians 4:8 says, “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” Surely, thinking about what service you could offer God would be included in that definition.
8. Class: Unbiblical. Unit 2, page 31. “Suppose He wants to do it through you. He comes to you and talks to you. But you are so self-centered, and you respond, ‘I don’t think I am trained. I don’t think I am able to do it. And I ...’ Do you see what happens? The focus is on self.” I disagree with Blackaby’s point. Jesus’ teaching on discipleship requires self-evaluation. Quoting again from Luke 14:26-30, “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.” In Isaiah 6:5-7 we read, “Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.” Isaiah’s concern was *not invalid*. In His case one of the seraphims dealt with Isaiah’s problem. In our modern times, it could be a person who feels they aren’t trained should go get some training.
9. Class: Unbiblical. Unit 2, page 37. “They may ask, ‘Can’t I get a word from God from the Bible?’ Yes you can! But only the Holy Spirit of God can reveal to you which truth of Scripture is a word

from God in a particular circumstance.” This view of Scripture conflicts with 2Timothy 3:16, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” All Scripture is always profitable. There is no point at time at which any word of Scripture becomes untrue or unprofitable.

10. Class: Inconsistent. Unit 2, page 37. “You also need to be very careful about claiming you have a word from God. Claiming to have a word from God is serious business.” I agree with Blackaby here, yet Blackaby is a member of Promise Keepers which is inconsistent with his stated position. Promise Keepers’ leader, Bill McCartney, constantly claims he has a word from God in his speeches, such as his statement that “God told him” that every church should send Promise Keepers \$1000, reported by the *Denver Post*.
11. Class: Unbiblical/self-contradictory. Unit 2, page 38. “He speaks to His servant when He is ready to move. Otherwise He wouldn’t speak to you.” Blackaby makes it sound as if God only speaks to give high-pressure assignments and never speaks to simply address the concern of one of His children. Blackaby elsewhere claims that God speaks to us through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church. Answered prayer, therefore, is God speaking to us. John 14:14 says, “If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.” Therefore God does speak to us for things that are our concerns, not necessarily His work.
12. Class: Unbiblical. Unit 3, page 48. “You, too, can so order your life under God’s direction that you come to know Him, **love Him only**, and become like Christ.” It is not at all God’s desire that we love Him *only*. “For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another” (1 John 3:11). “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death” (1 John 3:14). “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love” (1 John 4:7-8).
13. Class: Self-contradictory. Unit 3, page 53. “They seem to think that God is far off and unconcerned about their day to day living. That is not the God we see in the Scriptures.” This is a true statement. It contradicts his statement “He speaks to His servant when He is ready to move. Otherwise He wouldn’t speak to you.” On the one hand, he says God wouldn’t even speak to us if He didn’t want us to do something, and on the other hand, he says God is concerned about our day to day living.
14. Class: Inarticulate. Unit 3, page 55. “He invites you to relate to Him, so He can accomplish His work through you.” Is this really God’s motive? That would be like getting married so that the wife

could do the housework or so that the husband could be the breadwinner. God's reason for relating to us is simply that we personally will not perish; working with Him is a gift He gives some people. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (1Peter 3:9).

15. Class: Unbiblical. Unit 3, page 55. "His whole plan for the advance of the Kingdom depends His working in real and practical ways through His relationship to His people." No, it doesn't. God is pretty powerless if He needs people to accomplish His tasks. For instance, in Revelation we read, "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Revelation 14:6). God is in no way dependent upon man.
16. Class: Unbiblical. Unit 4, page 57. "You will find that the call to relationship is also a call to be on mission with Him." False. A good example is the woman caught in adultery. In parting, Jesus says to her, "When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:10-11). There are people that were in relationship to Jesus but were called to no kind of ministry at all. Jesus asked nothing of them but simply to keep holy lives themselves. In John 5:14, the man that Jesus cured at the well was simply told, "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." There is more than one example of this being the case, where Jesus made no call to mission of certain people for reasons known only to Him.
17. Class: Misinterpretation. Unit 4, page 65. Blackaby insists, "Jesus watched to see where the Father was at work." The verses that Blackaby derives this teaching from have absolutely nothing to say about "watching" and had nothing whatsoever to do with "where." John 5:19 says, "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." Not a word about "watching." "Seeing," yes. But "watching" makes Jesus someone less than God and smacks of Arian heresy. "Where" has nothing whatsoever to do with what Jesus said and is simply an unbiblical addition to what was actually said. I will not make additional examples everywhere that Blackaby applies this particular misinterpretation of the Bible (there are a great number), but only say that while it may be true of *us*, it is blasphemous to say of Jesus. In reality, though, Blackaby's interpretation is not even true of us. I may see God working

anywhere in the world, but that does not make it necessarily God's will that I go there and "join Him."

18. Class: Unbiblical. Unit 5, page 73. "Could Moses logically prove to someone else that he had heard from God? No, all Moses could do was testify to his encounter with God." This is utterly unbiblical, and it is designed to give Blackaby authority for claiming that God "speaks to him" all the time without any evidence. In Exodus 4:1-8, God gives Moses a few means to *prove* that God had spoken to him. It says, "And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee. And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee. And the LORD said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign."
19. Class: Debatable. Unit 5, page 75. "If you start 'doing' before you have a direction from God, more than likely you will be wrong." The apostles operated full-time on only one direction: "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46b-47). We already have that direction from God. What Blackaby is talking about here is an old Pietist teaching that John Wesley called "quietism." John Wesley did not live by that principle, taking the divine commission at face value, and won a lot more converts than the Pietists ever did. There is a "general" thing to be doing all the time, in addition to the specific things that God gives more leading on.
20. Class: Self-contradictory. Unit 5, page 75. "God is more interested in a love relationship with you than He is in what you can do for Him." I agree with this point. It contradicts Blackaby's other point, "You will find that the call to relationship is also a call to be on mission with Him."

21. Class: Unbiblical. Unit 6, page 96. “Jesus always was looking for where the Father was at work, and joined Him.” We have already demonstrated that the concepts of “looking” and “where” are not part of the Scripture passage that Blackaby bases this teaching on; the Scriptures simply say that what Jesus does what He sees God doing, in other words, He does the same things God is doing. Doing the same things God is doing have nothing to do with watching to see where God is working and joining Him; it is simply a way of life wherever you are. The trouble is, sometimes an erroneous principle is established in Blackaby’s courses and then accepted as a given forever after.
22. Class: Unbiblical. Unit 6, page 100. “You never know the truth of a situation until you have heard from Jesus.” This would seem to contradict Paul’s teaching from 1Corinthians 5:12-13, “For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.” That means that, based on the knowledge we have already received from Christ through the Bible, we are already qualified to judge matters within the church; and it is those who are outside the church that God judges. This is another example of Blackaby trying to twist Jesus’ statement “I am the Way”, meaning, the way to God and salvation, to specific situations within a church.
23. Class: Inconsistent. Unit 6, page 104. “Way back in my teen years I began to sense a deep burden for communities all across Canada that did not have an evangelical church.” I agree with Blackaby here that it the witness of non-evangelical churches is terrible, they don’t even preach the gospel. But Blackaby in real life is an ecumenist (see points #45 and #46), which is to view all types of churches as being equal; so it should not matter to him whether they were evangelical, liberal or Catholic. If it does matter, he certainly should not be an ecumenist.
24. Class: Unbiblical. Unit 7, page 108. In the introduction, Blackaby reiterates his teaching that budgets should be set far higher than you can manage and God will pull through. He gives his example, that the church budget was normally \$74,000, they budgeted for \$164,000, and they actually received \$172,000. Blackaby closes by saying, “God taught our church a lesson in faith that radically changed us all.” But my question is, does God teach a lesson about faith that causes one to disregard the principle underlying the plainly stated word of Jesus in Luke 14:27-33? That sounds more like a departure from the faith to me.
25. Class: Unbiblical. Unit 7, page 109. “When God invites you to join Him in His work, He has a God-sized assignment for you. You will realize that you cannot do it on your own. If God doesn’t help you, you will fail.” Wasn’t one of Jesus’ teachings, “For I was an

hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not” (Matthew 25:42-43). These are all things we can easily do for people, they are God’s work, and He has commanded us to be involved with Him in these things. There are certainly things that cannot be achieved without God’s help, but to claim that everything that can be done without God’s help are not ministries is wrong to the point of being heretical.

26. Class: Inconsistent. Unit 7, page 110. “If we looked at all of the circumstances, would we have proceeded? No. But, what you believe about God will determine what you do. When God tells you what He wants to do through you, you will face a crisis of belief. What you do shows what you believe.” This goes directly against Blackaby’s other statement, from Unit 2, page 37, “God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances and the church to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways.” This statement from Unit 2, page 37 is the entire tenor of the course.
27. Class: Inconsistent. Unit 7, page 111. The statement “Encounters with God are God-sized” is directly contradictory with this true statement from Unit 5, page 78, “You cannot understand the Word of God unless the Spirit of God teaches you. When you come to the word of God, the Author Himself is present to instruct you. You never discover truth; truth is revealed. When the Holy Spirit reveals truth to you, He is not leading you to an encounter with God. That is an encounter with God.” God encounters us in some small things like understanding small spiritual truths. It does not always have to be a huge production to be an encounter with God.
28. Class: Unbiblical. Unit 7, page 113. “When God lets you know what He wants to do through you, it will be something only God can do.” To reiterate my earlier point on this, from Matthew 25:42-43 and many other places in Scripture, we learn of things we can easily do for people that God commands us to do. I am sure that getting money together to bail out the church in Jerusalem was not presented by Paul as being something only God could do, for instance. This teaching of Blackaby’s denigrates any good work that God has called us to that isn’t impossible for man.
29. Class: Unbiblical. Unit 7, page 116. “I have come to the point in my life that, if the assignment I sense God is giving me is something that I know I can handle, I know it is probably not from God.” It makes me wonder if we’re reading the same Bible. When God told Joseph to move his family to Egypt to escape Herod, was God giving Joseph a task that Joseph could not do? It is fortunate that Joseph did not have the same theology as Henry Blackaby or Christ would have died as an infant!

30. Class: Unbiblical. Unit 7, page 116. “When God’s people **and the world** see something happen that only God can do, they come to know God.” This is signs and wonders theology straight out of the charismatic movement. Paul wrote in 1Corinthians 1:21, “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” Not by signs and wonders, but by preaching, the world comes to know God. And no one at all comes to know God unless they repent. The question is given on page 118, “How will the world come to know God?” and the required answer is, “By seeing God work.” False. Everyone who comes to know God comes by repentance and faith. This false teaching of Blackaby’s is reiterated dozens of times throughout Unit 7.
31. Class: Fallacious. Unit 7, page 119. Henry Blackaby openly proclaims his belief that God manipulated the national economy of Canada on behalf of his single church by forcing the Canadian dollar to hit rock bottom for a time so that funding coming from Texas would yield more Canadian dollars than it would have. This fallacy is called *causal reductionism*. It seems quite unlikely to me that God Himself manipulated the economy, putting who knows how many families in jeopardy as the parents lost their jobs.
32. Class: Misapplication. Unit 9, page 146. Blackaby takes a Scripture, 1John 2:3-6, “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.” Then, Blackaby writes, “Each ‘new’ command of Jesus will require a new knowledge and understanding of Him.” But the Scripture cannot possibly be interpreted as discussing “new commands.” We are to walk even as He “walked”, past tense. And as for commandments of Jesus, I know of only two, “Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:35-40). John speaks of keeping commandments from the Bible as a sign of obedience and love for God. Blackaby extends this out to some “new” commandments he thinks Jesus is giving, which is indicative of a belief in “progressive revelation.” Not much wonder Blackaby so heartily supports Roman Catholicism.

33. Class: Unbiblical. Unit 9, page 153. “When God purposes to do something through you, the assignment will have God-sized dimensions. This is because God wants to reveal Himself to you and those around you. If you can do the work in your own strength, people will not come to know God. However, if God works through you to do what only He can do, you and those around you will come to know Him.” This is utterly unbiblical. According to the Bible, “it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1Corinthians 1:21b). This notion that people will not be saved unless God moves mountains for them comes from Blackaby’s charismatic influence through Promise Keepers.
34. Class: Unbiblical. Unit 9, page 160. “Some people go to much trouble studying Satan’s ways so they can identify when something appears to be a deception of Satan. I don’t do that. I have determined not to focus on Satan. He is defeated ... The only way Satan can affect God’s work through me is when I believe Satan and disbelieve God.” This is the most unbiblical possible counsel from Blackaby, and it demonstrates why he is so easily deceived by Promise Keepers and the ecumenical movement. He refuses to be on guard against the devil’s work. 1Peter 5:8 warns, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” Ephesians 6:11 warns, “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” 1Timothy 4:1 says, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.”

Blackaby refuses to consider the possibility of being deceived by the devil in any of his teachings, which is nothing more than spiritual pride.

(By the way, the simple way of knowing the devil’s work is it is based on *perversion*, which is the denial of important differences. For instance, sexual perverts deny the differences between genders and generations. The devil used this strategy in the garden of Eden, telling Eve she could be like God, denying the essential difference between God and mankind. Wherever there is a denial of differences, such as in the ecumenical movement, one may be positive that the devil is at work.)

35. Class: Unbiblical. Unit 9, page 160. The question is asked, rhetorically, “Does God plan your life for eternity and then turn you loose to work out His plan?” Blackaby’s answer is no, but let’s

be careful about that, Henry! Paul writes, “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling**. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12-13).

36. Class: Unbiblical. Unit 10, page 162. In the introduction, Blackaby writes of a salvation experience involving a number of different members of his local church. Unfortunately, the story is spoiled by the last line, “Who won Doug to the Lord? The body did!” Far from it, Henry. John 6:44 says, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.” Who really won Doug to the Lord? God did. He may have used people, but let’s remember to give God the glory.
37. Class: Unbiblical. Unit 10, page 1. “Church members need to be taught how to walk with God. They need to know how to hear Him speaking. They need to be able to identify things only God can do.” The problem is, nothing in the New Testament supports Blackaby’s assumptions. The human part of the divine commission was not to do something only God could do. It was to preach the message of repentance and remission of sins to all nations (Luke 24:47), to baptize and make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). These are things that man can do. God needs to help for the effort to be successful, but man can do everything Christ commanded. (Note that Christ didn’t command anyone to “save people”; that’s God’s part of the work.) What people need is to obey the command already given, not “watch and wait” for new commands that come out of the heads of dreamers.
38. Class: Inconsistent. Unit 10, page 164. “Individuals often think that a work for God can be done with whatever means are necessary. They don’t hesitate to violate God’s written will in order to accomplish something they think is His will.” I agree with Blackaby’s statement here, but if he were to apply it in his own life, would he be an ecumenist, while many verses forbid even giving a greeting to a person who preaches a different doctrine? Such verses include Galatians 1:8-10; Romans 16:17-18; 1Timothy 1:3; 4:16; 6:3-5; 2Timothy 4:1-4; Titus 1:9; Hebrews 13:9; and 2John 8-11.
39. Class: Unbiblical. Unit 10, page 168. Blackaby is speaking about “corporately” knowing the will of God when he writes, “When God speaks to a person about the church, the person should share with the body what he or she senses God is saying. As each member shares what he senses God is saying, the whole body goes to God in prayer to discern His will for the body. In His timing God confirms to the body what He is saying. *Individual* opinions are not that important. The will of God is very important. No single method can be given for discerning God’s will as a body.” This is

not the truth. If it were actually practiced in the first church, the Corinthian church would never have expelled the man who was sleeping with his father's wife. Paul was the one who disagreed; his "one opinion" was quite important because it was based on Scriptural teaching. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 5:1-2, "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you." The sad fact is, most people in churches reject much of what Scripture teaches. One opinion is much more important than that of the majority, if Scripture backs up that one opinion.

40. Class: Fallacious/Unbiblical. Unit 10, page 169. Blackaby is discussing how he would not proceed with plans without a major consensus from the church body. Then he writes, "People often ask, 'Did you always wait until you got a 100 percent vote?' No, I knew that we might have one or more that were so out of fellowship with the Lord that they could not hear his voice. Another might be purposefully disobedient.... I did not get angry or disappointed with those who did not agree with the rest of the body. Their disagreement indicated that they might have a fellowship problem with the Lord." This is utter cultism. The argument is first based on an argumentative fallacy called *ad hominem*. Rather than consider the validity of a minority view, Blackaby prefers to question their fellowship with God. His approach becomes unbiblical in light of 1 Corinthians 5 (see point #39). In that situation, Blackaby would have to label Paul either "out of fellowship with the Lord" or "purposefully disobedient" because he disagreed with the majority opinion to have a fornicator in the church. This one paragraph from *Experiencing God* should put any cult researcher into a state of alert.
41. Class: Unbiblical. Unit 10, page 170. "If the people walk with God, then I can trust God to guide them... If the people do not walk in right fellowship with God, then I depend on God to guide me in helping them become what He wants them to be." Both of these statements are false teachings and I will deal with them one at a time. In Galatians 2:11 Paul writes, "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." Did Peter not walk with God? Of course Peter did. That does not prevent someone from making mistakes. When Blackaby's entire phrasing is taken into account, however, it reveals his view that when people agree with Blackaby, they are walking with God, and when they do not agree with Blackaby, they are not walking with God. This is an incredible degree of

arrogance, and it strongly suggests that Blackaby desires a “personality cult” to spring up around him.

42. Class: Misapplication. Unit 11, page 184. “You cannot be in relationship with Jesus and not be on mission. Jesus said, ‘As the Father has sent me, I am sending you’ (John 20:21).” In actual fact, there were many people in Scripture who were saved but were not “on mission.” God does not necessarily call a person into mission. Everyone supports mission, but not everyone is on mission. In Matthew’s account of the deliverance of the Divine Commission, we read in Matthew 28:16, “Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.” Jesus took His eleven disciples to a mountain away from everyone else to give them the commission to reach the world. Not everyone is called to be a missionary, and it does not mean that Jesus doesn’t love them. People who have bought in to Blackaby’s teachings become very judgmental of what they call “pew-sitters,” people without whose heartfelt financial support, ministry would be utterly impossible.
43. Class: Misinterpretation/inaccurate/misapplication. Unit 11, page 188. On the parable of the wheat and the tares, Blackaby writes, “Using this parable, Jesus teaches that some lost and evil people are mixed with true believers in churches.” Blackaby is blatantly contradicting one key part of Jesus’ own explanation of the parable. Jesus does not say that field is the church. Jesus says, “The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one” (Matthew 13:38). The “true church” is not populated with any unbelievers. Acts 2:47 says, “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” Man’s “churches” contain all kinds of unbelievers, but the true assembly of God contains absolutely none.
44. Class: Unbiblical. Unit 11, page 198. “Can God-like *Koinonia* [fellowship] exist between churches of different denominations as they co-operate to achieve greater Kingdom purposes? Yes! However, humans left to their own ways cannot achieve those kinds of relationships. Only God through His Holy Spirit can create and sustain *Koinonia* between His people. He wants to be King, Ruler, and Sovereign over all His kingdom. When He is allowed to rule, man-made barriers will fall.” If God is to be allowed to rule, wouldn’t everyone have to be in agreement with the things He teaches? Blackaby co-operates with many different doctrines and versions of the gospel, including the works-salvation of Roman Catholicism, and the baptismal regeneration of the Anglican communion and the Church of Christ, in addition to those churches that preach justification by faith. From a moral standpoint, Blackaby co-operates with denominations that reject

the Bible's teachings on homosexuality and fornication. How can one co-operate with such things if God is ruling over him? If God's rule is accepted, then those who oppose His teaching must be rejected. I have a lot of verses to support this. Galatians 1:8-10, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.";

Romans 16:17-18, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple";

1 Timothy 1:3, "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine";

1 Timothy 4:16, "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 6:3-5, "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself";

2 Timothy 4:1-4, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables";

Titus 1:9, "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers";

Hebrews 13:9, “Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein”;

2John 8-11, “Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”

Many denominations allow their traditions to outweigh Scripture. If Jesus really rules our lives, we will avoid working with such denominations.

Jesus spoke these things about the Pharisees, whose tradition outweighed Scripture:

Matthew 16:6, 11-12, “Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees... How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees”;

Matthew 23:2-3, “Saying The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not”;

Matthew 23:13-15, “But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.”

I will dispense with quoting parallel accounts from the other gospels. Quite a bit of Scripture that Henry Blackaby teaches you to ignore, isn't it?

45. Class: Unbiblical. Unit 11, page 198. "I am not suggesting that doctrinal differences ought to be compromised, but we can act like brothers and sisters who love each other." This is a direct refusal to obey God on Henry Blackaby's part. 2John 8-11, Romans 16:17-18 and 1Timothy 6:3-5 absolutely forbid any kind of fellowship with purveyors of false doctrine. People are not your "brothers and sisters" if they believe in salvation by anything other than faith in Christ or oppose God's teachings in the Bible.
46. Class: Unbiblical. Unit 12, page 203. "You sin against God when you: 1) Miss the mark of His purposes for you, 2) Rebel against Him, refuse to follow Him, 3) Commit acts of evil, wickedness, or immorality." Point 1) is not Biblical doctrine. Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Sin causes the coming short; but coming short is not in itself a sin. Sin defined Biblically is this: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1John 3:4). Without transgression of the Law, there is no sin.
47. Class: Debatable. Unit 12, page 210. "Agencies of a denomination, for instance, have a place in doing God's will that individual churches cannot accomplish alone." Blackaby is speaking of agencies such as the SBC's "North American Mission Board." The problem with this teaching is that there were no such agencies in the Bible, and yet individual churches accomplished the work. With this teaching, Blackaby denigrates the work of independent churches and nondenominational churches. Were Jesus and the apostles negligent in setting up a first century church that had no denominational agencies? I think not.
48. Class: Misapplication. Unit 12, page 213. "In Jesus' commission to His church He said, 'Go and make disciples of all nations...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you' (Matt. 28:19-20)." This is a relatively minor fault, but it is a common evangelical teaching that is false. This command was definitely not given to the church but exclusively to the eleven remaining apostles, who were even sent to a mountain away from everyone else to receive this command. Matthew 28:16 records, "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them." Not everyone is gifted or called to be an evangelist, and it is unbiblical (see 1Corinthians 12) to suggest that they are.

49. Class: Unbiblical. Unit 12, page 213. “Learning to follow Christ is a life-long process. You do not learn to follow Him all by yourself.” Blackaby here is recommending fellowship with a local church, but he goes overboard on the necessity of a church. He writes, “No one can become the kind of complete believer he ought to be outside the functioning body of a New Testament church.” But what Scripture actually says is, “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2Timothy 3:15). I know a person who was too sick to attend a church, ministering through a web site from his home for years. He recently made a new translation of the New Testament from Greek at home. A church is very helpful, and if at all possible we should be “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25). But the sort of claims Blackaby is making are unwarranted. A person can be fully functional as a Christian outside of any local assembly, if such a situation presents itself.
50. Class: Debatable. Unit 12, page 214. “Apart from the body, a gift or ministry is out of context.” Well, the Great Awakening in England was an example of an “out of context” ministry, then. John Wesley was not permitted to speak in his Anglican church so he simply proceeded to minister on his own and through his Methodist societies, which he did not view as a church. Since it was the greatest revival England ever saw, I guess we needn’t worry too greatly about “out-of-context” ministry.

There you have 50 false teachings from *Experiencing God*. I eliminated six more points that I thought were too minor to bring up in addition to these. Even at 50 points, though, it constitutes one false teaching in every four pages of *Experiencing God*.

If there is a lesson to be learned or a recommendation to be made, it is this. Do not trust the Southern Baptist Convention’s materials to be doctrinally pure, even if you are a Southern Baptist. Instead, follow the Scriptural advice given in Hebrews 5:14, “But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” We are to be discerning both of things we think are good and those things we think are evil.

Courses with this sort of content should not be given to people who do not have a great deal of Scripture knowledge with which to discern what teachings are true and which are false. Other LifeWay courses, like T.W. Hunt’s *Mind of Christ* for instance, contain solid Bible teaching without all the charismatic psychobabble of Blackabyism. I reviewed T.W. Hunt’s *Mind of Christ* again, to verify what I have said about him here. The teachings are virtually flawless in his excellent course. (Interestingly, Claude V. King wrote the exercises for *Mind of Christ*, the same man who did Blackaby’s exercises. Yet

the course is devoid of mysticism.) The difference between the two courses is night and day, and I can recommend *Mind of Christ* without any reservations.

But the best and safest antidote for ignorance about God is to simply read the Bible itself without having to be concerned about any of man's errors. I would recommend keeping away even from study Bibles, as they tend to have false teachings in the notes, and from dynamic equivalency versions that contain man's interpretations instead of the literal Word of God. Allow God to teach you His Word Himself. God's Holy Spirit is more than patient enough to be your teacher if you will turn to Him.

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