

The Noble-Minded Bereans

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As Paul and his company left the city of Thessalonica, they traveled to Berea. There, as was Paul's custom, he went into the synagogue of the Jews (cf. Acts 17:2). Of the Jews present in the synagogue who listened to Paul's presentation of the gospel, Luke tells us:

Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so (Acts 17:11).

What a wonderful testimony these Berean Jews obtained! They were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica. This was seen in the way they responded to the message Paul presented. We are told they examined the Scriptures daily. Through their examination of the Word (Bible study), Luke tells us:

Therefore many of them believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men (Acts 17:12).

The Bereans provide us a great example as to how we ought to approach the inspired Scriptures. There are three points of interest we should consider, based on their recorded example.

Noble-Minded

The Bereans were noble-minded. To be noble-minded expresses the idea of being open-minded—a sometimes missing quality among some Christians. The minute we hear something different, or something with which we disagree, the defense mechanism in our mind activates, and it closes. Instead, like the Bereans, we need to carefully listen to what is being taught, and then, having heard what has been said, honestly evaluate it in view of the Scriptures.

Being noble-minded means the Bereans possessed a teachable spirit. They were willing and able to learn. They were not of the opinion that they already knew it all, “so there is nothing left for us learn.” If we are found lacking a teachable spirit, chances are good we have a problem with the sin of pride. Maybe this is one reason why God is opposed to the proud. The proud refuse to learn because they think they know it all. When Jesus instructed us to become like children (Matt. 18:3), this may have been part of what He had in mind. Children are eager to learn. They are excited to make new discoveries. Children have a teachable spirit. Let us, as eager students of the Word, possess the same type of spirit.

Received the Word with Great Eagerness

The Bereans were clearly eager to learn. Study and application of the Scriptures were something they found exciting and stimulating. It is my fear that some of us today have lost this sense of excitement in the study of God's Word. I know this is not true for everyone, but how about for you? Are you excited at the thought of attending Bible class? Are you eager to learn deeper truths in the Scriptures? Does the thought of study encourage or discourage you? Is your lesson something you rush through (at the last minute) in an attempt to simply and quickly answer the questions? When was the last time you set aside some good quality time to eagerly and patiently do your lesson?

Examined the Scriptures Daily

That word daily says a lot. How many today can honestly say they examine the Scriptures daily?

By the way, to examine is not simply reading the Scriptures daily. Reading is good, but to examine means to investigate, scrutinize, and inquire. To examine is to dig deeper into the text. Upon hearing the words of Paul, the Bereans were eagerly digging deep into the Scriptures to confirm the message. They did not assume that Paul was automatically right because he was one who was well-schooled in the Law or because he was an apostle of Jesus Christ. They examined the truths he presented. In the same way, they did not automatically assume he was wrong. Through their effective listening and study, they learned the truth about Jesus Christ.

Good and effective Bible study can produce so many valuable and precious fruits. You will grow in the faith in ways you never thought possible. Seize and seek opportunities to learn. Let us all find and develop the noble-minded eagerness of the Bereans in our attitude towards Bible study. What a wonderful testimony we will obtain by so doing!