
Words of Truth

Think About What The Word “Search” Means

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So many people want to pick up a copy of the Scriptures translated in their native language and read it like a book. The desire is often to start at the beginning and read from cover to cover. Then, there are others who want to look at the Scriptures that support what they already believe. To do this, they use materials written by their false spiritual advisors and only study what those individuals direct them to study. We also find people who study the Scriptures in whole, but with their slant of what they already mean they never find anything they don't already believe. Since the Scriptures are our sole source of information for salvation (Psalms 19:7, Romans 1:16, and II Timothy 3:15-17), how wise do these things sound?

MANY churches of Christ are guilty of everything I wrote about in the first paragraph. I see many “Bible Reading Plans” for reading the Bible through in a year in “church of Christ” publications, websites, etc. Churches of Christ have their various bookstores and notable authors that, rather than the Scriptures; serve as the sole reading material for way too many erring Christians. Churches of Christ also have a terrible practice of Bible class materials and tracts written by their brethren that teach only handfuls of the truth rather than the sum of the truth (Matthew 28:20, Luke 4:4, and Acts 20:26-27).

What about us? I write a weekly article for studies. Is that your only source of study? Do you only read the Scriptures referenced in this weekly article? Do you check out the contexts of the Scriptures I cite as references? We have weekly classes in both the Old and New Testaments here. In those classes we go verse by verse. Do you prepare for those studies or do you plan on coming and just accepting the references others and I bring up during the class? If you are just depending on these things on a weekly basis, how are you being fed spiritually the things you and only you may need at this present time? It is certainly my job, from the Lord, to teach and explain the Scriptures (Nehemiah 8:8, II Timothy 4:2, Titus 2:1, Titus 2:15, etc.). Yet, you shouldn't just depend on me.

The Jews were much like many who err today. They were content to stay the status quo (Mark 7:1-9, John 8:39, and John 19:7). They ignored the very law they contended for in rejecting Christ. Yet, they believed they were upholding righteousness. Jesus warned that others would do the same (John 16:1-3). Paul confirmed that these things continued throughout the first century (Romans 10:1-3). How do we keep from being guilty of not growing and only holding on to the status quo? The answer to that brings us to the word “search”. Let's start there.

Search The Scriptures

Like the Jews, we make our stand upon the Scriptures. What good is a stand in the Scriptures though if we aren't rightly dividing those Scriptures (II Timothy 2:14-18)? In regard

to this problem, Jesus said this: *“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me”* (John 5:39). What does that word “search” mean? Let’s start not by looking at the English word we have translated as “search”, but with the Greek word that appears in the original text.

The word translated “search” [ἐρευνᾶω] in John 5:39 means this: “to seek, i. e. (figuratively) to investigate” (Strong’s # 2045). Consider what this term means as it was used by Jesus. Jesus instructed the erring Jews to investigate the Scriptures to see what was really there. Do you investigate the Scriptures?

There is another context wherein we find the past tense of the English word “search”. Notice: *“And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so”* (Acts 17:10-11). The Greek word there is different than Jesus used in John 5:39. The Greek word in Acts 17:11 [ἀνακρίνω] means this: “properly, to scrutinize, i. e. (by implication) investigate, interrogate, determine: - ask, question, discern, examine, judge, search” (Strong’s # 350). Would you characterize your methods of studying the Scriptures like the word in Acts 17:11? How much thought do you put into those things you study?

Thinking On What You Find In Your Search Of The Scriptures

Of course, we know that application of the Scriptures we study is key to us pleasing God (Luke 11:28, James 1:21-25, and I John 2:3-6). However, before you can apply the Scriptures you have searched, you have to take the time to think about those things (Joshua 1:8 and Psalms 119:15-16).

The book of Psalms, as is given us in the KJV, opens with this statement: *“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night”* (Psalms 1:1-2). How often do you search the Scriptures, close the book, and think long and hard about what you have searched and found? What good do you think the Scriptures serve you if you just read them and move on in thought to something else? I think we know the answer to that question.

Thinking is very much a part of what it takes to live the word of God. Paul told Timothy this: *“Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. 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”* (I Timothy 4:15-16). Are you thinking?

Conclusion

Take the time to search out and consider the points in this brief study. Take the time to reflect upon your study habits. If you want real results out of your time spent with the word of God you are going to have to search the Scriptures and ponder what you find. Don’t be so concerned with “getting through the Bible”. Be much more concerned about properly finding and understanding the truth on what you are studying (Proverbs 23:23).