

## “Be a Berean”

Do you know anything about the Bereans? In Acts 17 we encounter the noble Jews of Berea. As Paul and Silas preached to them, they received the word with all eagerness and examined the Scriptures. They wanted to understand the word of God rightly.

Rightly understanding the word of God is very important and learned skill. It doesn't come naturally. What comes naturally is picking and choosing a verse and completely misreading its intent. For example, I recently saw a photo of someone holding a sign that quoted Romans 2:11, “God has no partiality.” The context of the photo gave the meaning that God loves everyone equally. But if you go back and read Romans 2, you discover that it means God judges everyone equally: “God will render to each one according to his deeds” (v. 6). Position or lineage doesn't matter to God. God will judge everyone according to whether they obey the truth or unrighteousness (v. 8). So, Paul meant it as God judging everyone equally according to their works. But one would only know the true meaning if he was like a Berean, attempting to understand the word of God rightly.

So, how does a person become like a Berean? First, assemble regularly under the faithful preaching of God's Word with God's people. Go to worship with God's people. Being like a Berean does not mean becoming your own individual or private authority. Look again at the Bereans. The word was preached in the context of a community. The community was the place where interpretation was overseen and given to skilled readers and guided by traditions of reflection. This requires a church where the word is rightly handled by qualified ministers, which includes personal integrity and competency.

Second, sing the word of God. Paul instructs the church in Colossae to sing Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Singing God's word is a beautiful work of God's people. It not only helps the word of God to plant deeply in the hearts of His people, but it also enflames our affections for God Himself. Singing God's word can make our hearts burn for the loveliness of God. Again, this requires a church where there is a practice of singing God's Word.

Lastly, practice God's word. God's people are not meant to be hearers only of His word. By practicing what we hear, Jesus tells us that we build our house wisely on the rock. This requires a church that laments, exhorts, grieves, rejoices, rebukes, comforts, teaches, and does the word of God. It requires obedience.

By assembling under, singing, and practicing God's Word, one can become more like a Berean, rightly understanding God's word. Be a Berean.

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