

### Introduction

1. Review: Theme for the year; Stirring up the flame of God in our lives.  
Enoch – heart for God; Baranabas – a love for others; Josiah – pursued holiness; Jabez – sought God’s blessings. Today, the Bereans had a
2. John 8.32 – the truth will set you free; The police officer story.
3. Big Idea: The passionate pursuit of truth is the call of every believer.
4. John 14.6 – Jesus is the truth. All truth in every sphere of life emanates from him. He is the originator of it. Nobel Prize winners weren’t the first to discover a new truth, but were the first to uncover a hidden truth.
5. Christians should be the most zealous for truth b/c we know the source and value of it. Truth liberates people.

### Search for the Truth, 17.10f.

- They were more open-minded; noble character. The word typically has to do with ancestry, i.e., “noble birth or a higher class.” This time it means an unconditional willingness to be open to truth.
- They listened eagerly
- They searched the Scriptures for themselves.
  - Ἀνακρίνω is often used in a forensic sense, especially with regard to the preliminary questioning and examination of a prisoner by the judge.
- Appl – searching involves listening, time, discussion, investigation, but most importantly humility. **The biggest deterrent to truth isn’t limited brain capacity, but pride.** Pride refuses to either acknowledge the truth at some level or act upon it.
  - Ex of a relationship – it’s not the lack of truth, but the unwillingness to act upon the truth or to insist the other person walk in truth and you not change.
  - Ex of Italian scientist who warned community of impending earthquake & people labeled him an imbecile.
    - Why did these Jews from Thessalonica travel to Berea? Pride. They thought they had the complete truth.

- Appl – Be aware of anyone who tells you not to question them or their belief system. God gave you a mind that loves to question and he expects you to use it. You need to know that the things we believe are grounded in truth. Paul didn't pull his Apostle Badge and force them to believe b/c of his great learning!
- Don't be manipulated by any "great scientist" or "high minded" teacher who dashes God's truth to the ground as though it were a clay pot. Neither be overrun by any preacher who with sincerity and great passion extols beliefs which are contrary to your understanding. Study it for yourself!
- "It is a Christian virtue—to prove all things with sincerity and earnestness, to investigate, to institute a thorough search. And the authority of a teacher and pastor should never prevail to such an extent, that the hearer is expected to dispense with a personal search."
- We are to love God with all our minds. This at a minimum means we should constantly be seeking for truth in every field where the Lord has us planted.

This is what I'm seeing in people seeking truth about relational problems. Due to the build up of sin and pain, many are moving down the path of least resistance. It's not the search for truth, but the search for relief. Relief can be helpful, but it's only a temporary detour from truth. If relief becomes the destination, you will never be set free.

### **Recognize the: error, incompleteness and/or new reality.**

- Paul's approach was to explain the Messianic prophecies (17.3). He opened a new door for them.
  - They had to recognize that their current belief system wasn't adequate. This is why most Jews resisted Paul. They felt that they had all truth and anything new was heresy. They didn't like the implications of the new truth.
  - The Bereans recognized two things – first, the inadequacy of their belief system and second, they comprehended fuller dimensions of Jesus' message.

- The same is true for us today. We need to confront the limitations of our own views and comprehend a grander dimension of God & His truth.
  - Ill – attending Economic Development Alliance – seeing there is “so much more” to economic forecasting.
  - Appl – we hear tidbits of information & equate it with knowledge. That thin layer of knowledge acts as a barrier to truth. It’s like many Texan’s understanding of Spanish. We think we know enough until we get into a full conversation and we’re left shaking our head.
  - God wants us to be like the Bereans, who understood they didn’t have as much of the truth as they thought. This gave God an opportunity to bring truth into their lives.
- In Athens, they just added it to their toy box of beliefs. They had all these beliefs and they were unmoved by Paul’s teaching. They listened and added it to the pile. We must recognize the inadequacies, or the error of our current beliefs and new & deeper reality of the truth God is showing us.
  - I believe God is giving us a fuller understanding of Him and his world today. Just as new discoveries are unfolding each day, so too, are new revelations about God & His Kingdom. In Dan.12, there is a book of revelation that God will unlock for the end time generation. It will not be contrary to the Bible, but it will bring greater clarity to it. Just as in the first coming of Jesus prophecies and hidden Scriptures came to light, so shall it be during the season of his second coming.

## **Conform to the truth – 17.12**

- Threefold response to truth from Acts 17
  - Resist the truth – Acts 17.5–9. “We don’t want it.”
  - Accept the truth – 17.10–12. “We can’t live w/o it.”
  - Superficial attitude towards the truth – 17.21, 32. “We don’t need it.”

- The Bereans changed their lives b/c of the new truth! Dozens were both convinced and changed by the gospel message.
- The Athenians listened but most didn't bend. They weren't hostile, but they were ambivalent.
- This is a personal decision. We think that if we are confronted with truth, that we would bend/conform to it. Knowing the truth and conforming to it are two separate matters.
  - The devil knows there is a God...
- The Bereans eternal destiny was changed, b/c they sought the truth, recognized the limitations of their belief, and the conformed to the new truth of the Gospel.
- Appl - God is calling us to be truth seekers, who will confront our own incomplete or inadequate beliefs and will conform to the truth as He reveals.

Appl. What truth is God calling you to seek:

- What are the common themes before you...fascinating you in a healthy way...stirring a hunger to know more about..."
- Where are you struggling to find an answer...it's like birth, God is calling you to push in to the truth.

He's also calling us to be speakers:

- Have a Christian worldview
- We need prophets or thinkers. Christians who will call into question our belief and who will call things as they are in the sight of God with no equivocation. Leo Tolstoy - Christian... passive resistance
- Prophets or thinkers who will praise and condemn; they will distinguish good from evil; who are decisive and at times dogmatic. Too many Christians have muted voices b/c of either compromise with the world or fear of what others will say or do.
- We need Christians who will be both in the political debate and above it. espouse their political party line as though it's a word from God. We need men & women who will jolt, Republicans, Democrats, Tea Partiers and everything in between with truth from God's perspective. They are more concerned about being in alignment with God and His Word than they are with any political platform.

## Francis Schaeffer & his influence on me

### Seeking the truth: What do you need:

- Holy Spirit - 1 J.2.26f.
- Humility of Heart & Mind
- Perseverance
- The counsel of others - friends, books, teachers, etc.

Seek the truth; recognize the limitations or new reality; conform to the truth.