

Further Truth for Serious Seekers

“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 17:11).

A mistake often made when witnessing to people from various denominational backgrounds is the failure to recognize that God has been at work in their lives. They may possess a basic relationship with God already. At times, our arrogant declaration of truth has a negative effect on people. One person referred to this as the “We got it all, and you have nothing!” attitude.

Ed Silvano in *Prayer Evangelism* says, “Preaching the truth without love is like giving someone a good kiss when you have bad breath. No matter how good your kiss is, all the recipient will remember is your bad breath! This is what happens when, in anger or disgust, we tell the lost how terrible and depraved their lives are and how they are surely going to hell. Even though this may be true, our negative approach blocks and distorts the...message...”

We need to be longsuffering when dealing with people because we do not want them to perish (Acts 17:30). Care should be taken to be sensitive to the feelings of others while presenting the truth. As long as growth is seen, and truth has not been rejected, we should continue witnessing. There still is hope.

Training is needed to determine where people are in their spiritual development and

sensitivity to present information at appropriate levels of understanding.

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise” (Proverbs 11:30).

“Tolerance” is one of the prevailing attitudes in the world today. Everyone wants to do his or her own thing. There is political tolerance; tolerance of sexual orientation; and tolerance of different ways of thinking. There is also religious tolerance that says, “It doesn’t matter which religion you follow. We are all worshipping the same God.” The cry seems to be, “Accept me as I am!” In witnessing it is good to accept people as they are, but we cannot leave them there to perish. We should be always mindful that we are trying to pull others up to our level of spiritual understanding, rather than being pulled down to their lack of understanding.

Throughout the Book of Acts, the apostles encountered people with various levels of spiritual understanding and development. What did they do? Did they say, “It doesn’t matter. We all serve the same God. You believe what you believe, and I’ll just believe what I believe”?

They identified the person’s spiritual development and “began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus” (Acts 8:35).

Apollos

“And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquilla and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly” (Acts 18:26).

Apollos—

- 📖 Was an eloquent man.
- 📖 Was mighty in the Scriptures.
- 📖 Was instructed in the way of the Lord.
- 📖 Was fervent in the Spirit.
- 📖 Taught diligently the things of the Lord.
- 📖 Spoke boldly in the synagogue.

That sounds like a good candidate for the church, if not the ministry. BUT there was one problem. He knew only the baptism of John. Therefore, Aquilla and Priscilla “expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly” (Acts 18:26). They were able to recognize Apollos’ relationship with God and spiritual development, and they knew that they had more to offer him. Apollos possessed an admirable quality. He was open to further truth for serious seeker.

Cornelius

Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian band looks like a man any pastor would want in his church. Cornelius—

- 📖 Was a devout man.
- 📖 Feared God with his entire house.
- 📖 Gave MUCH money to the people.
- 📖 Prayed to God always.
- 📖 Saw visions.
- 📖 Was a just man.
- 📖 Had a good report among all the nations of the Jews.
- 📖 Saw an angel.
- 📖 Fasted.

Cornelius would be a welcome prospect in almost any church. But, Cornelius was apparently not saved. He even wanted to worship Peter. He was interested in further truth for serious seekers. He was told to send for Peter, “Who shall tell thee words,

whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved” (Acts 11:14). Peter came to preach to Cornelius and his household. While he was preaching, the Holy Ghost was poured out on them. They spoke with tongues, and Peter commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord (Acts 10:44-48).

Cornelius and Apollos both possessed a seeking heart. They lived in the light (the understanding) that they had, and God gave them more truth and understanding. God honors a seeking, willing heart.

“And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD” (Jeremiah 29:13-14).

Lydia

One day Paul spoke at a ladies’ prayer meeting by the riverside (Acts 16). Lydia, a seller of purple, was there. Lydia—

- 📖 Was praying.
- 📖 Worshipped God.
- 📖 Had an open heart.

Thank the Lord for an “open heart.” She listened to what Paul had to say and was immediately baptized.

Disciples at Ephesus

In Acts 19 we find “certain disciples.” Paul asked them, “Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?”

These disciples of John had not heard that the baptism of the Holy Ghost that John preached had come. Because they were “serious seekers,” they were willing to

receive "further truth." They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 19:5) and received the Holy Ghost.

Many other examples could be given of people in the Book of Acts who desired further truth. They obeyed the instruction of John 5:39, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."

Bereans

The Bereans mentioned in our Key Scripture are models for all. They wanted all that God had prepared for them. They did not just accept what was being said to them, but they examined it carefully in light of the Scriptures. They received the word with all readiness of mind and then searched the Scriptures to see if what they had heard was correct. Once they were sure that it was true, they believed. They accepted further truth for serious seekers.

"Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true" (Acts 17:11 *NIV*).

Study Questions

1. What is one mistake often made when witnessing to people from different denominations?

2. Why should one be longsuffering or patient when witnessing?

3. What does Proverbs 11:30 say?

4. What is the prevailing attitude in the world today?

5. How did the apostles react to people of various levels of spiritual understanding?

6. Describe Apollos.

7. What was Apollos lacking?

8. What did Priscilla and Aquilla do?

9. What did Cornelius, Apollos and others have in common?

10. What noteworthy characteristics did the Bereans possess?

