In Search of Truth
By Jim Deason

The Bereans "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). Many good sermons have been preached from this text. I have an old outline in my preaching arsenal, the idea for which I think came from a sermon preached by Robert Jackson many years ago, asserting that the Bereans believed because they kept three things: (1) Open minds (2) Open Bibles, and (3) Open schedules. It is hard to beat such a simple approach. Open minds? We are told that "a mind is a terrible thing to waste," and a closed mind is a wasted mind. Open Bibles? When one refuses to turn to the only source of spiritual light, he will remain in darkness. Open schedules? When one is too busy to search for truth, he is too busy and destined for destruction.

Truth is vitally important. The Psalmist said, "The unfolding of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple" (Psa. 119:130). Truth is necessary to be set free from sin (Jn. 8:32). By it we are sanctified (Jn. 17:17) and through obedience to it we are purified (I Pet. 1:22-23). In the day of Judgment, we will be judged by the truth (Jn. 12:48). Is it any wonder, then, that the wise man encourages us to "Buy truth, and do not sell it, Get wisdom and instruction and understanding" (Prov. 23:23)?

The importance of truth was not lost on those noble-minded Bereans. The desire for truth helped them to overcome the jealousy and prejudice of the Thessalonians so that they opened the Scriptures to compare them to the words of Paul. The desire for truth was so important that it became to them a daily exercise, even though they were no doubt busy with the affairs of everyday life. Some things are just more important than others.

It certainly appears that, for the Bereans, truth was more important than consequences. There is little doubt that believing and accepting the truth cost some first century Christians their livelihood and some their lives. The source, i.e., who brought the truth to them, was irrelevant. It did not seem to matter if others, perhaps the majority of others, believed it or not. After all, truth was truth. God is a god of truth (Psa. 31:5) and the Bereans wanted truth because they wanted a relationship with Him who was its source.

Bill Crews wrote the following paragraph, entitled, "Give Me The Truth." It reflects what I believe should be every Christian's attitude about truth. It is the attitude we see in the Bereans.

> If you are my friend, if you are concerned about my soul, give me the truth. Do not flatter me. Do not praise my virtues while remaining silent about my vices. Do not fear that the truth will offend me. Do not treasure our friendship, our friendly relations, above my salvation. Do not think that being blind to my sins will prove yourself charitable. However I may react to it, whatever may be my attitude toward you after you have done it, give me the truth! For the truth, and only the truth, can make men free from the shackles of sin, strengthen me in the pathway of righteousness, and lead me to the joys of heaven. If I am wavering, weak, lukewarm, indifferent, neglectful; if I have been overtaken in a trespass; if I have been drawn into the pleasures of the world;

if I have left my first love; if I have been led astray by error; or if I have done none of these, but simply need to grow in knowledge and be edified, give me the truth!

Searching for the truth is neither for the half-hearted nor the fainthearted. Your search for truth is likely to take you to unexpected places, and not all of them are pleasant, but it will recreate you into conformity with the image of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29).

One final word about being open-minded. Don't be so open-minded that your brain falls out. "Examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good..." (I Thess. 5:21). Test what you hear against what you know God's word to say. Test the unknown in the light of the known. Just because something is new, novel, and exciting doesn't mean that it is accurate. A lot of strange things have been promoted under the guise of being "open" that have no ring of truth to them. The reason some good things are old (traditional) is because they have been tried, tested and having withstood the ravages of time, have been found to be both true and expedient.

Enjoy the journey.