

The Bible: More than Classical Literature; Less than 4th Member of Trinity Part 8: More Helpers

Discussion Guide – March 2, 2025

¹⁰ That very night the believers sent Paul and Silas to Berea. When they arrived there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. ¹¹ And the people of Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, and they listened eagerly to Paul's message. They searched the Scriptures day after day to see if Paul and Silas were teaching the truth. ¹² As a result, many Jews believed, as did many of the prominent Greek women and men.

Acts 17:10-12

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

2 Tim. 2:15

Quotes:

"[The first Christians] believed the Scriptures could not be understood, much less translated, unless the gospel unveils their spiritual meaning. They could not conceive of "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15) apart from the gospel lens." – Brad Jersak

Experience is the context in which we hear scripture. Experience is a necessary poll of knowing. Experience is the place where we stand and hear God's word, know his love and understand his wisdom... Experience refers also to the effect on the readers on what we read and from that, it bleeds out into our worldview and our lives and our perspectives. – N.T. Wright

"The Christian needs another Christian who speaks God's Word to him. He needs him again and again when he becomes uncertain and discouraged, for by himself he cannot help himself without belying the truth. He needs his brother as a bearer and proclaimer of the divine word of salvation." – Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Discussion Questions

1. One tool of reading the Bible is to do so thoughtfully, like the Bereans in Acts 17. What are some practical ways we can cultivate a habit of reading scripture with diligence and open-mindedness? How can we avoid blindly accepting interpretations without critical engagement?
2. It's important to read the Bible with an understanding of its original audience, literary genres, and historical context. Can you think of a time when understanding the context of a passage changed or deepened your understanding of its meaning? How does reading in context help prevent misinterpretation?
3. Our personal experiences shape how we understand the Bible, but they shouldn't have the final say. Can you share an example of when your experience challenged or reshaped your understanding of a biblical passage? How can we balance personal experience with the authority of scripture?
4. For most of church history, scripture was read and interpreted in community rather than individually. What are the benefits of studying scripture with others? Can you recall a new insight gained from someone else's perspective that you wouldn't have seen on your own?