

# *It Is Written*

*A weekly publication of the  
Junction Highway church of Christ in Kerrville, TX.*

*Vol. 6*

*June 23, 2024*

*No. 25*

## *Do Your Own Thinking*

*By Bob Buchanan*

Not many of us think for ourselves when it comes to matters of religion. Most of us are what we are religiously because of the way our parents reared us and have never questioned whether we were right or wrong. We prefer to leave religious subjects and Bible issues to those supposedly trained and skilled in this field -- the priest, theologians, pastors, and preachers. Sometimes we even get the idea that the Bible cannot be understood by common people. Some of the religious leaders even teach and encourage this view.

Does the Bible say anything about the ability and responsibility of the average person to understand its message? Most certainly it does. To the Christians in Ephesus, Paul wrote, "Therefore, do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:17). Surely God does not require of man that which is beyond his ability, Paul had said earlier: "... as I wrote before in a few words, whereby when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ" (Ephesians 3:3-4).

The Jews of Berea were commended in the New Testament as being "more noble than those in Thessalonica because they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11). These people were not famous, nor were they rich or powerful. In fact, they were somewhat obscure. Their excellency was in their readiness to receive and investigate, to study and search for themselves whether the new teaching was or was not in accordance with the Will of God. Certainly, the Bereans could not be called professional theologians. They were simply people of honest hearts and open minds — moreover, a people with a profound respect for the authority of the sacred Scriptures. Unfortunately, this attitude of the Bereans -- the spirit of independent, personal investigation -- does not prevail among religious people in the twenty-first century. Man is in a pitiable state when he does not possess the spiritual interest to study the Word of God for himself.

It is shocking to discover how many "religious" people have never read the Bible. It is the duty of every man to test all new doctrines by the teaching of the Divine Word. We are, like the Bereans, to search the Scriptures whether these things are so or not.

There is no excuse for failing to do this. God has placed His Word well within reach of us all. It is printed in our language (no book has been put into more translations than the Bible) and can be purchased for a small sum. God has so formed us and so written His Book that it is in the level of our understanding. He has given us the necessary mental faculties to comprehend it, and He has made the substance of it so simple and plain that the wayfaring man can read and understand it. It is not the mystical utterance which some writings are.

The New Testament abounds with evidence that harmonizes with the attitude of the noble Bereans. The apostle Peter insisted that Christians should know what they believe and why they believe it, "be ready always to give an answer to every man who asks you for a reason of the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear" (I Peter 3:15). The apostle John places the responsibility directly upon every Christian to follow the pattern of the Bereans and prove every teaching to be sure it is from God "because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (I John 4:1).

It is not only our right but our duty to listen to all and to try all: to judge for ourselves what is right

(Luke 12:57). It is God's plain Will that we should all bring what we hear to the Standard of His own revealed Will in His Word.

Members of God's family today are simply trying to reproduce faithfully the church of our Lord as it existed in the first century -- the same in doctrine, worship, name, organization, service, life, and work. The Bible clearly teaches that the seed of the gospel -- the Word of God -- will produce after its kind, pure and undenominational Christianity. The first-century church was founded upon the basis of the Word of God; it follows that the same Word must serve as the blueprint for the twenty-first-century church.

## Serve To Be Great

By Dennis Stackhouse

Notice the statement made by Paul in I Corinthians 4:1: "Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." Be especially careful to recognize that Paul identifies himself and his fellow workers as "servants of Christ." Does that seem a bit strange? Is it right to think of one of God's apostles as being a servant? Shouldn't we expect Paul and his fellow preachers to be served by others? As a matter of fact, developing the heart of a servant is a completely Scriptural concept; there is no doubt that Christian people are encouraged to take on the role of a servant.

It all begins with our Lord and Savior. In Mark 10:45 Jesus said: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." Jesus Christ, the Son of God left the glory and splendor of heaven, the adoration of the heavenly hosts to become a servant. Seems rather counterintuitive, doesn't it? The very One who, above all others, should have been served came to this world to provide the ultimate example of what it means to be a servant. Our Lord spoke about the typical ways of mankind in Mark 10:42, indicating that rulers and great men exercise authority over those living under them. But a further insight was given to the apostles in Mark 10:43-44 that likely astounded them: "But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all."

This is certainly consistent with what we learn from other Scriptures in regard to how a Christian should view servanthood. The apostle Paul pointed to the contrast between living in the world and living as a Christian in Romans 6:18: "And having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness." Do Christians often think of themselves as "slaves of righteousness"? We should. Speaking about the different gifts or abilities Christians have and the fact that we should be exercising them, Paul went on to say in Romans 12:7: "If service, in his serving." Some people have a greater capacity to serve than do others and they should be using that ability to the utmost. Paul obviously recognized his obligation to function as a servant from his words recorded in Romans 15:25: "But now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints."

In Galatians 5:13 we read: "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." Christians are to be united "For the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12). Paul stated it plainly in Colossians 3:24: "It is the Lord Christ whom you serve." And in I Peter 4:10 we're told: "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." Christians serve one another and by so doing they also serve God and Christ, furthering the Lord's cause and expanding the borders of the kingdom. If we truly have the desire to be great, our Lord gave us the one sure path by which greatness can be attained: develop the heart of a servant.