

True Nobility

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Have you ever considered what true nobility is? To some, nobility is aristocracy. To them, to be noble would be to be born into a family of high class on the social scale. Others believe nobility is to be famous. Still others think of someone or something that is grand or impressive as being noble. As we think about nobility, probably many of us have conjured up the image in our mind's eye of men and women decked out in beautiful formal dress at a social ball. And, no doubt, some of us think about nobility as possessing outstanding qualities. We think of a particular person or group of people who possesses the highest moral qualities and is of superior character. He, she, or they can be looked up to by all men. They are honorable and of such character that all men ought to follow their example.

This latter ideal is what this publication is about. We want you to be noble! Our desire is for you to possess the most outstanding characteristics found in man. Do you want to be noble in this sense? If so, consider the following:

On Paul's second missionary journey, he took the gospel into Macedonia of Europe. His first major stop was Philippi and then Thessalonica. At that time, Thessalonica served as a capital of one of the four districts of Macedonia. Within this city, Paul found a Jewish synagogue and began teaching "that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, who I preach unto you, is Christ" (Acts 17:3). Within three weeks, the Lord's church was planted in this city with Jews, God-fearing Greeks, and some leading women (Acts 17:4). However, because of some unbelieving Jews, Paul and his company were sent away.

They traveled fifty miles southwest and came to the city of Berea. There, as Paul's usual practice was, they taught in the synagogue. Concerning the citizens of Berea, Luke recorded this marvelous commendation: "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). The title of this publication is based upon this verse. The Bereans were noble people because they possessed outstanding qualities, and we want you to be like the noble Bereans!

What made the Bereans noble? If we are going to possess the nobility of the Bereans, we must know and understand their noble traits, and we must follow their noble example. So, what made them noble? Let's look at the text to find out.

First, they were noble because “they received the word...” To receive the word means to understand and obey it. The word is the gospel. Unlike some of the Jews of Thessalonica who rejected the gospel for their traditions, the Jews of Berea received the word. It is truly a noble trait to receive the gospel. The gravest mistake of mankind is to reject the gospel of Christ, and yet so many people are doing this very thing. How sad it is for Christ to give Himself as a sacrifice for man’s sins, and then to be rejected by men. To me, it is absolutely mind boggling to think of people who reject the love of God through Christ Jesus. His love ought to cause us to desire to know His will and obey it. It ought to cause us to receive His word like the noble Bereans. Do you desire to be noble? True nobility is to receive the word of God.

Second, the Bereans were noble because “they received the word with readiness of mind.” The Bereans received the word, but they did more than just that. They received it with readiness of mind. In other words, their reception of the gospel was deliberate and with eagerness. They were anxious to learn the word of God. Interestingly in the original, there is a compound word literally meaning forward-mind. It carries the idea of stretching the mind forward. In contrast to the Thessalonians who received the word for only three weeks, the Bereans continued to listen to the preaching of the gospel of Christ. Their’s is an exceptional example of nobility and is worthy of imitation. All men ought to be like the noble Bereans. Do you desire nobility? True nobility is to receive the gospel with eagerness.

Finally, the Bereans were noble because they “searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” In other words, they were people of the Book. They examined the Old Testament scriptures which clearly indicates they understood them to be the inspired word of God. Luke’s point is that they evaluated Paul’s preaching by the scriptures. The original indicates they thoroughly and continually analyzed Paul’s preaching. It was a daily concern. They did not just take Paul’s word for it but were discerning. Unlike the Bereans, too many today simply accept what they have been taught rather than examining the scriptures. What about us? Do we desire nobility? True nobility is to daily search the scriptures and test the words of men whether they are of God or not.

We want you to be noble! So please follow the noble example of the Bereans.