

## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

John 5:39-40

By Raymond White

*John 5:39 Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life.*

Jesus' imperative to search the scriptures is a commandment binding on all people of all generations. But as we read these words in the King James, they do not quite make sense. Why would Jesus hedge? What does "ye think" have to do with it? Why not just "... for in them ye have eternal life"? Because they haven't found eternal life.

His words are a chide, a slight, an accusation like "for in them you suppose you have eternal life" implying ever so slightly, "but you haven't."

His words are clearer when we understand that the Greek can just as accurately be translated two different ways: the imperative as it is, "Search the scriptures"; or as an indicative, "You search the scriptures."

Putting it all together, the closest to his actual meaning might be my long paraphrase —

*John 5:39 You search the scriptures because you suppose you have found eternal life in them. But you're wrong because you have missed their core truth; specifically, that they testify of me. Clearly you have missed it because :40 you will not come that to me, that ye might have life.*

The point then is not just "search the scriptures," but search *and believe* what you find there. Searching alone does little good if you resist its message. Any academic scholar working on a history thesis can search the Bible and maybe understand everything it says. But if he or she does not take it to heart and commit to its saving message, then what good does the searching do? Certainly "search the scriptures." But in addition to that, also believe them and live by them.

Here's a short list of what the scriptures can do for you. The scripture can:

### [1] MAKE YOU WISE

*2 Timothy 3:15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

The wisest thing you can possibly do is to submit your life to faith in Jesus Christ. That's the starting point.

### [2] HELP YOU GROW

*1 Peter 2:2 Desire the pure milk of the word that ye may grow.*

But you don't want to stay at the starting point all your life, do you? Surely you want to continually improve your Christian life day by day, year by year. The best way to do that is to study the scriptures.

### **[3] HELP YOU SUCCEED**

*Joshua 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night ... for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and thou shalt have good success.*

You probably want your efforts to succeed. The Bible is a roadmap to success.

### **[4] MAKE YOU BLESSED**

*Psalms 1:1 Blessed is the man...that delight in the law of the Lord.*

Something divine and wonderful happens to people who take God's word seriously and live by them. Every area of life just goes better. God somehow intercedes in the lives of those who live for him. That, we call blessing.

### **[5] HELP YOU HELP OTHERS**

*1 Peter 3:15 Be ready to always give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.*

Be careful when you take advice but be doubly careful when you give it. Have you ever given advice to someone that, because they took it, really messed up their life? When you give advice, be sure you give the right advice, and the only way to know what the right advice is, is to know what God has to say. And the best advice you can ever give anyone is to always make sure their decisions square with God's will. And what is God's will? That you have to find in his word.