



TRUTH APPLICATIONS

Articles

LOOK FOR GOD

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In John 5.39-40, Jesus responded to a charge of blasphemy for “making himself equal with God” (v 18) by chastising the Jews for missing him in their analysis of the Scriptures. He said, “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.”

Notice that his implied commendation of them for searching the Scriptures. The word “search” (*epaunaō*) referred to “a careful or thorough effort to learn something” (Bauer, *Lexicon*, 3rd, ed., rev. & ed. Danker, 389). Apparently they were doing more than “daily Bible reading,” but their search had failed to see the teaching about him (cf. Luke 24.25-27, 44-46).

We appreciate the significance of John 5.39-40 more when we recall other teachings in John’s Gospel. It begins with the affirmation that the Word sent by the Father and identified as Jesus became flesh (1.14). As God’s Word, Jesus is also the truth (14.6; 17.17). The truth/word must be known if people will be free (8.32). It follows that Jesus would define eternal life as knowing God and the Son whom he has sent (17.3).

Do we see Jesus in the Word or are we more like his critics in John 5? Are we regular Bible readers? More importantly, are we regular students, searching the Scriptures? What do we look for in our search? God’s commands for salvation and faithfulness? Arguments to defend the faith? Comfort for times of trial? We certainly can find help for those concerns and it is good to discover and know them. But Jesus’ words in John 5 tell us that they are secondary. The Bible is about God, and by extension, about his Son. As we search its pages, we should look for him and the Son whom he sent.

How do you conduct such a search? Here’s a suggestion that might help you get started. A few years ago, I read Romans with the specific goal to see what it says about God. Just from reading and looking for references to God — either where his name appears or where pronouns refer to him — I recorded more than forty descriptions. Several were repeated. In Romans 1 alone, I noted that God is the Father of Jesus Christ

(1.4), a God of love (1.7), a personal God (1.8), a God to be served (1.9) and who acts according to his will (1.10). I read that he is a powerful God (1.16), who reveals both righteousness and wrath (1.17, 18). I also noted that he is invisible (1.20), immortal (1.23), and willing to let us choose whether or not we will serve him (1.24, 26, 28).

Imagine how our *knowledge about* God will increase if we repeat that exercise sixty-six times. Imagine how our *relationship with* God will improve if we regularly meditate on what we discover for understanding his character and growing in our trust in him.

Look for God!

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