

Good morning! One of the things I like about the Book of Acts is that the men and women we read about didn't know what they were doing. Oh, they had thousands of years of tradition but they didn't really have a playbook for what was happening in their lives at that moment; they were trusting God. Think about it: these folks had been raised in a culture with a very clearly delineated system of grain and animal sacrifices along with an exhaustive set of laws that governed every move they made. Now Jesus had come along and He had changed everything. They were still Jewish but they no longer needed those sacrifices. Their calendar had been ordered around rituals which were no longer needed. Jesus the Messiah had come---*now* what? Into that atmosphere of uncertainty, God had sent the Holy Spirit. This morning, let's consider that situation as we read this short passage together:

They received the word with all eagerness, examining the scriptures daily to see if these things were true. **Acts 17:11**

Has anyone ever said to you, "God told me to...?" What did you think? Did you believe it? Why... or why not? Many Christians would say that God has completed delivering the canon of scripture to the church, so what are we to think when someone we know suggests that he or she has heard some extra-biblical, personal message from God? Interestingly, nowhere in scripture does God limit Himself to providing only the information He has given us through the Bible. If He doesn't limit Himself, why should we limit Him? Maybe we should keep an open mind about that---after all, you and I should not place restrictions on God that He hasn't placed on Himself! In today's passage, these folks did what we should do--- they eagerly sought to hear from God and obey Him, while looking to see whether or not what they were hearing could be squared with scripture. Sometimes they had to wrestle with the scriptures together to understand what God wanted from them. As Paul told the congregation in Thessalonica, "*Do not despise prophecies, but test everything and hold fast what is good.*" So it is with us, too. We need the Word and we need the Spirit of we are to hear and understand what God wants to say to us. Does God have something to say to you this morning? Maybe you should start listening!