

Biblical Illiteracy

INTRODUCTION

1. A growing problem is one of “**Biblical Illiteracy**”...
 - a. Not just by those in the world
 - b. Also in the church
 - i. “**Americans revere the Bible - but, by and large, they don't read it. And because they don't read it, they have become a nation of biblical illiterates.**” - **George Gallup and Jim Castelli**
2. How bad is it? Consider these results from various surveys...
 - a. Fewer than half of all adults can name the four gospels
 - b. Many professing Christians cannot identify more than two or three of the Apostles
 - c. 60 percent of Americans can't name even five of the Ten Commandments
 - d. 82 percent of Americans believe “God helps those who help themselves” is a Bible verse
 - e. 12 percent of adults believe that Joan of Arc was Noah's wife
 - f. A survey of graduating high school seniors revealed that over 50 percent thought that Sodom and Gomorrah were husband and wife
 - g. A considerable number of respondents to one poll indicated that Billy Graham preached the Sermon on the Mount

-- “**Increasingly, America is biblically illiterate.**” - **George Barna**

[“**Biblical Illiteracy**” is like a poison, wreaking havoc in the lives of individuals, in our churches, and in our communities. To understand how, consider...]

1. THE POISON OF BIBLICAL ILLITERACY

A. ITS EFFECT ON INDIVIDUALS...

1. God's people have always been destroyed by lack of knowledge - **Hosea 4:1,6**
2. Where there is lack of God's Word, the people faint - **Amos 8:11-13**
 - a. In ignorance they make the wrong choices
 - b. When they stumble, they do not know where to turn
3. Without a knowledge of God's Word, a person has...
 - a. No real direction or guidance in life - **Psalms 119:105** (“*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path*”)
 - b. No true joy or peace in life - **Psalms 119:111,165**
 - o **How many lives are being destroyed, how many people are stumbling through life, because they do not have the light of God's Word guiding them...?**

B. ITS EFFECT ON CHURCHES...

1. Churches languish for lack of teachers; teachers are few for lack of knowledge - **Hebrews 5:12**
2. Churches are led astray by false teachers and false doctrine, for how can the ignorant know what is false? - **2 Peter 2:1-3**
 - o **How many churches are “dying on the vine”, or into wholesale apostasy because their members cannot discern between truth and error...?**

C. ITS EFFECT ON COMMUNITIES...

1. Our standards of morality are skewed, where good is evil and evil is good - **Isaiah 5:20**
 - a. We slaughter the innocent (abortion), sparing the guilty (no capital punishment)
 - b. We reward the wicked (movie stars, entertainers), depriving the good (teachers, etc.)
 - c. Divorce is made easy, adultery looked upon lightly, fornication “an affair, a relationship”, homosexuality an alternative lifestyle
2. The effect of such things destroy our families and communities

- a. Evil (pornography, promiscuity) is allowed to spread in the name of “freedom”, ripping families apart
- b. Children are deprived the kind of parenting that is their God-given right
- c. Leading to juvenile delinquency and greater evils
 - o **Consider how the moral fabric of our nation and others in the world are becoming unraveled when “everyone does what is right in his own eyes” - Judges 21:25**

[The poison of “Biblical Illiteracy” has infected and sickened our people, our churches, and our communities. Is there an antidote to this poison? Indeed there is, but it requires **individual** effort...]

2. THE ANTIDOTE TO BIBLICAL ILLITERACY

A. DAILY DEVOTIONAL BIBLE READING IN PRIVATE...

1. The truly blessed person feeds upon the Word of God daily - **Psalms 1:1-3; 119:97-98**
2. A systematic practice of prayerful Bible reading as part of a daily devotional...
 - a. Will bring a person closer to God
 - b. Will gradually increase one’s understanding of the Word of God
 - c. Will offer strength, comfort and hope that only the Scriptures provide
 - o **Are you willing to do your part, everyday, in stamping out “Biblical Illiteracy”...?**

B. FREQUENT IN-DEPTH BIBLE STUDY WITH OTHERS...

1. The faithful Christian realizes the value of mutual edification - **Hebrews 3:12-14; 10:24-25**
2. Churches often provide the opportunity for Christians to study together
 - a. In their Bible classes on the Lord’s day, during the week, and in their homes
 - b. Where they can benefit from the knowledge of other Bible students
 - o **Are you willing to participate in such activities to stamp out “Biblical Illiteracy”...?**

C. PARENTS ACCEPTING THEIR GOD-GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY...

1. God gave the responsibility of spiritual training to the parents - **Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Ephesians 6:4**
2. Church may provide assistance with their children’s classes, and yet...
 - a. Parents should not abdicate their responsibility to the church
 - b. Parents should be very much involved in the teaching programs of any church
 - o **Are you willing to accept your parental duties to stamp out “Biblical Illiteracy”...?**

D. PREACHERS FULFILLING THEIR DUTY TO THE WORD...

1. Preachers are to give heed to the Word, and to preach the Word - **1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 4:1-5**
2. We should expect preachers to be “men of the Book”
 - a. Preaching and teaching the Word of God, providing exposition of the Scriptures
 - b. Not entertaining us with “pop theology” and “pop psychology”
 - o **Are you willing to require that preachers proclaim the Word to stamp out “Biblical Illiteracy”...?**

CONCLUSION

1. I was encouraged to prepare this study reading an article by **Albert Mohler (The Scandal of Biblical Illiteracy: It’s Our Problem)**
2. I thought his concluding paragraphs to be especially on the mark...
 - a. “Churches must recover the centrality and urgency of biblical teaching and preaching, and refuse to sideline the teaching ministry of the preacher. Pastors and churches too busy--or too distracted--to make biblical knowledge a central aim of ministry will produce believers who simply do not know enough to be faithful disciples.”
 - b. “We will not believe more than we know, and we will not live higher than our beliefs. The many fronts of Christian compromise in this generation can be directly traced to biblical

- illiteracy in the pews and the absence of biblical preaching and teaching in our homes and churches.”
- c. “This generation must get deadly serious about the problem of biblical illiteracy, or a frighteningly large number of Americans--Christians included--will go on thinking that Sodom and Gomorrah lived happily ever after.”

Are we willing to get “deadly serious about the problem of biblical illiteracy”? If so...

“Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.” - James 1:21