

"BIBLICAL ILLITERACY"

INTRODUCTION

- A. There is a growing problem of "Biblical Illiteracy", not just by those in the world but also in the church
- B. Quote from George Gallup and Jim Castelli - "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."
- C. How bad is it? Consider results from various surveys! (about 2003)
 - 1. Fewer than half of all adults can name the four gospels
 - 2. Many professing Christians can't name but two or three apostles
 - 3. 60% of Americans can't name even five of Ten Commandments
 - 4. 82% Americans believe "God helps those who help themselves" is a Bible verse
 - 5. 12% of adults believe Joan of Arc was Noah's wife
 - 6. A survey of graduating high school seniors revealed over 50% thought Sodom and Gomorrah were husband and wife
 - 7. A considerable number of respondents to one poll indicated that the Sermon on the Mount was preached by Billy Graham
- D. "Increasingly, America is biblically illiterate." - George Barna
- E. "Biblical Illiteracy" is like a poison, wreaking havoc in the lives of individuals, in churches, and communities. Let's note how!

DISCUSSION:

I. THE POISON OF BIBLICAL ILLITERACY EFFECTS

- A. Individuals Hos 4:1,6; Amos 8:11-13
 - 1. In ignorance they make the wrong choices and when they stumble, they do not know where to turn
 - 2. Without a knowledge of God's Word, a person has no real direction, guidance, joy or peace in life Psa 119:105, 111,165
 - 3. How many lives are being destroyed or are stumbling through life, because don't have light of God's Word guiding them?
- B. Churches - lack of teachers Heb 5:12-14
 - 1. Led astray by false teachers and false doctrine 2Pet 2:1-3
 - 2. Many churches are dying or into wholesale apostasy because members cannot discern between truth and error
- C. Communities - moral standards skewed Isa 5:20
 - 1. Murder innocent (abortion), spare guilty (no capital punishment)
 - 2. Reward wicked (movie stars, entertainers), yet deprive the good (teachers, etc.)
 - 3. Divorce made easy, adultery looked on lightly, fornication "an affair, a relationship", homosexuality an alternative lifestyle
- D. The effect of such things destroy our families and communities
 - 1. Evil (pornography, promiscuity) is allowed to spread in the name of "freedom", ripping families apart
 - 2. Children are deprived of parenting that is their God-given right

- 3. Leads to juvenile delinquency & greater evils -- Consider how moral fabric of nation & others in world are coming unraveled when "everyone does what is right in his own eyes" Jud 21:25
- E. The poison of "Biblical Illiteracy" has infected and sickened our people, our churches, and our communities.

II. THE ANTIDOTE FOR BIBLICAL ILLITERACY (requires work)

- A. Daily devotional bible reading in private Psa 1:1-3; 119:97-98
 - 1. Systematic prayerful Bible reading as part of daily devotional
 - 2. Bring person closer to God, gradually increase understanding of God's Word
 - 3. Offers strength, comfort and hope only Scriptures provide
 - 4. Are you willing to do your part, everyday, in stamping out "Biblical Illiteracy"?
- B. Frequent in-depth bible study with others
 - 1. Christian realizes value of edification Heb 3:12-14; 10:24-25
 - 2. Churches provide opportunity for Christians to study together
- C. Parents accepting their responsibility Deut 6:6-7; Eph 6:4
 - 1. Church may provide assistance with classes, but parents must not abdicate their responsibility to the church
 - 2. Parents should be involved in teaching programs of church
- D. Preachers fulfilling their duty to the word 1Tim 4:16; 2Tim 4:1-5
 - 1. Should expect preachers to be "men of the Book" preaching and teaching Word of God, providing exposition of Scriptures
 - 2. Not entertaining with "pop theology" and "pop psychology"

CONCLUSION

- A. Note some comments from an article by Albert Mohler (The Scandal of Biblical Illiteracy: It's Our Problem)
 - 1. "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."
 - 2. "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."
 - 3. "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."
- B. Are we willing to get "serious about the problem of biblical illiteracy"?
- C. "Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls." - Ja 1:21