**What’s Your Bible Literacy?**

For the Christian, the Bible is the most important book there is. It is a collection of 66 books written by 40 different men in various countries over a period of about 1600 years. Because the message was given to the writers by the Holy Spirit of God, the Bible is literally God’s will revealed to mankind. Considering we all will be judged according to the teachings of Jesus Christ and His inspired New Testament writers, it is critical that we know and understand the precepts that He taught.

While many Christians are conscientious Bible students, others who claim to be disciples know very little about the book’s contents. They are happy to accept what other men tell them about its teachings. The problem with that religious strategy is that men are fallible and often make mistakes. They can become blind leaders of the blind, leading to the destruction of themselves and those who follow them (Matthew 15:14).

Before the invention of Gutenberg’s printing press in 1440 AD, every copy of the Scriptures was hand written, so they were rare and expensive. In the dark ages, literacy rates were low and the available copies of the Bible were written in Latin. Most people had to rely on someone to tell them what the book said.

Today Bibles are plentiful and inexpensive. We have access to many English translations, some of which are excellent. Most folks can read and write and their comprehension skills are pretty good if they apply themselves. Fine study resources are readily available including Biblical maps, dictionaries, concordances and commentaries.

Jesus taught in Luke 12:48 that “from everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.” While ignorance of the will of God will not be an acceptable excuse in the judgment (Matthew 7:22-23), it appears that those of us who have had every conceivable advantage will be judged more harshly if we squander the resources and the opportunities that have been made available to us.

If you can read and you have a copy of the Bible, there is no excuse for ignorance of its teachings. If you are capable of studying the book for yourself, there is no justification for simply accepting the word of preachers and church leaders. Read and study the Bible for yourself. Read the comments of others with the understanding that human commentaries are fallible. Study with others, but don’t accept any doctrine for which there is no Biblical authority.

The Righteous Judge is the only one qualified to take all factors into account in judgment but ignorance resulting from laziness, complacency and half-hearted service won’t get it. Ephesians 5:17 tells us, “Do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” That sounds like a command to me.

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