

## A NATION OF BIBLICAL ILLITERATES

The following story, though fictional, nevertheless reminds us that in regard to the Bible and spiritual truth, millions are illiterate. Two lawyers were best friends. Much to the amazement of one, the other became a Sunday School teacher. His friend fumed,

“I bet you don’t even know the Lord’s Prayer.” The other replied, “Of course I do. Everybody knows that. It’s ‘Now I lay me down to sleep...’” The friend interrupted with amazement and admiration. “Alright, alright, you win. I had no idea you knew so much about the Bible.” If you’ve read the Bible today, you are in a minority in America. In a 1989 church bulletin article entitled “*Revered But Not Read*”, David Sain reported, “Eighty-nine percent of Americans will not read the Bible today, a recent Gallup poll shows.” He quoted George Gallup, Jr., who said, “Our frequency of Bible reading has remained virtually unchanged over the years...People revere the Bible, but they don’t read it - that’s what it comes down to.” Gallup went on to bluntly say, “And because they don’t read it, they have become a nation of Biblical illiterates” (quoted by Winford Claiborne in Christ: Prophet, Priest and King - An Analysis of Hebrews; p 113). More recent surveys report 16% of Americans say that they read the Bible every day. Indeed, frequency of Bible reading in America, sadly, remains virtually unchanged.

I can think of only one thing sadder than a nation of biblical illiterate - a biblically illiterate church. Think it doesn’t happen? Read Hebrews 5:10-14 where an inspired man gave some Christians an “F” on their spiritual report cards. The problem? He has unusual but inspired teaching he needs to present about Christ and His likeness to an obscure but (it turns out) very important Old Testament priest/king named Melchizedek (did you say, “Mel who?!” But the readers are “dull of hearing.” Worse, “though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.” Wow! The writer indicates these Christians were actually regressing in spiritual school! Regarding God and spiritual truth, they should by now have a university level knowledge and degree. Instead, they are actually spiritually illiterate - needing to be back in spiritual kindergarten and start all over again with the ABC’s of the Bible! How about you, my friend? How many years have you been a Christian? How many Bible classes and sermons have you sat through? How often and how carefully do you read the Bible outside of church assemblies? Have you ever read it through? Do you know which book and chapter records the establishment of the church? Can you present the plan of salvation and tell someone how to be saved from sin and become a Christian (I Peter 3;15; Jude 3)? Do you know where to find the conversion stories in Acts? Can you explain to others why you are a member of the church of Christ? I’m not asking if you are a Bible expert. I’m asking do you read the Bible regularly on your own. Are you growing in your knowledge of God’s word and your ability to dialog with others about it? Regarding the Bible, are you literate or illiterate.

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