

About 15 years ago, there was a Gallup Poll and a Barna Poll on Biblical Literacy in America:

- **50%** could not name the Four Gospels - **60%** could not name 5 of 10 Commandments
- **82%** believe “God helps those who help themselves” is a Bible verse
- **50%** of a H.S. Senior class thought Sodom and Gomorrah were married.
- **12%** of adults thought Joan of Arc was Noah’s wife.

And increasingly, the author of the Sermon on the Mount is thought to be ... Billy Graham.

In connection with all that, George Gallup said: “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.”

Well, I don’t know how many revere the Bible, but a very recent poll says that **90%** of Americans still believe in God. That’s big. But it is not translating into Time spent in the Book.

Two things: 1) Not knowing Bible facts doesn’t mean you are doomed. My brother in law through marriage didn’t know who Noah was 5 years ago, and now he is a Christian.

2) I’m sure the same poll would garner better results in this building and probably this town.

But it is indicating something very, very serious – there is a general lack of attention to the reading, to studying, to understanding the Scripture in our nation, and such can easily reach even to this church.

Lack of attention to the Scripture – time spent reading, learning, piecing together and using it... does exceptional harm in a four circle spiral from the inside out:

- **The Individual** – I don’t truly understand who God is, or what He has done or is doing or wants me to do and be. I use little pieces of scripture, along with what I’m told and what I feel.

- **Psalms 119:161-165** – All of what the Word does... doesn’t happen when we walk from it.

- **The Family** – When I spent less time in the Book, that directly affects the culture of my home. And quite easily, we don’t spend time reading, studying or discussing, and our kids grow up that way.

- **Judges 2:6-7,10-11** – There was faith, but something didn’t get passed down.

- **The Church** – We are still religious and worshippers. It’s not like the church closes down. But what we want is less Scripture, Reading, Digging and Understanding, and more “User Friendly Self-Help”

- **Hebrews 4:12-14** – We all know about “ear tickling” but it starts with gradual unfulfilled potential.

- **The Nation** – And there you go. The outer spiral. What started in individuals, permeated families, and changed churches, leavens the whole lump. A nation of people who Don’t Know God – His Word.

- **Hosea 4:1-6** – How did this happen? Lack of knowledge. Forgetting the Law of God.

So, these statistics and the study of problems in these four circles simply serve to show the state of things around us and the potential shortcomings that could be in your life and mine (and likely are).

But we need to know: WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT THIS? How can we invigorate these four circles, from the inside out, with a passion to love, read, understand and apply the Word of God?

Ignite within you a hunger for the Truth about God - Matthew 5:6 – “blessed...hunger...satisfied”

- **Hunger to Grow in Knowledge**

- I want to know! I want to know about God. I want to know about God’s history with man, about How and Why God did what He did and what it means Here and Now!
- **I Peter 1:3; 2:2-3; II Peter 3:18** – God remade us to begin again. To not know. To be an infant. But to hunger, to consume, and utilize and grow.
- Put yourself on the Growth Plan – desire understanding, to know how the Bible fits together and to recall the Words and Ideas of Christ.

- **Hunger for His Discipline**
 - Wait. Nobody likes to be disciplined! But Christians do. I know I'm a mess. I know I can't direct my own steps. I don't just want to grow in knowledge. I want God to shape, reshape, conform my will to His. I want Him to take control and steer me.
 - **Hebrews 12:2, 8-11** – Eyes on Jesus – the Word. Disciplined by our Loving Father.
 - **II Timothy 3:16-17** – Teaching, Reproving, Correcting, Training!!! Long for it!
- **Hunger to understand Truth**
 - **II Timothy 1:13-14** – I want to know the Standard, the actual Content. I want to guard and protect the Treasure of Revelation.
 - **II Timothy 2:15-18** – Anybody can “talk Bible.” I want to “know Bible.”
 - *Example – The Romans Study we are doing with the kids. Chapters 7-11 are TOUGH. All about Jews and Gentiles and God's choices. Not many people study that stuff anymore. We want pre packaged, fast food application from Scripture. Read an easy verse, grab an idea, go apply it. That's fine, but that's not understanding truth. That leads to skipping and skimming and overlooking deep and beautiful text, because it isn't easy and instantly applicable to your situation. THIS then LEADS to ... picking from those tough passages and MISapplying them. Romans 9 anyone? “Mercy.” No, I want to know what God is teaching, what is real.*
- **Hunger for Preparation**
 - I want to be ready to see Jesus. I'm starving for the desire of readiness and once I get it, I don't every want to feel that hunger again. I want to know His will, today.
 - **I John 5:13** – I want to read what John wrote, believe it, and be confident my lamp is trimmed and bright when the bridegroom comes. But how can I know I'm ready?
 - **John 12:48 / Rev. 20:12** – Books will be opened. And one will be the New Testament. And Christ will look at me through those pages and see where I am. When every other thing in this universe is gone, the Bible will still be there in the end. I want to know it. I want to memorize it. I want to interact with it always!

Okay, do you have that Hunger for Righteousness? Do you want to Know the Word of God? HOW?
Let me share some quick tips, and relate them directly to the four circles of life from the introduction.

- The Individual – DAILY DEVOTION – Get up a half hour early. Engage in a reading program on your phone. Do your Bible lessons at home, or read up on upcoming class content. Set aside time to read, and some time to think, and some time to pray. Every. Single. Day.
- The Family – FAMILY FAITH – What about our faith, what we believe in? What would you say is the state of your families faith together? Read together. Talk about spiritual things today. When you rise up and lay down. At the least, encourage them to have daily devotion.
- The Church – WILLFUL WORSHIP – I'm not going to say “go to church every time you possibly can” and read Hebrews 10:25. I'm going to say “DESIRE and build your week around being with God's people to worship and encourage and grow together as Hebrews 10 teaches. Be about Bible Classes and Worship. A recent poll said **90%** of people who learn the Bible weekly do so primarily from the preacher. Shouldn't be #1, but a solid #3!
- The Nation – SCRIPTURE SHARING – Well, we can't change the world in a day. But we can move the Truth beyond our three most comforting circles in hopes of enlarging the third one. Share the Word to social media, share sermons, tell the Word to someone. They don't need lectures or inspirational jargon. They need the Word. (If this seems tough, work your way from the inside (circle 1) out. You will get there!

Speaking of needing the Word. We all do, but does anyone hunger for it today. There is a hunger inside of you to know and understand and obey. Do you feel it? Respond now!