



among you thinks that he is wise in this age, he must become foolish, so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God”

(1 Corinthians 3:18-19). Many of the books that fill our libraries are full of the wisdom of men, and we would do well to consider their value. However, never forget that in God’s eyes, man’s wisdom looks foolish. Books written by men can be valuable, but their value cannot compare to the riches

found in God’s Word. For this reason, no library is adequate unless the Bible sits in the foremost position.

Twenty-eight bibles sit on my desk. Some of them contain just the New Testament, others contain just the Old Testament, still others contain both testaments. Some of them are literal translations, others are paraphrases. Some are interlinear, others are just the Greek and Hebrew. Without the Bible, my library would be incomplete. God’s Word must be the standard by which we measure every other book in our libraries. The writings of men must match what is said in Scripture, not the other way around!

Conclusion

We noted at the beginning of this article that, as a Christian, you are expected to **“be diligent to present yourself approved to God... accurately handling the word of truth”** (2 Timothy 2:15). For this reason, I would encourage you to build a library to help you study God’s Word. Be aware of the dangers that come with man-made books, but don’t ignore their value! Above all, recognize that knowing God’s Word is the goal. Everything else must take back seat as God’s Word guides our lives.



4700 Andrews Ave.
Amarillo TX 79106
806-352-2809
www.olsenpark.com

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Welcome Visitors

**We are so glad that you joined us today.
Please come again.**

● **Let us know if you have any questions.**

ISSUE

17.1

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

January 4,
2015

Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM

10:20 AM

6:00 PM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Kyle Pope

Deacons:

Steve Dixon
Jack Langley
Neil Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott

Evangelists:

Kyle Pope
Andrew Dow



Why Do You Need So Many Books?

By Andrew Dow

During my time here in Amarillo my personal library has grown enormously. While I have purchased a few of my books, I have been overwhelmingly blessed in that many of my books have been freely given to me. As I look around my office I can see a wealth of information on various topics at my disposal. I see a number of commentaries, dictionaries, encyclopedias, lexicons, grammars, concordances, bulletins, bible class books, personal notes, and many topical books. The Lord has certainly seen fit to bless me with every opportunity to know and discern His Word. Still, I have been asked before, *“why do you need so many books?”* I believe the implication of such a question is that the Bible is all sufficient, thus there is no need to muddy the water with the thoughts of men. Don’t misunderstand me, there is much truth to that idea.

The Scriptures teach that it is the duty of all Christians to **“be diligent to present yourself approved to God... accurately handling the word of truth”** (2 Timothy 2:15, NASB). Jeremiah prophesied of the New Covenant, **“behold the days are coming... I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it... They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they will all know Me”** (Jeremiah 31:31-34). It is our responsibility to know God’s Word. In fact, knowledge of God’s word demonstrates that we are a part of His New Covenant. With these things

in mind, I hope you'll consider with me (1) the danger of books, (2) the value of books, and (3) the greatest book.

The Danger of Books

First, there is a danger in the number of books available. Solomon wrote with his God-given wisdom, **“my son, be warned: the writing of many books is endless, and excessive devotion to books is wearisome to the body”** (Ecclesiastes 12:12). We know by looking to the Bible that the periods of the united and divided kingdoms produced an enormous amount of writing. Among the books being written at that time were Kings, Chronicles, many of the Psalms, the Proverbs, a

number of the prophetic books, along with more books that were not preserved for us (cf. 1 Kings 11:41). Despite all of the books being written during Solomon's time, perhaps his statement in Ecclesiastes 12:12 is more true today than ever before. Living in a post-Gutenberg era, there is now an enormous amount of books available. Solomon's wisdom cannot be denied, there will be no end to the writing of books! This poses a danger: due to the large number of books out there, the student of the Bible must be careful to decide on which books he will rely.

Another danger that must be recognized when dealing with books is that these are the words of men. We must recognize that no matter how many books we add to our collections, none of them speak on behalf of God. Peter commanded those to whom he wrote, **“whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God”** (1 Peter 4:11a). I have no doubt that many authors who write concerning the Scriptures are trying to do just what Peter commanded, but we must understand that they are human. We know that **“there is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death”** (Proverbs 14:12), and it is not **“in a man who walks to direct his own steps”** (Jeremiah 10:23). Without the guidance of God, man is fallible. We must understand that the words of man, in whatever form they come, are not authoritative, but must be viewed as supplementary and secondary to the words of God.

A final danger is that books can contain false teaching. Since books are the works of flawed humans, we must be especially careful to keep books in their proper place. Paul wrote, **“even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed”** (Galatians 1:8). We must never read the words of man with the notion that they must be correct. Paul was concerned that there would be some who perhaps knowingly would try to pervert the gospel. Regardless of the intent of the author, we must recognize

that books are entirely capable of misusing Scripture, and we must read with that in mind. Just because something is bound in a book, published on a page, or written online, does not make it true.

The Value of Books

Despite the dangers associated with them, books can be of extraordinary value. **First, there is historical value to be found in books.** Jeremiah recorded the Lord's words to Israel, **“stand by the ways, and see and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; and you will find rest for your souls”** (Jeremiah 6:16). Israel had left the ancient path, and followed after something new and different. By quoting this passage I'm not suggesting that older writings are always better, but rather we must strive to follow after the ancient path of the New Testament. By observing the writings of men over time, we can see how and where some have departed from the ancient path, and how others have held to that ancient way.

Second, books can help us understand the other side of an argument. We are charged to **“preach the word”** (2 Timothy 4:2) to the lost world. One of the most common excuses for not teaching the lost is that someone may raise an issue or a question that we wouldn't know how to answer. How can we prepare ourselves to answer these questions? We need to spend time studying the various ideas of the world. Additionally, if we only allow ourselves to read material written by people that agree with us, we will never be challenged to think beyond our own point of view.

Finally, books often represent years or even lifetimes of study and devotion to God's Word. As such, wisdom and knowledge of past and present generations can be found within their pages. Solomon wisely wrote, **“A wise man will hear and increase in learning, and a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel”** (Proverbs 1:5).

Often times, books are nothing more than lengthy sermons or articles that can be taken in and considered over time. It is not difficult to see that books, if used properly, can be extremely valuable to the student of God's Word.

The Greatest Book

The goal of this article has been simple: concisely address the danger and value of man-made books. However, an article like this would be worthless if I didn't share with you what the most valuable book in my office is: *The Holy Bible*. The word *“Bible”* comes from the Greek word *“Biblos”* which simply means *“Book.”* So, when we talk about opening our Bibles, we're really talking about opening our books. That's why most Bible covers will read: *“Holy Bible.”* In other words, this is no ordinary book, but it is a unique, separate, and holy book. It is the Word of God.

Paul describes God's Word as **“the depths of God,”** and **“the mind of Christ”** (1 Corinthians 2:10, 16). When comparing this to the work of men, Paul says, **“If any man**

