

**First and foremost, read, read, read.** There is no way I can overstate this point. The best place to begin is to simply read what the text says. Make time to sit down and read. Read sections and books at a time. Find a reading plan to keep you on track. When you think you've read it enough, read it one more time. This is the most important and most neglected part of good Bible study.

**Second, allow me to use a worn out phrase: focus on the forest, not the trees.** In other words, don't get so bogged down in the little things that you miss

the big picture! If you get bogged down by asking detailed questions before you understand the big picture, you'll never get through it. You might be surprised to find out how many of your questions are answered by coming to an understanding of the overall message of a book or passage.

**Third, let me take this a step further: focus on the trees in light of the forest.** There is a proper time and place to ask detailed questions, but these questions should always be asked and answered in light of the context. This is why it's so important to read the text over and over again. The better your view of the overall meaning of the text (i.e., the forest), the easier it will be to understand and answer the detailed questions you might have (i.e., the trees).

Bible classes and sermons are wonderful tools we utilize to help one another know the Scriptures. But, brethren, there are no substitutes for discovering God's Word for yourself on a daily basis. Preachers and teachers can only do so much. You must decide today whether you will know the Scriptures or whether you will neglect God's precious truth. Please, brethren, never stop learning and never stop growing.



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## Welcome Visitors

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

ISSUE

17.25

BULLETIN OF  
THE OLSEN  
PARK CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

# Faithful Sayings

June 28,  
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

Ryan Ferguson

Arend Gressley

Ben Hight

Jack Langley

Neil Ledbetter

Blake McAlister

Brady McAlister

Walker McAnear

Sam Nunn

Lance Purcell

Rusty Scott

Justin Smiley

Trevor Yontz

## Evangelists:

Kyle Pope

Andrew Dow



## Know the Scriptures

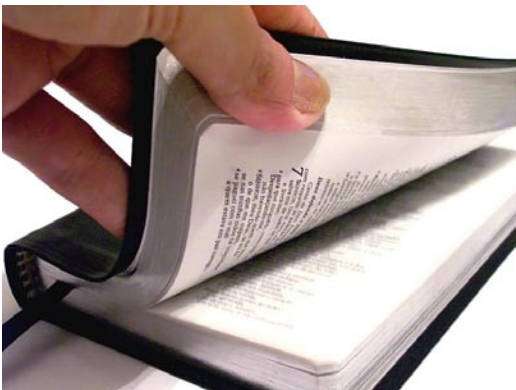
By Andrew Dow

In days gone by Christians were not allowed to read the Bible. There was a time when so-called "Christian" leaders punished those who would dare to place God's Word into the hands of the common man. Many men died in an effort to make the Holy Scriptures accessible to us today. Now, more than ever before, we have at our disposal a wealth of resources with which to study the Bible. There are a number of translations we can compare and contrast. We have dictionaries, commentaries, concordances, etc. to help us pursue the meaning behind the text. Computer programs have been produced and websites have been published that give the tech-savvy student a wealth of knowledge. We have certainly come a long way.

How well do you know God's Word? How confidently do you wield the weapon God has placed in your hand? I don't believe it is a stretch to say that Biblical illiteracy is one of the greatest issues that plagues the church today. We stand on the shoulders of giants when it comes to the wealth of Bible resources at our disposal, but we rarely utilize these resources. We would much rather a paid preacher tell us what the Bible

says rather than read it for ourselves. Those who died to put the Bible on your coffee table would be appalled.

From a historical perspective, we must recognize the great blessing it is that we can read and study God's Word for ourselves. Understanding what happened in the past should motivate us to excel today. Additionally, however, God revealed to us the great responsibility we have to know His Word. I beg you to take some time to consider with me what the Bible says about knowing the Scriptures.



### The Value of Knowing the Scriptures

Perhaps a good first question to ask is this: what is the Bible? Jumping into a book without knowing anything about it leads to misunderstanding and confusion. First, the Bible is God's message to mankind. **"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness"** (1 Timothy 3:16, NASB). This alone should give us reason enough to study it in-depth, but Scripture also tells us how precious God's Words are. The Psalmist, considering the words of God, wrote, **"They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much find gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb"** (Psalm 19:10). A final way to answer this question is summed up in Jesus words, **"Your word is truth"** (John 17:17). When we peer into our opened Bibles, we are not reading any old book. To the contrary, your mind is taking in God's precious truth.

God's precious truth is able to save mankind. Paul told Timothy, **"from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ**

**Jesus"** (2 Timothy 3:15). Where can man go to find salvation? Salvation is only found in God, through Christ (cf. John 14:6). It makes sense that we can only know what God expects of us by knowing His revelation! Jesus said, **"you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free"** (John 8:32). The first step toward salvation begins with hearing God's Word (Romans 10:17).

God's precious truth is also able to guide mankind. **"All Scripture is inspired by God,"** Paul wrote, **"... so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work"** (2 Timothy 3:16-17). God's Word continues to teach us after we are saved. These inspired words are able to make us everything we need to be in order to please God! No wonder the Psalmist said, **"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path"** (Psalm 119:105).

### The Danger of Not Knowing the Scriptures

There is unquestionable value in studying God's Word, but it is also worthwhile to consider the other side of the coin. There is serious danger in NOT knowing the Scriptures! If we do not study the Scriptures we are depriving ourselves from access to God's precious truth. Additionally, we are refusing the salvation and guidance it offers. The Bible, though, warns us further about these dangers.

When Paul was speaking in Athens he said, **"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness"** (Acts 17:30-31). Paul alludes to a time when God overlooked the ignorance of some, but that time is over. A day is coming in which everyone, everywhere will be judged. There is danger in not knowing God's Word!

Prior to His death, Jesus had a run-in with the Sadducees concerning the resurrection. In response

to their misunderstanding, Jesus said, **"Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures"** (Matthew 22:29, ASV). Misunderstanding the Scriptures leads to error on the part of the reader. Before they went into captivity, God said of His chosen people, **"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children"** (Hosea 4:6, NASB). Knowing Scripture is not simply a good idea, it is required to be pleasing to God!

### How to Know the Scriptures

It is my hope that by this point you recognize the serious need to know the Scriptures. As we conclude, let me offer just a few practical suggestions about how to go about studying: