

Tackling the Problem of Biblical Illiteracy in the Fire Service

Changing a culture of complacency

By Craig Duck – President/Missionary FCFInternational



Our world is spinning out of control. One only has to watch the nightly news to see what I am talking about. Firefighters and first responders are regularly responding to emergencies that prove this point. People are dying every day, and we are forced to pick up the pieces. In a civil war in the middle east people are being starved to death to prove a political point. The United States has witnessed many terrorism events that firefighters

and first responders have had to respond to in just this year alone. Since 1970 the Global Terrorism Database reports around 2,600 events that are responsible for thousands of deaths. Even local areas are experiencing problems with violence, drugs, and an epidemic of suicide. So, what is the problem? Could it be that people are not aware of God's plan? I believe we are experiencing a problem directly caused by Biblical illiteracy.

Think about it for a moment. Many people in the fire service are not as familiar with Biblical truths as previous generations were.

Christians of generations past were very literate when it came to the Bible. They memorized it, read it, studied it and shared their knowledge with others. When was the last time you had a Biblical discussion in the firehouse? Are today's firefighters even equipped to "hold their own" in a simple conversation with other Christians? "According to the 2014 "The State of the Bible" report by the Barna Group and American Bible Society, a majority of U.S. adults (81 percent) said they consider themselves highly, moderately or somewhat knowledgeable

about the Bible. Yet less than half (43 percent) were able to name the first five books of the Bible. The statistics are similar to the previous 2013 report which also showed that only half knew that John the Baptist was not one of the 12 apostles.”

Firefighters and first responders understand that complacency kills. In the fire service complacency can lead to serious injury or death. We don't allow our members to fall into this dangerous trap because it can affect the whole team. But what about our faith? Are we constantly growing in our faith or have we put our Bible on a shelf somewhere to collect dust? It is mission critical that we ensure we are growing as a believer. Those who choose to sit on the sideline and become stagnate in their faith jeopardize themselves and others. We must return to a time when God is first place in the Christian firefighters life, and others see it.

If this problem were a fire or EMS emergency, we would develop an incident action plan (IAP), ensure adequate resources are available and monitor our plan to ensure success. If this problem were a hazardous material response, we would ensure the incident command system (ICS) is utilized, have a research officer checking available resources, and ensure the team is prepared to mitigate the situation. So how is it that we continue to allow Biblical illiteracy in the fire service? What can we do to ensure Christian firefighters and first responders are growing in their faith?



Let's start with a quick test to see where you stand on the subject of Biblical illiteracy.

1. How many books are in the Bible _____?
New Testament _____ Old Testament _____
2. Who wrote the first four books of the New Testament?
3. Who wrote the first five books of the Old Testament?
4. Since the world began, which two people did not die?
5. How many people were on Noah's ark?

6. Which angel appeared to Mary?
7. Who taught in parables?
8. Who was the strongest man in the Bible?
9. What two books in the Bible are named for women?
10. What is the Greatest Commandment? What is the Second Greatest Commandment?

8-10 correct answers, you are Bible smart, 5-7 you are Biblically literate, 1-4 you are Biblically illiterate, 0 can I tell you about Jesus?

So how did you do? Are you prepared to share your faith with other firefighters and first responders?

To change our culture in the fire service to one of Godliness, we must develop an IP. That plan should include Bible reading, studying, memorizing and sharing. If our generation does not develop a sound plan and ensure enough resources are committed to the plan, we will surely fail. The Fellowship of Christian Firefighters International is prepared to help with this plan and ensure its success.

“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

Hebrews 4:12 ESV

The Bible is unlike any other book that has been written. The Bible spans thousands of years and was written by 40 different authors. There is no error in the Bible, and we can trust what was written in the original texts. Our job when it comes to growing in our faith is to read the Bible every day. Many folks have read through the Bible repeatedly, reporting on the positive changes they have been able to make in their life as a result. How often do you read your Bible? When was the last time you just sat for hours and soaked in the teachings it contains? You won't regret the time you spend reading through God's word.

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

II Timothy 2:15 NKJV

Are you prepared to study the Bible to help promote Biblical literacy? The Bible is clear that we must do our part to grow in our faith. This will take time and effort as we pour our life into studying. We spend many hours attending classes, preparing for promotion, and watching videos to get better. But how much time do we give to God? The Bible is just as relevant to today’s Christian firefighters and first responders as it was generations ago. God has laid out the perfect plan in the Bible, and we can still rely today on its foundational truths. Pray that God would show you how to understand what you are reading and studying.

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”

Joshua 1:8 ESV

Bible memorization is quickly becoming a thing of the past. Read through the Psalms and you will discover how important God’s words were to the people. Christian firefighters and first responders need to place a high priority on memorizing Bible passages. Memorizing helps us to be prepared to answer those



who have questions about our faith, help us through difficult times, and help us to make wise decisions. Whether you use old fashion flashcards or download an app to help you out, it is mission critical that we begin to memorize Scripture. God always blesses us when we take the time to memorize.

“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 28:18-20 NIV

Jesus encouraged us to share our faith with those we meet. That is what the Great Commission is all about. Notice how Matthew 28:18-20 begins by telling us to “go and make disciples of all nations.” We can’t fulfill the mission if we are Biblically illiterate. The passage then goes on to say, “teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” How do we possibly think we can ever obey that truth if we don’t know what Jesus commanded?

FCFInternational desires that every Christian firefighter and first responder to grow in their faith. We write daily devotions, articles, Bible studies, and produce videos to help you. Our prayer is that small groups will pop up in local fire departments all over the world who teach Biblical truth. Can you imagine what the fire service would look like if every one of us takes seriously the challenge to read, study, memorize and share our knowledge with others? God is ready to help, are you up for the challenge?

Want to start a local group in your area to study the Bible? Contact the International Office to learn how to begin.

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The APP – Christian Firefighter Hub

Quiz Answers

1. How many books are in the Bible? **66**
New Testament 39 Old Testament 27
2. Who wrote the first four books of the New Testament? **Moses**
3. Who wrote the first five books of the Old Testament? **Matthew, Mark, Luke, John**
4. Since the world began, which two people did not die **Enoch and Elijah?**
5. How many people were on Noah's ark? **8**
6. Which angel appeared to Mary? **Gabriel**
7. Who taught in parables? **Jesus**
8. Who was the strongest man in the Bible? **Samson**
9. What two books in the Bible are named for women? **Esther and Ruth**
10. What is the Greatest Commandment? **"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." (Matthew 22:37,38)** What is the Second Greatest? **Commandment "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:39)**