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Shrewd Sons

- by Frank Himmel

Jesus once lamented that the sons of this age are shrewder in relation to their own generation than the sons of light (Luke 16:8). In other words, people of the world have more initiative toward worldly things than Christians do toward heavenly things.

Consider a man who wants to catch fish. He does not expect fish to swim up to his door and invite themselves in. He is realistic. He'll buy ample equipment: a rod and reel (likely several), hooks, a net, a bait bucket, a stringer, all sorts of tackle and a deluxe box to keep it in, a hook remover, a cleaning knife, and anything else he thinks might be useful. He will probably borrow some money and buy a boat. He'll read books on fishing, watch those fishing shows on TV, and might even go to fishing college (yes, there is such a thing). He'll start keeping track of the tides. He'll talk to other fishermen about the best spots to go.

Do you suppose he will give it all up the first time he comes home empty-handed? No way — he'll just go out earlier the next time! No matter how busy a fisherman is, there is always time for fishing. He will ask his buddies to go with him. And when he snags a big one will he keep it a secret? You know better.

There are Christians who say they want to learn more of God's word. To accomplish this worthwhile goal they devote a whole thirty minutes per week listening to a preacher! Why don't they get up an hour earlier or set aside Wednesday evening for Bible Study? Evidently they don't see much value in that. And when these same folks have no money for books, periodicals, and other study aids, and no time for daily reading, it is little wonder that the fish aren't biting.

Are you having trouble with a certain temptation? Get help. Talk to others. Talk to God. Read His prescription. Stay away from circumstances where that urge is the greatest. You don't have to worry about saltwater fish in a freshwater lake.

Want to convert your neighbor? Set a good example. Ask him to come to church with you. Ask him to study with you. You might begin by asking him to tell you about his beliefs. Give him some literature or subscribe to a good magazine for him. You won't catch a thing unless you throw your hook in.

Here is a young brother who thinks he might want to serve as an elder some day. What should he do? Objectively analyze his character and work on deficiencies. Learn well the word so he can hold it faithfully. Listen to older brethren that his judgment may mature. Develop his skills as a teacher by watching, listening, and doing. Pay close attention to his family. Be hospitable. Work with people. Be careful to protect his reputation. Pray. When the time comes to cast, he'll be ready.

Heavenly goals merit thought, careful planning, enthusiasm, hard work, and whatever sacrifice of time and money is required. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12).

Are There More Books of the Bible?

by Kent Heaton

The question of the authenticity of the Bible is challenged by the existence of other books that seem to have a flavor for Holy writ. There are the apocryphal books written during the years separated by the Old and New Testament. Some of the books include the books of Maccabees, Tobit, Judith, Susanna, and others. Through the years other books surface that create an interest in whether the sixty-six books of the Bible (as we have them divided) are complete and why other books are not included. As with the apocryphal books these are not considered canonical or belonging to the canon for a number of reasons. The Jews were the keepers of the Hebrew scriptures or “oracles of God” (Rom. 3:2) and never accepted them as part of the book of Scripture. The New Testament was established as canon by textual scholars who followed the same pattern of establishing which books were canonical.

Returning to the question of whether vital information is being excluded by the absence of the Old Testament and New Testament apocryphal books, should these books be considered part of scripture? When these “missing books” of the Bible gain a following, renewed interest in their stories and teachings create more of a curiosity than the very obvious question about the Bible. Should we take a book (for example) like the Book of Enoch and question if the Bible is all we need in the absence of this book? Could it be safe to say the critics of the Bible who desire inclusion of these other books have investigated the sixty-six books of the Bible and found lacking what they need to know about God’s will? The curious crowds who intently read and study the apocryphal books must be asked if they have intently read and studied the Bible with the same veracity. If after a complete examination of Genesis through Revelation there are questions of incomplete knowledge; who is to blame for such results?

The Bible itself claims to be complete. When men question the fullness of God’s message in the Bible in seeking other books they deny Genesis 1 and the power of God. The question is often asked, “How can we know we have all the books of the Bible?” That is suggesting God cannot create the world in six days. If the Lord cannot give mankind what needs to be known in a book secured through the centuries of time as complete, then the Lord cannot say, “Let there be light” and there be light. Would not the creation of the world be a more “powerful” event than keeping a book secure through time?

Peter writes to the early Christians and gives them assurance that the word of God is complete: “As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue” (2 Pet. 1:3). Jesus told His disciples, “When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13; cp. 14:26). Paul declared, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). What more can there be than “God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory” (1 Tim. 3:16)?

If the Bible is not complete then God is a liar and Jesus is a fraud. The Bible is given by the providential wisdom of God for all truth. Anything beyond that is false (Rev. 22:18-19). Salvation is found in one book alone - the Bible!

via *The Knollwood Reminder*