

Does Your Reading Count?

by K.P. Yohannan

K.P. Yohannan emphasizes the importance of reading transformative Christian literature and committing to prayer in the face of spiritual challenges and global crises.

Scripture: Psalm 119:105, Matthew 16:24, Luke 14:26, Romans 12:1-2, Philippians 4:6-7, Colossians 3:16, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12, James 1:22

Topics: "Discipleship", "Spiritual Literacy"

Description

K.P. Yohannan emphasizes the dire need for spiritual literacy among Christians, particularly in the West, where an abundance of Christian literature exists yet many remain spiritually illiterate. He contrasts the lack of resources in places like China with the overwhelming availability of self-help books in free countries, urging believers to seek out literature that challenges them to live sacrificially for Christ. Yohannan calls for a return to the radical teachings of Jesus, highlighting the importance of prayer and intercession for a world in crisis. He encourages the congregation to read impactful Christian books and to engage deeply with the Gospels to foster a genuine commitment to discipleship. Ultimately, he stresses that reading should lead to action and obedience in the faith.

Transcript

While visiting China a while back, I was shocked when I learned that hundreds of church congregations there are without even one copy of the Bible to share among themselves. They are without any kind of Christian book, and still in many parts of the world it is impossible to find a Christian bookstore. In free countries, especially in the West, thousands of books on every conceivable subject are available to believers. One might logically conclude that because there are so many Christian books, most of the people in these nations are very spiritual and radical in their commitment to Christ!

Unfortunately, this is not the case. In fact, even though so many Christian books are available, many of God's people are truly illiterate when it comes to reading books that could really make a difference in their lives. When you visit the average Christian bookstore, you'll find that there are more books on self-help and how to make one feel good or how to improve one's situation, than on the radical call of Christ to lay down one's life and live unselfishly to reach this generation with the Gospel.

Many publishing houses will not publish a book with the name "mission" on it, simply because it wouldn't be a money maker. Furthermore, hundreds of priceless books are out of print because the topics are contrary to our self-centered, self-pleasing, watered-down Christianity. And do you realize the latest trend

is to read Christian novels? In other words, we are looking for anything that makes us feel good. Early in my Christian life, one of the best things that happened to me was that George Verwer, founder of Operation Mobilization, at which I was serving, asked us young people to carry with us the book True Discipleship, by William McDonald.

He wanted us to read it several times each year. Then I was introduced to the many books by A.W. Tozer and by Watchman Nee. And, of course, one cannot forget the book Calvary Road by Roy Hession. I'm sad to say that many of these books are not even available in the most popular bookstores. They have to be special ordered. Read the Gospels and see how Jesus called His disciples. He said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24).

And, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:26). Of course, Jesus promised a hundredfold more blessings than anything we can ever forsake. But He said these blessings would also come with much persecution. There is a price to pay in this generation if we are serious about seeing the multiplied millions of people in this world come to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are truly in serious spiritual warfare. Satan is serious not only about what he is doing but also about drugging us with this lukewarm Christianity and plunging us in a fog that blinds us to reality. I encourage you to get some of the books I mentioned previously. Read them and meditate on them. Then read the Gospels and let the Lord speak to you in a fresh and new way. Next, pray. There is no greater test of a person's grasp on reality than seeing how he is committed to prayer.

How can we watch 139,000 people being wiped away in a cyclone in Bangladesh, 50,000 slaughtered in Sri Lanka or hundreds killed on the streets in China and then take it so casually? If Christ were there in the flesh to witness these events, how would He react? I believe His heart would be breaking, and food, sleep, hobbies and anything else that might be considered important would become secondary. Would Jesus not fall down weeping and praying? Isn't this what we ought to be doing?

I believe the daily events happening in the world should become a prayer letter we can use to intercede for this generation. As you think about getting some of these excellent books, I would also recommend Operation World, by Patrick Johnstone. It is a must, because it gives the reader information on how to pray for each country. If you are unable to get any of the books I've mentioned in your bookstores, please let Gospel for Asia know. We may be able to help you locate them. Read not just for information, but to learn and obey.

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