

Leaders  
Teachers

# Attack Your Adversary

## SQUARE OFF AGAINST BIBLICAL ILLITERACY

*Before facing Goliath, David carefully selected five smooth stones. It is time for churches to address a giant problem—Biblical illiteracy. Pastors, introduce these seven foundation stones into your ministry and watch the enemy retreat!*

*My grandfather was quite a character. Born in 1906, he spent his entire life on the same Midwest farm. In fact, he died in the same room in which he was born! Grandpa went to his grave firmly convinced that the earth was flat. He told me that if the earth were round, "people on the other side would fall off." When I tried to explain that gravity exerts an invisible force that holds objects to the earth's surface, he laughed at my logic. He was in complete denial.*

*Many churches are in denial about the current crisis of biblical illiteracy. Their view of the situation is severely distorted. To them, biblical illiteracy is just one of the church's many shortcomings that need a few minor adjustments. It seems no more significant than a slight change in the price of gasoline. They're wrong—biblical illiteracy has far more serious side effects.*

## Cultural Instability

Biblical illiteracy is the most dangerous threat to the viability of the Church in America. Do I really mean that? Yes, I absolutely do—and here's why—God has established His Word as a cultural watershed. Once the Bible has been removed from the heart and mind of a person or a civilization, collapse is imminent. Our post-modern culture is gravely ignorant of God's thoughts and the Bible's wisdom. Our churches are largely impotent. Our society is therefore at risk. The walls of protection are crumbling. It is time to rebuild—stone-by-stone—using the reinforcing precepts found in God's Word.

This is exactly what Jesus meant when He referred to "the rock" of His Word:

*"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came*

*down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock."*—Matthew 7:24-25 (NIV)

We all know the fate of the foolish man who built on a sandy foundation. According to George Barna, "...only 3% of the nation's 13-year-olds have a biblical worldview, which serves as the foundation for all their decision making." \*Statistics reveal that the church is raising a generation of kids who have missed out on essential Bible training. They look fine on the surface, but lack the depth to conquer the challenges they're sure to face. How biblically literate are the kids in your church? Are they receiving a solid spiritual foundation? Do the teens in your flock continue walking with God beyond their high school years? Christians deserve solid Bible training. But without an intentional effort by church leaders, this will not happen.

*\*If you need more proof of the church's growing biblical illiteracy, please refer to the extensive research of George Barna, George Gallup, Thom Rainer, and others.*



DiscipleLand  
Children's Ministry  
Tools

by Mark Steiner,  
Th. M.,  
DiscipleLand  
Founder/President

## Seven Essential Stones

Let's move forward! These seven carefully chosen steps will guide a local church toward a solid foundation in God's Word. When you grasp the big picture of this strategy, anticipate that God will empower your efforts as you seek to honor Him and His Word.

### 1 Exhibit a love for the Bible in your own life and ministry.

Spend extensive time in the Word. Sing it. Share it. Memorize it. Recite it. Tote it with you. Read it! Demonstrate to yourself, to God, and to your church family that you love Christ through a whole-hearted pursuit of God through His Word. If the Bible does not permeate your own life, it is unlikely that your church will fully embrace God's Book.

*"Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long."*  
—Psalm 119:97 (NIV)

### 2 Establish high expectations for solid biblical training in your church.

Your church will participate in many, many activities in the years ahead. Determine to include God's Word in every one. View every ministry event as an opportunity to champion the relevance and power of the Bible. Raise the bar so everyone will search the Scriptures for life-giving insights.

*"...so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."* —Isaiah 55:11 (NIV)

### 3 Embrace children's discipleship with confidence and conviction.

Some pastors soft-pedal children's ministry. They assume that "Kids are too young to be discipled." Not so! Children are the best candidates for discipleship. They represent our most fertile fields for reaping a bountiful harvest. Christian kids are the key for turning the tide on biblical illiteracy. They have fewer distractions, greater faith, and 100% of the Holy Spirit.

*"Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown."* —Mark 4:20 (NIV)

### 4 Equip your parents to build their children in the faith.

God has given parents primary responsibility for the spiritual training of their children, but many parents don't know where to begin. They feel overwhelmed with this responsibility. So parents often entrust this task to the Church, or to chance. That is why discipling is the most pivotal ministry that churches can provide. It is time for churches to encourage and equip parents to carry out their responsibility. The vitality of the next generation of Christians pivots on its willingness to do so. Churches must plan purposeful ministries to disciple parents and children.

*"These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."* —Deuteronomy 6:6-7 (NIV)



### 5 Experience the joy of preaching through the Bible within the next ten years.

I'm not one to insist that the Bible must be preached exegetically from beginning to end. However, I do believe that God will honor a systematic presentation of the whole of Scripture to your congregation. Declare its power and relevance. Bring it to life. But by all means, preach the Word—all of it!

*"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."* —2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)



## Exhort and encourage everyone to apply God's Word personally.

The credibility of our witness rests, not on our knowledge of the Word, but our commitment to do what it says. Christians need to know about opportunities to implement the Word in everyday situations. We demonstrate this through acts of service, justice, compassion, generosity, righteousness, kindness, encouragement, courage, and sacrifice. The truth of God's Word must move from our heads to our hearts and then to our hands and feet. Offer opportunities and challenges to your congregation to do just that!

*"But someone will say, 'You have faith; I have deeds.' Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do."*  
—James 2:18 (NIV)



## Engage your congregation in a Bible Celebration.

King Josiah is the premier example of one who faced a biblical illiteracy crisis. During his reign, God's people faced a bleak spiritual future. The previous generation had completely abandoned God's Word. King Manasseh had destroyed all the copies of the Scriptures that had not been hidden. Years later, during a Temple renovation project, workers found a secreted copy of the Scriptures. When King Josiah heard God's Word, he braved political incorrectness and resolutely determined to reestablish the Bible's authority throughout Judah. It is time to restore God's Word to church life. If necessary, "tear your robes" like King Josiah! Bring back the Book!

Encourage your flock to bring their Bibles, not just to church, but to work! Give copies to visitors. Let your love for God's Word shine forth. Invite people to share their encounters with God through the Bible. Celebrate personal devotionals from your platform. Display posters that honor God's Word. Catch a fresh vision of what it means to have lives permeated by Holy Scripture!

*"The king stood by his pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the LORD—to follow the LORD and keep his commands, regulations and decrees with all his heart and all his soul, and to obey the words of the covenant written in this book. Then he had everyone in Jerusalem and Benjamin pledge themselves to it; the people of Jerusalem did this in accordance with the covenant of God, the God of their fathers."*  
—2 Chronicles 34:31-32 (NIV)

## Catch the Vision

Unless a force greater than the influence of gravity is exerted on an object, it will fall to the earth. Unless Christianity exerts a stronger influence than the world, the enemy's persuasive tactics will wean our churches from the truth of God's Word. The Great Commission hinges on the effectiveness of the church to weather the storm of biblical illiteracy.

Twenty years from now, the churches across America that pulsate with life and show signs of vibrant health will be those that address the crisis of biblical illiteracy. Churches with anemia or those that have collapsed will be among those that failed to come to grips with this issue.

The focus of my life and our ministry is to equip believers in the fullness of God's Word. I invite you to join in restoring biblical literacy to our churches—starting with your own fellowship. Picture your congregation as the church in Berea, eagerly searching the Scriptures day after day (Acts 17:11). Envision your flock as people who cherish their Bibles, who eagerly apply God's Word, and who boldly express their love for God and the gospel!

*Mark Steiner is passionate about utilizing God's Word to train God's people to transform the world. He believes that discipleship is the hope of the world. Mark was instrumental in creating DiscipleLand, a Bible curriculum that focuses on children's discipleship. He has served as president of Through the Bible Publishers since 1995.*

*Prior to his publishing experience, Mark served the Church as a Pastor of Christian Education for ten years. He is a seasoned seminar leader and a champion for children's education.*



# How Does DiscipleLand Build Disciples?

Here's how DiscipleLand helps you equip kids to reach their peak potential as Jesus' disciples. DiscipleLand's family of resources forms a complete Children's Discipleship System™ with five components:



## DISCIPLELAND PRESCHOOL

launches children ages 2-5 to begin walking with God.

Preschoolers establish a solid foundation through 200 different Bible stories.



## DISCIPLELAND KINDERGARTEN

inspires kids ages 5-6 to follow amazing Bible heroes.

Children grasp God's plan and purpose as they overview the entire Bible.



## DISCIPLELAND CORE BIBLE

challenges children in grades 1-6 to become victorious disciples.

Kids are equipped for Christian service through 24 quarters of sequential Bible curriculum.



## DISCIPLETOWN

equips kids in grades 1-6 with essential discipleship skills.

Children enjoy group learning in a creative Kids Church format.



## DISCIPLELAND ADVENTURE

motivates kids in grades 1-6 to pursue their discipleship journey.

Children travel to exciting locations around the world to experience topical Bible adventures.

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info@DiscipleLand.com

**DiscipleLand**—Children's ministry curriculum, ideas, and discipleship resources for life.

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