

“On My Shelf...” w/ Glenn Eldridge (#6)

Our God is a writing God, therefore he chose to communicate through the written language. Our church is a reading church, therefore we read God’s will from his written word. *This is an inescapable fact, that God’s people have always been and forever will be people of the Book.* And, of course, there are many books available in our day – through various medium such as print and digital – inconceivable as such would’ve been before the printing press, but there is really only one book that we need to know. And that’s the *holy* one: the Bible.

Unfortunately, there is a growing poverty of Bible reading in the church (not to mention the world) today. But that’s not to say there isn’t a hunger for it – no, people are hungrier than ever. It’s just that some don’t know it, or don’t realize where they can satiate it; and so, instead, we have many who walk about spiritually emaciated for lack of the living water and bread of life – Christ Jesus who is the Word in the flesh. And it’s in this state that some will seek for nourishment in the wrong places. Daniel Webster once said, “If religious books are not widely circulated among the masses in this country, I do not know what is going to become of us a nation. If truth be not diffused, error will be; if God and His Word are not known and received, the devil and his works will gain the ascendancy; if the evangelical volume does not reach every hamlet, the pages of a corrupt and licentious literature will.”

But let me tell you about some other reading that could potentially be a game changer for you, reading that could profoundly change your perspective, enlighten your mind, motivate you towards maturity and development and, ultimately, enhance your walk with the Lord. God not only gave us the Bible so that we would come to know him better, but being the Giver of every good and perfect gift, he has also talented many people in this world to convey their individual thoughts – thoughts that have the power to change and impact your life. John Piper has a great perspective on this.

“There are bad reasons to turn to other writers besides the Bible. And there are good ones. One of the bad reasons we turn to other writers is that we find the Bible tame and tasteless. It is anything but tame and tasteless. One of the good reasons we turn to other writers besides the Bible is that we savor the taste of God not only in the Bible, but also in the way others savor Him. The best writers intensify our taste for the Bible, and especially for God Himself”
(from the introduction of *Taste and See*).

Through their books, we should allow these talented writers to take us on a journey to know God better. I know that I’m not the only person who has benefitted personally from the writings of godly people – *many of the leaders here at the Brownsburg Church of Christ have too!* So what I want to do in these bulletin articles is to periodically ask one of our leaders “Hey, what’s on your bookshelf?” In other words, what books have had the most profound effect on your life and why? Last time we discovered *Michael Hunt’s* top 5 (read it on our website).

We’re going to finish our series with **Glenn Eldridge** in this article. Here’s his top 5:

1. *Search for the Ancient Order* (1990; Earl West).

West chronicles the inception of particular fellowship, the Church of Christ by covering the period between 1800 -1865. History is absolutely crucial for understanding, wisdom, and decision making today. All would do well to pick up a copy in order to acquaint themselves with our past.

2. *J.D. Tant: Texas Preacher* (1993; Fanning Yater Tant).

This particular edition of the biography of brother J.D. Tant is filled stories of the Tant family and of the times in which they lived. It was a different world at the beginning of the 19th century, and with it all the specific obstacles that our spiritual ancestors had to traverse. You'll learn about the history of circuit preaching, the early church of Christ and how the civil war affected everything and the Tant family in particular.

3. *Alcoholics Anonymous: The Big Book* (4th ed. 2002; Anonymous).

It's impossible to chart how many people have claimed changed lives due to the not unbiblical efforts of AA. This book has helped many, saved torn lives, and have equipped many leaders with the ability to lead those struggling with various addictions through the 12 step process to a freer existence.

4. *All About the Bible* (1989; Sidney Collett).

The Bible is, of course, number one on each of our shepherds' lists, but what about Bible study tools? So often we can get lost in navigating the deep waters of Scripture – we need a compass, or something to help us out! This book is the self-proclaimed “basic equipment for bible study.” Grab yourself a copy to understand the basics and wade through alleged contradictions and hindrances.

5. *The Shack* (2011; Wm. Paul Young).

This one made the New York Times Bestseller list. Here's a description taken from Amazon.com: “Mackenzie Allen Phillips's youngest daughter, Missy, has been abducted during a family vacation, and evidence that she may have been brutally murdered is found in an abandoned shack deep in the Oregon wilderness. Four years later, in this midst of his great sadness, Mack receives a suspicious note, apparently from God, inviting him back to that shack for a weekend. Against his better judgment he arrives at the shack on wintry afternoon and walks back into his darkest nightmare. What he finds there will change his life forever.”

Henry David Thoreau once wrote something that has never left me: “Read the best books first, or you may not have the chance to read them at all.” So much wisdom for our lives can be gleaned from those who have gone on before, and we miss out on a lot of life’s lessons when we fail to sit at the feet of these wise men and women and the thoughts they’ve shared. Either way, the good news is that we’ll gain wisdom; life has a way of knocking some sense into us (usually). But the better news is that you can learn from the mistakes of others – without making them yourself! But, again, it might take a little reading – and a little reading, as Thoreau said, might take a little time. Are we willing?

Let me put it this way. The average person can read 300 words per minute. Conveniently, the average novel has around 300 words per page. So, we’re at a minute for every page. This means that if you commit to spending only 15 minutes a day reading, and then only five days per week, you’ll be able to read around 3,900 pages! That’s like 20 average size novels or three to four large detailed works on any subject. Fifteen minutes a day? That’s doable.

We hope you found this article encouraging and that maybe you might think to pick up some books – like Glenn’s - that would help you in your journey towards a better relationship with Christ, and a better you.

What’s on *your* shelf?