

Do You Treasure the Bible?

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By Eric Metaxas

MANHATTAN, N.Y.—It’s a sign of the times when a major magazine can tell its readers it’s okay to ignore the Bible.

Ask a child what his or her favorite thing to eat is, and you’ll probably hear “pizza,” or “ice cream.” But grown-ups hoping to live their full threescore and ten would do well not to harden their hearts (or arteries) against more-healthy fare.

When you become a man, you put aside childish things, but, just as there are people who never grow out of their juvenile palettes, there are folks who never move beyond childish tastes in literature.

GQ magazine recently published a list of “21 Books You Don’t Have to Read.” Seldom have I seen an example of the blind leading the blind as blatant as this article.

Condemned were such classics as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *The Lord of the Rings*. The magazine’s editors describe these beloved titles variously as “racist,” “sexist” and “just really, really boring.”

GQ turns up its nose at some of the finest literary dining around. The editors’ poor taste is surpassed only by their poor reading comprehension. Mark Twain’s *Huck Finn*, for instance, which *GQ* dismisses as racist, is actually a satirical polemic against slavery!

The real thorn in *GQ*’s flesh, though, is the Bible, which it describes as “repetitive, self-contradictory . . . [and] foolish.”

The most important book in Western history is, according to this periodical filled with men’s grooming tips, just not worth the sweat of your brow.

Jumping Jehoshaphat, where do we begin?

At the risk of casting pearls before swine, I can assure the editors of this magazine that not only is reading the Bible worth the effort, but none of us can hope to understand our own civilization or even speech without it. I’ve already used nine popular expressions from the Bible in this commentary.

- For example, why do we have a seven-day week?
- Why is this the year 2018?
- Why do we use printed books?
- Why is the average Westerner literate at all?

The answer to all of these is “the Bible.”

Without reading the Bible, you could never comprehend works of art like the Sistine Chapel, the *Pieta* or *The Last Supper*. You will never fully grasp Dante, Milton or Bach.

Indeed, many great masterpieces wouldn't exist if religious patrons hadn't paid artists and composers to celebrate the message of the Bible.

If you don't have a working knowledge of the Good Book, most of Shakespeare's allusions will be opaque to you. You'll not understand why the first European colonists came to New England, you'll miss what motivated the abolition of slavery, and you will find Martin Luther King Jr.'s “Letter from Birmingham Jail” unintelligible.

That is a drop in the bucket of the Bible's influence.

This behemoth of a book, along with the Judeo-Christian tradition it represents, is the reason we understand many broad concepts.

- Why we value women equally with men.
- Why we don't think it's okay to leave newborns to die outside.
- Why we think mercy is admirable.
- Even why we believe history had a beginning and will someday come to an end.

Simply put, if you don't understand the Bible, you won't understand who you are and why you think the way you do.

Maybe I'm a voice crying in the wilderness. After all, studies show that most people who own a Bible don't read it. Maybe we no longer treasure this best-selling book of all time because its truths are no longer hidden in our hearts. If so, the writing is on the wall for the West.

But—for those with an appetite for the sumptuous feast found in God's Word—it is waiting on the shelf. The average American household has four copies!

Folks, don't listen to *GQ*. Do not sell your birthright as a Westerner for a mess of periodical pottage. And don't miss the message or the Savior that set this book apart from all others.

By the way, that's 15 biblical phrases.