

## **“Of the Making of Many Books, There is No End”**

**By Paul R. Blake**

*“And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh” (Ecc. 12:12).*

Solomon clearly evidenced the wisdom of inspiration when he penned this passage. He himself was the writer of a number of books, three of which are in the Old Testament. In addition, he wrote 3000 proverbs and 1005 songs (1Kings 4:32), as well as Psalms 72, 127, and possibly others. However, spiritual study is not the object of Solomon's admonition. We are encouraged in both Testaments to spend time with Holy Writ in order to better understand the will of God and to draw closer to Him through His word. The 119th Psalm is an outpouring of the joy David felt over learning the precepts of the Lord. Paul told Timothy to be diligent in gaining the approval of God through rightly dividing His word.

In addition, the Preacher of Ecclesiastes is not warning God's children away from the written works of faithful men. Solomon himself created more songs and proverbs than can be found in the pages of the inspired books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, or Song of Solomon. A great host of Christians have grown spiritually by reading and encouraging or edifying article in a bulletin. Sinners have been converted by reading a tract that convicted them of error and outlined the plan of salvation from sin. Young evangelists have had difficult issues made clear for them by the well written books of godly men. Granted, one must be cautious, understanding that what is written by men can never make void what was inspired of God.

Furthermore, Solomon is not teaching that one should avoid reading and studying secular writings. He is stating that the production of secular works is virtually limitless, i.e. that it would not be possible to read all of them, let alone retain much of what one read in them. In fact, Solomon points out that to make the attempt to read and know all things that men have written would be detrimental to one's own health. Yet again, he is not proscribing reading and studying the writings of men, he is warning us of “MUCH study,” implying an excess of attention to secular writings.

Rather, the wise king is enjoining God's people to find balance in their lives. An old saying goes something like this: “Reading makes a full man; writing makes a correct man; speaking makes a ready man.” Paul drew a connection between study and proper understanding of truth (2Tim. 2:15). Peter linked prior study to preparedness to defend our faith (1Peter 3:15). When we study the word of God, when we are edified by what devout men have written about the truth, and when we have a good knowledge of the world around us and how it works as well as the people in it and how they think, THEN we are fully living what Solomon wrote. We will have the right balance and proper mix of what will enable us to grow in faith, to teach the lost, to edify our brother, and to put to silence the opponents of truth.

Consider the consequences of reading and studying only. What time has such a one set aside to share what he has learned with others? It would be as if one went to public school for his entire lifetime. While he has learned a great deal, he has not put his learning to any practical use.

Secondly, what time has such a person set aside to practice what he has learned? How can he prove that he has truly learned anything until he exercises what he has learned? Eventually he must lay aside the books and put into effect the principles he studied.

Third, while he is engaged in study, the rest of his existence lies idle. Physically, the sedentary life of a student leads to a body weakened by inactivity. Mentally, the isolation of the study room precludes interaction with other people and separates one from other stimulating activities. Social skills begin to deteriorate. Emotionally, one can become stilted and dull as the unending rows of words on the pages of the “many books.”

Solomon's message of balance is important. Too little study will lead to ignorance, and ignorance brings sin, suffering, and poverty. Too much study leads to a life wasted in an attempt to do the impossible, that is, trying to fit the ocean of human written works into the limited space of a human mind in three score and ten years. Therefore, study the word of God diligently, read some of the things godly men have written, learn about the world around you. And then, go out and practice what you have learned and teach it to others.

**“Where Does the Money Come From?”**

A woman was on vacation, playing the slot machines. It was her first time in a casino, and she wasn't sure how the machines operated. "Excuse me," she said to a casino employee. "How does this work?" The worker showed her how to insert a bill, hit the spin button, and operate the release handle.

"And where does the money come out?" she asked.

He smiled and motioned to a far wall before saying, "Usually at the ATM."

That's the trouble with gambling and other "get rich quick" schemes. There's only one person getting rich, and it's not you. The lure is strong, though. The temptation to come away with that big jackpot, to go home with pockets full without putting forth much effort. It's easy to see that Paul was right when he said, "*Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare*" (1Tim. 6:9).

Considering the constant temptation of money, it's not surprising that Jesus had much to say about the subject. Solomon, in his pearls of wisdom contained in Proverbs, also had much to say about our attitude toward wealth. "*Give me neither poverty nor riches: Feed me with the food allotted to me; lest I be full and deny You, and say, 'Who is the LORD?' Or lest I be poor and steal, and profane the name of my God*" (Prov. 30:8-9). May you be sufficiently blessed. But may your possessions (or your desire for them) never diminish your sense of need for God.

### **Doubt and Faith**

Doubt sees the obstacles,  
Faith sees the way.  
Doubt sees the darkest night,  
Faith sees the day.  
Doubt dreads to take the step,  
Faith soars on high.  
Doubt questions, "Who believes?"  
Faith answers, "I."

### **A Moments Wisdom**

- The difference between a prejudice and a conviction is that you can explain a conviction without becoming angry.
- There are a lot of folks who mistake their imagination for their memory.
- Do not fear tomorrow; God is already there.
- To be without some of the things you want is an indispensable part of happiness.
- A smile is the lighting system of the face and the heating system of the heart.
- Courage is like love; it needs hope to nourish it.
- As one grows wiser, he talks less and says more.
- It sometimes shows a fine command of the language to say nothing.
- Nothing is easy to the unwilling.
- There is always free cheese in the mousetrap, but you never see a happy mouse there.
- Nothing dies more quickly than a fresh idea in a closed mind.
- Be careful of your thoughts; they could turn into words at any moment.
- The trouble with the world is not that people know too little, but rather that they know too many things that aren't true.
- God will mend a broken heart if you give Him all of the pieces.
- Happiness is the byproduct of trying to help others.
- Children are more likely to close their ears to advice and open their eyes to examples.