

Question 5. *May all men make use of the Holy Scriptures?*

Answer. *All men are not only permitted, but commanded and exhorted, to read, hear, and understand the Holy Scriptures.*

I. “All men are... permitted... to read”

A. All For The Bible

1. Some in church history believed that only those who held church offices and were formally trained should be able to read the Scriptures, as was the case with the Roman Catholic Church. God called and raised men to confront this issue.

a) John Wycliffe (1330 – 1384)

(1) Wycliffe believed that the Scriptures should be translated into the language of the people and not left in Latin for only the priests. He produced a Middle-English Bible translated from Latin. He remarked, “*Englishmen learn Christ’s law best in English. Moses heard God’s law in his own tongue; so did Christ’s apostles.*”³

b) William Tyndale (1494 – 1536)

(1) Tyndale would be the first to complete an English New Testament translation from the Greek. He once said, “*Christ desires his mysteries to be published abroad as widely as possible. I would that [the Gospels and the epistles of Paul] were translated into all languages, of all Christian people, and that they might be read and known.*”⁴

³ John Wycliffe, *131 Christians Everyone Should Know*, by Mark Galli & Ted Olsen, (B&H Publishing Group, Brentwood, TN, 2000), 213.

⁴ *Ibid.* 348–349.

2. God’s Word should not be withheld from others. Beware of spiritual leaders who claim to have “special knowledge” as to what the Scriptures “actually” mean. Surely, God has appointed pastors and teachers to rightly handle God’s Word, but it does not mean that they have sole access to it.

a) **Acts 17:10-11 (LSB):** *And the brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11 Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.*

II. “All men are... commanded and exhorted to read”

A. The Bible For All

1. God’s Word is for everyone, not just pastors and leaders in the Church. Once one is permitted to read the Bible, they are then “commanded” and “exhorted” to do so. If God’s Word is available, it must be read.

a) **Deuteronomy 17:18-19 (LSB):** *“Now it will be when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. 19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear Yahweh his God, to carefully observe all the words of this law and these statutes,*

- (1) In God’s kindness, it is more affordable than ever to have your own physical, personal copy of God’s Word. We have access to God’s Word on our phones for free.

b) The command is from God, as revealed in His acts of providence; by having access to God’s Word, they are obligated to it. If one does not, then he will be held accountable for ignoring God’s gift.

(1) **Luke 12:48 (LSB):** *...From everyone who has been given much, much will be required, and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.*

c) The exhortation comes from Christians who strongly urge all men, women, and children who can read the Scriptures to do so and be blessed.

(1) **Revelation 1:3 (LSB):** *Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy and keep the things which are written in it, for the time is near.*

III. “All men are... to hear and understand the Holy Scriptures.”

A. All Men Must Hear

1. As Christians, we are commissioned to go share God’s Word with all people (Matt. 28:19). People from every nation, tribe, and tongue need to hear God’s Word as revealed in the Scriptures (Rev. 7:9).

a) **Romans 10:14 (LSB):** *How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?*

b) See also Mark 16:15

2. We think of children who cannot yet read. Though the Bible may be available to them, they are not yet reader or equipped to read it. Therefore, children must hear the Scriptures read to them.

B. All Men Must Understand

1. People do not merely need to hear God's Word, but they desperately need to understand it. Once one hears the gospel and receives it, they then are to be taught the full counsel of God's Word (Matt. 28:20; Rom. 12:2; 2 Tim. 3:14-17).

Understanding God's Word is essential to the Christian life; without it, we will not know what we are to do.

a) **John 5:39 (LSB):** *You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that bear witness about Me*

2. Just because the Bible is written in a language that people can read or in a language that they can hear and know the words, it does not guarantee that they will understand it. Make sure that you have a translation of God's Word that you can understand.
3. When someone is unlearned or unfamiliar with biblical language, such as "propitiation," "justification," "sanctification," etc., they will need assistance and guidance in understanding what they are reading.

a) **Acts 8:28-31 (LSB):** *and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29 Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." 30 And Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" 31 And he said, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.*

C. Public Worship Gathering

1. All of these are available to everyone in the public gathering of the saints on the Lord's Day. In the corporate worship of the Church, we read the Scriptures together, we hear them read to us, and they are then explained to us (expositional preaching).

a) **1 Corinthians 14:24-25 (LSB):** *But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; 25 the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that surely God is among you.*

(1) One avenue of evangelism and one of the greatest forms of discipleship is to bring people to Church for public worship.

IV. Application

- A. All Christians should desire to see God's Word in the languages of all peoples. We should pray for the efforts of global missionaries, for translation committees' efforts in bringing the Scriptures into languages that do not have God's Word in their language, and for people to go and preach the gospel to the unreached.
- B. All Christians should also desire to assist and guide each other through the Word of God. Surely, our interpretations and hermeneutical skills may vary; some of us are formally trained while others are not, but we all have the Holy Spirit in us to guide us in truth. We can pray for illumination every time we go through God's Word, and we can pray for it for others, too.
- C. All Christians need to hear God's Word preached to them regularly (Heb. 10:25). Remember that the greatest means of grace to us is the reading and preaching of God's Word (1 Tim. 4:13).

D. Reflection Questions

1. **Question 1.** *“When was the last time you read God’s Word with a lost person?”*
2. **Question 2.** *“How is your daily Bible reading?”*
3. **Question 3.** *“Who is it in your life that you are guiding in God’s Word?”*

V. Repeat / Sing Question & Answer 1 – 5

A. **Question 1.** *Who is the first and chiefest being?*

1. **Answer.** *God is the first and chiefest being.*

B. **Question 2.** *Ought everyone to believe there is a God?*

1. **Answer.** *Everyone ought to believe there is a God; and it is their great sin and folly who do not.*

C. **Question 3.** *How may we know there is a God?*

1. **Answer.** *The light of nature in man, and the works of God; plainly declare there is a God, but His Word and Spirit only, do it fully and effectually for the salvation of sinners.*

D. **Question 4.** *What is the word of God?*

1. **Answer.** *The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, are the Word of God, and the only certain rule of faith and obedience.*

E. **Question 5.** *May all men make use of the Holy Scriptures?*

1. **Answer.** *All men are not only permitted, but commanded and exhorted, to read, hear, and understand the Holy Scriptures.*