

Why build a biblical/theological library?

Books are to the minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ what tools are to the carpenter: the essentials of the trade. A call to ministry is a call to preparation, and the building of a ministry library is a must, not an option.

As the apostle Paul faced his impending death, he still remained a student, requesting of Timothy that he bring the books when he came to visit him in prison (2 Tim. 4:13). This booklet has been prepared for those who desire to follow in Paul's steps.

Warren Wiersbe offers some sound wisdom for this very task: "My books are my tools, and I use them. I cannot afford to be a book collector; neither the budget nor the diminishing shelf space ... permits such a luxury.... I enjoy my library. Each book is a friend that converses with and teaches me. Better to have fewer of the best books than to clutter your shelves with volumes that cannot serve you well. Above all, love your books, use them, and dedicate all you learn to the service of Jesus Christ."¹ To that end we have provided more than 1,000 titles to assist you in building your library and faithfully serving our Lord. Most titles are written from an evangelical perspective, having been authored by individuals who affirm the full authority and inspiration of Scripture (Matt. 5:17-18; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).

While a good library is necessary as a solid foundation for ministry, training under godly men and women is also important (2 Tim. 2:2). You may be someone who senses God's calling for further study and preparation. Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary exists for this very purpose, with a faculty and programs of study designed to enable the student to be a careful and equipped teacher of the God's Word. Whether your calling is to be a missionary or evangelist, pastor or teacher, counselor, educator or minister of music and worship, Southeastern Seminary is a community of faith which can better prepare you for service in the body of Christ.

Southeastern Seminary is committed to training men and women in sound evangelical scholarship to reach a lost world for Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:18:20). If God leads you our way, we will look forward to working with you.

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth." (2 Tim. 2:15).

In His Name,

Daniel L. Akin, President
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary
Wake Forest, North Carolina

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¹ Warren Wiersbe, *A Basic Library for Bible Students* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 7-8.

GUIDE TO ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible	NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
AOTC	Apollos Old Testament Commentary	NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
BCOTWP	Baker Commentary on the Old Testament: Wisdom and Psalms	NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament	NIVAC	NIV Application Commentary
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentary	NTC	New Testament Commentary
BSC	Bible Study Commentary	OTL	Old Testament Library
BST	Bible Speaks Today	PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
BTC	Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible	PTW	Preaching the Word
CBC	Cornerstone Biblical Commentary	REC	Reformed Expository Commentary
EBC	Expositor's Bible Commentary	SAEC	St. Andrew's Expositional Commentary
EBS	Encountering Biblical Studies	THOTC	Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary
HOTC	Holman Old Testament Commentary	TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentary
HNTC	Harper's New Testament Commentary	TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentary
HNTC	Holman New Testament Commentary	TPC	The Preacher's Commentary
ICC	International Critical Commentary	WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
IVPNTC	IVP New Testament Commentary	WCS	Welwyn Commentary Series
NAC	New American Commentary	WEC	Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary	ZEC	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary		

COMMENTARY TAGGING SYSTEM

- T Technical – These commentaries are primarily intended for those with advanced or intermediate knowledge of biblical languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek).
- P Pastoral – These commentaries are primarily intended for pastors, teachers, and serious students of the Bible. Knowledge of biblical languages will be helpful but not necessary to benefit from these works.
- D Devotional – These commentaries are primarily intended for personal bible study and edification, focusing on the meaning and practical application of the text.

* *Indicates first suggested selections for your library*

GENERAL REFERENCES TO THE BIBLE¹

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¹ My preferred Bible translations would be the following: *English Standard Version*, (Crossway) *Holman Christian Standard Bible* (B&H), *The New American Standard Version* (Nelson), or *The New King James Version* (Zondervan). It is best to use multiple translations for serious biblical study.

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