

Growing Successfully In the Lord!

Please read all of this for I am writing about something we often claim we cannot do:

Whenever many adults hear the word *memorize*, they groan, "I could never do that." Yet all of us memorize many things in our daily lives: telephone numbers, account numbers, addresses, television commercial jingles, sayings by famous people. You have much more capacity to memorize than you realize.

We should memorize Scripture, if for no other reason than the Lord commanded us to learn His Word (see Proverbs 1:1-3). When you have stored Bible promises in your heart and mind, you will soon notice other changes in your life because the Holy Spirit will use the verses to teach you new things and to help you resist temptation (see Psalm 119:11).

No single habit in the Christian life can bring more reward, or great help than the memorization of the Word of God. For our own growth in Christlikeness, service, and blessing there is nothing of greater practical value than the memorization of God's Word. When we hid the Word in our hearts then we can have His Word at our disposal whenever and wherever we might be. Through this discipline God's Word will bring satisfaction, it will lift, strengthen, empower and bring great joy. Having His Word in our hearts makes possible the directing of the Holy Spirit, the insight and wisdom we need, and the immediate answers along life's pathways. Plus we will have the Word at hand to benefit those around us, saved or lost.

Over the years I've discovered verses to memorize from a variety of sources. As child I memorized some verses for Sunday School. Later, I learned verses from a Topical Memory System that I purchased at a Bible Camp when but a young teen. As a youth I worked at bringing Scripture to memory as I learned over 200 verses while still on the farm in Nebraska. I remember well the holder, like wearing a wrist watch, which I had created to hold verses. This made possible the memorizing of many verses while doing chores on the farm. Then one of the requirements of graduation at Grace Bible College in Omaha, Nebraska, back in 1956 was the memorization and test over 350 selected verses that came in a box of cards. I still have these and they are still the foundation of known Scriptures. These efforts have giving me much joy and great reward as often the Word of God flows while teaching or preaching the Word of God. Often in varied circumstances the Word of God hidden in the heart give direction and wisdom and gives one answers as a person faces may things over the years.

Verses can be tattooed on your heart so that in times of pressure or difficulty God's Word will bring peace and great joy. When reading the Word of God devotionally then the Word memorized is all the more precious. Some verses are exciting, inspirational -- wow! Others are basic and foundational. Some verses will help you as an adult, as a dad, or mom, or in whatever place in life you find yourself to be.

The Marvelous Benefit of Scripture Memory:

No other habit can bring more reward with any greater payoff, than the regular hiding of God's Word in the heart. There are many incentives for memorizing and meditating on the Scriptures: Lets look at some:

1. To know and love the Lord:

Jesus memorized Scripture. What a simple way to be like Him. Jesus, the living Word, not only modeled the Word, but He also quoted verses from at least 18 Old Testament books, saying, "It is written." Many verses ought to etch His character and actions into our hearts. (Isa. 61:1-3; Rev. 5:9-10; Luke 2:52; Hebrews 5:7-8)

2. To sharpen one's witnessing and give boldness to share the good news of the gospel. (I Peter 1:15; John 5:39)

3. To make the Bible easier and more understandable in our study times:

The verses I have learned have often made the Word of God an open book as the Holy Spirit brings to mind contrasting verses, or complementary verses as one studies. It is important to compare Scripture with Scripture and at times a person may be with others and will have the opportunity to share some Bible truth without the Word of God at hand. The verses I have learned shine points of light on each page. (Isa. 30:21; and Psalms 119:130)

4. To give flow of the truth while teaching and speaking His Word.

(Consider Isaiah 28:10; 55:11,12; Acts 1:8; Heb. 4:12)

5. To equip for victory, when battling with Satan and temptation.

As our knowledge of the Lord increases, the Word brings understanding, patience, insight, wisdom and the character of Christ into us. When temptation came Christ answered Satan with the Word of God, shall we do less? It is the Word that gives us spiritual power as we have truth to answer the temptations that come to our hearts. It is the Word memorized that the Holy Spirit can bring to mind when we need it the most. (See Psalm 119:9, 11; 17:4; 37:31; Colossians 2:3)

6. To prepare us for times of trial and suffering.

(See Philippians 1:29; Isaiah 63:9; Jeremiah 31:3) When trials and suffering is experienced how will you make sense of it all without the "thus saith the Lord?" It is the Word that will give you guidance and wisdom about how to respond and what to accept when others would question the Lord's care, goodness and perfect will in our lives. (Heb. 13:5,6)

7. To model a habit of Jesus for one's family and those one mentors or disciples.

If you are not memorizing, few will be challenged through your life to start. What a point of fellowship of husband and wife to share verses! What security we build into our kids as they leave home, when they have multiplied verses tucked away in their hearts! What a blessing we can be to others when we memorize God's Word.

It is worth the effort, yes a million times, yes.

Consider Some Suggestions:

1. You ought to select at least 100 verses that will mean the most to YOU!

I think it is better to know 100 key verses, reflecting a broad balance of Bible teaching rather than to memorize two or three entire Bible Chapters. Either way, begin this fascinating journey with God, and keep up a steady pace. How many verses you will eventually memorize? Who's counting? Consider the joy and blessing it could bring to your life.

2. Then work at memorizing those verses you select. But you say, "**I can't memorize!**" But, we memorize all the time: everything from street addresses to internet sites, from which key unlocks the shed door to which supermarket aisle stocks my favorite cereal or anything else we desire to purchase while there.

3. I think it is more an attitude of mind or a product of desire than it is ability or non ability. We sell ourselves on the idea we cannot memorize, but at the same time some men could give you the statistics of many a ball player, where they play, what team, what years, etc., and yet excuse themselves about the memorizing of the Word of God.

4. Maybe your motivation should be built on what glorifies the Lord and why Satan does not want you to know the Word of God.

Without a doubt it is God's will for us to hide His Word in our hearts, and doubtless Satan does all he can to keep us from doing that which could well bring the most growth in our lives. How will we become Christlike if the Word is not that important? We should desire to "engraft the Word" into our lives. (James 1:19-25)