

You Can Memorize Scripture

Written by Bob Stone

"Those who wait on the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."—Isaiah 40:31

Dawson Trotman, the founder of The Navigators, often used to say: "Predominant thought determines present action." This is the key reason that we should give ourselves to the memorization and meditation of Scripture. What we do and say is determined by the things that are most on our minds and in our hearts—Matt. 15:18-19; 12:34-37.

I know when this subject is brought up, people usually have good reasons for not being able to memorize, and the subject is quickly changed. In order to devalue our excuses, however, I want to give an overview of the whole process of systematically hiding God's Word in our hearts.

Why is it so important to memorize Scripture?

The Mandate for Scripture Memory

*These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. **Deuteronomy 6:6-9.***

Notice that a love command precedes a command concerning the retention of the Word. Notice also the various ways the Word is to impact ourselves and our children. This is the Old Testament method of Scripture memorization.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus,

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*giving thanks to God the Father through him. **Colossians 3:16-17***

*My son, keep your father's commands and do not forsake your mother's teaching. Bind them upon your heart forever; fasten them around your neck. When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you. For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the way to life... **Proverbs 6:20-23***

*My son, keep my words and store up my commands within you. Keep my commands and you will live; guard my teachings as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart. **Proverbs 7:1-3***

That's the mandate—the command; but what if we don't have the motivation to memorize?

The Motive For Scripture Memory

First is the model of Jesus:

- His example in Matthew 4:1-11
- His attitude in Philippians 2:5

Second is the goal of maturity:

- 1 John 2:14
- 1 Corinthians 2:6-3:2

Third is the love we have for the Lord and His Word.

The Psalmist: "*Oh, how I love your law..*"—Psalm 119:97. The believer in Christ can measure his love for the Lord by his love for His Word.

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Discussion Questions:

1. In what ways do you agree that your heart and the Scriptures were made for each other?
2. Scan together Psalm 119, which was written by someone who truly loved God's Word. What are a few of your favorite verses in this Psalm, and which ones reflect the kind of inner convictions you desire concerning the Bible's impact on your life?
3. Why is Scripture memory important for children?

Now, in case you need some more motivation to memorize Scripture, we will concentrate on:

The Merits of Scripture Memory

The general value of Scripture memorization

How does memorizing Scripture benefit me?

1. "It beats sleeping pills."
2. "It provides a quick knockout to Satan"—Matt. 4:1-11.
3. "It gives fresh ideas."
4. "It slowly molds a right mindset."
5. "It gives great joy to the heart."
6. "It has a spillover effect into other areas of discipline."
7. "It cleans out the cranial cobwebs."

Discussion Questions:

1. Which of the above seven benefits of memorizing Scripture do you feel you need to realize the most?
2. What passage or verse have you memorized that has helped you experience one of the benefits? Share it and explain which one.

More specifically, let's see how memorizing Scripture has value in particular areas in our lives. We see:

The Growth of Scripture Memory

There are 11 ways we can specifically grow and mature spiritually through Scripture memory.

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1. It increases our faith—Rom. 10:17.
2. It enables victory over sin—Ps. 119:11.
3. It produces inner cleansing—John 15:3.
4. It gives guidance—Ps. 119:24,104,105.
5. It gives direction to prayer—John 15:7.
6. It stimulates Bible Study.
7. It enlivens worship—Col. 3:16.
8. It supports good counseling—Is. 50:4.
9. It encourages witnessing—Col. 4:6.
10. It enables good teaching—Col. 3:16b.
11. It is necessary for meditation—Ps. 119:97.

Application Questions:

1. Which of the above benefits of Scripture memory are most important to you and why? Which are the least important?
2. Can you remember a time recently when Scripture memory helped you? Share the experience and the verse, if possible.