

WHY MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 2 Timothy 3:16, NIV

How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. Psalm 119:9, NIV

Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Deuteronomy 11:18, NIV

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. Psalm 1:1-3, NIV

So Why Memorize Scripture?

1. Jesus memorized Scripture

Jesus quoted the Old Testament frequently in His life and ministry. He quoted from 24 different books roughly 180 times! It is clear that He thought of the Scriptures as the ultimate authority in life and a way to understand the heart and desires of God. Why would we not follow Jesus by knowing and trusting Scripture the way he did?

2. We are called to do memorize Scripture

Colossians 3:16, NIV tells us to *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...* Deuteronomy 6:4-9 tells us to bind God's law on our foreheads, teach it to our children, talk about it wherever we go, and make it an integral part of our lives. We must know scripture first before we can teach it or apply it as God desires.

3. Memorizing scripture renews our mind and transforms our life

Are you one of those people who have to write everything down so that you don't forget? God knows that we cannot remember or keep his commands without being reminded of them frequently. This is one reason he told us to renew our minds in the scriptures daily. He already wrote down for us what we need to know! Romans 12:2, NIV says, *Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.* Keeping the truth of Scripture fresh in our minds helps us in the transformational process that God desires.

4. Conformity to Christ

Paul wrote, *And we, . . . reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with every increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.* 2 Corinthians 3:18, NIV. If we would be changed into Christ's likeness we must steadily see him. This happens in the word. *The Lord continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word.*

1 Samuel 3:21, NIV

Bible memorization has the effect of making our gaze on Jesus steadier and clearer.

5. Daily triumph over sin

How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. . . . I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. Psalm 119:9, 11, NIV. Paul said that we must *...by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body...* Romans 8:13, NIV. The one piece of armor used to kill is the *...sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.* Ephesians 6:17, NIV. As sin lures the body into sinful action, we call to mind a Christ-revealing word of scripture and slay the temptation with the superior worth and beauty of Christ over what sin offers. When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness he recited Scripture from memory and put Satan to flight (Matthew 4:1-11).

6. Comfort and counsel for people you love

The times when people need you to give them comfort and counsel do not always coincide with the times you have your Bible handy. Not only that, the very word of God spoken spontaneously from your heart has unusual power. Proverbs 25:11, NIV says, *A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.* That is a beautiful way of saying, when the heart is full of God's love, we can draw on the mind full of God's word and timely blessings will flow from the mouth.

7. Communicating the Gospel to unbelievers

Opportunities to share the gospel come when we do not have the Bible in hand. Actual verses of the Bible have their own penetrating power. And when they come from our heart, as well as from the Book, the witness is given that they are precious enough to learn. We should all be able to sum up the gospel under four main headings (1) God's holiness/law/glory; 2) man's sin/rebellion/disobedience; 3) Christ's death for sinners; 4) the free gift of life by faith. Learn a verse or two relating to each of these, and be ready in season and out of season to share them.

8. Communion with God in the enjoyment of His person and ways

The way we commune with (that is, fellowship with) God is by meditating on his attributes and expressing to him our thanks and admiration and love, and seeking his help to live a life that reflects the value of these attributes. Therefore, storing texts in our minds about God helps us relate to him as he really is. For example, imagine being able to call this to mind through the day:

The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. Psalm 103:8-14, NIV

I used the word “enjoyment” intentionally when I said, “communion with God in the enjoyment of his person and ways.” Most of us are emotionally crippled—all of us, really. We do not experience God in the fullness of our emotional potential. How will that change? One way is to memorize the emotional expressions of the Bible and speak them to the Lord and to each other until they become part of who we are. For example, in Psalm 103:1, we say, “Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise his holy name!” That is not a natural expression for many people. But if we memorize this and other emotional expressions from the Bible, and say them often, asking the Lord to make the emotion real in our hearts, we can actually grow into that emotion and expression. It will become part of who we are. We will be less emotionally crippled and more able to render proper praise and thanks to God.

9. Scripture helps you make wise decisions

I can't count how many times I've asked God for guidance about something very specific, and he has brought a scripture I've memorized back to mind, showing me what to do. The Bible says, *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.* Psalm 119:105, NIV. The more you know what God says, the more you are going to know how God thinks, because the will of God is found in the Word of God. The more you fill your mind with the Word of God, the more you will know the will of God. It strengthens you when you're under stress. We all get stressed from time to time. And the Bible says this, *Remember your word to your servant, for you have given me hope. My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life.* Psalm 119:49-50, NIV. If you will memorize scripture, your stress level will decrease dramatically and your confidence level will increase dramatically.

10. Memorizing Scripture makes us prosper and successful

This promise is shown in Joshua 1:8, NIV, *Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous, and successful.* It is vital to remember that God's definition of being prosperous and successful is far different from the world's definition. This is not a guarantee that we will automatically have everything we want, but promises a spiritual blessing, which is so much greater. Psalm 1 describes a man who delights in the law of the Lord by meditating on it. This leads to prospering and being compared to a tree planted by streams of water that bears fruit.

11. Praying scripture is powerful

Memorizing scripture can allow us to easily pray God's word. Prayer is powerful and scripture is powerful. If you combine them, you have dynamite power. If we memorize a verse, at any time we can use that verse with someone's name (others or ourselves) within the verse and pray it back to God. For example:

Open _____'s eyes and turn him/her from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that he/she may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Jesus. Acts 26:18

May _____ know that You are able to make all grace abound to him/her, so that in all things at all times, having all that _____ needs, he/she will abound in every good work. 2 Corinthians 9:8

Tips for Memorizing Scripture

- Site the number; say the verse and then site the number again – that way you will always know the number for a verse and can recall when needed.
- Choose a modern translation such as NIV. Avoid paraphrases like The Living Bible and The Message.
- Read the passage several times to understand its full meaning. Ask the Holy Spirit for clarity and application.
- Begin committing the passage to memory one verse at a time.
- List the verbs from the passage. Memorize them in order – then add the other words to them.
- In narrative passages, visualize the sequence of events in the story.
- See it happen in your mind.
- Carry scripture memory cards with you for additional study and frequent review (in the car, etc.)
- Strive for word exact memorization so you do not change the meaning God has created through enlightened writings and scholarly translations.
- Practice reciting your passage to a friend.
- Write out the verse in short phrases.
- Begin by memorizing the first two or three words and then build on that.
- Try memorizing the verse in word groups – four, etc.
- Learn songs with scripture in them. It becomes easy to memorize. Hymnals have lots of scriptures in them.
- You could actually use physical movements to help remember – hand, heart, mind, etc.
- For those who have the gift of creativity or craftsmanship, try scripture art. That is where you meditate on the scriptures and memorize it while you draw and write the words.
- Tell yourself you can do this, scripture memory – make it a positive activity!!

Works Cited

Piper, John. "Why Memorize Scripture?" *Desiring God*. N.p., 05 Sept. 2006. Web. 02 May 2017. <<http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/why-memorize-scripture>>.