

Memorization Priority

by A.W. Tozer

While memorization has its value, it's essential to balance it with independent thought and exploration to achieve true spiritual growth.

Scripture: Psalm 119:11, Proverbs 4:7, Philippians 4:8, Colossians 3:16, 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Memorization"

Description

A.W. Tozer emphasizes the importance of prioritizing memorization of Scripture and great hymns over excessive rote learning of texts, which can stifle independent thought. He argues that in a world overflowing with literature, true education comes from engaging with ideas that inspire personal exploration rather than merely memorizing words. Tozer shares his personal approach of memorizing Scripture for meditation and sermon preparation, while also cherishing hymns for their spiritual nourishment. He believes that meaningful engagement with a few profound ideas is far more beneficial than memorizing vast amounts of text without understanding.

Transcript

Certain cultures have stressed memorization to a point where education consists largely in learning by rote a few of the classics. . . .

About this two things may be said: One, that great skill in memorizing is found almost exclusively among peoples where books are scarce and where a certain limited few important classics are about all the reading matter required for an education as understood by those peoples. In the English-speaking world of today we have available not only everything that has ever been written in our mother tongue, but everything that has ever been written in any language, done for us in English translation. In the face of such a mountain of books, memorizing on any wide scale will be seen to be altogether impossible.

The second thing is that excessive memorization kills the impulse to think independent thoughts and makes us into tape recording machines full of other men's words but without a vital idea of our own. It is my considered opinion that a book that has fed a great thought into my mind and inspired me to explore new ideas on my own has done vastly more for me than the book I have memorized from cover to cover.

My own method is to confine my memorization to the Scriptures and the great hymns. I memorize passages of Scripture so I can use them in my sermons and meditate on them as I travel. And I like to store the great hymns in my mind to sing under my breath anywhere under any circumstances at any time.

Further than that I do not give myself too much concern about memorizing.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-tozer/memorization-priority/>

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