

Memorizing Scripture Because You Love Christ

by James Jennings

This sermon emphasizes the importance of storing up the Word of God in our hearts through Scripture memorization. It highlights the benefits of memorizing Scripture, such as encountering Christ daily, being transformed by the renewing of our minds, and having the Holy Spirit prompt verses in times of need. The speaker encourages diligence, perseverance, and a deep love for God's Word, focusing on knowing and loving the God of the Scriptures above all else.

Scripture: Psalm 119:11, Colossians 3:16, John 14:26, 2 Timothy 3:16, Mark 9:7, Proverbs 7:1, Isaiah 55:11, Romans 12:2

Topics: "Scripture Memorization", "Transformation through God's Word"

Description

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Transcript

Let's pray. Let's go before the Lord. Father, Lord, we are in a spiritual war.

I was talking to my brother Prince beforehand about different battle reports, so to speak, from this last week and different things that have happened on the enemy lines. Lord, we're looking for victories in many different areas. Lord, we're looking for strongholds in people's minds to be entirely eradicated and torn down and that the truth would be exalted in their mind.

Lord, I do pray for our brother's sister that You'd do a marvelous work in her heart. Lord, only that You can do. And Lord, we look to You.

We're expecting of You. Lord, we read in Thy Word. Lord, not just of how Thy people once were stirred.

Lord, we read that. But we read in Thy Word how Thy people went forth and in Your name, they even cast out demons in Your name. Lord, You did that.

You did a miracle. You put the demoniac, even You Yourself, You put him in his right mind. And Lord, we're grateful even to be here today to be in our right mind.

Lord, that is Your absolute mercy that You've not taken away our reasoning like You did Nebuchadnezzar because of his pride. But Lord, You have us here. And Lord, we just pray, our time being this gathering today, Lord, we look to You.

And the message I'm about to give, Lord, in the singing and the praying and the Lord's Supper and the baptism and Lord and Craig's sermon later. Father, You know how Craig has had different sickness, Lord, these last few days. And Lord, that doesn't so much discourage me, it encourages me because Your Word talks about You making men weak.

Even hearing from Ken how at the Puritan conference, Jeff Thomas had laryngitis. And Lord, what a sickness to have for a preacher. And yet, Lord, in the end, You do as You do, You help.

Lord, You help us in our weakness. Your power, it is made perfect. Made perfect in our weakness.

Lord, help us to be more content like Paul with being utterly weak and cast upon You. And Lord, I also just want to pray for the children in the back. Lord, I don't know who's teaching them today, but Lord, those precious souls, Lord, we long to see them follow You.

Lord, as many already have, Lord, they're by faith turning to You. Lord, and we're grateful for that. And Lord, I just pray You'd be in their time as well.

And so Father, we just commit this day to You, this message to You. Lord, our eyes are upon You and we ask for Your help from above. In Christ's name, Amen.

Alright, let me ask a question. Some of you are already going to know the answer to this question. Because I told those in the Exemplary Husband chat what I was going to speak on.

But I want to ask this question because it will get you thinking, and obviously, I'm going to talk about something spiritual. But the question's going to sound like I'm thinking of something physical this morning, and I'm not. I'm not, obviously.

But does anyone have a specific resource that you're actively storing up? You're accumulating and reserving this resource for use at another time. You even delight in it. And so you collect more of it daily.

Kind of like the person doing antique shopping. They run into some antique and it just has such an appeal, such an impact, they buy that. They say there's value in this.

I can enjoy this at a later point. Now, I'd argue every one of us should have something in our lives that we are constantly accumulating and adding to our collection. And what do you think that might be? Say again? Shoes? No, no, no.

The Bible does talk about feet. How blessed are the feet that carry good news. But no, please don't buy any more shoes.

Okay. I think your wife heard that. You want to say it one more time to make sure she got it? No, I want to think about memorizing Scripture.

That's what I want to think about. Well, you've not been a Christian long before you've already started to collect certain verses. And they have become something to you.

They have made an impact upon your life. And so, there's many places I could go, but let's go to Psalm 119. Psalm 119.

Which in Psalm 119, as one brother shared, this is basically an extended, full-blown, extravagant praise to God for one thing. His holy Scriptures. And out of 176 verses, about 171 of these verses refer in one way or another to the Scriptures.

It uses eight different words. Law is used 25 times. Word is 24 times.

Rules or ordinance is 23 times. Testimony is 23. Commandment is 22.

Statutes, precepts, promises. You've got about 171 references to the Word of God. And ultimately, the Word of God contains the mind of God.

It's all about understanding the mind of God. Even as Chad dealt with last Sunday. About us as Christians understanding the character of God, who He is.

We want to know who the Lord is. And He's given us His Word by which we can know who He is. And so we're not going to read the whole chapter.

And I'm not going to recite the whole chapter. I wish I could, but I can't. David Livingston at nine years of age, he recited all of Psalm 119.

He had memorized that as a nine-year-old child. And thankfully, he went on to not just memorize it, but he went and lived it out. And so that's important.

But let's just read maybe the first two sections of this psalm. And again, this is not necessarily a psalm of David. We don't know that for certain.

A lot of people refer to that as being something David wrote. Very well might be. But I'm going to say the psalmist says these things.

Verse one, blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong, but walk in His ways. You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently.

Oh, that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes. Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments. I will praise you with an upright heart when I learn your righteous rules.

Verse eight, I will keep your statutes. Do not utterly forsake Me. Beth.

Verse nine, how can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding his way according to your Word. With my whole heart I seek You. Let me not wander from Your commandments.

Listen to verse 11. I have stored up Your Word. And where did he store it up? In my heart.

And then he has a purpose statement. That, and what was his reason? That I may not sin against You. Verse 12, Blessed are You, O Lord, teach me Your statutes.

With my lips I declare all the rules of Your mouth. In the way of Your testimonies, I delight as much as in all riches. I will meditate on Your precepts.

I will fix my eyes on Your ways. I will delight in Your statutes. I will not forget Your Word.

We can stop there. Maybe read verse 18. This is an important one to know.

Even when you go to the Word, open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Your law. So notice the psalmist here, whether this is David or not, the psalmist had a perspective of having a certain activity in his life. And that activity, he describes it as, and maybe activity is a bad word to use.

It could be something different. But he describes it in verse 11, I have stored up Your Word in my heart. It doesn't necessarily say in his mind.

There's something in the heart. It's being applied to his heart. You can see that as you read the whole psalm.

It's having an impact on his life. I've stored up Your Word in my heart that I might not sin against the stored. What's the word stored? What do you think about when you think of the word stored? It's the idea you hid, you concealed it.

It's something no one necessarily can see. He's referring to an internal storage container, the heart, where he's storing up the Word, the Scriptures of the Lord. And I would say in other words, he's saying I've memorized the Word of God.

I have memorized the words of the Lord and what He has said. And I've got that here in my heart. It's in me.

I've memorized it. It's not just in my head. It's applied to my heart.

When you think about memorization, it's trying to remember something, right? Remember something. And notice what he says in verse 16. I will delight in Your statutes.

I will what? I will not forget Your Word. To memorize something, it's to have it there stored where you're not forgetting it. It's something that can be accessed as a Christian and applied to your heart and to help you in different situations.

And even Jesus in the New Testament when He spoke to His disciples, He said in John 16, I've said these things to you that when your hour comes, you may remember what I told you. Christ wants us remembering what He has said. The psalmist is actively engaged in storing up what the Lord has said internally in his heart.

And then James 1.25 talks about being a doer of the Word, not a hearer only. The hearer does what? Forgets. Right? He forgets.

And so we can be a very forgetful people at different points. And this psalmist, he says in verse 14, in the ways of your testimonies I delight. And so there's something about this activity of storing up the Word in

his heart, it's a delight.

I mean, he delights in it as much as in all riches. So you think about that rich man who's just wanting to obtain the next dollar, the next increase, the next percentage of interest from some investment. This guy's like that in the spiritual realm.

He's wanting the next investment he can get from the very Word of God. And he looks at it as equivalent to obtaining rich gold items and having them all over his home. But these rich items are truths of God that are stored up in his heart.

Isn't that how it is? There's some people, you go in their heart, you see their heart, and it's like walking in a mansion. I mean, you're just amazed. All the spiritual insight and the hidden riches of Christ.

That when you look at them on a surface level, you have no idea what's inside of their soul. What's inside of their heart. But the more you get to know them, it's just flooding with truth of who the Lord is and appreciation for Christ.

Why store up the Word in his heart? What was his purpose? And too many people just quote the first part. Right? Some of you did it right there. The purpose is not that I might not sin.

That is part of it. The most important part of the purpose is the last part. What is the last part? Against Him.

Against the Lord. So this is a statement you want to present in another way. In other words, he is saying what? I'm hiding the Word.

I'm storing up the Word in my heart because I am jealous about what? My intimate relationship with the Lord. You see, this is about his relationship with the Lord. He doesn't want to sin against a person.

It's not just he doesn't want to sin. There are people who don't want to sin. This person has a reason why he doesn't want to sin.

He doesn't want to grieve the One whom he loves. You see, there's a distinction there. And so we get even a motivation here.

We get a motivation. The motivation to store up the Word in his heart is not wanting to sin in his heart against the Lord. So his relationship with the Lord is the motivating factor to store up the truth.

He realizes as I memorize the truth and I understand who the Lord is and what He requires of me, that's going to help me maintain a closer walk with this Person whom I love who has loved me. So his primary concern is not about having more knowledge. It's not just about being moral.

It's about not offending one whom he loves. He realizes there is truth that in a time of temptation can be incredibly helpful to help him not sin against the One he loves. And he's thinking about sin in what level? What level? He's thinking about some external, physical action.

I've stored up Your Word in my heart that I might not sin against You. I think it's implied there. Yeah, he could be talking about not going and outwardly being angry.

But what's the psalmist thinking? He's thinking on a deeper level. He's thinking on the heart. Sin in the heart, right? I've stored up the Word in my heart that I might not fall into adultery of the heart.

Because Jesus says if anyone looks at a woman with lust, he has committed adultery in his heart. He's thinking on a deeper level than just some external reaction that is sinful. So you can see, this resource, the knowledge of God, the Word of God, actually helps this person here not sin against the Lord.

And it's helping them in their walk with the Lord. They delight in this person. They delight in His truths.

They don't want to forget His truths. So as I started with the question, are any of you actively storing up a specific resource in your life? I hope you can say, this is a resource you're trying to store up. When's the last time you've logged on, so to speak, and made an investment in memorizing something from this book? So I hope as I share some different things here, the hope is to motivate you not just to memorize Scripture, but to read Scripture, to know Scripture, to be in your Bibles.

Matthew Henry said this, God's Word is a treasure. It's a treasure worth laying up. And there is no laying it up safely but in our hearts.

If we have it only in our houses or in our hands, enemies may take it from us. If only in our heads, our memories may fail us. But if our hearts be delivered into the mold of it, and the impressions of it remain on our souls, it is safe.

And this is what needs to happen. You don't just memorize something and it's in the head, but it impacts the heart. You can tell, that's what the psalmist... He had some situation where he was prevented from sinning because he had stored up some truth about God.

I mean, haven't you experienced that? And what happens with that truth? That truth becomes all the more of an intimate friend for you. Now, who's someone else who the same Word in the Hebrew who's stored, or it's rendered, treasured up the Word of God? Who else in the Old Testament can you think of that describes them specifically? Anyone? Say again. Joseph? I don't know.

There might be a verse on Joseph. I'm not absolutely certain. Job.

Turn to Job. Job. Job used this word.

I want you to realize something. I'm trying to show you why you should want to memorize Scripture and be in the Word and treasure it. If you remember, Job is a man who is enduring a great trial, the loss of his children, property, health.

And we often focus on that. We even hear the Lord commend him as the most blameless man on all the earth. Well, what was practically going on in this man's life? For him to have such a commendation and for him to respond in the trial the way he did.

What was he doing before he got in the trial? What was he doing while he was in the trial? Job 23. Job 23. It's very interesting.

Job 23. And even look at his perspective in v. 10. This is incredible.

You're going to wonder, how does a guy think like this in such a severe trial? We're going to find out a few verses later. V. 10, he knows the way I take. When He has tried me, I shall come out as gold.

That's amazing. A guy's looking at a severe trial, losing all his children, his business, all of his suffering, and he realizes he's being tried and he's going to come out as gold. That's incredible.

V. 11, my foot has held fast to His steps. I've kept His way. I've not turned aside.

Then look at v. 12. I have not departed from the commandments of His lips. I have treasured.

And that word treasured is the same word from Psalm 119 in the original language as stored. I have stored the words of His mouth more than my portion of food. And then he even has a conclusion here.

But He is unchangeable and who can turn Him back? What He desires that He does. Isn't that amazing? He gives an incredible statement on the sovereignty of God right after He talks about treasuring the Word of God. Because you treasure the Word of God.

You see the truth of the sovereignty of God. And you can be in the midst of a trial and realize, wow, I'm being tried, but I'm going to end up like gold. And while God does as He desires, the fact He treasured the Word prior to even entering into this trial, it wasn't just that it made Him one of the most blameless men.

Not one of. The most blameless man in all the earth. That was God's perspective, right? That was not Job saying, I'm the most blameless guy.

But this is a massive factor behind how he responds. Though not perfectly, but he responds in an incredible way. Job was already storing up the Word prior to going into the trial.

And while in the trial, he did not forget the Word he had stored up, but it was actually used to impact his soul while he was in the midst of the trial. You see, imagine, let's take all the knowledge of God that Job had and strip that from him. How would he have been in the trial? What would have happened? I'll tell you, it wouldn't have been the same outcome.

It would not have been the same outcome. He was who he was because he was a man who treasured the Word and the truth of God. He was able to view his suffering in this way because he had treasured whatever the words of the Lord he had back then.

And what did Job even have? He talks about treasuring these things. What is that even referring to? He did not have a lot of what we've got right here. And yet here, that was enough.

We heard last week how much there's actually in the book of Genesis, right? You see Christ all over Genesis. Moses wrote of Me. There is so much more.

Imagine how diligent they would be trying to study whatever they had back then to get fed from the Word of God. Yet we in so many ways with the New Testament have so many hints and allusions that they did not have to understand what was written by Moses. Job uses this imagery here.

Verse 12, I've treasured the words of His mouth more than my portion of food. And you guys know, I trust the reality of the physical appetite we can have for food. The longing to fill that inner ache in the stomach after a long day of work or after not having eaten much.

And Job says what he stored up, he was more excited about that truth from God than he was about physical food. That's the type of appetite we want to have for the things of the Lord. Jesus said, I have food to eat that you do not know of.

There's some reality that us Christians are feasting on the Word of God and on the will of God and it's satisfying our souls even if we've not had physical food all day long. There's some sense of contentment

and your needs have been met from the Lord. Let's go back to Psalm 119.

But you see here, there's two men, two individuals here who their lives are marked by storing up the commandments, the Word, the Scriptures, what the Lord has spoken internally inside of them. And one says he delights in it more than riches. The other says he delights in it more than his portion of food.

And so they use some illustration to make it really clear in the physical realm that look, that guy just wants to get food. That guy just wants to get riches. No, no, no.

I'm like that in a more extreme way to get this. So that's something to imitate. Again, you all know Psalm 119.

How can a young man keep his way pure? So many people, they want purity in their life. And here he gives a simple answer here by guarding the way, the path he's on according to the Word. It's no mystery.

Those who are walking in purity, those who are having clear consciences, you go look at their life, what do you find them doing? Taking time to consistently be in the Word of God, to meditate on the Word of God, and even seeking to memorize and store up certain promises in the Scriptures. And no wonder, they're equipped for battle when the fiery darts of the enemy start getting hurled upon them. They know the Word of God.

In contrast, Proverbs 7, Proverbs 7, this has always struck me. Proverbs 7. He says here, I have seen among the simple, and he just talked about in v. 1, treasuring up My commandments with you, binding them on your fingers, writing them on the tablet of your heart, calling wisdom your intimate friend. Then he even says what this is going to do from the forbidden woman, from the adulterous woman with her smooth words.

And then he describes looking out the window. And look at v. 7. I've seen among the simple, I've perceived among the youths, a young man, and what's his problem? He's lacking sense. Where do you ultimately get good sense? Where do you ultimately get wisdom and knowledge? The Word of God.

And that causes you to have a right fear of God. So I feel fine restating that as I saw a young man who never really took diligent time to be in the Word of God, and he was on his phone more than he was in the Word of God. And literally, I don't know about you, like my phone right here, it has this thing called Digital Well-Being.

I guess it's built into an Android phone. And it mentions, I've been on my phone 23 minutes today, and it says exactly what I've been doing. Signal, Bible memory, Other, YouTube.

Oh, that was hearing songs on the way to the meeting. But you look at that 23 minutes, right? 23 minutes. You can do a lot in 23 minutes.

There's people who've memorized entire books of the Bible and you ask them how much time they spend a day, you know how much they'll say? But the Word, treasuring it, it's all over here. Spurgeon said, no one ever outgrows Scripture. The Book widens and deepens with our years.

And brethren, we've got it in our hands, right? Did Josiah have the Word of God in his hands? What did Josiah have? What was Josiah's real exposure to the Word of God? How did that come about? You guys need to go read about Josiah. Yeah, they found it. They're looking for something else.

Basically digging in the closet and they found the scroll. And then he goes and reads that, tears his clothes and you have one of the greatest revivals that ever happened in the Scriptures. What led to that revival? What led to everything Josiah did? Being confronted with, thus saith the Lord.

And it shouldn't have been the case for him because in Deuteronomy 17, it talks about, and maybe even if you haven't seen this verse, just read this. Deuteronomy 17. Was it 17-18? Listen to this.

This is incredible. It talks about laws concerning Israel's kings. And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, verse 18, you know, you become king.

What's the first thing they're going to do? Take you on your chariot ride and go look around at all the kingdom and see everything you've got? When he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law approved by the Levitical priest, and it shall be with him. And he shall read it all the days of his life. Why? Purpose that he may learn to fear the Lord his God.

And what's an evidence you fear the Lord your God? He gives us a clear answer. You keep all the words of the law. If you don't keep what God has said, then you don't fear God.

And these statutes and doing them, verse 20, so he's actively reading the Word, he's obeying the Word, he's doing the Word, and what happens? Verse 20, that his heart might not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue on in his kingdom, he and his children, and Israel. Isn't it amazing how directly connected to being in the Word of God is a man remaining humble? But if he's not doing the Word, he doesn't make that connection. You're in the Word, then you're doing the Word, and then there's going to be a sense of being humbled by the Word of God.

The heart doesn't get lifted up. It's like the Word just crushes pride in us. But brethren, we didn't have to dig through a closet to get a scroll.

And we don't have a scroll. We've got a nicely printed Bible that I can put in a case and I can zip it up and I can hold it and the case takes a beating and I've got my own copy and I've got like ten copies of it. I mean, we are in a wealth in our generation that has rarely been seen before.

Look, before you think about memorizing and storing up the Word through memorization, just think about reading the Bible. Have you read the entire Bible? Have you read all of the Scriptures? Have you read everything that is there? That's the start, right? Think of it this way, you've been introduced to this incredible store. This store has incredible riches that show you who God is.

Well, the thing to do isn't just to go in the store and right away get stuck in one aisle. And you're just stuck in the Isle of Matthew and all you're doing is just sitting there for two years. No, you want to go through everything there and get a whole reality of all 66 aisles, and then after that, you might pick one.

And you're really going to get to know that, a certain section in there. And then you're going to move on to another section. All the while, you're constantly surveying all 66 aisles.

You're wanting to have an overall knowledge of what is there in the whole Word of God. And you might not be intentionally memorizing anything, but you leave with a sense of what God has said as a whole that's going to be far better than, well, I went and memorized one chapter here, but I don't understand the whole big picture and I don't rightly interpret the Word of God. Yeah, don't miss out on the Old Testament.

I mean, we saw that last Sunday. There's a lot there in the Old Testament. You don't want to miss out.

Remember Bob in his sermon at the Fellowship Conference on Colossians 3, on memorizing Scripture, on being rich in the Word of God. He made the comment, he said, imagine a husband who's been gone for a while. Say he's gone to war and he's been writing his wife letters.

Then he gets home and he finds out his wife never had time to get through the whole letter. She never read through all of it. And we should feel that.

If we love the Lord, like this psalmist who said the reason that he's storing up the Word in his heart is he does not want to sin against a person. This is about his relationship with a person. It's not about knowledge.

It's not about facts. It's about knowing the Lord and not grieving Him. And we should feel that reality.

Daniel Smith in his biography, he said, once in India, I had been invited to have dinner with a group of Church of England missionaries. After dinner, a missionary nurse asked if I would take her place in leading devotions. She offered to read a portion if I would comment.

This I gladly assented to do. She asked, what would you like me to read? This is a person who's a Church of England missionary. I replied, oh, I suppose you read the last few verses in the book of Habakkuk.

She said, Habakkuk? And she looked at me as I was speaking in a foreign tongue. Who's he? May I read something from the book of John? Isn't that pathetic? You've got someone over there saying they're a missionary and they get asked to read a certain book in the Bible and they don't even know the book is in the Bible. That's not familiarity with the Word of the Lord.

If you're a new Christian and you don't know what Habakkuk is, that's fine. You're going to get to that aisle and you're going to be able to get introduced to all the nice riches that are there even though some of them are on the top shelf and they're harder to get to. It makes you think about Hebrews 5. By this time, you ought to be teachers.

You could in some way say by this time, you ought to have read the whole Bible. You've ought to have had time to really read the Scriptures. I remember coming to this church and there was a Tuesday Bible study and Tim looked out and he said, who here has read the whole Bible? And he said, raise your hands.

I couldn't raise my hand. Most of the guys there couldn't raise their hand. But that wasn't public shaming 101.

It was trying to motivate you. Go home and get in this book. Not as some public thing.

Not as something to check a box that you've read the whole Bible, but know God. George Mueller of Bristol, he read the whole Bible four times every year for a massive season of his life. You want to be familiar with the Scriptures.

That's what we're thinking about. That's far more important than just memorizing the chapter. Be familiar with the Word of the Lord.

The Welsh revivalist, Daniel, not revivalist, the Welsh man Daniel Rowland who saw a God-sent revival, it was said of him, the Word of God so mastered his attention that many years later, his son could affirm that

he knew almost the whole Bible as the expression is by heart. So that hardly a passage could be mentioned to him that he could not tell the chapter and verse where it was to be found. The Scriptures were no doubt the principal materials of his meditation.

His library contained very few books. What, this great man of God? He had few books in the library. Look, books can be helpful, but they can be very much wearisome, Ecclesiastes says, but this one book, don't get weary of it.

So we've got food to eat. We've got food to store up in our hearts. Now, does the Bible command us to memorize Scripture? Where does it command us? We see from Job, it's implied this is something you should do.

We see from Psalm 119, this is something we should do. I mean, you want to imitate these people, right? But is there anywhere where it states it in a way where it's like a command? He's saying to do it. We actually read, I think we read one of the verses, what Earl, don't turn there, but Proverbs 7 talks about writing it on your heart.

I mean, he's telling his son to write these things on the heart. He's putting it in such strong terms to him there. But go to Colossians, Colossians 3.16. He had just said in verse 15, let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body and be thankful.

And then he makes this statement. He's telling these believers at Colossae, let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. And this is the goal.

You want the Word of Christ to dwell in you richly. And what's the Word of Christ doing to you as it dwells in you? It's teaching and admonishing one another so it's doing that to you and you're going and doing that to others. You're able to teach and admonish someone who's weary here today from the Word because you know the Word.

And you're even able to sing the Word, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your heart to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. I mean, are you letting the Word of Christ dwell richly in you? Is it rich? Or is there a couple pieces of gold specks in there? Is that a goal? I want this to be rich.

I want to write it on my heart. I want to have it bound on my finger where I can look in the midst of a trial and I've got these different promises that are right before me like a gold ring. And bam, there it is.

God helps me in the midst of this trial, in the midst of this temptation. I'm guarding my way according to the Word of God. The one book, the book God's given us, the truth that's here, it's not just in the head, it's affected the heart.

It says in Joshua, the book of the law shall not depart from your mouth. You shall meditate on it day and night. We're called to meditate on the Word of God.

I mean, if we're a soldier, shouldn't we have a ready sword? Shouldn't be ready for the battle? Ephesians 6, the sword of the Spirit. What is it? It's the Word of God. It's the Word of God.

Is that sword ready to fight the lies of the enemy? Colossians 2, or not Colossians, but 2 Corinthians 10, we destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God. We take every

thought captive to obey Christ. I mean, that's something we're engaged in as Christians.

People, they say something, and you're processing it through the Word of God, and you realize that thought is not according to God. And you know what you do? You take out the sword, the Word of God, and you destroy that thought, right? And then you present them with that which is true. You're replacing that thought with that which is truth.

That's so much even what's happening in missions. When you go into a foreign land, people don't know who God is. They have some perception of Christianity, of the Lord.

They don't know that. There's all this combat happening, destroying lies and giving them truth. And how are you going to do that if you don't know the Word? 2 Timothy, all Scripture is breathed out by God.

It's profitable for teaching, reproof for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. Let me read something. I think I shared this before, but it's been very challenging to me.

This is written by Justin Poitras. He wrote this about his father. Listen to this.

Vern Poitras is a godly man. Seeing as my father has not been one to maintain an extensive social circle, it is within a man's private life in the refuge of recreation in those unseen hours where his character is most laid bare. And so it is there that I wish to speak on behalf of his differentness.

One of the first areas where I encountered this different godliness was in his Bible knowledge. Every seminary professor or man in ministry knows his Bible, or at least would like to appear to know his Bible. So such a statement can seem a truism.

Yet my exposure to this reality was more organic and thus made a stronger impression. We did morning and evening devotions as a family. And I knew my father read his Bible in the morning.

But I also remember other occasions such as Saturday afternoons or evenings or during vacation times hearing of all things a sanctified hissing noise. The noise would come from his bedroom. The door was slightly ajar, and I discerned the cause of the hissing to be my father's voice as he read the Bible to himself at a volume just above a whisper.

The result, audible to someone outside the room, was a series of sounds echoing faintly in the hallway. When I peeked in, he would seem sometimes raise his eyes and offer the faintest smile before returning to the Scripture. He was always willing to be disturbed.

But if left alone, he would proceed for long durations reading large chunks in his setting. It is within a man's private life in the refuge of recreation in those unseen hours where his character is most laid bare. Slowly, as I grew in my own Bible education, I became aware that my dad could serve as a Bible encyclopedia.

And not just to answer questions about any and every theological term or church structures or clarifying how to interpret a tricky passage. He knew where every story or doctrine was in the Bible. I still remember being stunned at about the age of 10 when my mother revealed to me that you could quote or read any section from the Bible, and my dad would be able to tell exactly what chapter and verse it came from.

Naturally, I had to test this a few times and soon discovered that my dad, indeed, had mastered this neat little party trick, though I saw a little more value to it than that at the time. Vern Poitras was eating his lunch in the Mason dining hall by himself, and a man observed my father was whispering over a Bible. What are you doing? My dad said, I'm memorizing the book of Habakkuk.

It's interesting because I referred to Habakkuk earlier. This guy's memorizing Habakkuk. Why Habakkuk? You know what Vern's answer was? Because it's the next one.

There's not much one can say after a response like that. Eventually, I was able to goad out of my dad more precisely how much of the Bible he had memorized. He had memorized the entire New Testament, the whole book of Psalms, the second half of Isaiah, Ecclesiastes, the Son of Solomon, all the minor prophets, Ruth and other select portions of the Old Testament narrative.

That comes to around half of the Bible, at least as far as direct memorization is concerned. I then discovered that in order to keep it from fading, he tries to make a daily practice to review six chapters of memorized material in addition to his daily review of Hebrew vocabulary flashcards. So when Dr. Poitras gives his plug each year in his hermeneutics class for really knowing your Bible, and during sermon preparation, memorizing the passage, which I failed to memorize Psalm 119, I'm sorry, because that was my sermon text.

He says this, it's not empty counsel, though he'd never willingly give his credentials. It's always been challenging me seeing what Vern has done in knowing the Word of God, and even how it wasn't like this is some public thing. Eventually, his son is the one who made this more well known.

And if you're aging, you might hear this and think that's impossible. If you're young, you might hear that and think, wow, I really need to get diligent now. If you're young, that's a right thought.

You should get motivated now. And if you're old, that's a wrong thought. Don't get discouraged.

Don't be discouraged. Bob Jennings, he said, you know, students, I mean, think of how, why is it the student can go to college and all of a sudden, he's in a whole different gear. He's plowing, he's studying.

I mean, in every idle moment, he's studying his books. You get up from the dinner table, you go back to the books. Why is it that we study the books that men have written so diligently? And when it comes to the Word of God, we're so lazy, so casual.

It's not right. It doesn't make any sense. I mean, you think of that.

You think of whatever, those of you who've gone to college, and let's say you're studying nursing or engineering. I mean, think of all the time invested in having that knowledge. Does that in any way compare to the time invested in having the knowledge from this good book? And this is what's going to last.

This might not put bread on the table. It actually will because it'll encourage you to trust the living God who will put bread on your table. But you know what it is going to do? It's going to put spiritual bread in your soul.

It's going to keep you from sin. It's going to help you know who this God is from the Word. We've got about 14 minutes left.

What is an example of Scripture memory being used in the Bible? Who do you think of who quoted Scripture? Who had it stored up in their heart to the point where it just overflowed off of them? Yeah, Peter? Stephen? I mean, Stephen says a lot in Acts. I don't get the sense, you know, he's flipping around. I mean, it was there.

Here an encouraging thing about Stephen is, was Stephen directly quoting verses? Like word for word? Or what was he in general doing? He's paraphrasing and pulling it all together. See what I'm saying? And that's really the essential. Look, whether you get something word perfect or not, if you just pull out what's there and understand what it meant in its context, that's what he's doing.

He's taking the Word and he's putting it out in that way. And obviously, Christ. I mean, you could say, well, Christ is the Word.

How could it be that He would? But he quoted from Deuteronomy in the midst of his temptations. And Jerry Bridges, he makes this wonderful comment. Christ used specific Scriptures to thwart temptations.

It should be instructive to us. He brought particular passages from the Old Testament to bear on a particular temptation He faced. So I encourage you to memorize Scriptures that deal with the particular temptations to which you are especially vulnerable.

Then ask the Holy Spirit to bring these passages to your mind at the time of temptation. John, he says, I write to you, young men, because you're strong. What made them strong? And the Word of God abides in you.

What'd that lead to? And you have overcome the evil one. You rip out, the Word of God abides in you. They ain't strong and they don't overcome the evil one.

Darlene Rose, she was a missionary who was captured by the Japanese in World War II. She spent four years in a prison camp. They took her Bible away.

As a child and a young person, I had a driving compulsion to memorize the written Word. In the cell, I was grateful now for those days of vacation Bible school when I had memorized many single verses, complete chapters and psalms, as well as whole books of the Bible. I don't know if she's saying all that happened in VBS or not, but if that did, we've got to higher our expectations.

Nothing wrong with what the kids memorized, but in the years that followed, I reviewed the Scriptures often. The Lord fed me with the living bread that had been stored against the day when fresh supply was cut off by the loss of my Bible. He brought daily comfort and encouragement, yes, and joy to my heart through the knowledge of the Word.

I had never needed the Scriptures more than in those months on death row. But since so much of His Word was there in my heart, it was not the punishment that they had anticipated it would be to me when they took away my Bible. Incredible.

Another thing, I encourage you, if you really want to be motivated to memorize the Word of God, look up John Piper's multiple messages on memorizing the Scriptures. In one, he gives eight reasons. Eight reasons, and I'm not going to go through those.

We're short on time and I want to say a few more things. But, brethren, I don't know what your excuses are for not memorizing the Word of God. The classic one is I don't have a good memory.

And there's two examples that stand out to me. Number one was a time Paul Washer was speaking and he said he was on a hunting trip with David Miller. David Miller was in a car wreck, paralyzed.

He's a preacher from a wheelchair. And they were putting wood in the fire and David was quoting Scripture. And Paul said to David, he said, oh, I wish I had a memory like yours.

You know what David Miller said to Paul? He said, no, brother, I just try harder than you. And to me, that's the truth of the matter. Some of you know of a brother who'd been in our church who memorized almost all the epistles.

I lived with him. People said he had a photographic memory and all of that. You know what I saw? I saw every day he was in the room for 30 minutes with a Bible open.

I didn't see other guys doing the same thing. To me, it wasn't a great mystery he had what he had recorded. And if you put the time that he did into memorizing, you would come away memorizing almost the same as he did.

And you know how I know that? Because I did that. I figured I'm going to memorize a book of the Bible in a month like he is doing. And I put my mind to it and I was able to memorize 46 verses from the book of Titus.

And I realized this isn't that difficult. It's just a matter of consistent time. I'm not saying there aren't people who have a God-gifted ability, but God forbid we use that as some excuse.

You know, I'm too old. It takes too much time. If it takes too much time, that reveals what your priorities are.

Or this excuse, I've tried before and failed. Look, I've tried before and failed. I've tried to reinvigorate my soul to memorize the Word of God and store it in my heart.

Just because you failed and you ended up being inconsistent and getting distracted and being lazy, or maybe it was the end of that season in God's providence and you had other things you needed to invest your time in. If you did, what's more important than the Word of God? Maybe you couldn't invest as much as you could, but that's not a good reason to not memorize the Word of God. I remember, you know how you don't know a verse? What's something you do when you're trying to think of that verse and you can't remember where it's at? What do you do? You just make a paraphrase into Google.

And then it pops it up. You know what that can create with technology? You never really know what aisle that good food and riches is on. Because you've got this little device.

But that gets ripped away from you. Is it in the heart? You see, that's what we're thinking about. I'm not saying these cannot be great tools.

They absolutely can. The dumbest excuse, though there's validity to it, is it might cause me to be proud. Look, I get it.

You can make Scripture memory and idle. And there are people I know who have done that. And yes, are there lost Jews and atheists who have the whole Old Testament memorized? Who can sit there for three hours in word-perfect quote through the book of Psalms and they're lost and atheists? Yeah, you can go read examples about that.

I realize, you can search the Scriptures because in them you think that you'll find eternal life. Jesus says, you refuse to come to Me that you might have life. But remember my point one from Psalm 119.

I'm storing up the word. It's about you not wanting to sin against a person. It's about your relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ.

What should my expectations be for Scripture memory? Another person, if you go look on the Internet, you're going to run into a man named Andy Davis. And he's memorized 44 books of the Bible. That's out of 66.

And he memorizes a book like Matthew. Then he'll review it for 100 days after he's memorized it and then he'll move on to another book. I listened to an interview of his and he said this.

He said, look, even with Scripture memory, it's all temporary. Because you're working, you're working, working, you get a flawless one day and then Tuesday you can say it perfectly and then a week later you can't. It's just how it is.

That's the nature of our forgetful brains. But I've accepted that I've been at this a long time. I started in 1986.

And I understand what I'm going after. What I'm going after are insights, you know, those aha moments, those encounters with God through the text. Those are the sweetest things of all.

And then the overall sanctifying effort or effect of having Scripture running through your brain constantly. You're being transformed by the renewing of your mind. You see that? I mean, he's realistic.

You know, if you get 44 books of the Bible memorized, I mean, do you know how much work that would take to be able to quote those words perfect on the spot? That's missing the point. If that's the goal, that then becomes the party trick, right? It's amazing in John 14, but the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things and what will the Spirit do? He will bring to your remembrance all that I've said to you. Isn't that amazing? If you get in the Word of God and you're studying the Word of God and you're memorizing the Word of God, you might not remember that even if you memorized the whole book, but right at that moment, the Spirit of God is able to bring to your remembrance and put that truth in your mind right there in the midst of the temptation, right there in the midst of giving counsel to someone, and it's able to have a massive impact in that situation.

So you get it in the memory, the Spirit of God is able to prompt it to your memory. Andy Davis, he wrote a book called *An Approach to Extended Memorization of Scripture*. If you Google that, Andy Davis, *An Approach to Extended Memorization of Scripture*, you can find the PDF online for free.

He's got a lot of practical helps and ideas in the book that I won't get into right now. Yeah, the one brother who, I have no reason to mention his name, but he memorized a lot of Scripture back in the day. I asked him if he had any reflections on all that time he invested.

He said this, I'm just glad I was able to invest that time while I had it. That really is the truth. When you're young, you're single, you've got the time.

Yet few really commit. And those who commit, they never regret it. It's helped me until today.

One thing I may have changed, if I could go back, was starting at a different book. I started at the book of James because it was small comparatively, and then I went forward. So James and 1 Peter and following are more embedded in my mind since they were the first two books I did.

I may have done better to start with Ephesians or Romans. Like he's saying, the first book he did was so embedded, he maybe should have picked some more selective thing from the steak aisle than something from the bread aisle or something. Yeah, Andy Davis said start with Ephesians because it is amazing how much is there.

Then he said this, the same brother, another word, I've read tons of books in my life as a Christian, and I'm sure the majority of what I've read, I've forgotten. It hasn't benefited me to this day. But all the Scripture I've memorized, I'm sure has benefited me to this day.

I think of Bob's word too, that God just gave us one book. He didn't give us multiple books. He just gave us one book, and we should know it.

Well, we're about out of time. Let me see what else here was worth mentioning. Yeah, Paulos was mighty in the Scriptures.

Want to be mighty in the Word of God. Andy Davis, he said this, he gave this illustration, and I feel like it can hit home on the importance of memorizing Scripture. If you could go back before Google was Google, before Amazon was Amazon, and you had a thousand bucks laying around, and their stocks were dirt cheap, if now you know what you know, would you invest in their stocks? Most likely you would.

If you knew for certain how much those would eventually be worth, you would invest everything you had at that moment if it was a guarantee Apple and Amazon would be worth what they're worth. Brethren, that's what the Word of God is like. It's absolutely the truth to invest yourself in now, and you will not get 20 years down the road and say, oh man, the stock value really dropped.

If anything, it's only going to increase all the more, especially if they take your Bible away from you. So my hope was just to stir you all up. We want to let the Word of Christ dwell richly in us.

We want to be people who are storing up the Word of God in our hearts that we might not sin against a person whom we love who's given us one book. And Andy Davis, he said this, I guess my gift is perseverance. That I just didn't give up.

I just kept working at it. But for me, what enabled me to do it was along the way, you just love Scripture. And actually, you don't even love Scripture anymore.

You love the God of the Scripture. You love the triune God of the Bible. You love the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

That's what happens. And so it's not about finishing anymore, memorizing something. It's not about achievement.

It's not about telling your friends none of that. It's about an encounter with Jesus Christ today. And then he said in Mark 9, because he's memorizing, going back over Mark 9. It's about encounter with Christ today.

He said, that's what it is. Sorry, it gets me emotional. That's how I fellowship with Christ today.

You get it? That's really the heart of it, brethren. You go reading the Word of God, whether you're trying to intentionally memorize something or not, you get to know who Christ is from this book. And it will change you.

So, again, if you're motivated to memorize Scripture, find a place. Start. Be diligent.

Read Andy Davis' book. You could also Google Memorizing His Word, Precept Austin. We've got a lot of helpful truth there.

And I've shared this before, but Brooks, he makes this incredible quote. Remember, it is not hasty reading, but serious meditating upon holy and heavenly truths that make them prove sweet and profitable to the soul. It is not the bee's touching of the flower which gathers honey, but the bee abiding for a time upon the flower which draws out the sweet.

It is not he who reads the most, but he who meditates most who will prove the choicest, sweetest, wisest, and strongest. Christian. Amen.

Let's pray. Father, Lord, I pray You'd put a holy desire in our hearts and our souls to know Your Word more, that we would just be... Lord, Lord, I want it more in my own life, Father. I can say that I've been the person at times who's gotten motivated and I've launched out and maybe I got a few chapters down in that season and then just, Lord, I did not remain as I ought.

And Lord, so even in studying this, even in reading of Job and the psalmist, Lord, what a motivation, Father, to know Your Word. Even hearing of others who've done it and seen the benefit in their lives. And Lord, the benefit of knowing You more.

Lord, we've seen this on knowing You. And that's really what this is about. It's about storing up the Word in our heart or that we might not sin against You.

Lord, we love You. We want to know You more. Lord, forgive us for whatever apathy or distractions or the things that have not allowed us... Lord, that's wrong.

It's not that they've not allowed us. They've been distractions to prevent us from obeying this call to go to You to let the Word of Christ to enrich us. Lord, we want to be people who can teach and admonish people and just overflow with Scripture.

Lord, it's been said that when we die, we're bleeding, they see Scripture right there just coming out of us. Lord, it's been so internalized. So Lord, we just look to You today.

Help us. In Christ's name, Amen.

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