

## How to Study Pt. 3

# Scripture Memory

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I'm excited that we included Scripture Memory in this series: if we're going to learn and know Scripture, we need to hang on to it.

Think about things you remember: States and Capital, advertising jingles, song lyrics, old phone numbers, foreign languages. The truth is, we DO remember stuff and what we remember matters (except passwords).

Curt Thompson, MD:

"What we consciously focus on, we remember. And what we remember shapes our expected future."

"We believe what we pay attention to."

Scripture memory refers to whatever is in the Bible, whatever translation.

Maybe you have memorized Scripture before, maybe you haven't. Let's explore reasons why you would memorize Scripture:

- It's already right there in your mind when you need it
- It's hard to memorize something if you don't understand it and it's also hard to understand something you don't understand: it aids familiarity
- It's like working a muscle; use it or lose it. Reinforces the important things
- Jesus memorized Scripture. He uses Scripture when he faces temptation.
- It's how God makes himself known
- Scripture shapes us:

### **II Tim 3:16, 17**

**16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God<sup>a</sup> may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

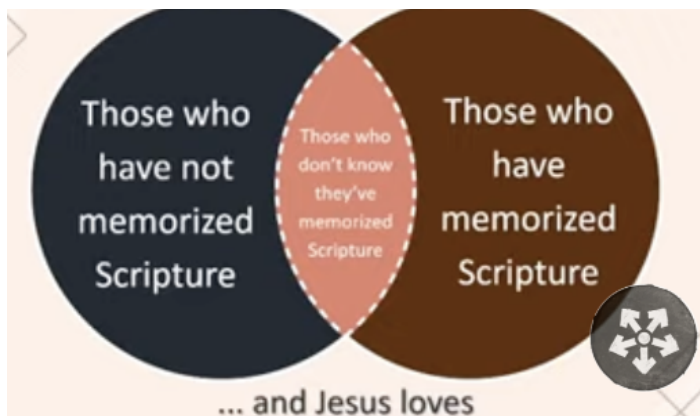
- We can pray well for others using God's words to pray back to him; the Holy Spirit is at work in the words of God.

## Why memorize Scripture?



- It all comes down to this: You each have a heart beating in your chest. It's interesting when people receive heart transplants the can have personality shifts, new preferences and affections, new identity affiliations, and even new memories from the donor! Yes, there are memories stored in the organ itself in cellular memory connected to our heart. God knew this; this is also true of our metaphysical heart as well: the place of our affections, our emotions and our identity. God wants his word in our hearts (it doesn't say in our minds or our brains...we are to know Scripture BY HEART).

## Scripture Memory is for everyone:



Notice that Jesus loves everyone including those who have and haven't memorized Scripture.

And **those who don't know** they have memorized scripture. Here are ways you could have memorized Scripture but don't know it:

- The Lord's Prayer that we say on Sunday mornings
- Songs (The Village has more that 45 songs directly from Scripture). Try to match the lyrics with their references for further memory challenges.
- Stories and parables: David and Goliath, Adam and Eve, Jesus's encounters and parables. Remember them: find them in Scripture, discover why they are important, and lean into them.

Before we go on, we are going to do a corporate Scripture Memory experience. Let's memorize the shortest verse together:

Jesus wept. John 11:35  
*(it's short and thorough).*

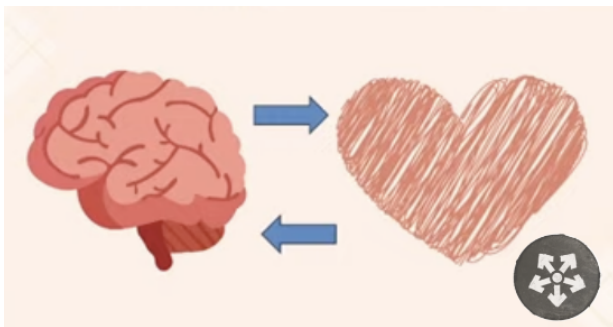
The words are the easiest part of this: it's a whole sentence that makes sense to our brains. The numbers are harder. Even if you just know John 11, you know a lot: you know the verse is from a gospel, it's in the middle of the gospel (Jesus wants us to know this in the middle of the story) Or maybe you just know it's in John somewhere.

This verse tells us something about Jesus: he has a heart, he cares, he grieves, he feels intense emotions. If we read the whole chapter, we find out he wept for a friend who died; maybe he was holding our grief too. The grief of death is a heavy weight and Jesus felt this.

Let's review this again: Jesus wept. John 11:35. ALL of us just memorized Scripture!

We have a lot of options in our culture about what to focus on and how we will use our time. My mother in law says when she grew up, people just memorized the KJV which was the only version people used. People "accidentally" memorized lots of scripture then. From 1935-1990, 36 other translations came out in English: there are now lots of choices. This can be problematic if we memorize with others or re-memorize passages in another (or updated) translation.

Our culture tells us that we don't have to rely on our memories: we are literate and we are independent. All of my experiences of Scripture memory are doing it alone or with one other person. But perhaps we can do some things to make it easier.



We also need our brains to memorize: we need to make choices and review enough to put things into our long-term memory. There is an interaction between the heart and the brain.

### 3 Steps to Memorize:

## Select, Recite, Review

**Select:** What, how, who. This is a decision made and eliminating decision fatigue. Maybe you want to find out the references to all the Bible stories you know. Maybe you want to choose the songs you want to learn. Or maybe you want to use a system like the Navigator's Topical Memory System. Or maybe you want to memorize what God is speaking to you..or the whole chapter or book. What would I like to have available if I were on a desert island?

References can be hard: Putting paragraphs on index cards can create a flow.

When I memorized Ephesians, I would walk around my house muttering to myself. I took the cards in the car and said verses between stop lights.

So let's select something to memorize: Write it down.

**Recite:** Look for repeated words and imagery: create a scaffolding in our brains to create an order.

Aim for word-perfect: we want to get the words exactly right each time. Its like music written on a page: it doesn't change each time we play it.

**Review:** As we review it over and over, it will go from short to long-term memory. When you take a pause and go back to it, you know it better.

This process of **Select, Recite, and Review** is good enough even if you still can't remember things long term. This process alone of pondering verses will change you.

**Isa 59: 10-13.**

“As the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

**10**

As the rain and the snow  
come down from heaven,  
and do not return to it  
without watering the earth  
and making it bud and flourish,  
so that it yields seed for the sower and  
bread for the eater,

**11**

so is my word that goes out from my mouth:  
It will not return to me empty,

but will accomplish what I desire  
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

**12**

You will go out in joy  
and be led forth in peace;  
the mountains and hills  
will burst into song before you,  
and all the trees of the field  
will clap their hands.

**13**

Instead of the thornbush will grow the  
juniper,  
and instead of briers the myrtle will grow.  
This will be for the LORD's renown,  
for an everlasting sign,  
that will endure forever.”

Put God's word in your heart, this will happen to you! I guarantee it.

**Long-term memory,** though, needs review from different angles, new ponderings to let it really sink into our hearts. What is this saying?....now?....to us? Reviewing gradually over time does this.

For those of us who have memorized Scripture, there is **caution tape**: When the Sadducees came to Jesus, they had a ton of Scriptures memorized. They knew Scripture and they tried to trap Jesus.

**Matt 22:29** Jesus said to them in reply, “You are misled because you do not know the scriptures or the power of God.

We can memorize and yet not **know** it.

**I Cor 1:8b-9** knowledge inflates with pride, but love builds up. **2** If anyone supposes he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know

Knowing it in your brain is not enough: be careful what you do in your heart. We need to watch our motives and submit humbly in our hearts and let it re-inform our mind.

**Matt 12: 34** For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

### **Practice time:**

Write this down on the index cards that are being passed out now. Add whatever you want to the card that will help you. Take 3 minutes and get with 1-2 other people and talk about this verse.

**Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.**

**Romans 12:12**

Continue talking about this over lunch!