

Lesson 5: His Word in Us

Intro

In our first lesson we discovered the ten signs of true discipleship in the parable of the Vine and branches. One of these signs was that disciples of Jesus abide with and live according to God's Word. Jesus said: "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you." (John 15:7) God's Word in us; the source of communion with God!



Think about it! What does it mean to have God's Word in us?

God's Word in us means...

To have God's Word in us means that His Word plays a central role in our lives. We regularly read His Word, think and pray about what we read, and live our life according to what it says. But there's one more important aspect of having God's Word in us: learning scripture by heart. In this discipleship course we will go deep into God's Word and memorize a text during each lesson. The goal of this lesson is to explain why it is important to memorize Bible texts and how it can be effectively done.

For some reason memorizing scripture has become old fashioned or passé. But in the past scripture memorization used to play an important role. One of the most important parts of Jewish education was memorizing God's Word. We also know that the Waldensians memorized large portions of the Bible. Ellen White commented:

Quote #1

"These principles they earnestly sought to impress upon the hearts of the young. From earliest childhood the youth were instructed in the scriptures and taught to regard sacredly the claims of the law of God. Copies of the Bible were rare; therefore its precious words were committed to memory. Many were able to repeat large portions of both the Old and the New Testament." (*The Great Controversy*, pg. 67)

Spiritual Giants

No wonder these men, women, children and youth were spiritual giants of God. God's Word was engraved in their hearts and minds and gave them the strength to remain faithful! God is calling people to be filled with the Holy Spirit and used by Him today just as much as He called them in the past. If we look around, we will find many Muslims and Jews memorizing large portions of their Holy books. What about us? How do Adventists handle and treat the Word of God? How much of a role does it play in our lives? It is about time we tap into this powersource and experience God in a new way. Without it, we will never have the revival that we desire to see!

2 Questions

We will answer two questions during this lesson. First, why is it important to learn scripture by memory? (We will actually find 8 biblical reasons.) Second, how can we memorize scripture in such a way that it will be anchored in our memory and never forgotten? Let's start with the first question!

1st Reason Because God said so!

This reason alone should be sufficient. God clearly expressed that we should not only read His word, we should write them on our hearts. Read the following Bible texts and write down the phrases that make this point clear!



Proverbs 7:1-3: _____

Deuteronomy 11:18-19: _____

Quote #2 "Several times each day precious, golden moments should be consecrated to prayer and the study of the Scriptures, if it is only to commit a text to memory, that spiritual life may exist in the soul." (*Last Day Events, pg. 66*)

Quote #3 "God's precious Word ist he standard for youth who would be loyal to the King of heaven. Let them study the Scriptures. Let them commit text after text to memory and acquire a knowledge of what the Lord has said." (*Last Day Events, pg. 67*)

Quote #4 "Hang in memory's hall the precious words of Christ. They are to be valued far above silver or gold." (*Last Day Events, pg. 67*)

Quote #5 "Keep a pocket Bible with you as you work, and improve every opportunity to commit to memory ist precious promises." (*Last Day Events, pg. 67*)

2nd Reason We can love God more when we learn His Word by memory.

When Jesus was asked which commandment was the greatest, He quoted Deuteronomy 6:4-5. This makes this text so important for us. If we want to see the practical application of this passage we must continue reading verses 6-9. What hints do we find here about allowing God's word to be ingrained in us?



Deuteronomy 6:4-9: _____

There is a close connection between the command to love God with all our hearts, soul, and mind and the command to have God's Word ingrained in us. Jesus himself showed the importance of this connection in John 15:7. Let's be honest, learning a Bible text by memory will not create a love for God in us in and of itself. No, that would be man's weak attempt to create and produce a love that is only possible through the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. (Romans 5:5) On the contrary, taking the Bible seriously and learning scripture by heart helps the love that the Holy Spirit has already placed in our hearts to grow. It helps to keep the LORD always before us (See Psalm 16:8) which in turn helps our love for Him to grow.

There is another interesting point in this passage. Moses said: "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes." (Verse 8). Does this remind you of anything? Think about God's seal described in Revelation as a sign of the faithful in the end times. It is not a visible sign on the forehead, but rather a symbol that represents the commitment of the believers who follow Jesus. The seal on the forehead represents God's commandments in our thoughts and mind. If we ingrain God's Word in our minds, God will in turn write His law on our hearts and we will be sealed for the time of the end.

3rd Reason God's Word works in us and transforms us.

Everything that our senses take in, whether good or bad, affects us. When we learn Bible verses by heart, it is not just passive, inactive information floating around in our brains. No! The same words that brought this world into existence, God's word, works in us and transforms us. Just like a tablet that dissolves in water and infuses its nutrients throughout the entire glass, God's word becomes one with us, and takes over our thoughts and feelings. There is one difference: God's word never fizzles out! The Bible isn't just information; it is a living Word that transforms life.

How do the following texts express this idea?



Hebrews 4:12: _____

1 Thessalonians 2:13: _____

1 Peter 1:23: _____

When God transforms us through His Holy Spirit, He uses His Word as the vehicle. God's word memorized is like a seed that has been planted, grows and produces good fruit. Jesus explained this in many of His parables in which He compares the seed with the Word of God and the soil with the heart of man (i.e., Matthew 13:1-9,18-23).

4th Reason God's Word in us gives us strength to obey and helps us to overcome temptations.

When God's Word transforms us, it enables us to obey God. God gives us strength through it, to truly obey from the heart and to overcome temptation. Read the following Bible verses and write out the ideas expressed in the texts!

Deuteronomy 30:14: _____



Psalm 17:3-5: _____

Psalm 40:8: _____

Psalm 119:11,16,93: _____

Matthew 4:1-11: _____

Proverbs 6:20-23: _____

When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, He didn't have time to look up the right answer in the concordance. So how was he able to answer each temptation so quickly? He knew God's Word! Let's be honest. When we are tempted, we do not typically have time to sit down, study God's Word, and contemplate what we should do. We need to be able to recall God's Word in a split second, and that can only happen when His word is ingrained in our hearts and minds. Only then can the Holy Spirit remind us of what Jesus said (John 14:26).

Memorized Bible texts are also weapons against negative thoughts. We can only get rid of them when we can replace them with positive thoughts. During times of temptation and negative thinking, if we take God's promises from His Word, claim them as truth, and thank Him for them, the negative thoughts will lose their power over us and be unable to stay in our mind.

Quote #6

"Build a wall of scriptures around you, and you will see that the world cannot break it down. Commit the Scriptures to memory, and then throw right back upon Satan when he comes with his temptations, 'It is written.' This is the way that our Lord met the temptations of Satan, and resisted them." (*Last Day Events, pg. 67*)

5th Reason

We can know more clearly God's will for our life.

When we let Scripture influence us, we can more clearly learn God's will for our life. Read the following text!



Psalm 25:4-5: _____

Psalm 119:105: _____

Proverbs 15:24: _____

Isaiah 30:21: _____

6th Reason

God can use us more efficiently in encouraging and leading others to Christ.

What does Peter challenge us to do?



1 Peter 3:15 : _____

Peter says that we should always be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in us. This includes the times we do not have our Bibles with us. It also includes the moments when we are studying the Bible with others and they ask off topic questions. Our ability to answer those questions could be both an encouragement and/or the thing that leads them to make a decision for Christ.

Take a look at a classic sermon from Jesus, Paul or Peter. They constantly quoted from the Holy Scriptures without having the rolls on hand. It would have also been too cumbersome and time-consuming to find the correct scroll, unroll it, find the right verse, quote it, roll it back, put it away, and then repeat the whole process again with the next passage. No, they had God's Word in their mind. It equipped them to preach powerfully and authentically. Whether it is a sermon, Bible study, small group, or a conversation with someone about our faith, God can use us more efficiently and more powerfully when His Word is ingrained in us.

Quote #7

"Some who are teaching present truth are not acquainted with their Bibles. They are so deficient in Bible knowledge that it is difficult for them to quote a text of Scripture correctly from memory. By blundering along in the awkward manner they do, they sin against God. They mangle the scripture, and make the Bible say things that are not written therein." (*Testimony, Vol. 2, pg. 341*)

7th Reason

When we learn God's Word by heart, we will always have it with us, even when an actual Bible isn't available.

It just so happens that in everyday situations we do not always have a Bible on hand. What about times of persecution? Do you think we will be allowed to have Bibles? The Bible recalls many instances when the followers of God were thrown into prison. Remember Jeremiah who was imprisoned multiple times. Where do you think he always got his strength from?



Jeremiah 15:16 : _____

How many Christians, because of their faith, were thrown into prison and did not have access to a Bible! Even today many Christians are in prisons and internment camps. Just like Jeremiah, they can receive strength from God's Word because they have ingrained it in their minds! Not to mention that they can strengthen and encourage other Christians who are also imprisoned!

Quote #8

"The time will come when many will be deprived of the written Word. But if this Word is printed in the memory, no one can take it from us." (*Last Day Events, pg. 67*)

Quote #9

"Study the Word of God. Commit its precious promises to memory so that, when we shall be deprived of our Bibles, we may still be in possession of the Word of God."

(*Last Day Events*, pg. 67)

8. Grund

When we learn God's Word by heart, it increases our intellectual ability in every area.

Those who systematically memorize the Bible and contemplate God's word increase their ability to remember and understand things, not just about the Bible but in every field of study they engage in. Their intellectual faculties grow in every area of life.



Psalm 119:99 : _____

Quote #10

"God desires man to exercise his reasoning powers, and the study of the Bible will strengthen and elevate the mind as no other study can do." (*Mind Character, and Personality, Vol. 1, pg. 91*)

Quote #11

"If the mind is set to the task of studying the Bible for information, the reasoning faculties will be improved. Under the study of the Scriptures the mind expands and becomes more evenly balanced than if occupied in obtaining general information from the books that are used which have no connection with the Bible. No knowledge is so firm, so consistent and far-reaching, as that obtained from a study of the Word of God. It is the foundation of all true knowledge. " (*Mind, Character and Personality, Vol. 1, pg. 97*)

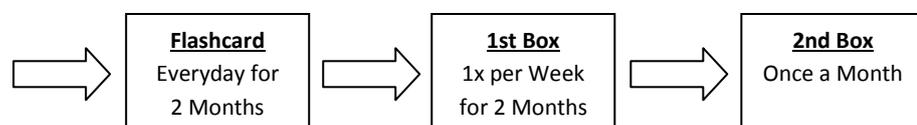
But How?

The Bible consistently declares the importance of God's Word being ingrained in us and gives many reasons why. The question remains: How can Bible texts be so ingrained in our minds that we do not lose them after a couple of days or weeks? How can they remain in our long-term memory? It is possible, so let's explore the way!

Tips on learning Bible passages by heart

1. Believe that you can learn Bible verses by heart! At first, it may be hard and unusual. But it is possible if you really want it. It only takes diligence, persistence, and a few minutes every day.
2. Use the appropriate tools. Just like every handyman has the right tools for his work to be efficient and good, so we too need the right tools for memorizing Bible verses. The most important tool is a pack of flashcards that you can easily carry. On one side of each card you will write a book, chapter and verse number. On each card's opposite side you will write out the verse. Carry these cards with you at all times. Another beneficial tool is a marker, which you can use to mark the most important words in each verse.
3. When you learn a Bible verse make sure you understand its context. It is much easier to learn a verse when you know why and to whom it was written than if you isolate it from the passage in which it is found.
4. Use any free time you have to go through your memory verses. You can learn while you are on a walk, waiting at the bus stop, or any other downtime you may have. It is a perfect way to learn many Bible texts by heart without having to reserve a specific time during the day. Remember, you only need a few minutes every day.

5. Choose a Bible translation that is faithful to the original. The work you put into learning is worth storing it word for word in your mind. Bible versions that are paraphrases, such as The Message or the Good News, have their place. But they are not ideal for memorizing scripture. In the end, we want our minds filled with what God actually said, not an approximation or interpretation.
6. Learn the text word for word. God's Word is holy. That is why we should take it seriously and not add to or take away from it (see Deuteronomy 4:2). We are investing precious time into learning Bible verses. It would be a shame to impress a variation full of mistakes into our minds! So learn the text exactly as written in the Bible. Do not forget! It does not require more effort to learn a text right than to learn it wrong. So make it a rule for yourself to learn the text word for word.
7. Repetition deepens impression! When you want a new Bible text to be ingrained in you, then repeat the first part until you can recite it from memory. Then learn the second part and quote both parts from memory. Repeat this until you can recite the entire text word for word from memory.
8. Learn the text reference as well. Begin by reciting the text reference, then the text, and end with the text reference again. This way you will learn where the text is actually found and not just know it's somewhere in the Bible.
9. In the beginning you will want to start with memorizing shorter texts. Longer texts are harder to remember and repeat. Once you have more practice, and it has become a part of your lifestyle, you can work on longer texts.
10. Spend time contemplating the verse you are learning. Think about each of the individual words and their meanings. Ask yourself what God wanted to say with this verse.
11. Remember to recite the verse often so that you will not forget it in a couple of days. When you learn a new Bible text word for word, write the date on the flashcard and add it to the cards you carry around with you. Repeat this verse everyday for the next two months. You only need a couple of minutes every day to repeat your verse. Remember to use the free minutes you have throughout the day! Once you have reached the two month mark (check the start date on your flashcard), put your card in a small box. Now you will repeat this text only once a week. Later (after another two months) when you know this verse very well, you can move it to a second box. This box is for verses you only repeat once a month. If you use this method, Bible verses will be committed to your long-term memory.



12. Decide how many Bible texts you want to learn per week. You can begin with one Bible verse per week. The number of flashcards you will carry around will steadily increase: 1,2,3 ... 8. The first card will then move into Box #1. Every week another text will be added and an old one will be transferred into Box #1. This way you will eventually be repeating 8 verses a day. Be faithful to your commitment!

13. During Bible study you will constantly come across new verses that you would like to memorize. Write yourself a reminder or write them immediately on a flashcard. When it is time to learn new verses you have the freedom to choose which ones. Ask God to show you Bible verses that He would like to use to impact your life at the moment. When a certain verse really speaks to you, do not wait until the next week or month before you learn it. Add it immediately to your daily recitations.

14. Find someone you can memorize Bible verses with. Keep each other accountable and recite the text to one another. Accountability is an important key to staying committed.



You really need discipline, consistency, and commitment to memorize Bible verses. Think about how many verses you could learn by heart in one year! When you learn one Bible verse per week, in one year it adds up to over 50. After five years, you will have memorized over 250 verses. If you stay committed, you will have acquired an enormous, priceless treasure. Review the reasons that are in favor of you taking on this challenge. Are they enough to motivate you? Do you want to take on this challenge? How many verses would you like to learn per week? Write your answer in the space below!
