

Series: Dwell	Reference: Psalm 19:7-11	Title: Remember, Remember, Remember	Date: 10.31.2021
Website Writeup:			
God's Word is the believer's source of truth & wisdom. It should be prized & valued in the believer's life. Today we explore how memorizing Scripture helps followers of Jesus to lean on its truths in all seasons & situations of life.			

COLOR CHANGES IN TEXT INDICATE SLIDE CHANGES

Scripture's an important part of our lives & we shouldn't just rush through it. We've talked a lot about the need to be immersed in it daily. As Dallas Willard said to us last week, *"To dribble a few verses or chapters of Scripture on oneself through the week, in church or out, will not reorder one's mind & spirit - just as one drop of water every five minutes will not get you a shower, no matter how long you keep it up. You need a lot of water at once & for a sufficiently long time. Similarly for the written Word"*¹

But is it necessary to memorize it? And do you?

Scripture memory has a long history in the church as a form of spiritual formation with benefit throughout the ages.

But what can it do? What good is it?

Take a look at this video by Phyllis H. Hendry, called *Seeds of Scripture*, from RightNow Media where she outlines what God did in her life as a result of memorizing scripture as a young girl (you can register for a free account for RightNow Media through our [website](#) to watch the video).

Psalm 19 helps us understand why having Scripture embedded in our hearts & minds is beneficial. A firm grasp of God's Word makes it available & ready for access even when we aren't able to thumb through the Scriptures. Open your pew Bibles to p376 to Psalm 19 beginning in v7.

Psalm 19:7–11...*The law of the Lord is **perfect**, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the Lord are **trustworthy**, making wise the simple. ⁸The precepts of the Lord are **right**, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are **radiant**, giving light to the eyes. ⁹The fear of the Lord is **pure**, enduring forever. The decrees of the Lord are **firm**, and all of them are **righteous**. ¹⁰They are more **precious** than gold, than much pure gold; they are **sweeter** than honey, than honey from the honeycomb. ¹¹By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward.*

Proposition: God's Word is the believer's source of truth & wisdom. It should be prized & valued in the believer's life. **Application:** Memorizing Scripture helps followers of Jesus to lean on its truths in all seasons & situations of life.

¹ (Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy* [San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1998], 356).

The law of the Lord is perfect, it's sure (v. 7), it's right, it's pure (v. 8), it is true (v. 9). It revives our souls, gives us wisdom (v. 7), brings us joy & understanding (v. 8). It endures forever (v. 9). We should desire it even more than gold or honey, because it's what helps us stay on course & guides our life in Christ (vv. 10–11).

Think about those descriptive words & their benefits...in a world full of lies, where we can't be assured that any story is true or real! A world of sinking sand. Don't you want solidity? The Word is where you find it.

As some of you know, a few of us do ministry with Prison Fellowship. Every Monday & Wednesday for two hours starting at 4:00p those involved are on a Zoom call with nine prisoners in maximum security. Three are Muslims, and a few are lifers for murder.

Funny thing was this past Monday my son walked into the room as I was on the call & they all shouted, "Hey little Guynes! Don't be afraid, we're all just prisoners!" then laughed. They have a great sense of humor.

We spoke about trust a lot in that meeting centering our minds on Matthew 7:15, "*Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.*" And 1 Peter 3:10, "*Whoever would live life & see good days must keep their tongue from evil & their lips from deceitful speech.*" How do we deal with people when they can't be trusted, what keeps us from trusting others & what does distrust do in relationship. At one point one of the Muslims asked me to pray for another of the prisoners, it was a divine moment!

I couldn't help to think, what if they'd memorized those two verses as 8 year olds, would they be sitting in that room? Would they've been better prepared to set healthy boundaries between themselves & the ferocious wolves promising them the world, but only ending them up in jail? Where are those false prophets now who told them, "To be a man you gotta shoot that guy!"? Where are they now who told them their only opportunity was to sell drugs & rob? How would their lives be different today if they'd embraced the life of Christ & kept their tongues from evil & their lips from deceitful speech? Gotta wonder...

Time didn't allow for me to point out that in a world where it seems everyone lies, the one person they can trust is Jesus. That Jesus (and that includes His Word/Scripture) struck me when I first came to faith. He was full of integrity, did not lie, or did He shy away from difficulty, He can be trusted!

I wanted to read 1 Peter 2:22, "*He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth.*" Everyone in this room will fail you, they will break your trust, and you can mitigate the effects of that in how you set boundaries, and to whom you give your heart, but there's been only One who's perfect & without deceit! That is JESUS!

The psalmist writes to encourage the reader to embrace God's Word as an invaluable expression of God's wisdom. The metaphors the psalmist uses "refer to the great value of God's Word in terms of its effects on those who observe them. It causes integrity, loyalty, uprightness, purity & growth in righteousness (vv. 7–9).

The efficacy of God's revelation is set forth by the synonyms for the law, the characteristics of the word, and the beneficial effects on the godly. The Word of God in itself, in its revelatory qualities & its transforming effects in the godly, is, therefore, of greater value than the most valuable objects of man's striving...It keeps the wise on the narrow path by forewarning them of possible pitfalls (v. 11a) and by guiding them on to the rewards of godliness - life, God-given joy, wisdom & contentment"²

In our meeting with the prisoners we asked them, what are 3 values you'd like to impress upon your children? Many of them said things like, honesty, integrity & the like. I thought long about that question myself. I hope I've left my kids with 3 key values; Love of God (including His Word), Love of Others & Love of God's Creation. If I have those three, everything else falls directly into place. The essence of Matthew 6:33...*"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."*

Jesus showed us by example the importance of hiding Scripture in our hearts. He "quoted twenty-four books of the Old Testament almost 180 times in the New Testament."³ *Jews for Jesus* has a list of Christ's references to the Scriptures in His ministry. It's extensive from the Sermon on the Mount, to teaching on honoring parents, to the Ten Commandments, Hosea, Isaiah, etc... You can access that list in the written sermon tomorrow (<https://jewsforjesus.org/answers/jesus-references-to-old-testament-scriptures>).

K. J. Ramsey tells her story about how Scripture memorization helped her endure a season of debilitating pain & emotional fear when she said: "A month after I turned 20, my body suddenly became a place of pain rather than possibility. In a matter of days, I could no longer walk because of severe joint pain & inflammation. I sat on my dorm bed, and for a few minutes I tried to uncoil my swollen hands to turn the pages of my Bible, to no avail. In that suffering, the Word hidden in my heart started countering my fear. I was confused & craving comfort, but God's story was alive inside of me, welcoming me into the wonder that I am loved at my weakest."

The rest of the article focuses on how neuroscience reveals the keys to helping Scripture make its way into our lasting "autobiographical memory." "When we engage the Bible first & foremost as a relationship with the living God, it activates the parts of our brain needed to encode the story of Scripture into our autobiographical memory. Further, as we engage the Word with our whole bodies - writing, speaking, listening, drawing &

² (Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, The Expositor's Bible Commentary [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008], Psalm 19:7–11).

³ (Kevin Halloran, "Ten Biblical Reasons to Memorize Scripture," *Unlocking the Bible*, November 1, 2016, <https://unlockingthebible.org/2016/11/ten-biblical-reasons-to-memorize-scripture/>)

imagining - and connect it reflectively to our stories, we are able to absorb it in a way that connects multiple systems of our brains.”⁴

Having Scripture hidden away within your heart can get you through the most terrible of times...A remarkable story of endurance I've told before, but is worthy of retelling, involves Dmitri, a believer who was imprisoned for his faith. The only believer among 1,500 hardened criminals in a large prison. His tormentors were unable to break him. Dmitri pointed to two sources of strength in the face of torture.

Every morning at daybreak during seventeen years in prison, Dmitri would stand at attention by his bed. Facing the east, raising his arms in praise to God, he'd sing a song to Jesus. Dmitri recounted the mocking laughter, cursing & jeers of the other prisoners as they banged metal cups against the iron bars in anger, throwing food & human waste to try to silence him & extinguish the only true light shining in that dark place.

Another discipline which sustained Dmitri - as told to Nick Ripken, author of the book *The Insanity of God* (155–62) - was scribbling down Bible verses, scripture stories, or songs on scraps of paper. Jailers spotting the pieces of paper, would beat him severely.

The day arrived when Dmitri left his cell to face execution. He was dragged down the corridor. But before they reached the door leading to the courtyard, his place of execution, 1,500 hardened criminals stood at attention by their beds. They faced the east & began to sing. Dmitri told Ripken, it sounded to him like the greatest choir in all history. Inmates raised their arms singing the very song they'd heard Dmitri sing to Jesus every morning all those years.

Dmitri's jailers instantly released their hold & stepped away in terror. One of them asked, "Who are you?" Dmitri responded, "I'm a son of the Living God, and Jesus is his name." The guards returned him to his cell. Soon after, he was released to his family. If Scripture can sustain such a man in such a situation, imagine what it can do for you.

David Powlison, a Christian Counselor, speaking to the power of hiding the Word in your heart & applying it calls that "putting the rivet between the text & your life now." Think about using Philippians 4:6-8...*"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer & petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts & your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸Finally, brothers & sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things."*

Do yourself a favor, zero in on one verse or short passage where Scripture lives in your life, commit it to memory & see what God does. Then another, and another, until you find yourself pickled in the Word of God & experiencing the benefits of it.

⁴ (K. J. Ramsey, "The Best Way to Memorize Scripture Has Little to Do with Learning Words", *Christianity Today*, September 21, 2020, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2020/october/science-scripture-memorization-heart-head-knowledge.html>)

Review verses, including their references you've already memorized, picture them on the page, say them out loud, use note cards, write them out, keep them with you. Review them in quiet moments, saying them without looking at the card, then check your accuracy. Because, God's Word is the believer's source of truth & wisdom. It should be prized & valued in life. Memorizing Scripture helps us to lean on its truths in all seasons & situations of life.

Let me end with 10 reasons we should memorize Scripture...Jesus did, we are called to, it renews our mind & transforms our life, helps against temptation, helps us live in obedience, brings God's blessing to our lives, allows us to more readily encourage believers, allows us to share with unbelievers better, gives us a better understanding of God & His will & makes us wise. (For a more complete outline of this list go to <https://unlockingthebible.org/2016/11/ten-biblical-reasons-to-memorize-scripture/>)

The Bible's a book of tremendous wisdom which can have an impact on every area of our life. By memorizing Scripture we're able to have wisdom at all times. Make the Bible your supreme treasure. Whether it be a few verses, longer passages, or complete books, there's no better investment of your time than hiding God's Word in your heart.

I ordered this box of Scripture memory cards off Amazon which you could do yourself. A small cost, but a great investment in your life! And to get you started, I've printed a list of verses as a starting place, I hope you will begin to incorporate this valuable practice as a part of your spiritual rhythm: 2 Corinthians 5:21; Isaiah 53:5; 1 John 1:9; Acts 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Deuteronomy 8:3; Psalm 73:25-26; Mark 8:35-36; Romans 8:31-32; 1 Peter 1:13; Ezekiel 36:26; 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10; Hebrews 4:15-16; John 1:1-2; Psalm 27:4.

- A GOOD START ON SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSES -

2 Corinthians 5:21...

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Isaiah 53:5...

But he was pierced for our transgressions,
 he was crushed for our iniquities;
 the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
 and by his wounds we are healed.

1 John 1:9...

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Acts 4:12...

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18...

Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray continually, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Deuteronomy 8:3...

He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

Psalms 73:25-26...

Whom have I in heaven but you?
 And earth has nothing I desire besides you.
²⁶My flesh and my heart may fail,
 but God is the strength of my heart
 and my portion forever.

Mark 8:35-36...

For whoever wants to save their life[a] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. ³⁶What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?

Romans 8:31-32...

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

1 Peter 1:13...

Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming.

Ezekiel 36:26...

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

1 Thessalonians 5:9-10...

For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.

Hebrews 4:15-16...

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

John 1:1-2...

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning.

Psalms 27:4...

One thing I ask from the Lord,
 this only do I seek:
 that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
 all the days of my life,
 to gaze on the beauty of the Lord
 and to seek him in his temple.

Philippians 4:6-8...

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer & petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts & your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸Finally, brothers & sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things.”

Matthew 28:18-20 (the Great Commission)...

“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.””