

Lesson 9

Chapter 6 - "*I Can't Memorize!*" and Chapter 7 - "*Memorize Scripture? I Don't Have Time!*"

Read chapters 6 and 7 and work through the following questions.

1. Why is the assertion "I can't memorize!" a weak excuse and not a valid reason for not memorizing Scripture?

True, memorizing in general is not considered the necessary part of life it once was. Today's generation relies more on books and computers and all our other modern conveniences. Students today are told, it's only important to know where information can be found. But even so, we are still forced to do a certain amount of memorizing just to exist in this world. When you move into a new home, start a new job, get a new telephone, a new e-mail address, fax number, whatever, the first thing you do is memorize the information. Do you know anyone who was asked for their phone number or address who answered, "I don't know, I just can't memorize?" When you meet new friends, it may take you awhile, but at some point you start remembering their names. Yet, when it comes to memorizing Scripture, probably no excuse is used more often than, "Oh, I can't memorize!" And perhaps none is more ridiculous.

2. Why do you think this is such a popular response when the subject of Scripture Memorization is introduced?

Someone using this response is undoubtedly anxious to end the topic of conversation. Many people find the idea of memorizing Scripture to be threatening because they see it as a time consuming drudgery and they may already feel guilty about not doing it. Such people probably think that if they discuss the subject they may be *forced* to face up to the fact that it is something they *should* at least be considering, thus adding even more guilt to what is already there. Other people may not have given it any thought at all and really don't want to be put in a position of addressing it.

The average Christian of today is quite happy loping along the path of least resistance, simply feeding on what others hand out, not wanting to be confronted with the idea of exerting time and energy on anything that requires effort on their part.

We live in a world where everything is quick and easy. The quicker and easier the better. Memorizing Scripture does not fit into that category. It is therefore often just discarded without any consideration. The average Christian gives little or no thought to the rewards that await those who take time to etch the Words of Scripture on their mind and soul—to literally take the Sword of the Spirit.

We are involved in warfare, whether we know it or not. Whether we like it or not. We have an ever avid enemy who has succeeded in convincing many Christians that memorizing Scripture is definitely a negative and he has somehow injected this quick and easy answer into the minds of many. It is interesting that people who have no contact with each other in order to communicate such thinking, are quick to use this same response, "Oh, I can't memorize!". I was even surprised to learn that a native in Africa picked up on it when the subject of memorizing Scripture was addressed.

3. Read Matthew 4:1-11 and then compare Jesus' answers to Satan with Deuteronomy 8:3; 6:16 and 6:13. What conclusions can you draw that might be helpful for us to note and apply in the warfare we encounter in our lives?

1. The *only weapon* that Jesus had and apparently needed to use against His most powerful enemy was the Sword of the Spirit, God's Word.

2. He obviously had memorized Scripture in order to have these verses in mind when they were needed. He did not have a Bible in book form nor concordances or other helps such as we have today. And even if he did, he wouldn't be carrying them around with him. Nor was it conceivable that He would be lugging massive scrolls around to refer to whenever Satan raised his ugly head. He must have memorized the Scriptures in order to respond as he did. Orthodox Jews started their children memorizing the Torah when they were three years old and they could quote the first five books of the Bible from memory by the time they were twelve. It is interesting to note the many direct quotations from the Old Testament recorded both by Jesus in the gospels and by apostles in the epistles. When you run across them, be aware that they must have been quoting from memory.

3. Jesus stood firm in the Scriptures and when attacked by His arch enemy, He quoted God's Word to him. He did not pursue long theological explanations. He merely responded with Scripture He had memorized and we're told "Then the devil left Him." (cf. with James 4:7b)

4. a) What kind of an army would it be if no one followed the orders of the commanding general, if each soldier just decided for himself what he could, should or would do? Are we really free to pick and choose for ourselves what we feel like obeying and rejecting whatever doesn't fit our personal agenda?

Could it be that we do not see the reality of Scripture? Could it be that some of us have been so lavished with God's goodness that we just take it for granted and like spoiled children have no desire to apply ourselves to the serious battle confronting us? Could it be that instead of being a well disciplined army we have become a ragtag militia? Are we oblivious to the onslaught of the one who is taking full advantage of this casual mind set in order to kill, steal and destroy us, our children, our families, our schools, our judicial system, our country and everything we hold dear? Where is our army?

You may want to consider the losses that Christians have suffered in Western culture in recent years as corrupt teachers have taken over our schools and our children, as the abolishment of absolutes and morals is toppling our teens and divorce has ripped families apart of both congregations and clergy alike.

b) *The Sword* and this workbook focus on a vital command given to us by our Commander-in-chief a command that is important for us to heed as we face the ever raging battle between good and evil. Write out this command regarding Scripture memorization from the New Testament and a similar reference given in the Old Testament.

Take... the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. (Ephesians 6:17)

Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds.... (Deuteronomy 11:18)
(also Deuteronomy 6:6-9; 11:18-19.)

6. a) An illustration is given of steel grating against steel as when a vehicle has worn through its brake lining. Why is this a picture of someone trying to handle a stressed schedule without an adequate balance of spiritual sustenance in their repertoire?

When brake lining is badly worn or is non-existent, metal begins to create groves and scars in its counterpart. If we feel we have "no time" to memorize Scripture we can know we are ensnared in the enemy's web. It is his strategy to force us into situations where we have to face the pressures and trials of this life in our own strength and wisdom. Without adequate spiritual protection and input whereby we can draw from a higher and more powerful Source we are very vulnerable. All around us we see evidence of hurtful grooves that have scarred and devastated, if not our lives, then the lives of many around us.

b) What hurtful results have you seen in the lives of people who focus on schedules driven by this world's agenda.

children suffering from lack of attention and care. (their lives being forever affected)
deterioration of marriage relationships (sometimes divorce)
lack of defense even against overt satanic attacks
deterioration of physical stamina and well being
pursuing the circular course of making money and acquiring perishable possessions.

(Be sure to emphasize that this is not intended to infer that soldiers of the cross are exempt from heartaches and pain. But we can know that God's Word offers guidance, protection, comfort and endless resources for those who seek it. And devastating consequences are sometimes the results of choosing to ignore its wisdom.)

7. How do you see the memorization of Scripture being used in our struggle against the one we are told "prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour"?

There is only one place in this world where *pure* truth exists and that is in the Bible. We cannot expect spiritual growth if our lives are a minor in predigested truth and a major in this world's agenda. Surely we need pure truth in healthy portions if we are to progress spiritually. As we memorize God's truths, as we feast on them, and brand them on our minds, we will have protection, counsel and guidance to help us find our way along this rocky path of life. It is very important for us to plan our priorities and our time to accommodate this aspect of life.

8. How do you see the illustration of the professor filling his jar as it applies to the life of a Christian desiring to live for the Lord and having a positive influence on his world.

This illustration vividly portrays the necessity for everyone, especially Christians to set goals and priorities. We must decide where we want the impact of our life to be. This must be given first place in our thinking, our planning and our agenda or it will not happen. We can't just let our jar fill up on its own with "what comes naturally" and expect to have the desired results. If *we* do not pre-determine our priorities and our goals in tune with our Great Creator, we will be jostled around by the cares and crashes of this world. The decision is ours. Be careful about thinking that if you delay or decline to choose, that no decision is made. You are **choosing to do**, or you are **choosing to ignore**.

9. Why is it especially important to have a strong spiritual influence in your life to draw from, (such as Scripture memorized and branded on your mind and thinking process), in order to survive a particularly stressed agenda?

In any man's reasoning, to go into a battle without a weapon in hand is sure suicide. It would never be considered in the physical realm but many of us unwittingly find ourselves involved in spiritual conflict with our sword at home lying on the coffee table. A stressed life is out on the front lines often with tensions pressing from all directions. Decisions must often be made on the spot. There is often little or no time to contemplate or explore the consequences and spiritual impact. And unless the Mighty Sword is securely in hand and in mind, there is great danger of the enemy gaining significant ground.

10 a) Write out in order of their importance, the three things you consider your top priorities in this life.

b) Spend some time with the Lord evaluating them, your progress and your future.

11. Many people made great sacrifices in order for you and me to have a printed copy of God's Word of our own. Some gave their very lives that we might have this awesome gift.

How many of us have ever given any thought to the price that was paid to make this great gift possible? These veterans could well be among the *great cloud of witnesses* mentioned in Hebrews 12:1. If they are, indeed, watching carefully, cheering us on from the sidelines, what are they seeing in us, in you and in me? A deep regard for Holy Writ? Fruit for their labor?

Spend just a few moments with the Lord acknowledging their sacrifice and thanking Him for these brave men and women who blazed the trail on our behalf. If you haven't started already, perhaps now is a good time for you to tip your hat to them and start your own journey along the memorizing journey. And if you have already started, you may want to give some thought and prayer to whether the Lord would have you help to encourage and challenge others to take this gift of His written Word seriously and start taking it to heart literally.