



Chapter 8

PREPARE YOUR MIND FOR ACTION!

(I Peter 1:13)

The Lord always meets us where we are and works with us at a pace we can handle. Considering our diverse personalities, our varied capabilities, and current location in our spiritual journey, we are not all in the same starting position. If, for example, you're really excited about memorizing God's Word, raring to go and can't wait to get started, you're obviously not in the same starting position as the one who is thinking, "Yes, I know this is something I *should* do," but is less than enthusiastic about the whole idea.

If, in all honesty, you have to admit that you fall in the second category, don't be discouraged. This chapter will help you peer into the reasons behind such thinking and, hopefully, assist in helping you "straighten your aim" before actually pitching in.

I'm sure you know that Scripture memorization, in itself, is no magic formula. It is possible to intellectually memorize the words with little or no heart involvement

or life application. The results of such an exercise can prove to be meaningless and could even be discouraging.

Gardens must be prepared before precious seed is introduced. Clearing must take place and rocks removed. Cultivation, water and fertilizer help ready the ground. Similarly, the soil of our hearts may need to be prepared for hosting the precious *holy* seed of God's Word.

At one time, I memorized the entire book of Philippians but soon forgot it. Perhaps I tried to learn it too fast without proper review. But I believe the major reason was that I looked at it as more of a mental exercise than a spiritual adventure. I respected the authority of God's Word and memorized the words, but there was no vital interaction with the Author. Nor did I look to the marvelous truths and promises of the Living Word to bathe my soul and feed my spirit in meditation. It was more of a legalistic ritual and was not the delight for me then as it is today.

Another example that illustrates the possible futility of trying to plant God's Word in an unready heart is even more depressing. A recent cult leader, heavily into sexual perversion and other ungodly practices, was reportedly able to quote long passages of Scripture and in some cases used this to attract people to him. However, the fruit of his life indicated that this must have been something of an ego trip and a mental discipline with little real heart involvement.

Although the circumstances and individuals in these two examples are vastly different in both cases the Word memorized seemed to be introduced into unprepared soil which yielded little or no harvest. Preparation of the

heart's soil prior to planting the seed might have significantly changed the outcome.

I must be quick to add that heart preparation, per se, has not consistently proven to be a prerequisite for someone launching into a program of Scripture memorization. There are some who began memorizing rather reluctantly who soon radiated joy and started bubbling with enthusiasm as the Word took root and the Lord began to reveal Himself in special ways. As usual, we can't put the Lord in a box nor presume to know how He'll work in any given situation. His Word is living and powerful and He will do what He will do, for His own reasons, sometimes in spite of His reluctant children. So we offer here no hard and fast rule, merely suggest that a heart that is prepared offers more fertile soil than one that is not, and we trust that this chapter will help to clarify your focus in this direction.

To test the fertility of the "soil" in your heart, you may find it helpful to compare your attitude toward God's Word with that of the author of Psalm 119. How does your heart respond to these scattered excerpts from his Psalm?

vs 14 - I rejoice in following Your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.

vs 16 - I delight in Your decrees; I will not neglect Your word.

vs 20 - My soul is consumed with longing for Your laws at all times.

The Sword

vs 24 - Your statutes are my delight; they are my counselors.

vs 47 - I delight in Your commands because I love them.

vs 48 - I lift up my hands to Your commands, which I love, and I meditate on Your decrees.

vs 54 - Your decrees are the theme of my song wherever I lodge.

vs 77 - Your law is my delight.

vs 97 - Oh, how I love Your law! I meditate on it all day long.

vs 103 - How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

vs 111 - Your statutes are my heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart!

vs 120 - I stand in awe of Your laws.

vs 127 - I love Your commands more than gold, more than pure gold....

vs 140 - Your promises have been thoroughly tested, and your servant loves them.

vs 159 - See how I love Your precepts....

vs 162 - I rejoice in Your promise like one who finds great spoil.

vs 163 - I hate and abhor falsehood but I love Your law.

vs 167 - I obey Your statutes, for I love them greatly.

S-o-o-o, what is your heart's reaction to the psalmist's prayerful expressions toward God's Word? If your spirit is saying, "Amen! Amen" or at least relating positively then I suggest your soil is ready! In fact, you may already have begun storing this marvelous treasure in your innermost consciousness. This is why you can relate to his expressed delight and esteem for the Scripture therein expressed.

If, on the other hand, you're saying, "This is just not where I am!" then you should be aware that there is one who is deceiving you and inhibiting what should be a natural hunger and thirst in you that God's people have for His Word. Your arch enemy has succeeded in stifling your appetite for what is one of the greatest sources of power as well as one of the greatest joys that the Lord has made available to His children.

"Brainwashing" is a 20th century term. It automatically conjures up visions of heinous ways that have been used to twist men's thinking in order to introduce gross lies that they would not normally accept. Perhaps the most devious application of its use has been as Satan himself has manipulated the minds of Christians in managing to suppress their natural desire to consume the powerful Word of their awesome God to the point of even

making its memorization something that is bothersome and negative to them.

What has this conspirator planted in your mind regarding the Word of God? Has he told you, for example:

That you can't memorize Scripture? That you don't have the mental ability to retain even a verse, so how can you take on a whole chapter? (If so, you may want to check out chapter 6, *I Can't Memorize!*)

That memorizing Scripture is a real drag; that it's just too much work and isn't anything you want to get involved in?

That reading the Bible is something you *owe* God and that by merely reading it you are fulfilling your daily obligation?

That just by reading your Bible, *you* are doing *God* some kind of favor?

That you have no time in your stressed agenda for this added burden? (If so, chapter 7, *Memorize Scripture? I Don't Have Time!* deals with this concern in detail.)

Thoughts like these need to be viewed as part of the "rubble" that should be addressed in order to give the living seed room to grow. Perhaps this is why Peter admonishes us:

...prepare your minds for action.... (I Peter 1:13)

This is like preparing your garden for planting, removing skepticism from your thinking just as you remove rocks from your plot of ground and adding positive input as you add the needed nutrients to your garden. For example:

Prepare Your Minds for Action!

1. Be aware that **any** negative thinking toward God's Word is directly from Satan's bag of tricks. James 4:7 tells us:

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Reject negative thoughts regarding the Word for what they are — **lies**. Satan is the father of lies and is a master at masking his intentions. Fill your mind with Scripture — **truth** — written by those who openly express their love for, and delight in, God's Word. You may want to memorize a few positive verses so that when Satan tempts you with negativism toward the Word, the Holy Spirit can use the verses you have learned as a *Sword* against him. (Ephesians 6:17)

2. Always remember that you are dealing with the Holy Script of a Holy God, not the ideas and concepts of mere men. II Timothy 3:16 says:

Every Scripture is God-breathed — given by His inspiration.... (Amplified Bible)

II Peter 1:20-21 tells us:

...no prophecy of Scripture is of any personal or private... interpretation. For no prophecy ever originated because some man willed it — it never came by human impulse — but as men spoke from God who were borne along (moved and impelled) by the Holy Spirit. (Amplified Bible)

When you begin to memorize God's Word, you are embarking on a spiritual adventure with an awesome Guide. God's Holy Spirit, the Author of the Book, will become your *Enabler*, your *Teacher*, your *Interpreter*, your *Deliverer*, your *Counselor*.... Look to Him. Rely totally on Him. He longs to make this one of the most exciting parts of your spiritual journey.

3. Know that God's Word is *your* link with *eternity*. Although the book in which it is printed will one day crumble and disintegrate, the *Word* inscribed on its pages is forever. Through this Eternal Word, it is within your power to access eternity right now in this life. When you memorize the Scriptures, you are actually grasping a piece of eternity. Never lose sight of the fact that you are laying hold on the very thoughts of your omnipotent God. As you meditate and delight in His Holy Word, you will gain added insight into divine secrets about *eternal joys, eternal blessings, eternal pleasures, eternal hope, eternal love, eternal peace, eternal wisdom, eternal promises... and the list goes on.*

We're told that:

People are like grass that dies away... But the Word of the Lord will last forever. (1 Peter 1:24, NLT)

Recorded in three of the gospels are Jesus' words:

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away. (Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33)

Prepare Your Minds for Action!

Is there ever any question in your mind as to whether the sun will come up tomorrow morning or whether the trees will lose their leaves this fall? According to this verse, it is much more likely that such things would happen than for the Lord to ever go back on His Word. The things that you and I see as absolute in this world cannot even be compared with the validity, the stability and the integrity of God's holy, inerrant Word.

The enormous privilege we have of owning a copy of this eternal treasure cannot be over-estimated. That we as mere mortals might consider the opportunity we have of storing this treasure in our hearts to be less than a wonderful gift from God is unthinkable. We may live only for this world if we so choose. But when God's Word lives in our heart and becomes a meaningful part of our thinking, we are incorporating an *everlasting treasure* into our life that will bear *everlasting* fruit. If we have no desire or time to embrace this little piece of eternity God has given us here, what is going to be our joy in heaven?

Prepare your mind for action and receive the Word with blessing. It will be yours to enjoy now and forever!!!

Your Word, O Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. (Psalm 119:89 - emphasis added)