



Memorizing The Scriptures

Your Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin
against you
Psalm 119:11

Willie Alvarenga

Memorizing The Scriptures
P.O. Box 210667
Bedford, TX 76095
(817) 545 4004
© 2005 Willie Alvarenga

Acknowledgement

I am so indebted to brothers Hardeman Nichols, Robert Stapleton, Grant Sullivan and his wife Dara for taking the time to read this material and to proofread it. Thank you so much for taking the time to help others in the kingdom of God.

Willie Alvarenga

Dedication

It is a great honor and a privilege to dedicate this brief study to the following brethren who have impacted my life for the good. These men have been a good example in memorizing Scriptures. Many are the names of these men, some of whom I've known in person and others I did not have the privilege to meet. Nevertheless, I appreciate very much their dedication in this matter.

Hugo McCord

Guy N. Woods

Johnny Ramsey

Avon Malone

Garland Elkins

Hardeman Nichols

Gus Nichols

Dave Miller

George Bailey

Gary Fallis

Scott Lambert

Richard Stevens

Timothy Sparks

Ben Bailey

Perry Cotham

Robert Taylor Jr.

Bill Burk

Tom Gaumer

Ken Hope

Eddie Parrish

The Bible exhorts us to be imitators of that which is good (**3 John 11**); Therefore, I thank God so much for these men who have been a good example to me. May God bless them, and help us to continue to imitate their dedication for the cause of Christ.

Willie Alvarenga

“Let Us Go Back To The Bible And Be Known As Men Of The Book”

Introduction

One of the practices that we do not hear very much today in the church is memorizing Scriptures. It is sad how many Christians today do not feel the need to imitate Jesus in this matter (**Matt. 4:4, 7, 10; 1 Pet. 1:21**). Many do not feel the need to be “**Mighty in the Scriptures**” as Apollos was (**Acts 18:24**). Many do not feel the need to love and meditate in the Scriptures all day long as David did (**Ps. 119:97**).

I believe it is time to go back to the Bible and practice more often the memorization of God’s Word. It is time to put aside all the excuses that are being used not to memorize Scriptures. Excuses, such as “**I’m too old,**” “**I cannot memorize the Bible,**” “**I don’t need to memorize,**” etc. Many are the excuses to not put to practice this very important matter. Therefore, I exhort each and every one of us to really take this seriously, and to start keeping God’s Word in our hearts like David did (**Ps. 119:11**).

In this brief study I wish to present information of great benefit to those who have the desire to memorize Scriptures. Let me tell you something; You have the potential to memorize anything, especially the Scriptures, therefore, do not hide this potential, but instead, use it for the glory and honor of our Creator who wants us to be very knowledgeable in the Scriptures. This practice will not only help us to please God, but it will also help us to grow spiritually.

I believe it is time to stop memorizing worldly songs, and instead, start memorizing God’s Word. All of those people who use excuses not to memorize Scriptures have the potential to memorize phone numbers, addresses, songs, and many other things. It is time to take God’s Word seriously, and not the things of this world (**1 John 2:15-17; Matt. 6:33; Col. 3:1-2**).

I will tell you ahead of time. The things that I’ll be presenting in this material are not new to you. They are just reminders of some of the things that you already know. So I hope that you take them seriously.

About The Memory

Memory—The mental faculty of retaining and recalling past experience. It also means an act or instance of remembrance; recollection¹

Many are the studies that have been made to understand the human mind. Many books have been written about the human memory. According to some of the studies, humans have two kinds of memory “**Short term memory**” and “**Long term memory.**”

¹ The American Heritage Dictionary, p. 785

The short-term memory means that a person can remember information, but only for a short period of time. For example, you look up a number in the phone book for the first time, and you wish to use that number only on that occasion. If you wish to recall that same number later on, you will not be able to remember it. Why? The answer is simple, that number was stored in your short-term memory.

The long-term memory means that the information that you store in your mind can stay there, and be recalled much later. In order to be able to switch from short term memory to long term memory, the person needs to repeat many times the information that he, or she wants to memorize. You also need to make up your mind as far as wanting to keep that information for a long time. For example, the numbers that we use frequently are kept in our long-term memory. Why? The answer is simple, and that is, because we use them all the time, and it is as if we were repeating that number all the time. We also keep those numbers in our long-term memory because such numbers are important to us. We have seen the need to keep them in our memory. It is the same thing with God's Word. If we do not see the need to keep the Scriptures in our hearts, we will never do it.

The Importance Of Memorizing The Scriptures

Here are some reasons why I believe we need to memorize the Scriptures. I hope we take them seriously.

We need to memorize the Scriptures because...

1. They are inspired of God (**2 Tim. 3:14-17; 1 Cor. 2:13; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; 1 Thess. 2:14; 1 Cor. 14:37**).
2. Our Lord Jesus Christ did it (**Matt. 4:4, 7, 10; Matt. 19:4-6**).
3. The Bible brings joy to our hearts (**Jer. 15:16; Rom. 15:4; Ps. 19:8**).
4. The Word has power to save our souls (**James 1:21**).
5. The Word has power to make us wise unto salvation (**2 Tim. 3:15**).
6. Memorizing the Scriptures will help us always to be ready to give an answer (**1 Pet. 3:15**).
7. The Word is like food to us (**1 Pet. 2:2; Jer. 15:16; Ez. 2:8-9; Heb. 5:11-14**).
8. The Word has power to help us to not sin against our God (**Ps. 119:11**).
9. The Word can prepare us unto every good work (**2 Tim. 3:17**).
10. The Word is the truth of God (**John 17:17; Ps. 119:160; 19:7-8**).
11. The Word directs our steps in the right way (**Ps. 119:24, 105**).
12. The Bible is the most important book we can have.
13. They teach us how to please God (**Eccl. 12:13-14**).
14. The Bible is our weapon to defeat Satan (**Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12; Matt. 4:4, 7, 10**).
15. Through the use of Scriptures we can reason with the non-Christian (**Acts 17:1-4**).
16. The Bible can prepare us to help and teach one another (**Col. 3:16; 2 Tim. 2:14-17**).
17. Having God's Word in our hearts will help us to discern between good and evil (**Heb. 5:13-14**).

18. Having God's Word in our hearts will help us in our life of prayer (**John 15:7**).
19. Having God's Word in our hearts will help us to recall the Scriptures anytime we need them (**Ps. 119:97; 16:7**).

Practical Advice On How To Memorize And Retain The Scriptures

1. Choose the text or book that you wish to memorize.

If this is the first time you are trying to memorize Scriptures I recommend that you start with a verse and not a whole book. Later, when you have gained experience, you will be able to memorize complete books of the Bible. Once again, choose the text you wish to memorize and stay with that text until you have it memorized.

2. If you choose a verse, divide that verse into sections.

If you chose a verse to memorize, try to divide that verse into sections. For example, if you wish to memorize **2 Tim. 2:15**, divide such verse into four parts.

Part 1 "Give diligence"

Part 2 "To present thyself approved unto God"

Part 3 "A workman that needeth not to be ashamed"

Part 4 "Handling aright the word of truth"

If it is necessary, divide such verses into more parts to make it easy for you. After you divide the verse into sections, you are now ready to start memorizing part by part until you have memorized all of it.

3. Do not try to memorize the whole verse at once. You are not ready for that.

It is important that you do not try to memorize the whole verse in one attempt. Try to do it by sections. If you wish to memorize a verse in one try, it will be very difficult. As I said, it is important that you divide your verse into sections to be able to memorize part by part, and not the whole verse at once. Many times people get frustrated when they try to memorize complete verses in one attempt and they cannot do it. If you do not do it in an orderly fashion, you will get discouraged and will give up very soon.

4. Repeat the verse many times until you have it memorized. This is one of the best ways to memorize Scriptures.

Repetition is one of the best ways to memorize Scriptures. Therefore, in order to memorize Scriptures you need to repeat the text that you wish to memorize many times until you have it memorized. Once you have it memorized, you need to repeat the verse many times during that day so you won't forget it. If you do this, you will find out that the verse you memorized one day can be recalled on the next day without any trouble. In order to accomplish, this you need to be a person of patience. Memorizing Scriptures is not something easy. It requires a lot of work and sacrifice; but after you have mastered this practice you will be very thankful to God and yourself for not giving up. Try to take advantage of the opportunities you have to memorize. By this I mean that you will work on your memory at home, at work when you have time, when you're in the car, waiting for a green light, or at the store waiting for your oil change to be made. I mean, everywhere you go, try to work on your memory, because in the long run, it will pay off.

5. Get some index cards.

Index cards are very helpful to you because you can take them everywhere you go. You can write the book, chapter and verse on one side and the whole Scripture on the other side. Use the index cards wherever you go and practice your memory work. If you have a small Testament then you won't need the index cards, because you can take your Bible anywhere you go. Some people prefer index cards, and if you are one of those, then I would suggest you to get them. Look at these when you're at work, school, college, etc. The Bible says that we are to redeem the time (**Eph. 5:16**); therefore, take advantage of the time you have and often repeat the verses you have written on your index cards. Try to write only one Scripture, so you can work on one Scripture at a time.

6. Try to memorize verses by topic.

There has to be order when you memorize Scriptures. You cannot memorize one Scripture here and another Scripture there. If you do this, you will not be able to get the benefit you're really looking for. It is imperative that you memorize verses by topic; that is, memorize verses that have to do with one subject specifically. For example, memorize verses that have to do with the inspiration of the Bible, baptism, repentance, confession, being faithful, sin, heaven, hell, personal growth, etc. If you memorize Scriptures by topic, you will soon have a concordance in your head, which will help you to recall verses on a specific topic. Following this advice will help you a lot when you prepare your sermons, and Bible classes.

Those who have a lot of Scriptures memorized are able to prepare sermons and Bible classes faster than the ones who don't have Scriptures memorized. Why? The answer is simple; those who don't have Scriptures memorized have to go to the concordance in order to find the Scriptures they need; while those that have a lot of Scriptures memorized can recall them faster.

Memorizing verses can also help you answer questions on different subjects of the Bible. I remember one time when I was teaching a Bible class and a lady asked me a question about where we are going to spend eternity. She said that the Jehovah's Witnesses say we are going to live here on earth. Therefore, she wanted to know what the Bible teaches on this subject. Thank God, I was able to quote and give her a lot of Scriptures concerning our future in heaven (for those who are faithful) and not here on earth (**Phil 3:20; John 14:1-4; 2 Pet. 3:10-13; 2 Cor. 5:1-2**).

Having many of Scriptures memorized can help you to quote them while you are preaching your lessons. This way you will be able to sustain what you're saying with the Bible. But if you don't know where they are, or cannot quote them, you will not be able to sustain your claim at that moment. All you are going to say is, **"I'll get back with you on that some other time,"** or **"It is somewhere in the Bible"** That, my friend, is not good for us as preachers to do!! People want evidence, and we can give it to them because that evidence is right there in the Book.

When you memorize Scriptures you will be able to present a BCV, that is, book, chapter and verse. You will be able to recall Scriptures that fit into your lesson at the time you are preaching.

We need to go back to the Bible and use the Scriptures when we're preaching, instead of quoting what men say about the Book, or quoting fables, stories, etc. Let us go back to the Bible and cover our sermons with Scriptures, instead of saying something else. Remember, God's power is in His Word, and not somewhere else.

7. Never memorize a Scripture without Its Book, Chapter, and Verse.

When you memorize Scriptures, try to first memorize the BCV, that is, the book, chapter and verse. Try to memorize where they are found in the Bible. It is a shame not to be able to know where the Bible teaches certain things. We have many Scriptures memorized but most of the time, we do not have the BCV. Just imagine if you quote to a person the Scripture that says **"Ye have fallen from grace"** and not be able to tell that person where that Scripture is found. On one occasion, we were knocking doors in Oklahoma, and all of the sudden, we ran into a Jehovah's Witness. Somewhere along our study we started talking about Hell. The man was trying to defend his false doctrine that Hell did not exist. He was not able to find the Scriptures he wanted to misuse, so we ended up helping him by giving him the Scriptures he wanted, and explained them correctly. Later on, he got out a ready reference where all the Scriptures he wanted were found. Again, it is a shame to try to defend a doctrinal point and not know where those Scriptures are found.

8. You will need a lot of discipline.

This means that you will work for that which you desire; that is, to know them by memory. If you do not have discipline to be able to accomplish this task, you will not be successful. You have to discipline yourself to memorize Scriptures daily, and not just every other week. If you memorized a Scripture Monday, but do not repeat it on Tuesday, by Wednesday that Scripture that you memorized on Monday will be gone. Discipline plays a very important part in being successful at memorizing the Bible. Many today do not memorize Scriptures because of a lack of discipline upon their part. If you do not take this matter seriously, you will not be successful. Therefore, remember that you are a soldier in Christ's army, and as a good soldier, your duty is to memorize God's Word (**Ps. 119:11; Matt. 4:4, 7, 10**).

9. You will need a lot of determination.

Determination will help you to accomplish any task you set your heart to do. Every man who runs in races uses a lot of determination to be able to come to the finish line. You will also need a lot of determination to be able to accomplish your task of memorizing the Scriptures. Determination means a fervent desire to accomplish your goal. I encourage you to keep a positive mind concerning this matter, so that you will be able to be successful.

When using determination keep in mind to practice what you learned (**James 1:22; 2 Tim. 2:15**), and also to use correctly God's Word.

10. You will need your will.

If you are not willing to memorize Scriptures, you will not be successful. You need to be willing to accomplish this very important task. You really need to want to memorize the Bible; otherwise you will not do it. Many do not memorize because they simply do not feel the need to do it. If this is your case, then I suggest to you: Do not keep on reading this material. You need to be willing, and I'm serious about this!! If you're willing to memorize Scriptures, I assure you that God will bless you and help you to accomplish this very important work.

11. You need time to be able to accomplish this.

Time is our worst enemy. Nevertheless, all of us have time to memorize Scriptures, if we just have the will and determination to do it. Many people use the excuse of not having time to memorize, and this is why they don't do it. The Bible teaches that we have time for everything (**Ecc. 3**). We all can spend at least ten minutes trying to memorize one Scripture that will help us to grow spiritually. It is funny how we always have time for everything else, but no time to read or memorize the Bible. This is so wrong, brethren! I encourage you to organize your time. Organize it in such a way that

you always have the time to memorize the Scriptures. Give time to the Lord! Give time to the Scriptures! Give time to your spiritual growth!

All of us can find the time to watch movies, different programs and games. Just like we find time to do these things, let us find time to memorize the Bible. Finding the time to do this will help us in the long run. When you go to work, try to think about the Scriptures that you already have in mind. Instead of listening to music on your way to work, practice your memory work. This will help you to keep them in the long-term memory. If you really wish to accomplish this goal, God will help you to find the time.

12. You will need a lot of love.

Loving the Scriptures will help you to want to memorize them. Many of us need to have the attitude of David who said, **“Oh, how I love thy law, it is my meditation all the day long” (Ps. 119:97)**. If we have this attitude we will be able to memorize the Bible. We also need to have the attitude of Job who said, **“I have not gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have treasured up the words of his mouth more than my necessary food” (Job 23:12)**. We need to... **“As newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation” (1 Pet. 2:2)**. The Bible says, **“If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (John 14:15)**. Therefore, if we love God, we will memorize the Scriptures!!

13. Try to quote from memory the verses that you already know.

The majority of Christians can remember verses that some time in the past they memorized. These verses need to be brought to memory from time to time so that you won't forget them. Try to quote these verses and add them to your list. Maybe you have memorized fifty verses and all you need to do is memorize the BCV (that is, the book, chapter and verse). Try to make a list of the verses that you already know, and repeat them from time to time.

14. Practice the verses that you memorized with your friends, wife, etc.

When you finish memorizing a certain Scripture, try to practice that Scripture with your wife or friends at work. This will help you to do away with fear when you are quoting Scriptures in front of others. This helps people to retain the Scriptures they are storing in their minds. Practice with someone every night, and with your friends at work, whenever you have the time. Quoting Scriptures to others will not only be of benefit to you, but also you will be able to encourage others to do the same!

15. Try to do a word study of the Scriptures you memorize.

When you do a word study of the Scriptures that you are memorizing, it will help you to remember the information that this Scripture teaches. Why? Well, for the simple reason that doing a word study of the Scriptures takes time, and basically, you are taking time with the text. The more time you spend with the text, the more you will be able to remember it. And if you do a word study, you will be able to know what the text really teaches. This will help you to avoid quoting Scriptures out of context!!

16. You will need a lot of concentration!

When you start memorizing Scriptures, it is very important that you do it with much concentration. Be very aware of what you are doing! Do not try to do two things at the same time. When you memorize Scriptures, try to do only this, and nothing else. Do not think about other things when you're memorizing Scriptures. If you do not concentrate on what you're doing, you will not be able to memorize. Many people cannot memorize Scriptures because they are thinking about other things when they are doing this. Try to pick a place where you will not be distracted. Get inside a room where there will not be any noise to distract you. If you pick a place where there is no noise, it will help you to concentrate better. When you study for a very important test, you don't want anybody to distract you. The same thing is true with the practice of memorizing Scriptures. You need time to be alone! Early in the mornings is a good time to try to memorize Scriptures. The reason is because at that time, your mind is fresh and without any worries. Do not force Scriptures into your mind. If you are tired, do not try to memorize at that time. Leave it for some other time.

17. Memorize the central theme.

Another method that can be used to remember Bible verses is the method called "**The central theme.**" What do I mean by this? Well, I mean that you will memorize only the Central theme of the verse. This also means that you will not memorize it word for word, but only what that specific Scripture teaches. With this method the person only gets familiar with the central theme of that verse. With this method, you still have to memorize the BCV. You can memorize more Scriptures using this method, than using the word for word method.

Let me give you an example of this method. When you talk about **Galatians 5:4** you will remember that this Scriptures talks about falling from grace. The central theme of **Romans 5:8** is God's love for men. The central theme of **Mark 16:15** is the great commission. So by remembering **Mark 16:15** you will know what that Scripture talks about. Therefore, using the central theme method, the person, every time one hears a specific Scripture, he will not be able to quote it word for word, but rather will know what that Scripture teaches. When preaching you will be able to quote the central theme. For example, when preaching you can say, "God wants us to be good examples (**1 Tim. 4:12**). He also wants us to be the salt and the light of the world (**Mt. 5:13-14**). Also, He

wants us to be knowledgeable in the Scriptures (**2 Pet. 3:18**.)” If you noticed, I just mentioned the Book, chapter and verse with just the central theme of each of the Scriptures. In the examples I gave you, I did not quote the verse word for word, but only what that verse talks about.

18. Put sin aside.

A heart that is filled with sin will not be able to memorize the Word like God would have us to do. The Word will not be able to be stored in our hearts, if our hearts are filled with trash. You will need a clean heart to be able to memorize the Word of God the right way. The Bible exhorts us to do away with sin (**Eph. 4:11; 2 Cor. 6:17; Eph. 4:17-21; 1 Pet. 2:11; Gal. 5:16; Rom. 13:14; Matt. 5:8; Heb. 12:14**). I encourage all of us to put aside evil thoughts and practices that are not in harmony with God’s Word. Doing this will help us to have a pure heart and a mind ready to memorize God’s Holy Word.

19. You will need to know why you are memorizing Scriptures.

The Christian that wishes to memorize the Word of God must understand the reason why he wants to do this. If you do not have a main purpose for which you wish to memorize God’s Word, then you will not have success in doing it. Therefore, think a lot on this matter. Ask yourself the question, why do I want to memorize Scriptures? What is my reason for memorizing Scriptures? Never memorize Scriptures to be seen of men. Never memorize Scriptures to think highly of yourself. Be honest with yourself, and ask God to help you memorize Scriptures for His glory, and not for your own. If you memorized Scriptures to think that you are somebody, then you have done it for the wrong reason. Whatever we do must be for the glory of God, and not for ourselves. You must memorize the Bible for the right reason and definitely not for the wrong.

Practical Principles About Memorization

1. Try not to use the Scriptures you memorized out of context.

It is very important that you be very careful not to use the Scriptures you memorized out of context. There are many preachers who have memorized lots of Scriptures, but when they use them, they apply them out of context. Quoting Scriptures out of context means that you apply them incorrectly at the time you use them. Remember that a text out of context is a pretext. Make sure that the Scriptures you use in your sermon or class justify the point you are trying to make. Just because you have a lot of Scriptures memorized does not mean that you can use them all in the same way. Explain the Scriptures the right way! Remember, we have a great responsibility to **“handle aright the Word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15)**.

2. Practice the verses you memorize.

By practicing the verses you memorize, I am not saying to repeat the verses you memorized, but to be a **doer** of God's Word. The Bible exhorts us to do this (**James 1:22**). Don't just memorize Scriptures, but also practice what they teach. I can have a lot of Scriptures memorized concerning my responsibility to love my brethren, but if I don't practice those Scriptures, I have failed, and I have not accomplished anything. Keeping God's Word in our hearts implies that we are going to practice what they teach. I encourage you not to be one of those who memorize Scriptures, but do not practice what they teach. Remember, God wants us to live our lives according to His will (**James 1:22**).

3. Keep an attitude of humility.

It is very important that you must be very careful to maintain an attitude of humility when you memorize Scriptures. There are some that have thousands and thousands of Scriptures memorized, but there is one problem with them, they think they are better than everybody else. They put aside humility and dress themselves with pride. Never think you are better than the person next to you just because that person doesn't have Scriptures memorized like you do. Christ is our supreme example. He knew the Word of His Father, but always kept himself humble, and never thought He should be proud. Christ was able to quote lots of Scriptures; nevertheless, He was a humble person. We need to be more like Jesus; always with an attitude of humility! Don't ever expect to be praised just because you have lots of Scriptures memorized. Paul said, "**But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world**" (**Gal. 6:14**). Never give place to the devil to start glorying in yourself (**Eph. 4:27**). Memorize lots of Scriptures, but always keep an attitude of humility.

4. Let them read the passages.

It is important that you let the people read the passages when you study with them. When doing personal work, let those with whom you study read the Scriptures. It is not recommended to quote the Scripture to them, but let them read it for themselves. If you do this, this will help them to see for themselves what the Word of God teaches (**Acts 17:11**). Also, when you preach, let the congregation read some Scriptures. There will be times when you're going to quote Scriptures, but from time to time, let them read the Scriptures.

5. Memorize and retain the Scriptures.

It is very important that you memorize Scriptures, but it is also essential for you to retain those Scriptures in your long-term memory. It is one thing to memorize and

another thing to retain what you memorize. Many have a short-term memory, that is, they remember information only for a short period of time. We are not looking for this kind of memory, because this memory will not help us to retain the Scriptures we memorized. For this reason, repetition and discipline are essential to remembering Scriptures for a long period of time. I want you to remember your Scriptures for many years to come, and not just for a few days. There is no benefit if you memorize many Scriptures, but later on, forget them. Therefore, try to retain the verses you memorize for a long time. Practice the verses every day and repeat them frequently. This will help you remember them for a long time.

6. Ask God for help.

Never try to memorize Scriptures without first asking God to help you love and respect His Word. The Bible exhorts us to pray without ceasing (**1 Thess. 5:17; Col. 4:2; Rom. 12:12; Lk. 18:1**). Praying without ceasing also implies to pray before starting to memorize Scriptures, and also after you finish memorizing. Don't expect God to put the Scriptures in your mind miraculously. You will have to work hard, and with God's help you will accomplish what you wish. It is important for us to be men of the book, but also men of prayer. Depend upon God for everything, and yes, even for memorizing Scriptures! If your desire is genuine, God will help you to do it right!

7. Put God first in your life.

If God is not first in your life, you will not be able to memorize Scriptures the right way. I wrote "**the right way**" because many can memorize Scriptures. It is one thing to memorize Scriptures, and another thing to memorize them the right way, according to the will of God. The Bible says that God must be first in our lives (**Matt. 6:33; Col. 3:1-2**). Therefore, let God be first in your life and then you will have success at memorizing the Bible.

If you practice these principles you will be able to...

1. Have many Scriptures memorized for your own personal and spiritual growth.
2. "Be always ready to give an answer to any man that asks you a reason concerning the hope, which is in you" (**1 Pet. 3:15**).
3. Be an imitator of great examples such as Jesus, and Apollos (**Matt. 3:3, 7, 10; Acts 18:24**).
4. Memorize complete books of the Bible without any problem.
5. Gain experience through the practice of these principles and it will not be difficult to memorize anything.
6. Give advice to your friends and family members through the use of Scriptures, which will be in your heart and ready to be used and quoted to those who need to hear what God thinks.
7. Feel great about yourself when knowing that the Word of God has been stored in your heart (**Jer. 15:16**).

8. Prepare sermons and Bible classes without any problem, since the Word of God will be in your heart like a concordance.
9. Overcome Satan through the use of Scriptures, which will be in your heart (**Ps. 119:9, 11**).
10. Be a walking Bible and a walking concordance!!

How to memorize books of the Bible.

After you have gained experience in memorizing Scriptures, you will be able to take another step, that is, to memorize complete books of the Bible. I will tell you in advance that it is no easy task. It's not easy, but it is not impossible. Such a task can be accomplished. The epistle of Titus can be memorized in one week if you so desire. If you practice the principles already mentioned, and the ones that I will suggest, you will be able to memorize complete books of the Bible.

Here are some practical principles to help you memorize complete books of the Bible

1. Choose the book you wish to memorize.
2. Choose short books that are not long as you begin.
3. Count the chapters and verses in the book you choose.
4. Read the whole book one or two times before you start memorizing. This will help you to have an idea of what you will be memorizing.
5. Divide the chapters into short portions of a few verses.
6. Divide the first chapter in sections of four or five verses per section.
7. Memorize the first four or five verses during the first day, and only repeat those verses throughout the day.
8. After you have memorized these verses, repeat them many times during that day, so that at the end of the day, you'll be able to have them well memorized. Doing this will help you to quote them the following day.
9. If you were able to memorize the first selected verses very quickly, do not try to start another section. Stay with the ones you will memorize that day and practice them many times. If you start another section, you will have too much for that day, and you will end up not doing a good job.
10. After you have memorized the first section, and you're able to quote it next day, then you can start memorizing the second section.
11. When you are finished with the second section, try to quote the first and the second section together, to see if you have them memorized. If you have a hard time quoting all the verses you have memorized, then you need to spend more time with these verses, and don't try to go to the next section.
12. When you have the whole book memorized, try to repeat it many times during the week so that you will not forget it.
13. Remember, dividing the chapters into smaller sections will help you to memorize the verses a lot better.
14. There must be an order and that order must be respected.
15. Take breaks from time to time so that you will not force your mind.

16. Repeat the Scriptures you have memorized aloud and not just to yourself. Repeating the verses aloud will help you to keep them in your mind.
17. Reciting Scriptures aloud will help you to change those Scriptures from short-term memory to long-term memory.
18. Also try to write the verses on a piece of paper just to make sure that you have them well memorized.
19. Experts recommend that a person take a ten-minute break at least every hour that you memorize. If a person studies too much, fatigue will cause our not being able to remember the information (*B. F. Skinner*).
20. Be very persistent in wanting to achieve this goal.

Why many do not memorize Scriptures.

Many are the reasons why people do not memorize Scriptures. Let us observe a few of those reasons, and I hope that you are not using them as excuses for not memorizing God's Word.

Many do not memorize for the following reasons...

1. They do not feel the need to keep God's Word in their hearts.
2. They do not desire to take time to practice memorization. They are so busy watching TV, and doing other things that in reality, do not bring any benefit to their souls.
3. They have not repented of their sins. One who practices sin will not be able to feel the need to love and practice the Word of God; much less will he feel the need to memorize it.
4. One may be indifferent towards the Word of the Lord. A person who has his eyes on the world and not on God will never feel the need to memorize His Word.
5. They do not believe in the potential they have to memorize God's Word. If this is your case, then you need to do away with that mentality and start thinking in a positive. Believe it: **"I can memorize the Word of God"**
6. Some think that memorizing God's Word is not important.
7. Others think that memorizing Scriptures is something too difficult to accomplish. They are partially right, memorizing is not easy; but it also is not impossible.
8. Others have tried before, but have not been successful, probably because they had no discipline or an orderly way of doing it. You need to be determined to do it; otherwise, you will not be successful.
9. Some may not have discipline and patience to accomplish it. If this is your case, you need to work upon these areas.
10. Others are not willing to give the time necessary to the study of God's Word and also to memorize it.

Many are the reasons why some people are not memorizing Scriptures. It is my prayer that these are not the reasons or excuses you are using. Many other reasons could be given; nevertheless, these are the ones we often hear. Now, what is your excuse?

Notice what Robert Taylor Jr. said about how to memorize Scriptures.

“I, sometimes, have people ask me do you have a photographic memory? Well, if I do I never have had any film in it and never have had any batteries to operate it!

I do not know of any other way for a person like myself to memorize than just to go over it and over it and over it. I have had the habit for many years of memorizing a certain number of verses each day, anywhere from about eight, ten, or twelve, and the only way that I have ever found to do that was just to open the Bible, read it a few times, get exactly what each verse says, and then close the book and say it a few times to myself and then open up and see if I have correctly memorized it.

I believe memorization is one of the best things that I have ever done. It allows a person to spend a great deal of time on the verses that he or she memorizes. I, one, time, had a critic of mine say, “Brother Taylor, I think you do too much of your preaching not reading the scriptures or not reading any of your notes.” And, the thought occurred to me, well, I certainly am not ashamed to do something that my Lord did.

If I remember correctly, there is only one time that he ever read the scriptures, and that would be in Luke the fourth chapter when they presented to him a portion of the book of Isaiah; he read from it and then closed the book and made the application. The rest of the time he just simply quoted the Old Testament. He was able to quote it when he met the Devil. He was able to quote it when he was asked questions by his enemies. He was able to quote it when he was asked questions by his own apostles and by his own disciples. He had the Word of God in memory, able to quote it at random.

The idea of preaching without notes requires a lot more study than to depend upon quoting. I was in a gospel meeting in Tupelo, Mississippi, a number of years ago, and after I had presented some three or four lessons some of the brethren in the vestibule were saying, “Have you noticed that brother Taylor is not reading any notes in the presentation of the lessons?”

Brother Darrell Beard, who was the local preacher there, said to the other men, “Yes, brother Taylor is not one of our noted speakers.” It can be done, and I have no objection to a person depending upon his notes. I never did depend upon notes except for the first three or four sermons. The very one that I presented without any notes of any kind I decided that I would tell the story of Joseph in the last few chapters of the book of Genesis, so I just read those chapters enough and presented it without any note at all.”²

² Spiritual Sword Lectures, The Gospel of John—The Gospel of Belief, Questions and Answers Open Forum, pgs. 498-499

Notice the following from Marlin S. Hoffman

“The moral code for the church, Christ’s “Sermon on the Mount,” as recorded by Matthew, should be memorized by every Christian who desires to live and teach others how to live more perfectly.

To convert alien sinners to Christ, one should study and know the book of Acts. The memorization of chapters 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, 22 and 26, which contain the major cases of conversion, would be very helpful.

Any minister, who would like to receive and remember the instruction which Paul gave two young ministers, would be wise to commit to memory, never to be forgotten, I and II Timothy and Titus. For practical, everyday Christian living, the book of James with 108 verses is very good. For the discipline, worship and work of the church the book of Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and others would be good to know. If one desires to spend much time daily for a lifetime to gain greater knowledge and wisdom from the Bible, he would do well to memorize many choice passages and chapters from Genesis, Psalms, Proverbs and other books of the Old Testament.”³

Preaching Without Notes

The practice of preaching without notes or an outline is not common. In this study, I wish to present a few principles regarding the importance of preaching without notes.

What does it mean to preach without notes?

Preaching without notes means that the person who preaches will not depend upon his manuscript or outline to deliver his message. It also means that the person who preaches without notes will depend very much upon his personal study that he has done before the delivery of his sermon.

Preaching without notes does not mean that one preaches without adequate preparation. Preaching without notes also does not mean that one will not use notes in the preparation of the sermon.⁴

Why many people do not preach without notes?

These are some of the reasons I think people do not preach without notes

1. They are not very familiar with the subject they will be preaching.

³ Marlin S. Hoffman, *You Can Memorize God’s Word* (Abilene, TX: Hoffman Publications, 1967) p. 44-45

⁴ Holland, Thomas, *Sermon Design and Delivery* (Shreveport, Louisiana: GUSSIE LAMBERT PUBLICATIONS) p. 83

2. They do not have a lot of confidence in the capacity of their mind.
3. They have not studied the subject they will be preaching very well.
4. They have come to the point in which their notes have become their crutches, and without them, they cannot walk, that is, they cannot preach.
5. They do not think they have the ability to preach without notes.
6. They have never tried to preach without notes.
7. They think that if they don't have their notes, they will not be able to remember what they have studied.
8. They have not gained any experience in memorizing Scriptures.
9. They did not have enough time during the week to internalize their sermon in their hearts.

These could be some of the reasons why some do not preach without notes. There could be other reason; nevertheless, these are the ones that I personally used in the past.

How can I be able to preach without notes?

1. Have more confidence in yourself, and think that you can do it.
2. Study very well your sermon or class, so that at the time of delivery, you will be able to do it without any trouble.
3. Try to discipline yourself as far as memorizing Scriptures, or at least be aware of where those Scriptures are found.
4. Depend very much upon God when you stand in the pulpit to deliver the sermon. This does not mean that God will help you to remember everything you have studied in a miraculous way. You have to do your part in this matter. Remember, **John 14:26** and **16:13** only apply to the apostles and not to you!
5. Pray to God before you start preaching, for God to bless you in presenting what you have spent hours and hours studying.
6. Memorize the main points of your lesson.
7. When you memorize your main points, and study your lesson well, you will be able to present your sermon without notes.
8. Try not to get nervous when you preach without notes. Never give place to being nervous, because this could be the cause of forgetting your material that you have studied.
9. Practice your sermon in advance in a private place. This will help you to review your lesson before you preach it.
10. Do not try to memorize the whole sermon word for word, but instead, try to be very familiar with it.
11. Try to remember your sermon during the week, so that when Sunday comes, you will be ready to preach it without notes.
12. Prepare your sermon ahead of time. This means that you will not prepare your sermon Saturday night.
13. Do not try to recite your sermon word for word, but instead, try to preach it. If you try to recite your sermon word for word, it will be very difficult to remember it; and also, you might not be able to remember everything you wrote.

14. Preparing your sermon ahead of time will help you to have enough time to practice it before you preach it.
15. Try to keep your main points in a logical way, so that you will be able to remember them.
 - a. For example: **“Man’s Greatest Problem — Sin”**
 - i. Definition of this problem — Sin
 - ii. Consequences of sin
 - iii. The solution to the sin problem.
16. Do not use main points that are difficult to remember.
17. Preaching without notes is not easy since it requires much effort and discipline to be able to accomplish it.
18. Preaching without notes requires a lot of study on your part.
19. When preaching, your heart must be in your sermon, which means that your sermon must be in your heart.

Preaching with notes has some disadvantages.

1. We depend too much upon our notes, and when we get lost in our notes, things will not go well.
2. If it is necessary to preach on the spot, you will not be able to do it because you do not have your notes with you at that time.
3. On one occasion *Charles Spurgeon* was asked his comment on one of his students who preached a sermon to see what he thought of that sermon. His comment was: **“Well, only three things. He read it, he read it badly, and it was not worth the reading.”**
4. If we depend too much upon our notes there could be a danger of reading the whole sermon instead of preaching the sermon.
5. Preaching with notes becomes a hindrance to the preacher who tries to keep an eye contact with his audience.
6. The majority of the time, the preacher will keep his eyes on his notes instead of his audience.
7. The preacher will not be ready at all times **(1 Pet. 3:15)**.
8. Just imagine for a moment if you are preaching at the building and all of the sudden the lights go out and you cannot continue to preach, because you cannot see your notes! This would be embarrassing to the preacher!!
9. Now, let me make something clear, I’m not trying to say that preaching with notes is something that is wrong. I’m not saying this at all.
10. I’m just saying that depending upon our notes has some disadvantages.
11. Every preacher needs to use a method, which best works for him. But let me encourage you to pay attention to the disadvantages of preaching with notes.

Preaching without notes has some advantages.

Many are the advantages; let us observe some of them:

1. You will be able to preach at any time, even when asked on the spot (**1 Pet. 3:15**).
2. You will be able to have eye contact with your audience.
3. Preaching without notes can help you to keep your audience listening to the sermon you're preaching.
4. It will help you to develop your mind to be able to think quickly on the spot, during the exposition of your sermon.
5. You will not depend at all upon your notes.
6. You will not have to worry at all about getting lost in your notes.
7. You will be able to retain more information using this method.
8. You will be able to remember lessons you have preached in the past.

Disadvantages of being able to preach without notes:

1. There is a danger of not writing your lessons to keep on file.
2. The preacher needs to practice his ability to write correctly.
3. You might depend only upon the study of your lesson without having to write your sermon.
4. He could be in danger of studying his lesson the last minute without adequate preparation ahead of time.
5. If you don't do it correctly, you could give the impression that you're reciting the sermon instead of preaching it.

B. C. Goodpasture's father encouraged him to preach without notes, or as his father said, "**Shoot without a rest.**" "The father insisted that a preacher did not know his lesson unless he could recite without a book! The son, therefore, has not used a note in preaching within the last forty years... He believes almost anyone can preach without notes if he is willing to pay the price—study until he knows his subject."⁵

Some interesting stories that have encouraged me to memorize Scriptures.

It has been told that in middle Tennessee a court was called and the bailiff could not find the Bible used for swearing witnesses into court. The judge inquired about the delay, and He asked, "Is there a member of the church of Christ here?" A portly, bald blacksmith arose and said, "Sir, I am a member of the Church of Christ." The judge instructed him to come before the bench and then advised the bailiff, "Have the witness

⁵ Willard Collins, *Sermons and Lectures of B. C. Goodpasture* (Nashville, TN: B. C. Goodpasture, 1964), p. 5

put his hand on this man's head. These Church of Christ people know enough Bible that I'll accept the testimony of the witness."⁶

"While you are young and able to memorize and can spend hours in this library in research, there is one important thing to do—Study. When you are older and churches are making great demands of you and your time, there is still just one important thing to do—Study. But, when you are older and others are being put on the shelf, you will be honored and used in the Kingdom if you will just do one more thing—Study." (*Jesse P. Sewell*)

Brother Hardeman Nichols at the Spiritual Sword Lectureship told the following story:

"From a Child Thou Hast Known..."⁷

"Some of us have been exceedingly blessed in having been reared in homes where the Word of God was respected and taught from our earliest recollections. It should make us humbly grateful for such godly parents, who like Lois and Eunice taught us the Word of God. Of course, we attended every service of the church, and all of the classes. We were always expected to study the lesson before class time also. But, beside these routines, we were constantly reminded of the importance of the Scriptures in the home. We were encouraged to learn entire chapters of the Bible while Dad would be away, so that we could quote them to him when he returned from gospel meetings. Although he would usually give us a dollar upon a job well done, he would impress us with the fact that we needed to learn the Word for our own edification and spiritual growth. In my youth, the ominous menace of polio was pervasive each summer. My mother required us to take a nap, or at least to lie down on a pallet, while she read to us from the Bible. It remains as one of the sweetest memories of my youth.

There were also the family devotionals, which we held around the breakfast table when all eight of us children were required to be present. That usually was the only meal when we could all be present without conflicting schedules of school and work interfering. It was our practice for each one to quote a passage of Scripture and cite where it was found. An incident happened at one of those table devotionals that we have related many times. Dad had been at the hospital the night before visiting with a patient. Her husband was there, and Dad invited him to come spend the night at our home instead of driving the lengthy distance out to his farm. He said in that way he could get some rest, and the hospital could call our home if his wife's condition worsened. Then he could check on her the next morning after an early breakfast. Upon Dad's insistence, the man stayed in our guest room over night. The next morning at breakfast, Dad explained our custom of each one quoting a passage before we ate. In fact, our plates were turned upside down on the table until we gave our memory work! Now, the man was not a member of the

⁶ Guild, A. Claude, *Training Men To Preach* (Fort Worth, TX: GUILD PUBLICATIONS) p. 54

⁷ Hardeman Nichols, "The Authority Of The Bible" (Spiritual Sword Lectureship, Memphis, TN) p. 205

church, and he in fact was not particularly religious. Upon the explanation, Dad said he did not have to participate, but he said he would like to do so. The devotional would begin with Dad, then Mother, and the children from the oldest to the youngest, saying their verse for the day. Then we could turn our plate over and following a prayer we could enjoy the breakfast. Later our guest said that he became frantic for he could not think of a single passage he had ever heard, and it was getting closer to his turn. Finally, he had thought of one: "Jesus wept." So, relaxing a bit, he listened as the last of the eight children were repeating their verses. I was next to last and I quoted, "Pray without ceasing." Hudson was the last and youngest and he said, "Jesus wept." The man was so shocked when Hudson said the verse he was going to use that he blurted out, "He shore did!" and turned his plate over and was ready to eat!

Let me encourage you and your family to have some ways of your own to talk of the Holy Scriptures and to study them for your own benefit. Other things like entertainment and play should not crowd out the knowledge of God's Word. I am reminded of an incident, which happened to me during those formative years at home. G. A. Dunn, Sr. was a popular evangelist throughout the Southern section of the nation and was noted as one who knew the Bible from cover to cover. He would be a guest in my parents' home during some of those meetings. I remember one afternoon that we children in the neighborhood were playing croquet in the yard when Brother Dunn came to the back door and called, "Hardeman, will you please come in and read the Bible to me while I rest?"

I did not even lay my mallet down, but took it into the guest room where our guest was already relaxed on the daybed. He had removed the celluloid collar from his dress shirt, and had taken off his shoes (they must have been size fourteen and very narrow!). He had his pince-nez glasses in his hand and without opening his eyes, he said, "Turn to Psalm 119 and read it to me." That I knew was the longest segment of Scripture in the whole Bible! I turned my croquet mallet upside down, laid the Bible upon the mallet head and began to read. The Psalm was much longer than I remembered! While reading I counted ahead the number of pages in the Psalm. Six pages! One hundred seventy-six verses! My croquet game was going to be delayed far longer than I had anticipated! I was only down to about verse 30 when I thought my audience had gone to sleep, so I decided I would skip over to closing verse, read it, and tiptoe out to resume my game.

As I started to read that concluding verse, Brother Dunn never moved, but said, "Hardeman, I think you skipped from verse 30 to verse 176. Verse 31 says, "I cleave unto thy testimonies, O Jehovah..." and without a single fumble, he quoted the remainder of that long Psalm word for word! When he finished, I said, "Brother Dunn, when did you ever memorize all of that?" Only then did he open those beady eyes as he stretched with a yawn and said, "Oh, while out playing croquet!" I did not enjoy the rest of our game nearly as much as before.

I have thought about that incident many times, and perhaps some of my conclusions are attempts at self-justification. I am sure that recreation is a commendable part of a child's (and adult's) life; however, that day I learned that some things cannot be accomplished

alone by playing games. It had been impressed upon me that some things are more important and enduring than games and play. The apostle Paul taught Timothy that vital truth also. He insisted, “**Bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things**” (1 Tim. 4:8).

“READING THE BIBLE”⁸

It is **ONE** thing to “read the Bible through;”
ANOTHER thing to read to **LEARN** and **DO!**
SOME read it as their duty”—once a week,
But no instruction from the Bible seek.

One reads to “bring himself into repute”
By showing others how he “can dispute!”

While **OTHERS** read “because their neighbors do;”
To see how **LONG** `twill take to “read it through.”

SOME read it for the wonders that are there—
How David killed a lion, and a bear.
While **OTHERS** read with uncommon care—
HOPING to find “some contradiction” there!

One reads “with father’s specks upon his head,”
And “sees” the things just as his father **SAID!**
Some read to “prove” a pre-adopted creed,
Hence understanding but **LITTLE** what they read;

For every passage in the Book they bend
To make it suit that “all important” end!
So **MANY** people in these latter days
Have read the Bible in so **MANY** ways

That **FEW** can tell which “system” is the best;
For **EVERY** party contradicts the rest!
But read it **PRAYERFULLY**, and you will see
Although **MEN** contradict, God’s **WORD AGREES!**

For what the early Bible prophets wrote
We find that Christ and His apostle’s quote.
SO TRUST NO CREED THAT TREMBLES TO RECALL
WHAT HAS BEEN PENNED BY ONE AND VERIFIED BY ALL!

⁸ Johnny Ramsey, “*Back To Bible Preaching*” (Abilene, TX: Quality Publications, 1982) p. 16

Verses To Live By...

“Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth”
(2 Timothy 2:15)

“Thy word have I laid up in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.”
(Psalms 119:11)

“But sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you.” (1 Peter 3:15)

“But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” (2 Tim. 3:14-15)

“Through thy precepts I get understanding, therefore, I hate every false way.
Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”
(Psalms 119:104-105)

“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
To Him be glory both now and ever. Amen.”
(2 Peter 3:18)

**Willie Alvarenga
P.O. Box 210667
Bedford, TX 76095
(817) 268 3222**

**© Copies of this material can only be made by permission from the
author.**