



Practices for

LIFE WITH JESUS

Part 5: The Practice of Memorizing Scripture

Memorizing scripture engraves God's word onto our minds and hearts.

Why?

Matthew 4:1 – 11

- Simply put, God's word is precious and powerful. This passage does not explicitly say, "Memorize Scripture!" It is a picture of Jesus as King, victorious over Satan. But through this description of Jesus being tempted and His responses, we see the value of scripture being engraved onto His mind and heart. Hence, we should engrave God's word onto our minds and hearts.
- Scholars say that this test/temptation of Satan refers back to the Shema in Deuteronomy 6. The Shema is absolutely foundational to the Hebrew faith. Jews would typically say this prayer every morning and evening. It explicitly speaks of a culture whereby the preciousness and power of God's word is exemplified by memorizing and reciting it.
- The first test is a test of the heart (*Lev*), speaking to the deepest convictions and desires – a core desire of hunger. Jesus responded by quoting Deuteronomy 8:3; It is written: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." Jesus' response shows that He uses God's word to defend Himself from temptation and that God's word is more precious than bread.
- The second test is a test of Jesus' soul (*Nephesh*). The word "soul" is referring to Jesus' whole person, His entire physical being. In response to this temptation, when Satan takes a truth of God protecting His own and then twists it into a self-centered act, Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:16, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."

- The last test is a test of Jesus' strength (*Meod*). But this is more than just strength. It literally means "very, really, much." To test all of Him – to rule the world now rather than in God's way and in His timing. Jesus responds by quoting Deuteronomy 6:13, echoing the ten commandments, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only."
- Where the Jews failed in the wilderness, Jesus is victorious. And it is poetic justice that at the end of Matthew, in contrast to Satan taking Jesus to a very high mountain and falsely offering all the kingdoms, Jesus has died and risen again, and He goes atop a mountain and says, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me..."
- Why memorize scripture? Simply, God's word is precious and powerful. It is precious because it is God-breathed. It gives us LIFE and directs us in His ways. It is powerful because it comes from the source of all power and protects us from the evil one.

"Clearly, Jesus had a practice of saturating Himself in and memorizing the words of His Father, a practice that helped Him center Himself and overcome in every circumstance. To follow Jesus, then, we too must adopt the practice of committing scripture to memory. Impressing God's words into our neural hardwiring helps us rest in the presence of God, resist temptation, root ourselves in God's redemption story, and ward off anxiety." Jasona Brown

"I know of no other single practice in the Christian life more rewarding, practically speaking, than memorizing scripture...No other single exercise pays greater spiritual dividends! Your prayer life will be strengthened. Your witnessing will be sharper and much more effective. Your attitudes and outlook will begin to change. Your mind will become alert and observant. Your confidence and assurance will be enhanced. Your faith will be solidified." Chuck Swindoll

How?

- **Pray:** Ask the Lord to lead you to passages that speak to you. Memorize a verse/passage that is meaningful to you.
- **Do a little each day:** Notebook, index card, Apps, review, review, review.
- **Practice in the time gaps:** Recite verses to start the day, while waiting for someone, or even while driving.
- **Bring it to life:** Draw out verses, speak them out loud, recite them with others; add a topic to the verse to create a mental hook.
- **Resources:** Mole Skin notebook, on a refrigerator, vanity mirror, Chegg Flashcards App, "Verses for Life" App (topical memory system).

What?

- What should we memorize?
- **Start the day:** Psalm 96:1-4, Psalm 100, Ephesians 3:16-19, Revelation 4:11
- **Our Identity in Christ:** Zephaniah 3:17, Psalm 139:13-14, 2 Corinthians 3:4-6, 1 Corinthians 15:10
- **Peace:** Isaiah 41:10, John 14:27, Philippians 4:5-7