

Hiding God's Word In My Heart

Franklin Church of Christ
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PM Worship

Introduction:

How many times have we heard **Psalm 119:11**—"Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You."? We want to remember the word. But we all have such poor memories. How many times do we say, "I have a terrible memory. I can't remember names, numbers or even why I came into this room." These attacks on our memory hinder our ability to hide God's word in our hearts. Note some key points to help you remember God's word.

Discussion:

- I. What am I talking about when I speak of remembering God's word?
 - A. When I say "remember God's word," what pops into your mind? Memory verses, right? That is definitely a part of remembering God's word. In **Matthew 4**, Jesus remembered actual verses and quoted them (**Deuteronomy 6:13, 16; 8:3**). We need to do likewise.
 - B. This is about more than memory verses. When Paul exhorted Timothy to continue in the things he had learned from childhood (**II Timothy 3:14-15**), he was talking about principles, concepts and teaching. Remembering the word of God is being able to recall the point of scripture and apply it to our lives.
 - C. How often do we hear sermons that affect, challenge or encourage us and we want to remember them? Yet a few weeks later, all the points are lost and our lives do not change.
 - D. How often do we stumble across a passage that helps us answer a difficult question? Or perhaps a passage that we know will be helpful in a discussion? We underline it, highlight it, read it out loud and then say, "I am going to remember where this is." Months go by, the discussion comes up again and we can't find the verse.
 - E. How often have we struggled with a difficult passage and believed we finally grasped its meaning? Then a few months later someone asks us about it, we look at it, we know we "figured it out" before, but can't remember what we had figured out?
 - F. All of this is about hiding God's word in our hearts. All of it has to do with memory. I am not about to provide you keys to perfect memory. No one will be able to recall every detail of everything studied or learned. But we can improve our memory of God's word.
- II. Be motivated to remember.
 - A. This may sound overly simple, but we will not remember things if we have no desire to remember them. As a child, I rarely remembered to take out the trash. Why? I did not want to.
 - B. Allow me to provide the motivation. **Psalm 119:11** demonstrates that remembering the word of God is key to overcoming sin. Satan is on the prowl (**I Peter 5:8**). He will attack tonight. He will attack tomorrow. If we want the slightest hope of overcoming, we must remember God's word.
 - C. Remembering God's word is not a parlor trick with which to impress our friends. It is an imperative part of salvation. Do not be deceived, if we do not remember God's word, we will die. Not because God has a prerequisite amount of memory work, but because we have neglected one of the major tools God has given to protect us from Satan's attacks (*cf.* **Ephesians 6:14-17**).
- III. Pay attention.
 - A. Have you ever laid something down and could not find it? When you finally found it, it was right where you put it. This lack of memory was really lack of attention. To remember the word of God, you have to pay attention to it. Reading a verse nonchalantly, even repeatedly, will not impress it upon our minds. Just reading the Bible every day will not make us remember what it says. Coming to class and worship will not, by themselves, implant God's word in our hearts.
 - B. This was Jesus' point whenever He said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" [**Matthew 11:15 et al**]. **Hebrews 2:1** says we must give heed to what we hear or we will drift away. According to **Proverbs 5:1-2**, our lips will retain knowledge only when we pay attention.
 - C. Consider some keys for paying attention:
 1. Our minds often step in line with our body. If we let our body get all relaxed, our mind will do the same thing. Thus, if we do our reading or memorizing in bed or our easy chair, we will likely have trouble. Instead, do it sitting up at a desk or at the kitchen table. If we want to

remember a class lesson or a sermon, we mustn't lay our heads down, rest our eyes or hunch over with our elbows on our knees. Let's sit up straight. Keep our bodies in an alert and attentive position and our minds will find it easier to be alert and attentive.

2. We should read as much of the Bible every day as we can. But for the memory's sake, instead of reading three chapters at one sitting, read one chapter a piece at three different times. Instead of reading for 30 minutes, read for 10 minutes 3 times a day. That allows your mind to work on processing smaller chunks and does not overwhelm it with big ones. If your mind can process and devote attention to more for longer periods go for it.
3. We can take notes. By taking notes, I do not mean just copying what we read or what we see on overheads. I mean, writing down in our own words what we are hearing and reading. The very nature of taking notes forces us to pay attention.
4. We may repeat what we are hearing or reading. If we are in an assembly, we can repeat it in our minds out of respect of the order of our assembly. If we are at home, we may repeat it out loud. This is one of the few times where engaging our mouths helps engage our minds.

IV. Review and repeat.

- A. If we do the above, we will lock many things in our short term memory. But we do not want to remember for a few days, we want to remember as much as we can for as long as we can.
- B. This is accomplished by repetition and review. Too often, we think it is a waste of time to hear or read the same things over and over again. However, what did Peter say in **I Peter 1:12-15**? He said as long as we are in this tent, we need to be reminded of the things we have already learned. Have you ever wondered why some of the points in **Galatians** mirror **Romans**? Why are **Ephesians** and **Colossians** so similar? Is it possible that God realizes the need for repetition? Reading one book automatically repeats what we learned in another book.
- C. Did we memorize a verse this morning? Then review it again this evening. Review it again tomorrow. Repeat it again in a week and in a month. We should call it back to our minds repeatedly. That will help us lock it in long term memory.
- D. Did we just finish reading **Matthew**? Before we go on to read **Mark**. Read **Matthew** again.
- E. If we have taken notes, we can review by looking at our notes. We do not necessarily have to listen to a sermon or read the Bible book again right now. Notes written in our Bible will help us recall what we had earlier studied when we get to difficult passages again. As with the memory verse, we should review what we have learned repeatedly. By the way, one of the reasons for good notes is we will never remember everything. If we have filed good notes well, when we cannot recall something, we can look it up easily. That process also works as review.

V. Tell someone else about it.

- A. Whenever we read scripture, memorize passages or listen to lessons, do so with a view of telling someone else what we have learned. This accomplishes two things. First, it forces us to pay attention when we are learning. We cannot explain it to someone else if we did not pay attention. Secondly, we are automatically reviewing and repeating what we have learned.
- B. Paul told Timothy in **II Timothy 2:2** to take what he had heard and commit it to faithful men who will in turn teach others also. There is really no better way to call to memory what we have learned than following this pattern. When somebody asks us what we did today, we can tell them about our study and how excited we were when we learned whatever it was we learned. Those of us who are married, can tell our spouses about it. Parents can teach children about it and children, parents. We can call a brother or sister in Christ and share with them what we learned. When we go to lunch after worship with brethren, we can discuss the lesson with them—not dissecting and destroying it, but recalling it.

Conclusion:

Having said all of this, keep in mind that remembering God's word is about growing. As Peter says in **II Peter 1:5, 8**, our knowledge is to be increasing. Knowledge is simply recall of what we have learned. Just because we cannot remember everything we would like today, does not mean we are terrible Christians. It means we are growing Christians. Work at it, be diligent. If we pay attention to God's word, review what we have learned and tell others about it, our memory will grow.