**USE IT or LOSE IT**

***The Power Of Memorizing***

Use it or lose it. We have all heard that many times, but the reality of it is so true. If we don’t use our physical, mental or spiritual skills we will soon lose them, just like the one-talent man in Jesus’ parable (Matt. 25:14-30). Physically, if I don’t use my muscles, they will decline and atrophy (just ask any ex-athlete). Mentally, if I don’t challenge my brain to keep learning, it will slowly become less functional (ask many retirees). Spiritually, if I don’t press forward, I will drift backward and lose my soul (ask any lukewarm Christian – Rev 3:16).

Paul said we must “*press forward*” in our spiritual walk (Phil. 3:13-14). One way we can do that is to discipline our mind and soul by the memorizing of scripture. Having a “ready recollection” (to use a worn-out phrase) of Bible verses at your fingertips is a powerful faith-building exercise. Imagine the value of quoting, and actually believing and living, this verse: “*I will delight myself in Your statutes;* ***I will not forget Your word***” (Psa 119:16). To have in your heart, and on your tongue, the attitude of Jeremiah when he said, “*Your words were found, and I ate them,* ***And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart***” (Jer. 15:16).

Moses told Israel, after giving them God’s Word, “*Therefore* ***you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul****, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes*” (Deut 11:18). Solomon gave great advice when he told his son concerning the scriptures to: “***Bind them continually upon your heart****; Tie them around your neck. When you roam, they will lead you;* ***When you sleep, they will keep you; And when you awake, they will speak with you***” (Prov 6:21-22). In other words, memorize it!

Jesus Himself said, “*Man shall not live by bread alone,* ***but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God***” (Matt. 4:4). Live today by being nourished upon those spiritual words from God’s mouth. Know them by heart. Use it, or lose it.

Recently at Northwest several members have been working on memorization of chosen passages of scripture. We worked on Ephesians 1, then Psalm 1. Everyone was free to work on any verse(s) they wanted, with the sole emphasis on committing God’s word to memory.

Several years ago I put together a personal list to create in my heart a greater love for God. It was a simple program that focused on just one verse per week (surely that is a doable goal), but it made me concentrate on that aspect of God all week, greatly strengthening my faith. For those who have not yet started a simple, doable memorization plan then maybe this will get you kick-started. It works family devotions as well. But whether or not you use this, or one of your own making, I do pray you will take our heavenly Father’s words and “*bind them continually upon your heart*.”

52 verses in 52 weeks.

The following passages of scripture can be easily adjusted to fit the mentality of each child or adult. I suggest you buy a stack of 3x5 or 4x6 index cards and make copies for each person to carry with them throughout the day, or put on a refrigerator for the children to see, or make a rolodex-style flip chart for the dining room table. Choose your own translation you want to use. Simply read the verse aloud at least 10 times, emphasizing each part, until you can then speak it from memory. Do it every day for a week. You will be surprised at how quickly you nail them down, especially by repeating them weekly before you start your next verse. Make it fun. “*Delight yourself in God’s word*.” (Psa. 119:16,24,35,47,70,77,92,174).

**13 Verses On God’s Character**

1) Exo. 34:6 2) Deut. 7:9 3) Psa. 46:10 4) Rom. 11:33 5) Jam. 1:17
6) Psa. 139:14 7) Rom. 1:20 8) Acts 17:27 9) Psa. 8:9 10) I Cor. 1:9
11) Luke 11:13 12) Eph. 1:3 13) Psa. 121:1-2

**13 Verses On God’s Promises**

1) Psa. 145:18 2) Prov. 16:3 3) Rom. 8:28 4) Phil. 4:13 5) Isa. 40:31
6) I Cor. 2:9 7) Jer. 29:11 8) Prov. 3:5-6 9) Psa. 139:14 10) I Cor. 10:13
11) Psa. 138:8 12) 2 Cor. 9:8 13) Psa. 73:23-24

**13 Verses On God’s Word**

1) Deut. 6:6-7 2) Rom. 15:4 3) Psa. 119:11 4) Psa. 119:105 5) Matt. 4:4
6) John 17:17 7) Rom. 1:16 8) Rom. 10:17 9) 2 Tim. 3:16 10) Heb. 4:12
11) I Thess. 2:13 12) John 12:48 13) Rev. 22:18-19

**13 Verses On God’s Salvation**

1) John 3:16 2) I Tim. 2:5 3) 2 Pet. 3:9 4) Acts 17:30 5) Matt. 10:32
6) Acts 4:12 7) Gal. 3:26-27 8) Mk. 16:16 9) Heb. 11:6 10) Acts 22:16
11) John 14:6 12) Rom. 6:4 13) I Cor. 15:58

Before you begin, start with this as your theme verse, and as your motivation:

Psalm 119:97 “*Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day*.”

Remember, use it or lose it. Let’s use it. – Rick