

**Russell Kelfer**

# **The Miracle of Memorization**

**(Part 2)**

**513-A**

**Series: Promises and God's Word**

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Note: Russell wrote each of these lessons in a manner that would enable him to clearly communicate them to his weekly class. The grammar or punctuation you encounter may not be technically perfect, but you will certainly “hear” his unique gift for making the message applicable to the common man in everyday situations.

It’s been said of him that he was really a writer who read his stuff. And that’s a very accurate statement!

May you be richly blessed as you “hear” as you read.

# The Miracle of Memorization

## (Part 2)

In the last few lessons we have been dealing with Joshua 1:1-9. First of all, we dealt with the promise of God's presence. He said, "I want you to remember what I did for Moses. I'm not going to fail you, and I'm not going to forsake you."

God used Moses simply as a reference point. He said, "These promises are yours. I'm not going to fail you. I will not forsake you." What this means is that God will not be less than adequate for you. He will not be less than available for you.

The priorities were found in the next verse. He said, "I want you to be strong and of good courage." He repeated this again in verse 9. Two lessons ago we dealt with the fact that strength is inner endurance based upon God's adequacy. Courage is a visible expression of inner strength.

God goes on to say that there is a prerequisite. It is total, absolute obedience. We all shrink back and say that we can't be strong, and we can't be courageous. We say, "I've tried, but I can't be absolutely obedient." God says, "I want you to not turn to the left or the right. I want you to get on the freeway and stay there."

In the last lesson, we dealt with how we can get off on the access road and ride alongside of the freeway and think that we are in an adequate working position spiritually, until all of a sudden, the access road veers off in the opposite direction. Because we were not in total obedience, we missed the mark.

The power source is the fourth aspect. This is where we begin in verses 8,9 and 10. The fact is that the source of our power is no less than the Word of God. Nothing else. It is the way that we can become strong and courageous. It is the way that we can be assured of victory over the enemy because it says in verse 5, there shall not be any man able to stand against thee.

We are told that we can be strong, courageous and have total victory over the enemy. We are told that we can have total obedience. We can have prosperity and success. There is not a

one of us here that doesn't vote for that.

Both the question and the solution are found in verses 8-9. You can have prosperity and success. They are all available directly from God. But, there is a procedure or process that we must go through to accomplish this end.

### THE PROCESS

Principle 1- It is a commandment from God. We dealt with this in the last lesson. He said, "Be strong and be courageous." He said, in regards to the same principle, "The Word of God shall not depart from your mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night." These are absolute commandments from the mouth of God. These are not viable options for someone who desires something a little extra in the Christian life. These are musts.

Principle 2- There is only one source of this strength and that is the Word of God.

Principle 3- It is a process, not an experience. We dealt with this also in the last lesson. There are two aspects of having the Word in your mouth. One is that it means literally to receive readily. Secondly, it means to have it instantly accessible. In other words, we are to have it on the tip of our tongues.

Principle 4- Memorization is the only viable alternative for meditation to work. If these things are true, if the Word is the only source, if it is a commandment and if we are to both have it accessible in our minds and readily receive it, the only way to do it is to memorize it. We recall basically 10% of what we hear. We recall 20% of what we hear and read. We recall 50% of what we hear, read and study over a period of time. But we recall roughly 100% of what we hear, read, study, memorize and meditate. The way to get a grip on the Word of God is to memorize it.

### Four Aspects of Memorization

There are four aspects regarding memorization:

The first is to memorize. Saturate your mind with a particular verse like you did with Joshua 1:8-9.

The second area is to review. This is to continue to call back to remembrance the verse you memorized. If you don't do that, 6 weeks from now I will ask you to say Joshua 1:8-9. The chances are that 25% of you will be able to do it. The other 75% will remember the words, remember the thought and remember

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where it is, but you will not be able to share it readily. If you memorize and review it on a regular basis between now and then, it will be more engraved in your heart than now. You will not need to glance at it, you will simply have it at your fingertips. It will be like our volunteer who shared Ephesians 2:8-9. He had memorized it five years before. Once it is memorized, it is there.

The third area is to meditate. As you recall a verse, enter into the verse as a person. We will get to this more in the next lesson.

The fourth area is to apply it. Memorize, review, meditate and apply. To apply means to obey and rely on what the meditation has produced in your heart. We will get to some illustrations of this in the next lesson.

Principle 5- What are the objections to memorizing the Scriptures? You may say, “This is a negative approach.” I want to deal with it in total honesty. As Christians, we come up with the most ridiculous excuses for not doing the will of God. I want to go through these excuses very quickly. Some of them take care of themselves. I want us to shoot down any arguments that the enemy may be penetrating in our own minds.

*The first question is one of legalism.* I would like to suggest to you that doing something on a regular basis in obedience to the Word of God, whether you feel like it or not, is not legalism. It is obedience. Legalism is when you focus on the procedure and make it your god rather a means to an end in itself.

I’ve heard people say, “It seems that it is hypocritical to memorize Scripture, if you don’t really feel led to.” I think the Greek word for that is “hogwashio.” When you are so sick in the hospital that you don’t feel like eating, what does the doctor do? Does he leave you alone? No. He gives you intravenous injections because you don’t have the ability or the sense to eat for yourself. He feeds you because you need food then more than any other time in your life. That is the way it is spiritually. When you don’t feel like getting into the Word, that is the time you need it the most. If you are waiting for your feelings to motivate you, you have a real problem.

*Second question we often ask is, “What if I don’t want to?”* That is another good, legitimate excuse. That is all it is. Having the “want to’s” really has nothing to do with having the “supposed to’s”. Some of you are parents. I don’t think that you would ever accept that as an excuse from your child when you call them

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in and say, "I want you to clean up for supper. I want you to sit down and eat your food." If they say, "I don't want to." You say, "Excellent. Now let's sit down and talk about why we are going to."

Isaiah 33:13 is a good passage.

Hear, you who are afar off, what I have done;  
And you who are near, acknowledge My might. (NKJV)

*The third argument that I often hear from those of you who are young in the Lord is "I am not in fellowship".* Being in fellowship is having things between you and God, such as unconfessed sin in your life, out of the way and having yourself in the position where you really feel that you and God are in a perfect relationship. A lot of Christians say, "I can't memorize this week because I've been out of fellowship. I don't have the right relationship with the Lord." As Isaiah 33:13 tells us, it really doesn't matter if you are nearby or far off, you need to listen to what the Lord has to say.

"But you, son of man, hear what I say to you. Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you."

Now when I looked, there was a hand stretched out to me; and behold, a scroll of a book was in it.

Then He spread it before me; and there was writing on the inside and on the outside, and written on it were lamentations and mourning and woe. (Ezekiel 2:8-10 NKJV)

Moreover He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel."

So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll. (Ezekiel 3:1,2 NKJV)

*The fourth one is, "What if I am angry with God?"* That question doesn't even bear a good answer. The first thing you do is to confess it as sin then you get into the Word. All of us have said this. We may say, "I have a bitter spirit toward God. It seems like an unfortunate time for me to get into the Word of God." That is exactly the opposite. This is the time to get into the Word and fall at His feet to remind yourself of who He is.

An excuse of weakness or inability is next and is the one we hear the most. "I just can't memorize." Some of you can't very well. But, those same people, if you ask them to dial a phone number, oftentimes can pick up the phone, and you will be amazed at the numbers they will remember.

### Principles of Memorization

The key to this is Exodus 4:10-12. This is the passage that was shared a few lessons ago.

Then Moses said to the LORD, “O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”

So the LORD said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD?”

Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.” (Exodus 4:10-12 NKJV)

Moses argued with Him some more. God finally said, “Okay, if that is the way you want it, I will give you a helper.”

The Lord said, “Who made your mind anyhow?” I know that it is not a natural thing for some of you to memorize. That is fantastic, because it brings us to the second point. His strength is made perfect in weakness. This really means that if you have a natural bent for memorizing, you, in the flesh, can memorize the Word. God will use it. But you will miss a portion of the blessing that those of us receive who do not have a natural bent to memorize. In our lives, because we do not have that natural ability, we need a supernatural ability. We go to the Lord, and we must ask Him.

*First-principle of memorization is to remember the principle to ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find?* We say, “Lord, I can’t memorize. I forget where I live. I have to get out my driver’s license to make sure I am pulling into the right driveway. Lord, would you supernaturally enable me to memorize? I will start out slowly, and I am going to ask You to perform a miracle in my life. That is Your business. I know it is the will of God, and if I ask anything according to Your will, You hear me.”

Ask God. Take one verse for the next week like you did for the last lesson. Watch God perform a miracle. Who will get the glory? He will. You will be amazed. You will fall down on your knees. You will praise Him because He did something that you could not do.

*The second principle of memorization is God will test your faithfulness when you first begin to memorize.* You say, “I prayed that prayer. I asked God. I spent 30 minutes trying to memorize Joshua 1:8,9. Nothing happened. I can only remember part of it.”

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That is a good start. God will test your faithfulness. Do you remember what He did with Moses? Do you remember the kind of tests He gives us? He wants to find out if we are faithful in the few things. He will then make us ruler over the many things. The principle is that He is judging you by what you are doing with what you have. Do you remember the parable of the talents? He is not judging whether you have the 10 talents are the 2. He is judging whether you are a 2-talent man or woman on how you are investing the 2 talents.

Some of you can memorize 1 verse a week. Some of you are 2 verses a week. Some of you are 4 verses a week. We can memorize, Thus saith the Lord, this week and then start on the next phrase the next week. The key is that we have to be honest with ourselves. If you are a 1 verser you will need to set aside 4 times as much time. Common arithmetic tells us that you will be able to do the same thing in 4 times as much time. This is before God begins to supernaturally reveal Himself to you. You can in 4 times as much time do the same thing that somebody else might do in one. There is really no problem. All we have to do is set aside 4 times as much time. You say, "That is terrible." It may mean as much as 15 minutes a day for you.

*The third principle of memorization is motivation.* We dealt a little with this under the part of legalism. I Peter 2:2 says:

As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that  
you may grow thereby, (NKJV)

Crave it. You say, "That is a feeling." No, it is not. If it was a feeling, it wouldn't be a commandment. You can't command your feelings. It is a commandment that you put yourself into a position that the Word of God is the very desire of your life. That is what this verse means. You hear some people say, "I sure will be anxious when God gets me to the point where I desire the sincere milk of the Word."

You are supposed to. It is a commandment. There are ways to do it. The Word of the Lord is the only thing that has self-producing motivation. Oh taste and see that the Lord is good. This is the principle because faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. It produces its own desire.

You say, "How do I get a hunger for the Word?"

Eat it. Taste it. Memorize it. The more you get the more you



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want. Some of us are this way about food. I suggest that this is a dieter's delight. If you want a challenge, something to do besides eating, every time you go to reach for that snack, reach for a Scripture pack and begin to eat the Word. Ask the Spirit of God to satisfy your soul with the living Word.

*The fourth principle of memorization is the process of perseverance.*

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it

And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.

Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.

But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. (I Corinthians 9:24-27 NKJV)

The process of perseverance is the principle. Imagine an athlete. He trains because he is supposed to, not because he wants to. He doesn't say, "I have a weakness here" as an excuse. He works on his weaknesses. An athlete knows that progress breeds motivation. As he has success, he is motivated to press on. He wants to get to the top.

The same is true in talents or skills. The same thing is true in the military. Paul told us in other passages that we should be like military trainees. We are being trained for battle. You bring your mind, your body and your spirit under subjection.

The last area is the prerequisite for proper priorities. This is what it all comes down to. Matthew 6:33, says if we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, these other things will fit into their proper perspective.

Job 23:10-12 is a good passage to study.

But He knows the way that I take;  
When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.

My foot has held fast to His steps;  
I have kept His way and not turned aside.

I have not departed from the commandment of His lips;  
I have treasured the words of His mouth

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More than my necessary food.

(NKJV)

Wow. That hurts. In other words, what we have to do is set aside priorities. Psalm 119 is a good passage. The Job passage tells us that if you run out of time to memorize the Word, you don't eat. You say, "Well I need to make money and do other things." Now I don't meant to say that you need to quit your job. Psalm 119:72 says,

The law of Your mouth is better to me  
Than thousands of coins of gold and silver.

(Psalm 119:72 NKJV)

Therefore I love Your commandments  
More than gold, yes, than fine gold! (Psalm 119:127 NKJV)

I opened my mouth and panted,  
For I longed for Your commandments. (Psalm 119:131 NKJV)

These are some of the objections that the flesh likes to raise. These are some of the answers that the Scripture gives.

### WHAT SPECIFICALLY DOES SCRIPTURE MEMORY DO?

First of all, it affects our prayer life. How many of you have memorized 40-50 verses? Have you found a difference in your prayer life because of those verses? Why? "Because when I am claiming promises I know the promises. I am able to intercede using God's Word." We talked about praying and interceding with God's Word a few lessons ago. We are praying with authority as Jesus did in John 17. We are praying within the will of God. Mark 12 says:

"Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God?" (Mark 12:24b NKJV)

This is where our mistakes come from. That's where we pray wrong. We pray and we ask Him with the wrong motivations because we know not the Scriptures.

Secondly, memorizing the Word makes a phenomenal difference when you are tempted. This is the one thing that Jesus did in the wilderness as we see in Matthew 4:1-6. Every time Satan approached Him, Jesus answered with the Scriptures. He simply gave him the Word of God. We suggested several lessons ago that there is a possibility in many cases when the enemy begins to encroach and tempt you, if your barrel is full, you simply turn to the Lord and say, "It is written." You will be amazed at the verses that will come to your mind.

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I've told people to try that. They have told me, "I was under severe temptation. I just said, 'Lord, help! It is written.'" I asked, "Have you been in the Word lately?" They answered, "No." I asked, "Do you memorize the Word?" They answered, "No." I asked, "What was the Lord supposed to give you?" They answered, "He was supposed to give me a Scripture." I replied, "Where was it supposed to come from?" They responded, "From the Bible."

The key is not, Thy Word have I hidden in my Bible. The key is, "Thy Word have I hidden in my heart that I might not sin against Thee." The key is that you memorize it and give God a storehouse. When you feed that computer and program it properly, you can simply share, "It is written," when the enemy comes and the Word of God comes alive.

The third area is your witness. How many of you, honestly, could tell me Romans 3:23? Why? Because you learned it sometime ago. Why did you learn it? Because you wanted to communicate to someone who has not yet found Christ that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. The power of our witness comes from the Word, not from what we think. There are two things that we are supposed to have, the Word of God and our personal testimony. Scripture puts it, "that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto to you". If you know even five verses of Scripture and have a personal testimony of what God has done in your life, you know enough to at least share the gospel with someone else. I Peter says,

having been born again, not of corruptible seed but  
incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and  
abides forever,

(I Peter 1:23 NKJV)

I heard the testimony of Dawson Trotman. Some of you have heard it or read it. It is a small portion of his personal testimony on tape of how he became a Christian. One of the reasons he founded the Navigator ministry and is so strong on Scripture memory is because he was personally saved as a result of memorizing Scripture before he became a Christian. He entered a contest, and he wanted to win. He was the only one in the group who memorized the Scripture. All of the Christians didn't bother. He was an unbeliever. They were given points, and the one who had the most points didn't have to pay for a party they were having. That was his motivation. He memorized the Word and learned all of the verses. He won the prize. He was walking to work three weeks later and all of a sudden these verses came

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to his mind. As one would come, he would become convicted. The Lord would then give him another. This happened with all of the verses that he had memorized. He fell to his knees and received Christ as his Savior. There was no one there actually leading him to Christ, but because of the verses or through the verses that he memorized, he came to receive Christ.

The other areas that Scripture memory helps are personal growth and conviction. Psalm 119:128 says:

Therefore all Your precepts concerning all things  
I consider to be right;  
I hate every false way. (NKJV)

Lastly, in ministering to others. I will cover these verses later.

I want to close with some practical steps. To do practically what we need to do, we need three things:

- 1) A plan
- 2) A goal
- 3) A helper

As far as a plan is concerned, let's don't put this into a box and let the plan determine the spirituality of it. This is legalism. You can memorize by sections such as learning the Sermon on the Mount. You can memorize I Corinthians 13. You can memorize the book of Colossians. You can memorize whole Psalms or Proverbs. You can memorize by subjects. You can memorize a packet of verses on spiritual growth or witnessing or love or the tongue. They can be with a pattern or randomly. In your everyday reading, a passage may be very meaningful. You can jot that one down and begin to memorize it. Or, the verses can be relating to certain patterns. These are some examples of patterns:

1) Relating to your personal needs. Let's say that you have a temper. You want to get into Scripture memory. Instead of memorizing a number of verses at random, go through the Word and find a list of passages on anger. Write them down in some kind of outline form. Give titles to them. Memorize them for about two months. As you start to get angry, the Lord will have a tool to work with in your life immediately.

Let's suppose you have a problem with lying. Look up some verses on lying or truth. If you have a problem with slothfulness, you can do the same thing. There are at least 150 topics or more

to do this with.

2) Relating to personal study. You may be studying I Timothy. Pick out some verses and memorize the key verses in that book.

3) Relating to topics or teaching that you are having at that time. You may be going to Bible Study Fellowship. Pick out two or three verses from the lesson of that particular week to memorize. You may get some verses from Sunday school, the sermon of that week or another Bible study you are going to.

First, memorizing needs to be by section or subject or a pattern at random. It needs to be visible and available. This is the practical aspect of memorizing. The key is to get some verse cards. You can take a 3x5 card and cut them up yourself. If you have a hard time reading small print, you can get a large print Bible and copy on a copier and paste them on a card. The cards are small but the print will be big. The idea is that unless you write them on something and have them visible and available, you can't do it. What does it say about the Word? We should have it on the doorposts of our house and on the gates to be like frontlets before our eyes.

If you just walk around and say, "I need to look that verse up. I forgot it. I was working on it." You go home and find your Bible, but you forgot the reference or you can't find it. Or you are at work, and your Bible is at home. Or you are outside, and your Bible is inside the house.

Let's say that you have written it on big cards. You are sitting at work, and you are on your coffee break. You don't want to pull out the huge cards and wave them in the air so others will see how spiritual you are. You want something that is inconspicuous, but available.

You can buy verse cards at a local Christian bookstore that are sub-divided by topics. They are already chosen for you. As you progress, you can keep them in little packets. The one you are working on at present is put under the front plastic pocket so that you can look at it often. The others can be kept inside of the packet for review. Again, this is not a legalistic procedure, you can do just as well without it, but this will help. You can keep it in your coat pocket or in your purse.

You can buy a box so that as you begin to develop a bank of verses, you can organize them either by topic or books of the

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Bible. You can, then, review them on a regular basis.

Another idea some people use is that, as you develop a few verses, you take a notebook and divide it into columns. Under those columns put a book of the Bible. On the left hand column, write the verses you are working on. In the next column put a title to help you remember that verse. It also helps to put the first two or three words in a third column.

You can get a piece of paper and cover the columns so that you can peel back whichever column you want to use. You can review yourself either by looking at the reference, by looking at the topic or by looking at the first three words. If you want to review yourself by looking at the topic, you know they are all in 1 Peter, and you open it up and look at the topic. By that topic, you should be able to recall that verse. When you need it, it will come to you from a circumstance that involves an area that is topically arranged in your mind.

For instance, you may need to know a verse on suffering. I Peter 2:19-21 comes to mind. You can remember it because you have a label for it, and you have reviewed it that way. This is another way to review.

Secondly, a goal is to choose how you want to memorize. Are you going to memorize topically or otherwise? Stay with it at least three months. You don't want to do one thing one week and another thing the next week. Be consistent in what you do. Set a minimum goal for each month. If you don't have a goal, you don't know if you have reached it or not. Decide how many verses a week you want to memorize. Whatever you have done, pick three times that many verses to review, if you have that many memorized. If you are memorizing two, review six. If you are memorizing ten, review thirty. Decide whatever works for you.

Thirdly, write it down and tell God about it. If you decide that you are going to memorize the Word, write it down in a book of remembrance or somewhere else. Not that you will be faithful for the rest of your life, but drive a stake in the ground that on this date you have decided to become faithful in memorizing the Word. Then talk it over with God. Get alone with the Lord. This is how the stake gets driven in the ground. Get alone with the Lord and say, "Lord, I'm not sure if this is Your will or not, but I want You to confirm if this is what You want me to do."

Pray about it. If you come to the realization that it is the will of

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God for you, make a commitment to Him. Say, “Lord, based upon the authority in Scripture, I am convinced that this is Your will, I’m going to tell you right now that by Your grace only, I’m going to plan, beginning today, to memorize and to review a certain number of verses a week. I’m going to do this not because it will make me more spiritual, but because it will introduce me more fully to You, the source of my spirituality.”

Lastly, get yourself a helper.

Two are better than one as it says in Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, because they have a good reward for their labor. If one slips up, he has a buddy to help him. Woe to him that is alone when he slips up, he doesn’t have a chance. This is a loose translation, but this is what it says. The key is to pick a friend who is also endeavoring to memorize the Word. Don’t compete with them. Don’t memorize the same verses. Agree to call each other two or three times a week to encourage each other, not judge each other. As you do, share your verses with each other. This is gentle motivation. Your motivation may be wrong, but the end product may be right. God will change your motivation as you become faithful.

Then, agree to pray with each other. Agree that you will pray for each other that you can memorize faithfully.

And then you can review and correct each other.

I want to ask or make a suggestion to those of you who want to have a plan that you might want to take these four verses for the next week. The topic for the week is the Word of God. Here are four verses:

Hebrews 4:12 - the power of the Word

Romans 10:17 - the fruit of the Word

John 8:31-21 - the freedom of the Word;

Jeremiah 15:16 - the joy of the Word.

If any of you are looking for a path to follow, and you want to begin this week; begin by using these verses. The key is not in what we do; the key is in what God does. All we are doing is being obedient so that we are available to the Spirit for Him to use us.

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