

## Abiding in Christ through Scripture Memory John 15:1-11

### INTRODUCTION

**Dt 6:4-9** - 4 “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! 5 “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 “These words, which I am commanding you today, must be on your heart. 7 “You must teach them diligently to your sons and must talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. 8 “You must bind them as a sign on your hand and they must be as frontals on your forehead. 9 “You must write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

**Dt 11:18a** - “You must therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul...”

**Dt 32:46-47** - “Take to your heart all the words which I am warning you today, which you must command your sons to observe carefully, even all the words of this law. For it is not an idle word for you; indeed it is your life.”

**Jos 1:8** - “This book of the law must not depart from your mouth, but you must meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.”

**Job 23:10-12** - “But He knows the way I take; When He has tried me, I will come forth as gold. “**My foot** has held fast to His path; I have **kept** His way and not turned aside. “I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.”

**Ps 1:1-3** - How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, or stand in the path of sinners, or sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers.

**Ps 19:7-14** - The **law** of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; The **testimony** of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The **precepts** of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; The **commandment** of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The **fear** of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The **judgments** of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether. They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward. Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults. Also keep Your servant back from presumptuous sins; Don’t let them rule over me; Then I will be blameless, and I will be acquitted of great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer.

**Ps 119:9-16** - How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word. With all my heart I have sought You; Don't let me wander from Your commandments. Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You. **Blessed** are You, O Lord; teach me Your statutes. With my lips I have told of all the ordinances of Your mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate on Your precepts and regard Your ways. I will delight in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.

**Ps 119:97-105** - O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all day long. Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever mine. I have **more insight** than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation. I **understand** more than the aged, because I have observed Your precepts.

I have **restrained** my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word. I have **not turned aside** from Your ordinances, for You Yourself have taught me. **How sweet are Your words** to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth! From Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

**Jer 15:16** - Your words were found and I ate them, and Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; For I have been called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts.

**Mt 4:4** - But [Jesus] answered and said [to Satan], "It is written, 'Man will not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.' "

**Jn 1:1-4, 14** - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. **All things** came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men....14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

**Jn 5:24** - "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who **hears** My word, and **believes** Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and **does not come into judgment**, but has passed out of death into life.

**Jn 5:39** - "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;

**Jn 8:31-32** - So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly My disciples; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

**Jn 15:1-11** - 1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He **prunes** it so that it may bear more fruit. 3 "You are already **clean** because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he **bears much fruit**, for apart from Me you can do nothing. 6 "**If anyone** does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. 7 "**If**

**you abide in Me**, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 “My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

9 “**Just as** the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. 10 “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. 11 “These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

- Now, please **bow with me** and let’s ask God’s blessing on His Word before we study.
- **QUOTE: Dallas Willard**, professor of Philosophy at the University of Southern California, wrote, “Bible memorization is absolutely fundamental to spiritual formation. If I had to choose between all the disciplines of the spiritual life, I would choose Bible memorization, because it is a fundamental way of filling our minds with what it needs. This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth. That’s where you need it! How does it get in your mouth? Memorization”<sup>1</sup>
- **THE BIBLE TEACHES US NINE REASONS TO ABIDE IN CHRIST THROUGH SCRIPTURE MEMORY.**
- Before we begin we must clarify what it means to abide in Jesus and how that relates to Scripture memory.
- Scripture memory is a **spiritual discipline** – perhaps the greatest spiritual discipline. But Scripture memory does not make you like Christ. God makes you like Christ. God uses His Word abiding in the mind, heart and soul of the believer to sanctify and transform him. So we must not presume that the **mere religious observance** of Scripture memory will transform us any more than church attendance, worship, giving, or any other spiritual discipline.
- It is possible to memorize Scripture and **never** abide in Christ and **never** bear spiritual fruit. Now how do we know this. **Two reasons:**
- **First**, the devil memorized Scripture. We see this clearly in Matthew 4 at the temptation of Christ. Because the devil can and does memorize the Bible and remain the devil, so you and I can memorize it and be used by the devil. **Scripture memory is not a magic formula for godliness.** The Word, Living and Written must **abide** in us, not merely be present in an intellectual capacity.
- **Second**, in **John 5:38**, Jesus says to the Jews who were trying to kill Him, “You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent.” Now the Jews memorized massive amounts of Old Testament Scripture. Jews were very serious about memorizing Scripture. So Jesus looks at these **religious, devoted** Jews, whose minds are **swimming** with Old Testament passages and He says to them, ‘my Word does not abide in you.’
- So what does it mean to **abide in Christ** – to **abide in His Word** – which are **identical** (Jn. 8:31-32; Jn. 15:1-11)? I think **John Piper** sums it up well when he says that **abiding in Christ and the Word means that the words of Jesus take root and bear the fruit of faith and holiness.**

#### **THE BIBLE TEACHES US NINE REASONS TO ABIDE IN CHRIST THROUGH SCRIPTURE MEMORY.**

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<sup>1</sup> “Spiritual Formation in Christ for the Whole Life and Whole Person” in *Vocatio*, Vol. 12, no. 2, Spring, 2001, p. 7.

- A good preacher always gives an acronym for the words of each point so you can easily remember the sermon. And the nine words are 1) transformation, 2) victory, 3) fruit, 4) assurance, 5) witness, 6) ministry, 7) worship, 8) prayer, 9) joy.
- So the acronym is T.V.F.A.W.M.W.P.J. (tiv-**fo**m-wu-pdge). The accent is on the second syllable of that wonderful acronym. Now you all know I flunked homiletics!

### 1. IT TRANSFORMS AND CONFORMS OUR MINDS TO CHRIST AND HIS WORD.

- When I say “it” what I mean is “abiding in Christ through Scripture memory”.
- **Rom. 12:2** - And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.
- **2 Cor. 10:5** - We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

### 2. IT ENABLES VICTORY OVER SIN AND THE DEVIL.

- **Ps. 119:9-11** - How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word. With all my heart I have sought You; Don't let me wander from Your commandments. Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You.
- **Eph. 6:17** - And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.
- In Matthew 4, when Satan tempts Jesus, the only response Jesus gives him is this: “It is written” and He quoted God's Word.
- **1 Jn. 2:14b** - ...I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God **abides** in you, and you have **overcome** the evil one.
- You see the connection there? When the Word of God **abides** in you, you overcome, you conquer the devil! The devil and His kingdom have no defense against the Word of God.
- What are you fighting sin with? What is your weapon against Satan?
- The **only way** you will overcome sin, the flesh and the devil is through the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. That means you must have it on your heart **all the time**, because sin, the flesh and the devil never stop working and you need constant defense.

### 3. IT ENABLES US TO BEAR SPIRITUAL FRUIT.

- **Jn. 15:2-8** – 2 “Every branch in Me that does not **bear fruit**, He takes away; and every branch that **bears fruit**, He prunes it so that it may **bear more fruit**. 3 “You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 “**Abide** in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot **bear fruit** of itself unless it **abides** in the vine, so neither can you unless you **abide** in Me. 5 “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who **abides** in Me and I in him, he **bears much fruit**, for apart from Me you can do nothing. 6 “If anyone does not **abide** in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. 7 “If you **abide** in Me, and My words **abide** in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 “My Father is glorified by this, that you **bear much fruit**, and so prove to be My disciples.
- In that passage, bearing fruit is repeated **6 times** and abiding in Christ **7 times**. What do you think the point is? **God is glorified when His disciples bear fruit as they abide in Christ and His Word.**

- Remember, you can memorize Scripture and NOT abide in Christ, but you **cannot** abide in Christ without memorizing Scripture. You can memorize Scripture and NOT bear fruit, but you **cannot** bear fruit without memorizing Scripture.

#### 4. IT PROVES THAT WE BELONG TO CHRIST...IT GIVES US ASSURANCE OF SALVATION.

- Jn. 8:31-32** - "If you continue in My word, then you are truly My disciples; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."
- That word 'continue' is the same word for 'abide' in John 15 that occurs ten times in verses 4-10.
- Jn. 15:2, 5-6** - 2 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He **prunes** it so that it may bear more fruit....5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he **bears much fruit**, for apart from Me you can do nothing. 6 "**If anyone** does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned."
- Those who abide in Christ through Scripture memory will bear fruit and that fruit brings assurance. Abiding in the Word of God brings assurance of salvation.

#### 5. IT ENABLES US TO WITNESS IN THE WAY GOD HAS CALLED US TO.

- Rom. 10:17** - So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.
- 1 Pet. 1:23** - for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.
- 1 Pet. 3:15** - sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

#### 6. IT ENABLES US TO MINISTER TO ONE ANOTHER BY SPEAKING PROFITABLE WORDS AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME.

- Pr. 25:11** - Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances.
- Ps. 119:24** - Your testimonies also are my delight; They are my counselors.
- Eph. 4:29** - Let no unwholesome word come out of your mouth, but only what is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.
- 2 Tim. 3:16-17** - 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.
- ILL**: I have read that Dr. Howard Hendricks of Dallas Seminary once made the statement to the effect that if it were his decision, every student graduating from Dallas Theological Seminary would be required to learn **one thousand verses word perfect** before they graduated.

#### 7. IT AWAKENS WORSHIP.

- Col 3:16** - Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you [you is **plural** – corporate exhortation], with all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

- **Ps 119:47-48** - 47 I will **delight** in Your commandments, which I love. 48 And I shall **lift up** my hands to Your commandments, which I love; and I will **meditate** on Your statutes....54 Your statutes are my **songs** in the house of my pilgrimage.

#### 8. IT AWAKENS OUR PRAYER LIFE.

- **Jn. 15:7, 16** - 7 “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you....16 “You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.”
- **1 Jn. 5:14** - This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

#### 9. IT BRINGS THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST’S JOY ANYWHERE AND ANYTIME.

- **Jn. 15:11** - “These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.
- **Jn. 17:13** - “But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves.
- **ILL**: Most Christians experience the joy of Christ in small, fleeting experiences. It is like going outside in the rain and feeling drops of water and receiving a tiny taste of the majesties of God. OR it’s like going into Braums and getting a spoonful of your favorite ice cream. Now that’s delightful as far as it goes. But what Jesus wants you to experience is not raindrops but the floodwaters of His goodness.
- **Ps 36:7-9** - 7 How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings. 8 They drink their fill of the **abundance** of Your house; And You give them to drink of the **river** of Your delights. 9 For with You is the fountain of life;
- When you memorize the Holy Scripture, you can **abide** with Christ anywhere, anytime. You can **pray** to Him anywhere and anytime. You can **enjoy** Him everywhere and all the time.
- **QUOTE**: **Chuck Swindoll** wrote, “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”<sup>2</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

### TIME CHECK

#### Objection #1: I don’t have a good memory.

- Answer: You remember what is important to you.

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<sup>2</sup> *Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), p. 61.

- We remember the lyrics of songs from decades ago. We remember lines from our favorite TV shows. We remember sports teams and players and games and wins and losses from years ago.
- We remember what we delight in. We remember what brings us joy and happiness and fulfillment.
- **ILL:** Husbands, if you forget your anniversary, then your anniversary is not important to you. God have mercy on you husband if you forget your anniversary. You're a dead man the next day. And you should be! Scripture says, "He who finds a wife, finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord" (Prov. 18:22). "An excellent wife is the crown of her husband" (Prov. 12:4). Husbands, you should anticipate your anniversary for days and weeks before it comes and celebrate it when it comes every year.
- Most of us have bad memories, but we will remember what is **important**, what is **delightful**, what is **valuable** in our hearts.
- So, Scripture must become **delightful**, **valuable**, **joyful** in our hearts. Then we will remember it. Pray to God that He would make you thirst for Scripture like you thirst for water (or coffee, or soft drinks...). Pray that God would give you hunger pains for His Word every day. Pray that you "would not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

#### **Objection #2: I don't have time.**

- Answer: You spend time on what is delightful, valuable and enjoyable to you.
- Every day you spend time watching TV, on FB, playing games, talking to friends and family on your cell phone or at home or at school. You and I spend time every day on a hundred things far less important than hearing the words of God.
- Our problem is not time. Our problem is we don't cherish Christ like we should.

#### **Objection #3: I'm lazy.**

- We never say this, but we know this is true when we fumble around and try to make excuses for why we haven't done this.
  - We are not naturally self-disciplined people.
  - Answer: Accountability and encouragement. Heb. 3:13
1. It transforms and conforms our minds to Christ and His Word.
  2. It enables victory over sin and the devil.
  3. It enables us to bear spiritual fruit.
  4. It proves that we belong to Christ...it gives us assurance of salvation.
  5. It enables us to witness in the way God has called us to.
  6. It enables us to minister to one another by speaking profitable words at the appropriate time.
  7. It awakens worship.
  8. It awakens our prayer life.
  9. It brings the fullness of Christ's joy anywhere and anytime.