

*"If I had to find one word to describe how belief came to take hold in me, it would be 'repetition.'"*

**KATHLEEN NORRIS**

## **MEMORIZATION**

<b>Desire</b>	to carry the life-shaping words of God in me at all times and in all places
<b>Definition</b>	Memorization is the process of continually remembering the words, truths and images God uses to shape us. Memorization provides us with a store of learning, which can be accessed anywhere and anytime.
<b>Scripture</b>	<p>"Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long." (Psalm 119:97)</p> <p>"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." (Psalm 119:11)</p> <p>"Then they remembered his words." (Luke 24:8)</p> <p>"I think it is right to refresh your memory. . . . And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things." (2 Peter 1:13, 15)</p>
<b>Practice Includes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• memorizing Scripture, hymns, poems, quotes, etc.</li><li>• rereading portions of Scripture until they are committed to memory</li><li>• memorizing Scripture verses that clearly reveal God's plan of salvation</li><li>• memorizing the books of the Bible, particular dates and times as well as where various verses are found</li><li>• learning by heart portions of Scripture that encourage you when you are tempted</li></ul>
<b>God-Given Fruit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• keeping company with Jesus by hiding his Word in your heart</li><li>• recollecting God-given encouragement and exhortation</li><li>• developing a habit of remembering that anchors your life in biblical truth</li><li>• committing to memory Scripture, hymns, poems and quotes that God is using in your life</li><li>• knowing where well-loved portions of Scripture are located</li></ul>

# MEMORIZATION

**FOR MILLENNIA, COMMITTING THINGS** to memory served as the foundation for religious, political and educational instruction. Memorized matter was known to have staying power. It was not at the mercy of being relevant or hip and didn't depend on books or literacy. Words, stories and prayers known by heart could be stored deep in the mind, pop up out of the blue and amuse, comfort, and educate others.

But the world has changed. The printing press, the increasing accessibility of books, the flood of information, the World Wide Web—all these make memorization less important. If we want to know something, we can just Google it. If we like a poem by Emily Dickinson or want to know who the Chaldeans were, we type in a few words and have it on our computer in a heartbeat.

No doubt the ability to read and access to books and computers are wonderful gifts. But a mind so overwhelmed with information that nothing is known by heart can leave the soul at the mercy of the last mental image that took our fancy. Memorization allows us to choose words and images that shape our minds and hearts. It gives the mind somewhere to go when all the media is turned off. Furthermore, memorizing God's Word allows us to access divinely inspired thought and wisdom. And it works in us even when we are not conscious of its doing so.

If you are someone who forgets birthdays and can't remember why you opened the refrigerator door, the whole notion of memorization can seem ludicrous. Don't be too discouraged. Consider the things you have already memorized without trying. What songs do you know by heart? What proverbs or sayings or Bible verses? Memorization depends on repetition. Choose what you want to memorize and tape it where you constantly see it. Return to it again and again.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What is your attitude toward memorization?
2. What do you believe the benefits of memorization can be?

When have you experienced the benefits of memorization?

3. What sort of things have you memorized without trying? What was that like for you?

4. If you were put in solitary confinement, what sort of things would you have learned by heart to nourish your soul?
5. Do you find yourself memorizing sporting statistics, line-ups or world records, recipes, phone numbers, email addresses, directions?  
How does memorizing these things help you or encourage you in memorizing words that can nourish your soul?

### SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

1. Begin by memorizing some of the choruses or songs that you enjoy. Sing the bits you remember. Listen again to the bits you forget. Write them out if it helps you. When you have committed the song to memory, notice when the song simply pops into your mind. Let the song be a way God enters into your life and speaks to you.
2. When you find yourself captivated by a Scripture, write it on a card that you can tape to a mirror, a window or even the shower wall. Every day read the verse, rehearsing it in your mind and heart. On a daily basis remind yourself of the Scripture until you know it by heart. Only then are you ready to move on to another portion of Scripture.
3. Memorize a chapter of the Bible. Take your time with this. Let the words sink into your soul. If singing helps you to remember things, don't be afraid to sing the words.  
Memorize a book of the Bible.
4. Develop a group that memorizes the Scripture passages for worship services. Work together to dramatically speak God's Word.

### RESOURCES ON MEMORIZATION

*Delighted by Discipline* by Mark R. Littleton

*Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* by Donald S. Whitney, chapter 2

The Topical Memory System by The Navigators

*The Word of God: Unleashing the Power of Scripture Memorization* by Michele Miner