**Do we memorize scripture anymore? By Thailer Jimerson**

I used to love memorizing scripture but somehow with the inevitability of that plague “busyness” the practice just fell out of routine. I still have the basics memorized: Lord’s prayer (Matthew 6.9-13). Psalm 23. But it’s nothing like the days where Amber and I were actually excited to plop on our goofy red sofa simply so we could start memorizing the Sermon on the Mount. (This was before kids, mind you.) We got really far, too, before somehow it fell by the wayside.

Fast forward quite a few years, I’m driving down the road listening to one of my favorite podcasts *Help Me Teach The Bible* with Nancy Guthrie (highly recommended) and she interviews this guy named Andy Davis. Davis has – get this – memorized 41 books of the Bible. He said something that really resonated with me. He said you can’t expect to Holy Spirit to use tools you’ve not provided him with. What he means by that is the Holy Spirit doesn’t just zap passages in you when you really need them, he often reminds you of things you already know. And in our fight against sin where we’re encouraged by the apostle Paul to “take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,” how can we expect to pierce and deflate those lies if we’re not equipped with that sword?

There are many passages to encourage us to do the same. Some are explicit – like Jesus avoiding Satan’s temptations by repeatedly quoting Deuteronomy with rapid fire “It is written,” “It is written,” “It is written” in passages like Matthew 4 or Luke 4. Or there’s that time when Jesus says “You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God” (Matthew 22.29). Or there’s the new covenant promise which could imply a deeper familiarity with God’s word when it says “I will put my laws in their minds and write it on their hearts” (Hebrews 8.10). Or there’s Paul’s command “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly…” (Colossians 3.16).

And there are many implicit points to be made too. For example, in Psalm 1 where it speaks about the contrasting paths of the righteous and the wicked, the righteous is the one who delights in the law of God and meditates on it day and night. That word “meditate” in the Hebrew is not an internal activity but means “to mutter.” They read aloud. They meditated by muttering. This all speaks to a community that didn’t have the word of God in their hands so they took it with them – from the temple and the synagogue teachings – in their heart, through memorization. Many of the scriptures that would have been prayed or sung daily or at the annual feasts would have to be memorized. And I’m sure that Jesus along with most Jews of his day would have had the psalter memorized entirely.

If you’d like to start memorizing scripture more often (and I hope you do) try this new technique I learned from Andy Davis. First, pick a passage or a book to memorize. Starting with the first verse, recite it aloud ten times. On the next day, say your review passage ten times, then recite the next verse ten times (again, aloud). On the third day, review the first passage once, your previous passage (from day 2) ten times, and then your new, third passage aloud ten times. Pretty soon you should have a set of verses you go over only once, your review passage from yesterday 10 times, and your new passage 10 times. And before you know it, you’re a memorizing machine.