

Chapter08

Benefits of Scripture Memory

This is all about the benefits of Scripture memory. And let me tell you, God is no cheapskate when it comes to lavishing His benefits upon those who obey Him.

Here's my Top Ten list of biblical principles that, if you live by these in obedience to God, you will benefit from:

1. Truth that sets you free.
2. Freedom from demon-induced fear.
3. Joy in the Lord, which is constant and not dependent upon the ups and downs of circumstance.
4. Perfect peace! Perfect! What can top that?
5. Protection from the devil.
6. Contentment.
7. God's steadfast love and mercy.
8. God is with you in the midst of trials.
9. God works all things together for good.
10. God sings your praises to the angels in heaven!

There are hundreds more--perhaps thousands--that we can have. But these are verses that I have found to be some of the most practical and beneficial verses in the whole Bible, because they deal with some of the major areas of life that we struggle with. How I would love to have known these principles earlier in my life. Well, I didn't, but I know them now! And I long to share with you what God has poured into me.

Get ready to be blessed!

1)The Truth will set you free

Jesus promises: if you spend regular time with Him in His Word, you will have His truth. Once you have the Truth of His Word, you have freedom!

“If you remain in My Word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free” (John 8:31b-32)

Jesus' statement about "remaining in His Word" is a clear, unambiguous command to practice Scripture memory.

Now, look at the list of promises:

You will be His disciple...

You will know the Truth...

The Truth will set you free.

Our part is the "Scripture memory" condition: "If you remain in My Word."

If Eve had practiced Scripture memory back in the Garden of Eden, she would have known exactly what God said. She would have known the Truth and the devil wouldn't have been able to persuade her. Perhaps we'd still be in Eden!

From the earliest days of mankind, God has been telling us how to remain in His Word. For example: *“These Words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall 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”* (Deuteronomy 6:6-7)

Look at the list of "how-to" instructions God gave to the Israelites — and to us:

We must pass on this handling of the Word of God--including Scripture memory--to our children.

The Word of God should be the first thing we think about as we rise up from sleep. We must:

learn about and discuss God's Word at home, grab opportunities to discuss and apply God's Word during the day, and let His Word comfort our minds, our hearts, and our spirits as we lie down to sleep. Again, you can only do these things after you've done the Scripture memory part.

Back in the day when Jesus spoke those words, the people did not understand that He was not offering political freedom, but freedom from kinds of spiritually-induced miseries such as:

Scripture memory benefit: freedom from demon-induced fear!

2)A spirit of fear

The fear that you are experiencing is not from God.; Satan is the author of your fear!

“God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind”

(2 Timothy 1:7)

Here is perhaps the most important thing to know about fear: it is not just a physiological response to circumstances.

Fear is a spiritual phenomenon, inflicted by Satan and his demons.

God built a "flight-or-fight" mechanism into you for your protection. The rush of adrenaline known as a panic attack will also, in the face of real danger, give you an instant boost of strength.

But Satan and his legions of demons, as they always do, have taken God's gift and have corrupted it by using it against you. They do it by planting thoughts into your mind, thoughts of impending disaster and doom. They are behind all of those "what-if" questions that tie you in knots of fear.

Paul wrote, *“Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but... against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”* (Ephesians 6:12)

The "voice" you "hear" in your thoughts sounds like your voice. But often, it isn't. It may be the voice of a demon, impersonating you by "whispering" thoughts into your mind. In this way, demons are able to deceive you into believing their lies.

When you walk with God, your life will begin to show the "fruit" of your relationship with Him:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” (Galatians 4:22-23)

Scripture Memory Benefit: JOY that is inexpressible and filled with glory

Rejoice In The Lord Always; Be Anxious For Nothing

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say rejoice. Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:4-7)

You can live "above your circumstances" and rejoice, when your joy is in the Lord! This is not just "Bible-speak". This truly happens.

I know what you're thinking: "Rejoice always?? Be anxious for nothing?? Not possible!!"

But God is longing to help you rise to this level of spiritual maturity. This is living in the joy that flows from a constant awareness of your intimate relationship with God. You'll trust Him, when you know for certain who you are in Christ.

Here's a very practical application.

This is learning to think the way God thinks. For example:

You've noticed the price of gasoline increasing. And how do most people respond? By complaining, and worrying about their finances. But at the root of that worry is fear, that God isn't really going to provide for their needs.

That line of thinking won't take you anywhere good. So let me suggest a radically different response: Choose to praise God instead!

"What?? You expect me to praise God for high fuel prices? You're crazy!!"

Not crazy; just plugged into a wonderful principle. Here's a verse that contains a principle I've chosen to live by: *“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your*

mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2)

Let me suggest that you take the high road. Try this the next time you go to the gas station. You won't see people who are totally controlled by the "world system" doing this:

Praise Him because fuel is available!

Praise Him because you have a car!

Praise Him for the money in your account!

Praise Him because you are healthy enough to drive!

Praise Him because you have a license!

Praise Him because there are highways and bridges to drive on!

...and so on. Add your own praises to the list

Praise Him because no matter what you choose to name, ultimately He provided it!

I want you to know that I actually do that every time I go to the gas station. It keeps my mind on God and off of the fact that I'm often paying more to fill the gas tank than I paid for my first car!

I go around throughout the day praising God and thanking Him for what I have. When you go about praising God and recalling His Word, the devil can't get a word in edgewise!

Here's how this works: just as the S-T-R-A-I-N of lifting heavy weights strengthens your muscles, God uses the strain of adversity to strengthen your faith in Him.

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His purpose is to make you more like Jesus. Thus, trials are merely occasions to turn to Him and "rejoice in the Lord."

Joy is in the Lord — Happiness is tied to circumstances

Happiness rises and plummets according to fickle circumstances. Joy in the Lord is abundant and constant. And you can choose to have it!

Wouldn't you agree that you can deal with life's issues more effectively from a position of peace and Joy in the Lord rather than from fear, worry, doubt, anxiety, and panic?

Speaking of peace: what could possibly be better than this?

Scripture Memory Benefit: Having God keep you in perfect peace!

4) Thinking/meditating on God = perfect peace.

Just look at this: when your thoughts line up with God's thoughts; when you have not just memorized His Word but internalized it into your heart, God gives you His peace:

*“You will keep him in perfect peace
whose mind is stayed on you
because he trusts in you” (Isaiah 26:3)*

When you keep your mind firmly fixed on God, he gives you His perfect peace. What a great deal that is! This is not just "Bible-speak". This truly happens.

Jesus said, *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid” (John 4:27)*

The world may give you peace according to your circumstances. But when you've surrendered your life to Jesus, He gives you "peace that surpasses all understanding".

But again, the offer is conditional. God offers perfect peace to those whose mind is stayed on [focused on or fixed on] Him.

Therefore, I choose to keep my mind solidly on God, by making God the top priority in my life. I'll do it by preaching His Word to myself regularly throughout the day. It's amazing how, once you've done enough Scripture memory, God will bring to your mind passages He wants you to apply in a particular situation.

I read it out loud, because Romans 10:17 says, "faith comes by hearing the Word of God."

I choose to respond to life's situations with praise to God at all times (Psalm 34:1)

by trusting Him every time I hear a "what-if" from Satan.

God does not deal in "what ifs" in my life. He knows what's going to happen. I choose to believe that God is trustworthy, that He is good, and that He can handle whatever comes up.

Trusting in myself has not given me peace.

I don't know what the future holds... But I do know Who holds the future!

Scripture Memory Benefit: God's protection from the devil!

5)Obedience = Divine Protection

Someone has said that the Holy Spirit is the most under-employed being in the universe.

How it must grieve the Spirit, to watch us flailing around frantically trying to gain control of our lives. We cannot do it. And one of our biggest obstacles is unseen: the devil.

God has extended an offer of help, to all who will submit to Him:

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." (James 4:7)

When you live a life of obedience (submission) to God, He pretty much takes care of your devil problems for you!

Jesus has given us the perfect "how-to" strategy for victory over the temptations, lies, and attacks of the devil. In Matthew 4:1-11, Satan tried to tempt Jesus three times. But each time, Jesus deflected the temptation by speaking the Truth of Scripture. In each response Jesus said, "It is written..." followed by a statement of Truth from the Word of God.

For example: He answered, *"It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"* (Matthew 4:4)

That's how we must "submit ourselves therefore to God", and in the process "resist the devil." The Word of God is our weapon against demonic beings who would otherwise easily devour us. The battle takes place in our minds, and we win the Battle with Scripture.

To put it another way: the more Scripture memory you've done, the more powerful is your weapon against the devil!

God reaffirmed this strategy when He inspired Paul to write:

"And take... the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." (Ephesians 6:17)

You have to put first things first: submit to God first. In this case, that's Scripture memory. But don't just take them in as "head knowledge". Allow the Word of God to penetrate into the "soil of your heart". That's simply a discipline of saying the passages over and over, and as you say them, visualizing yourself as already living according to the principles contained in those passages.

Then, as the Word takes root and begins to grow and bear fruit--and recall: one of the Fruits of your relationship with the Holy Spirit is self-control--now you have the power of the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ active in your life, and you can easily resist the devil.

When it comes to obedience to God, there's always a part I have to do first. Once I've done my part, God does the part I cannot possibly do.

God wants our obedience. What He is watching for is steady progress in the right direction. He wants us to voluntarily come under His authority. In other words, He wants us to submit ourselves to God.

An Example From Scripture of submitting to God: Tithing on your income:

When you are a faithful steward of what God has given you, He shields you from the devil.

"Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the Lord of hosts." (Malachi 3:10-11)

And let there be no doubt as to who the "devourer" is: *"Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour"* (1 Peter 5:8)

This is a huge deal!

The devil has incredible power over us, but God has him on a leash. When you walk in obedience to God by giving back to Him the first 10% of your income, He promises He will not allow the devil to destroy your finances.

As we become more and more obedient -- submitting to God -- He strengthens the protective shield He has put around us.

Scripture memory benefit: contentment, even in difficult times!

"... for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.
(Philippians 4:11b-13)

We can know contentment even in lean times. Jesus Himself promises!

Contentment is a virtue that does not come naturally. But it can be learned. If Paul could write about contentment from a prison cell, who of us cannot learn contentment in the affairs of our lives? But we must choose it, and then God promises to help us.

A reporter once asked John D. Rockefeller - one of the richest men in the world at the time - how much money was enough. He replied, "Just a little bit more."

But if that's truly our goal, we doom ourselves to failure. We can never succeed, because we cannot possibly reach the goal. Like a mirage shimmering on the horizon in the desert heat, the goal of "more" will always remain an illusion in front of us, always beyond our reach. It's like a treadmill that wears us out, and takes us nowhere.

By embracing the priorities of the world system, the system controlled by Satan and his demons, we give others far too much power to control our lives.

Only one opinion really matters: what does God think of our priorities?

As true followers of Jesus, we must continually filter our priorities by asking ourselves, "Does this honor God? In light of eternity, does this really matter?"

In the book of Hebrews He says, *"Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'"* (Hebrews 13:5)

This is something you can do.

For most of us, it takes some adjustments in attitude and priorities. That was certainly true for me. But as you do more and more Scripture memory, you give the Holy Spirit more material to work with, and He begins the process of changing you from the inside out. When you become aware that this is happening in your life, do all you can to cooperate with Him.

Here's one more benefit for you:

Scripture memory benefit: God's mercy is new every day!

7)Another day = another chance:

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;

his mercies never come to an end;

they are new every morning;

great is your faithfulness.

“The Lord is my portion,” says my soul,

“Therefore I will hope in him.”

(Lamentations 3:22-24)

God's love for you and for me is constant. Every day He gives us another chance to grow in obedience to Him. Therefore, I choose to put my full trust in Him. He has never let me down!

Aren't you glad God isn't like people? With most people, you're lucky if you get a second chance.

How does that old saying go, "Fool me once: shame on you! Fool me twice: shame on me!"

Some will hold a grudge for a long, l-o-n-g time!

Not so with God.

You may have messed things up royally today. But tomorrow, He'll be right there for you, longing to forgive you, help you, calm you, strengthen you, encourage you and pour out His steadfast love and mercy upon you. He really means it.

Don't make the mistake of thinking of God as being like the people you know. People will hurt you, people will misunderstand you and people will let you down. God will not. When God allows pain in your life, it's always for a good reason. It's to help you. And He will never let you down.

Scripture memory benefit: God is always with you!

8)He longs for you to let Him help you:

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;

*and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you” (Isaiah 43:2)*

Late one night, when the devil attempted to engulf me in panic, I woke up enough to realize what was happening. In the darkness of our bedroom, I said softly, "God, I know you are here with me." Then I spoke Isaiah 43:2 from memory. Instantly that "spirit of fear" left me!

That true story more than proved to my satisfaction the benefit of Scripture memory. Once I experienced first hand how demons flee from the spoken Word, the Word of God became my weapon of choice.

Isn't it reassuring to know that God is always with us, even in difficult times?

Throughout the Bible, God promises He will never leave nor forsake us, that He will be with us always. Because we're not in Heaven yet, our journey through life will be marked by a succession of problems and difficulties. That's what those references to "passing through the waters" and "walking through fire" refer to.

And you'll notice, it doesn't say "if" troubles will come. It says when you pass through the waters... when you walk through fire...". It'll be hard, but you'll make it through. That's a promise from God! That's also the power of God.

Because we have a free will, God will not force His help upon us. Satan and his demons are not so polite. They work at jamming our minds with thoughts calculated to keep us distracted and keep our focus away from God. But knowledge is power. Because we know what Satan is doing, we also know to turn to God for help!

Scripture memory benefit: God works all things together for good!

9)God will make something good out of your problems!

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. “ (Romans 8:28)

Heavenly Father, I choose to trust You when You say my trials are just for a season. I know something good will come out of it. I choose to step out in faith as I wait for You!

Isn't it great that you can know truths about God's ways, including His promises to help you? (Some people actually believe we can't know any truth!) And isn't it fantastic to realize that He's working for your good to give you His very best?

God never wastes an experience. He will take what seems to be an absolute "train wreck" of a life" and use it for His purposes. He didn't cause your problems, but He allowed them to happen for reasons you may not know until you're in heaven. The fact is: He saw your train wreck coming before He created the universe!

God's plan is to strengthen you for His work. He'll take your mess and make it your message. He will teach you things through adversity that you would never learn unless He allowed some rain to fall into your life. These lessons are far more bearable when you know God has so much confidence in you that He allows them to happen. The "fire" of the adversity you are in may be hot, but God's hand is on the thermostat! He knows exactly how much you can stand.

Job put it so nicely: *“But He knows the way that I take; when He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10)*

This is the process God uses to make us more like Christ, so we can do Christ's work.

Scripture Memory Benefit: God rejoices over you with singing!

10) God isn't mad at you; He's mad about you!

"The Lord your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing." (Zephaniah 3:17)

Dear Father in heaven, for much of my life I didn't know how much You loved me, or that You even cared about me at all. I am overjoyed to learn just how much You really do love... me! Your Word has truly opened my eyes. Thank you!

Some people keep God at a distance, picturing Him as an angry old man with a big stick who is just waiting for them to so much as look sideways, so He can pound them down. That image of God is a lie from the demons in hell!

Here's the truth: God loves you!

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

I once heard a sermon where the speaker told us to draw a circle around the word "world" in John 3:16 in our Bibles. Then he had us write the word "me" beside the circle. The idea was to get each of us to read it and start thinking of it like this: "For God so loved ME that he gave His only son.." The person said, "even if you were the only person in the world, Jesus would have died on the cross for YOU!"

Because we are finite beings in a finite universe, it's impossible for us to fully comprehend the concept of an infinite God. If you divide infinity into two parts (or two zillion parts), each of the parts is... infinite!! Each one of us has available to us one hundred percent of the infinite God who created the universe!

I cannot truly understand how that works, but I believe it.

I don't know about you, but I find it reassuring to realize that I cannot understand God. I mean, think how small a God He would be if any of us could understand Him.

You may ask, "How can I get to know God?" We get to know God in the same way we get to know each other. We know other people by the words that they say and the works that they do.

It's the same with God. We know Him by the words that He said and the works that He did. And we get both of those from reading His Word, the Bible.

You can't read it just once! Your mind needs constant renewing!

If someone were suffering from, for example, pain in their lower back (as I have in the past), that person could very likely reduce or eliminate that pain by practicing a discipline of regular stretching and exercise. But you cannot just do the exercises one time and expect any lasting benefit.

It's the same with Scripture memory. This has to become a habit, a part of your daily life. And like exercising, if you do it, you reap the benefits.

Summary: The entire Bible was written for our benefit!

Just think of all the devotional books that have been written and all the sermons preached, every one of them applying biblical wisdom for our benefit. There must be thousands, perhaps millions of individual applications.

It makes me wonder: is it possible that, like God Himself, the number of practical applications of biblical wisdom that could be written about Him is infinite?

There is an old saying: "What you don't know won't hurt you". Is that true? There may be examples someone might relate to support that. But the converse could also be argued. What if you took hold of a bare electric wire, but you didn't know that it was connected to a live circuit: Trust me: you would instantly know that it hurts you!

When it comes to Scripture memory and knowing and applying the Word of God, I like this variation of that old saying: What you don't know can never help you

Wouldn't you agree: if you've got all those benefits from God in your life, you are equipped and protected to handle whatever the world throws at you, right?

The really awesome thing is: anyone can have this!