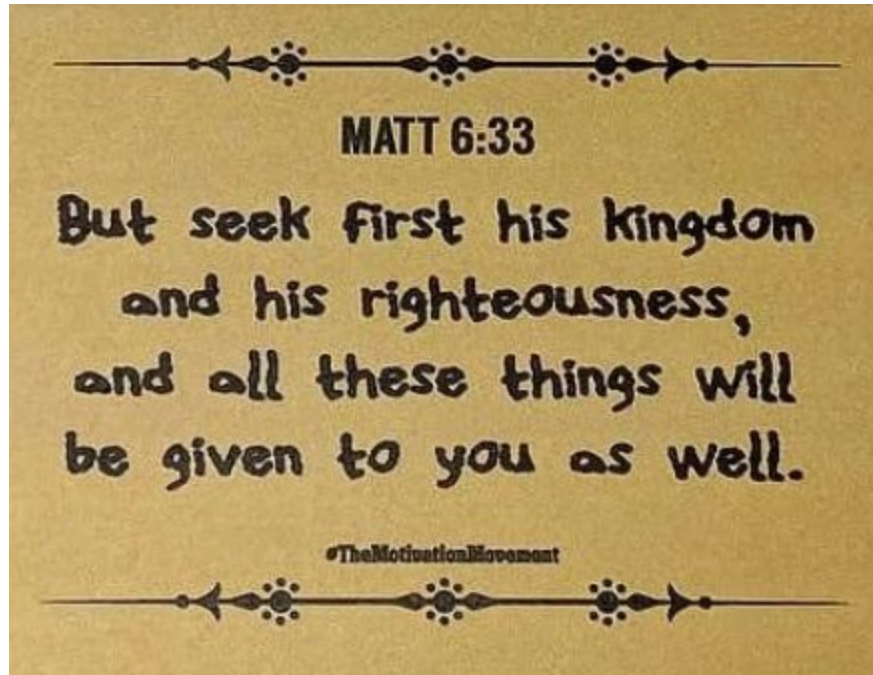


Counseling Homework: Memorizing Scripture

By Wendy Wood



God has ordained that the sanctification process follow the steps laid out in Ephesians 4:22-24. Every believer is to “put-off” the old self and old sinful desires, “renew” their mind in the truth of God’s Word, and “put-on” the new self made in the likeness of Christ. As counselors, our homework assignments must include a steady diet of the Bible. The last blog had four suggestions for having counselees study a passage of the Bible, and this blog will deal with memorizing scripture. The next blog will deal with meditation of scripture.

Ephesians 6:17 calls the Word of God the sword of the Spirit. God’s Word is our weapon against the lies and deceptions of our own thoughts, Satan, and the world. Matthew 4 recounts the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. For every lie and half-truth that Satan used to tempt Christ, Jesus responded with a quote from Scripture. We see the power of having verses memorized when we see Jesus Himself using Scripture He had memorized as a child to battle temptation. Luke 2:52 tells us that Jesus grew in wisdom as he went through childhood and into adulthood. Our counselees (and we as counselors) need to have their minds armed with “swords” of

scripture so that they are ready to fight the doubts, unbelief, and wrong thinking they encounter.

Not only is it important to memorize scripture, it is helpful to have the right “sword” for the right battle. If you are battling the temptation of anxiety over illness, John 3:16 is a great verse, but may not be the most effective weapon at that time. A more helpful verse may be Isaiah 41:10 that tells us not to fear because God is with us and will help us and strengthen us. As counselors we want to arm our counselees with the best passages for their particular struggles. There are some scriptures that are helpful at all times. Having verses about God’s attributes, His sovereignty, His wisdom, His love, His goodness, His justice, and His immanence are always helpful as are the truths of God’s grace displayed in Christ on the cross. However, the Ephesians 4:22-24 walk of sanctification suggests that renewing our minds in specific truths for specific sins will be beneficial for the battle.

Whenever I bring up the idea of memorizing scripture, 9 out of 10 counselees will tell me, “I can’t memorize. I have such a bad memory” and then giggle nervously. Randy Patton says, “It’s not an ability problem, it’s an interest problem”. Meaning, 9 out of 10 counselees do have great memories for things they really want to know. They can probably recount the sins of another person against them or have song lyrics memorized from the 1980s. If they are convinced that Scripture is important, they can memorize.

Choose some verses that target what your counselee most needs to renew their mind in. Here are some ways to help them memorize those passages.

1. Write the verse or passage out 5 times a day for a week.
2. Write the verse on a sticky note and put it on your bathroom mirror. As you brush your teeth, shave, put on make-up, comb your hair, etc, recite the verse 5 times.
3. Write the verse on a 3X5 card and put it in a plastic bag. Tape the plastic bag (ziplock side down) in the shower. Read through it 5 times every day in the shower.
4. Put your sticky note on the dashboard of your car. At every red stop light, read it through as many times as you can.
5. Have your counselee get the “FighterVerse” app from Desiring God. For \$2.99 this app allows you to put a verse in and then it offers quizzes and songs and other memory tools. I like the “fill in the blank” quiz that lets you choose a level 1-5 and each level advances until there are only blanks to fill in.
6. Write the verse or reference on the palm of your hand. Throughout the day, read or recite the verse as you see the reminder on your hand.

7. Set a reminder or alarm on your phone to go off every hour. Stop what you are doing and read through the verse.
8. Get a bunch of wide rubber bands that are big enough to wear as a bracelet. Write the verse going around the band and read it throughout the day.
9. Put the verse to music! Choose an easy and familiar tune and fill in the words of the verse. Something like “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” or “3 Blind Mice” that are repetitive and simple are most helpful.
10. Write the verse on a dry erase board and hang it in your kitchen. Each day as you are making a meal or grabbing a drink, read the verse and erase one of the words. Each day as the verse is left with more blank words, you’ll be memorizing.
11. Say the verse out loud whichever method above you choose. That engages both sight and sound as learning modes. Writing it and saying it out louds adds a third learning type.
12. Draw pictures that represent the main ideas of the verse or passage.
13. Create hand movements (similar to sign language but make it up!) that will help you remember the words of the verse.
14. Ask a friend or spouse to quiz you on your verses regularly or to text you and ask how you are doing.

Memorizing is just a step to meditating on the verse. The next blog will offer ways to encourage your counselee to meditate on scripture. Meditating is soaking up scripture in your mind so that the Holy Spirit can work it deep into your soul.