

Welcome to Digital Discipleship, a weekly video teaching from Pastor Shawn and a downloadable weekly devotional guide. We pray that you will grow stronger in your walk with Jesus as you lean into these teachings and devotions.

DIGITAL DISCIPLESHIP – LESSON 12 –

Memorization Will Help You Renew Your Life

Day 1

Renew the Mind

Introduction

1. The Christian life is fraught with difficulty, as Jesus said.
2. **Matthew 7:14 (ESV)** *For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.*
3. He also said that in this world we would have troubles (John 15:18-21; 16:33).
4. The Apostles agreed. When Paul and Barnabas returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch they said . . .
5. **Acts 14:22 (NIV2011)** *“We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.”*
6. We are flawed within and attacked with temptations and opposition from without.
7. In 2 Corinthians 11:23-29 Paul catalogued his experiences of hardships, endured in his ministry life.
8. Yet, Paul did not excuse himself from progress and growth in his salvation.
9. On the contrary, writing from prison he said ...
10. **Philippians 3:10 (NIV2011)** *I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.*
11. No surrendering or quitting here. In fact, hear his resolve to press on ...
12. **Philippians 3:12 (NIV2011)** *Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.*
13. Which is why he could challenge the Philippian believers to do the same.
14. **Philippians 2:12 (NIV2011)** *Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.*
15. What made it possible for Paul and the Philippians, and what makes it possible for us, to persevere and progress in our faith despite severe trials and troubles?

There are three reasons why it is possible to persevere and progress in the faith

First: we have God’s Spirit living in us

1. Think about it: we really have more going for us than what comes against us.
2. **Romans 8:31-32 (NIV2011)** *What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?*
3. The greatest gift God gave us at salvation was the person of the Holy Spirit. Peter said ...
4. **Acts 2:38 (NIV2011)** *Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*
5. In turn, the Spirit, who dwells in us, does remarkable things for us.
6. For one, He strengthens us with power in our inner being.

7. **Ephesians 3:16 (NIV2011)** *I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being.*
8. And this power, Paul said, enables us to persevere in the face of trouble, or weakness.
9. **Colossians 1:11 (NIV2011)** ... *being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience.*
10. Absolutely incredible! But how does He do it? He does it through His word, as we'll see next.

Second: we have God's Word

1. God's Word accomplishes exactly what it says.
2. **Isaiah 55:11 (NIV2011)** ... *so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.*
3. Ultimately, our words express wishes and desires.
4. But God's Word(s) accomplish precisely what they are sent out for.
5. With a word God can speak His will into being, as He did at Creation. And He can crush any opposition.
6. **Jeremiah 23:29 (ESV)** *Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?*
7. And who delivers those powerful words? The Holy Spirit delivered God's eternally written Word.
8. **2 Peter 1:21 (ESV)** *For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*
9. See what David had to say about that.
10. **2 Samuel 23:2 (NIV2011)** *The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; his word was on my tongue.*
11. However, the Spirit also delivers spoken words (rhema) that come to ALL BELIEVERS!
12. **Ephesians 6:17 (NIV2011)** *Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.* (also 2 Pet 1:21)
13. Notice that Paul was saying this to all the believers in the church at Ephesus.
14. The Spirit can speak directly to the believer through the written Word (logos), revealing our inmost motives to us.
15. **Hebrews 4:12 (ESV)** *For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*
16. And He can speak to the believer directly to the believer apart from the written Word.
17. Praise God, the "words" of God come to us in two forms then! Written or spoken!
18. That's the whole point of NT spiritual gifts such as prophecy, words of wisdom and knowledge; which would not come to us by the Spirit through the written Word (logos), but directly as a spoken word (rhema) specifically for our situation.

Third: we have the ability to feed our spirit/souls on His words

1. From what we've seen above, the Spirit delivers life-giving words into our inner beings which sustain us.
2. Jesus referred to the relationship of the Spirit and His words this way ...
3. **John 6:63 (NIV)** *The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.*
4. The Spirit empowers the words so that they are life-giving to soul/spirits.
5. See how Jesus elaborated on this in one of his responses to the devil's temptation.
6. **Matthew 4:4 (NIV)** *Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*
7. Matthew records Jesus as saying that we (our immaterial side) cannot live or survive without this kind of 'food.'
8. In the Gospel of John Jesus described it as withering up (John 15:5-6). What an accurate description.
9. How many people are 'withering up' in their lives because they are starving from lack of spiritual food.
10. We have the ability and responsibility to spiritually EAT. God won't force us to do this.
11. We can't be passive in this, hoping that the Spirit will just come along and do it for us. No.
12. The 'word' which the Scriptures use to describe such eating or feeding is "meditating."
13. **Psalms 1:2-3 (NIV2011)** ... *but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night.*
³ *That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers.*
14. You can easily see the parallels the Scriptures lay out for us between 'eating bread' (Matt 4:1-4), 'abiding in the Vine' (John 15:5-7), and 'meditating on God's Word.'

15. They're all referring to the same thing!
16. In meditation we ponder, prayerfully think about, listen or 'chew' on Scripture.
17. As we do, the Spirit takes those words and enlivens them in our spirit/soul, bringing understanding, fresh insight, application, warning or encouragement to us.
18. The passage we're meditating or 'feeding' on comes alive and dynamic, transforming us within.
19. Some describe it like this: "The Scripture jumped off the page;" or "it grabbed me."
20. You feel and know that you are being personally addressed.
21. And God's Word (logos) and words (rhema), enlivened by God's Spirit, as we feed on His word through meditation, will give us the necessary strength required to persevere and progress in our faith even in the face of severe hardships.

Reflecting and Reviewing

1. Write down something that stood out to you, from the reading you just completed.
2. What three reasons are given for why we can persevere?
3. How does the Holy Spirit help us in persevering?
4. In what two forms does God's "word" come to us?

Life Application

1. Listen in prayer about this question – "Holy Spirit, is there any patterns or examples of giving up in my life? What are they?" Write down what you receive.
2. Then, humbly ask someone that you live with – "do you feel that I am the type of person that perseveres, that approaches life with the ability to endure?"
3. Read over and meditate on John 15:1-8.

Day 2

Renew the Mind

Memorization is an extension of meditation

1. As we saw on Day 1, the Psalmist said, meditate on God's Law - day and night.
2. God said the same thing to Joshua.
3. **Joshua 1:8 (NIV)** *Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.*
4. **NOTE:** Not allowing God's Word to depart from your mouth, has something to do with meditation!
5. **Think about this:** the idea of every believer owning their own Bible wasn't even possible until relatively recent in the history of mankind.
6. In 1439 Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press, and for the first time in history the mass production of books was made possible! Only 1/10th of human history has had a printing press!
7. So how did they get the Word before that?
8. The scrolls would be in the tabernacle or temple.
9. God's Word was transmitted to people orally through **MEMORIZATION!**
10. That's why it says, "Don't let it depart from your **MOU**TH!**"**
11. **Deuteronomy 30:14 (NIV)** *The word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it.*
12. It got into their hearts via their mouths!
13. ***Memorization is an extension of meditation!!!***
14. **In meditation**, you chew on the same passage carefully, over and over.
15. **In memorization**, you continue this until you can repeat it from memory!
16. **E.g.** From Pastor Ray, Founder of Church Renewal - Many years ago, I thought very negatively, and I would often mutter to myself: "I quit."
 - a. What I didn't realize, was that what I was thinking, was self-fulfilling – I wanted to quit!
 - b. I didn't, because I had gained a fear of the Lord – but I **FELT** like quitting!
 - c. And we all know that how you **FEEL** often determines your responses!
 - d. But over a period of time, I noticed that I didn't have those same thoughts anymore. And it has already lasted for two to three decades!
 - e. I had often wondered what had changed in me. Did God just do something miraculously in me, so that I was suddenly this positive and persevering person?!
 - f. Well, about that same time, totally unrelated I thought, I sensed I was to memorize Scripture – just me. So, I did: 750 verses or so.
 - g. It wasn't until years later, while meditating on my deck early in the morning, that the Holy Spirit revealed to me **WHY** my emotions changed!
 - h. My thinking had been changed through memorization!
 - i. Even a character trait that stubbornly resisted my attempts to change it, was conquered through memorization!!
17. Did you notice something else Psalm 1 and Joshua 1:8 both say: "Meditate day and night!"
18. That's very difficult to do if it isn't in your mouth and heart!
19. However, if the Word is in your mouth and heart, you can meditate on it when you're: doing house chores, washing dishes; driving long distances; sitting at a red light; sitting in a waiting room (assuming you don't have kids clambering over you!); standing in a check-out lineup; waiting in a car-wash lineup; waiting in a fast-food wait-up line; waiting to board an airplane; during the flight; waiting for your baggage; before you fall asleep; when you wake up; or if you can't sleep.
20. **E.g.** One of the places I like to review memory work is when I am exercising, as it helps pass the time!
21. **I'm not saying:** "Do this instead of praying!" Not at all!
22. **Scripture says:** "Pray without ceasing," AND "Meditate day and night!"
23. More often than not, memorization-meditation will lead you to prayer.

Reflecting and Reviewing

1. Write down something that stood out to you, from the reading you just completed.
2. Why can meditation and its extension, memorization, help us?
3. What are some good places or times when we can memorize?

Life Application

1. Would you say that you quickly read God's Word, or that you meditate on it?
2. What is your own personal journey with memorization? Write it down.
3. Ask three or four people that you know about their own journeys with memorization. You can do this through text, email or in person.

Day 3

Renew the Mind

Benefits of memorization and meditation

1. God says there are significant benefits from memorizing and meditating on Scripture.
2. **Joshua 1:8 (ESV)** *This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.*
3. God said the same through the Psalmist ...
4. **Psalm 1:1-3 (ESV)** *Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ² but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³ He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.*
5. The ones who meditate on God's law end up being blessed by God and they prosper in everything they are assigned to do.
6. Of course, it always assumes that the one meditating, then obeys! Obedience is what brings blessing and success, not just understanding.

Benefit 1 of meditation/memorization: it changes your perspective, motivating you to reorder your priorities

1. This is no doubt the most important reason for memorization and meditation. Jesus said ...
2. **Matthew 6:22-23 (NIV2011)** *The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!*
3. In His lesson here, Jesus used the eye as a metaphor for perspective.
4. For example, we'll say something like this: "She just doesn't see that if she doesn't study, she will fail."
5. We don't mean by that that she doesn't see with her physical eyes, but that she simply doesn't have the right perspective on this.
6. Jesus said this in the context of urging us to store up treasures in heaven rather than on earth.
7. The key for storing up our treasures in the right place is our perspective.
8. If we have an eternal perspective, it will affect our priorities – where we'll invest our time, talents, prayers and money.
9. The best way to get the correct perspective is to think on eternal matters.
10. **Colossians 3:2 (NIV2011)** *Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.*
11. Paul said that when we think on things above, that it changes our perspective, thereby motivating us to reorder our lives, priorities and goals to align with God's will.
12. **Romans 12:2 (NIV2011)** *Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*
13. Here is how memorization will help you get that right perspective:
 - a. The world keeps distracting us and calling us to its short-term enticements.
 - b. Imperceptibly, our thinking shifts, making us feel like this world is what is real.
 - c. And we will ALWAYS live according to what we FEEL to be reality.
 - d. But when, for example, you begin to memorize verses talking about the brevity of life, the Spirit will literally shake you awake from your spiritual slumber.
 - e. Think about how the Spirit can awaken your spirit when you memorize/meditate on what Paul said:
 - f. **Romans 13:11-12 (NIV2011)** *And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. ¹² The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.*
 - g. Or think about the impact of memorizing these words by David:

- **Psalm 39:4-5 (NIV2011)** *Show me, LORD, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is. ⁵ You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Everyone is but a breath, even those who seem secure.*
 - h. Once the Spirit has opened your spiritual eyes with the right eternal perspective, you will automatically align your decisions in the light of your new perspective!
14. Memorizing and meditating on such passages will motivate you and give you the desire to walk with God and to love Him.
 15. You'll find that the lure of the world will loosen its grip on your soul because you'll begin to see that this world isn't ultimate reality – it is, as C.S. Lewis put it, “shadowlands” of the real thing coming.

Benefit 2 of meditation/memorization: it transforms your behaviors, making you successful

1. There's a very BIG reason why people cannot change their thoughts, emotions and attitudes, behaviors and their speech!
2. As important as the Set Free Retreat is – and it is VERY IMPORTANT & HAS TRANSFORMED MANY LIVES – it is only one half of the equation.
3. We're not to just PUT OFF certain sinful practices, but to PUT ON or CLOTHE ourselves with the thoughts, emotions and attitudes, behaviors and speech that were characterized by Christ.
4. They include traits such as: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, goodness, self-control, love and so on! They're also referred to as the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).
5. When we do this, we're putting on the character of Christ!
6. **Galatians 4:19 (NIV)** *My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you*
7. But the question is this: “How do you PUT ON Christ's character?”
8. Many believers try and try and try, but they just can't change. Why? Because they're thinking about the wrong things!
9. **Romans 12:2 (NIV)** *Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*
10. Our character is transformed (attitudes, emotions, speech, & behaviors) by **FIRST** renewing our minds
11. That's where THE WAR for the souls of men & women, teens & children, is being waged!
12. YOUR eternal destination & reward, as well as those you are given to influence (family), is determined by what you are thinking about!!
13. **2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NIV)** *For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*
14. Notice: “We take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ!”
15. How do we take captive our thoughts? How do we change our thinking?
16. By intentionally thinking on the right things – that's how!
17. **Philippians 4:8 (NIV)** *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.*
18. But Scripture gets even more specific; it doesn't just tell us to think about nice things in this world – go and meditate on green trees, and oceans and mountains – not at all!
19. **Colossians 3:1-2 (NIV)** *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.*
20. We're to think about **“THINGS ABOVE”** which are laid out for us in Scripture!
21. **For Paul, see what follows right thinking:** THEN PUT OFF the practices of the old self (Colossians 3:5-9), and PUT ON or CLOTHE yourselves with the character traits of Christ (image of Creator): compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, & forgiving one another (Colossians 3:10-14)!
22. Right thinking precedes character change!
23. The Psalmist said the same ...
24. **Psalm 1:1-3 (NIV)** *Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. ² But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.*

³ *He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.*

25. **Two results:** brings forth fruit in season AND its leaf doesn't wither!

Reflecting and Reviewing

1. Write down something that stood out to you, from the reading you just completed.
2. What two benefits of meditation and memorization are mentioned in today's reading?
3. What is one of the best perspective changes that we can get? What kind of perspective do we need to keep us from being distracted by the world?
4. How do we start changing our character? What often has to come first?

Life Application

1. Ask the Lord to show you when a perspective change, really helped you out. Write this down. And thank Him for guiding your thoughts (or using others to help you).
2. Spend some time in prayer over this question – "Lord, what do I worry about, or stress over, that can be impacted by thinking about eternity instead?" As you pray, pause to read over Matthew 6:19-24.
3. Have there any verses that you have memorized in the past, or even heard often, that have made you think twice about how you act – positively or negatively? If yes, write this down. If you have 2-3 examples, record them all.

Day 4

Renew the Mind

On Day 3, we looked at two benefits of meditation/memorization. Today, we'll look at a third one.

Benefit 3 of meditation/memorization: it revives your emotions, making you emotionally whole

1. In some quarters of the Christian Church, there is a bias against emotion in our faith.
2. For many, their faith is mainly a matter of the head and not the heart.
3. There are at least three important purposes for our emotions:
4. **Purpose 1:** we are to love and worship God with our emotions also
 - a. Jesus instructs us to love God like this: *Love the Lord your God with all your HEART and with all your SOUL and with all your MIND. **Matthew 22:37 (NIV)***
 - b. Men and women are emotional beings – it is a major part of who we are.
 - c. God hates lukewarm Christianity (Revelation 3:16).
 - d. Real worship taps into and uses emotions. That's what music, singing, praise and rejoicing are for!
 - e. **If you never or seldom experience emotion in your worship, something is wrong.**
 - f. Consider the sampling which follows:
 - g. David:
 - **Psalm 4:7 (NIV)** *You have filled my heart with greater joy than when their grain and new wine abound.* (also: Psalms 9:1, 8; 16:9)
 - **Psalm 28:7 (NIV)** *My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song.*
 - **Psalm 150:3-5 (NIV)** *Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, ⁴ praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, ⁵ praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals.*
 - Trumpets (noise), harp and lyre (melody), tambourine and dancing (rhythm!), strings and flute (harmony), clash of cymbals (noisy percussion!)
 - Emotions? I think so!
 - h. Peter:
 - **1 Peter 1:8 (NIV)** *Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.*
 - Did you catch it? An INEXPRESSIBLE joy! Emotions!
 - i. Paul:
 - **Ephesians 3:19 (NIV)**... *and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*
 - Paul prays that saints will know God's love BEYOND the mind –in experience and emotion!
 - j. Saints in heaven:
 - **Revelation 7:9-10 (NIV)** *After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰ And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." (also Revelation 19:4)*
 - In heaven they are worshipping God with the whole heart! And so will we!
 - k. Jesus:
 - **Luke 10:21 (NIV)** *At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure."*
 - The word "said" is not translated from the usual Greek word "lego."
 - Here Luke uses the word, "rheo," meaning, "poured forth" or "poured out."
 - It's an emotional word!
 - l. Our problem isn't that we use TOO MUCH emotion in our worship – we use it too little!
 - m. Don't misunderstand, just like we all have varying degrees of intellectual quotient (IQ), so too, we have varying degrees of emotional quotient (EQ).

- n. But to employ virtually no emotion in our walk with God is an indication that we are not whole.
5. **Purpose 2:** we are to receive love in our emotions
- Just as the love of a spouse was never intended to be a purely intellectual understanding, in the same way, God's love for us is to go beyond an intellectual understanding!
 - Ephesians 3:17-19 (NIV)** *And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,¹⁸ may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*
 - We were designed to EXPERIENCE God's love! Don't sell yourself short! It's that good!
6. **Purpose 3:** emotions are for motivation, not for direction
- But here's where we go wrong.
 - Many use emotions for directional purposes and decision-making.
 - They make choices based on what 'feels' right or good. That's the wrong use of emotions.
 - We are not to be guided by our emotions in this, but by our MIND.
 - Romans 12:2 (NIV)** *... be transformed by the renewing of your MIND. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. There it is!*
 - Our mind is subject to and is to be guided by the Scriptures and the Spirit.
 - Once the mind has made the proper determination about something, then emotion can be a very helpful as a MOTIVATOR for doing the right thing.
 - It has been given to us from God to motivate us to OBEY Him!
 - John 14:21 (NIV)** *Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me.*
 - Is Jesus saying that love constitutes obedience, even done in drudgery? I don't think so.
 - Instead, He is saying that the obedience is motivated by love!
 - E.g.** Jacob worked a total of 14 years for his wife Rachel
 - After he worked for her seven years it says the following.
 - Genesis 29:20 (NIV)** *So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.*
 - E.g.** From Pastor Ray – Founder of Church Renewal - Mowing in-law's lawn
 - When Fran and I were dating, she went on vacation with her parents.
 - Though they never asked me, I regularly went over to the house to take care of the yard.
 - And it was as nothing to me! I whistled and sang and skipped through the routine – well, not outwardly, just in my heart! 😊
 - Yet, I found it pure drudgery to do it at home. Do you see the difference?!
 - Emotions are to be a spur to move us to obedient ACTION.
7. One more thing – our emotions must be subject to the Holy Spirit, just like our mind is.
8. So, what does this all have to do with meditation-memorization?
9. If you store up texts in your mind about who God is, it will help you relate to Him as He really is.
10. Imagine being able to call this to mind through the day:
11. **Psalm 103:8, 13-14 (NIV)** *The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.¹³ As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him;¹⁴ for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.*
12. You begin to think of Him like that in your own walk, and that brings great enjoyment of His person and ways!
13. We're all emotionally crippled—some more than others.
14. We do not experience God in the fullness of our emotional potential. How will that change?
15. One way is to memorize the emotional expressions of the Bible and speak them to the Lord and to each other until they become part of who we are. For example...
16. **Psalm 103:1-5 (ESV)** *Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!² Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits*
17. That is not a natural expression for many people.
18. But if we memorize this and other emotional expressions from the Bible, and say them often, asking the Lord to make the emotion real in our hearts, we can grow into that emotion and expression.

Reflecting and Reviewing

1. Write down something that stood out to you, from the reading you just completed.
2. What benefit of meditation and memorization are mentioned in today's reading?
3. What are three important purposes for our emotions?
4. Do different people have different capacity for emotion? Why? And should everyone connect with God through emotions?

Life Application

1. Would you say that you love God fully with your emotions? Invite God to speak to you about your "emotional journey" with Him.
2. Are there things that you have experienced in life that have caused you struggle with emotions? Ask God to show you any examples. Then, if you get some, ask Him to speak to you about those situations.
3. Take Psalms 103 and 150. Practice reading them out at least 2x each.

Day 5

Renew the Mind

On Days 3 & 4, we discussed three benefits for meditation/memorization. Today, we'll highlight two more, and provide steps for memorization.

Benefit 4 of meditation/memorization: it helps you resist temptation, making you victorious

1. A chief way to resist temptation is by memorizing relevant Scripture, so you can recall it when needed.
2. Matthew 4 records three temptations that Satan brought against Jesus, and He resisted all three by reciting Scripture from memory!
3. **Psalm 119:11 (NIV)** *I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*
4. In my heart – for the Psalmist the words of God were not just kept in writing for him – but in his heart!
5. I have hidden, means treasure (tsaphan) – came to mean “hide” or “store” as they had no banks.
6. If you had treasure, you hid it in the ground, so that no thief could steal it from you!
7. The devil wants to steal God’s Word from you.
8. In the parable of Matthew 13 look what happened to the seed that fell on the first soil ...
9. **Matthew 13:19 (NIV)** *When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.*
10. And if the Bible is outlawed, you will need it in your heart!

Benefit 5 of meditation/memorization: it sharpens your witness and ministry, making you fruitful

1. As He ministered, Jesus quoted 24 Old Testament books almost 180 times in the New Testament!
2. Some have memorized verses to lead people to Jesus.
3. Think about how your witness for Jesus would be sharpened if you memorized Scripture.
4. **1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)** *Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.*
5. With regards to ministry, memorization will also give you something to build up other believers!
6. Often when we want to encourage someone going through a difficult time, we can pause to listen, and the Spirit will give us Scriptures that we have memorized, to share with them.
7. **1 Thessalonians 4:18 (NIV)** *Therefore encourage each other with these words.*

Benefit 6 of meditation/memorization: it gives you spiritual understanding

1. There are three ways in which you and I can receive wisdom and understanding, and we must employ all three means to gain spiritual insights and understanding.
2. **First:** receive it from others
3. **Second:** ask for it in prayer
4. **Third:** meditate on God’s Word
 - a. In Psalm 119 the Psalmist uses the word “meditate” no less than seven times. In verses 15-16, for example, he says ...
 - b. **Psalm 119:15-16 (NIV2011)** *I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways. ¹⁶ I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.*
 - c. In prayer he asks the Lord to open up his spiritual understanding as he meditates.
 - d. **Psalm 119:18 (ESV)** *Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.*
 - e. A little later he rejoiced that the Lord gave him greater understanding as he meditated.
 - f. **Psalm 119:32 (NIV2011)** *I run in the path of your commands, for you have broadened my understanding.*
5. Seriously try it for 3 months – it will amaze you!

Benefit 7 of meditation/memorization: it energizes your prayer life

1. Much of the Psalms are a collection of prayers. Some have called it the Bible’s prayer book.

2. What's fascinating about it, however, is that the book doesn't begin with a prayer, but with a psalm on the value of meditation!
3. In other words, God is saying that meditation and memorization are important to assist our prayers!
4. The reason for that is that when you meditate on Scripture you begin to grasp the mind of God.
5. See how it impacted the prayers of the Early Church:
 - a. **Acts 4:24-26, 29-30 (ESV)** *"Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, ²⁵ who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, "Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain?" ²⁶ The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed'... ²⁹ And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, ³⁰ while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus."*
 - b. Notice the two underlined portions imbedded in the prayer. The first portion is an almost word-for-word quotation from Psalm 146:6, while the second is a quotation taken from Psalm 2:1-2. They were praying Scripture that they had memorized!
 - c. The Spirit had opened their minds to understand how the psalmist had been speaking prophetically about recent events in their day.

Steps to memorization

Step 1: pray for a desire to memorize

1. You may doubt that you can do this – particularly if you are older.
2. But if I offered you \$1000 for every verse you memorized in the next week, how many do you think you could memorize? Yet God says of His Word
3. **Psalm 19:10-11 (NIV)** *They (laws) are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. ¹¹ By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.*
4. God designed your faith to feed on Scripture all day long.
5. **Matthew 4:4 (NIV)** *It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'*
6. Your faith to trust God in all things depends FULLY on whether you are feeding your soul on His Word through Scripture!
7. If you choose against Bible memory you choose against the food of faith and will, at best, become a weak Christian!
8. How much better if your desires became ...**Psalm 119:97 (NIV)** *Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.*

Step 2: choose Scripture verses intentionally

1. Don't be haphazard in the way you choose verses to memorize – be intentional about this.
2. Everyone will want to memorize some passages like Psalm 23, which bring comfort and encouragement.
3. This is both necessary and good. However, don't stay stuck in the "Comfort" category.
4. You are alive for a purpose and for an assignment which God has for you (Ephesians 2:10).
5. The most helpful for this are those that give you an eternal perspective, as mentioned previously.
6. As you continue to work through other lessons, you will want to memorize verses having to do with their themes, such as obedience, prayer and listening prayer, growing your character and so on.
7. The whole idea is that the verses you memorize will really benefit your spiritual renewal and growth.
8. Steadily, you will form a personalized memorization plan, tailored just for you.
9. In time, this will develop into one of the most life-changing habits you will ever experience! Guaranteed!

Step 3: start small

1. Choose whatever is manageable for you. If you can only do a couple of verses for the week, that's fine.
2. Begin with one verse and repeat it over and over until you can say it.
3. Then do the same with the second verse, repeating it until you can say it.
4. Next, if the verses link next to each other in Scripture, connect them as you review, so that you can say them together.
5. Review these throughout your day whenever you have a moment.

6. In the days following, keep reviewing them throughout the day.
7. If you start out too ambitiously, memorizing one chapter per week, you might bog down, become discouraged and perhaps even quit.
8. Think about it over the long term: if you memorized just 1 verse per week, after one year you would have 52 verses. If you continued that for 10 years you'd be at 520 verses! That's sizable, yet doable!
9. If, on the other hand, you LOVE to memorize and it is easy for you to remember and review, go for it!
10. Some of you are so competitive by nature that you want to learn 1000 verse right now.
11. But there are three dangers lurking here:
 - a. First: if you aren't careful, you might neglect other important responsibilities, which God expects you to fulfill. Be careful about this.
 - b. Second: if your memorization becomes imbalanced in your life, it may likely move from being a refreshing meditation exercise to becoming a burdensome activity in your life. At this point it has must become memorization for the sake of memorizing.
 - c. Third: you may become so bogged down that you quit altogether. If that happens to you, don't quit. Just slow down your memorization pace to something manageable.

Step 4: Choose a tool to help you

1. **First:** 3X5 cards – write or type out your verses and tape them up on your mirror, refrigerator or desk.
2. **Second:** Phone app
 - a. There are a variety of ones to choose from, but the one many have used is Scripture Typer
 - b. You can get this app for your iPhone or Android
 - c. It has its own topical verse collections – 55 of them, like freedom from sin, creation, comfort, eternal life, prayer, salvation, etc.
 - d. But you can import your own verses and categories.
 - e. Choose the translation you like to use for reading and memorizing.
 - f. It goes with you wherever you take your phone and is very handy to use when you have to wait for appointments and so on.
 - g. You can download this app for free, but it has a limit of 100 verses you can load on it.
 - h. If you wish to keep all your verses together, then you will want to purchase the Pro App for approx. \$10.

Chuck Swindoll wrote, *“I know of no other single practice in the Christian life more rewarding, practically speaking, than memorizing Scripture...”*

Reflecting and Reviewing

1. Write down something that stood out to you, from the reading you just completed.
2. What four benefits of meditation and memorization are mentioned in today's reading?
3. What four steps are given for memorization today?

Life Application

1. Make memorization part of your meditation in your daily devotional time.
 - a. SMORP works very well with memorization, because memorization can be part of meditating.
 - b. Either lengthen your daily devotional time or shorten up your Bible reading time a little.
 - c. Another suggestion: memorize in the morning time and read Scripture before bedtime.
2. Draw up a reasonable schedule of how many verses you wish to memorize this year.
3. Begin your memorization this week with passages about eternity from the selection below
4. Of course, there may be others you may wish to add to the list.
 - a. Matt 6:19-24
 - b. Matt 10:28
 - c. Matt 25:21
 - d. Mark 10:29-31
 - e. Luke 12:48
 - f. Luke 16:9-11

- g. John 14:1-6
 - h. 1 Cor 3:10-15
 - i. 1 Cor 4:5
 - j. 1 Cor 6:19-20
 - k. 1 Cor 10:26
 - l. 1 Cor 15:51-58
 - m. 2 Cor 5:10
 - n. Eph 2:10
 - o. Col 3:1-2
 - p. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
 - q. Heb 9:27
 - r. 2 Pet 3:3-13
 - s. 1 John 2:28
 - t. Rev 20:11-15
 - u. Rev 21: 1-8
 - v. Job 41:11
 - w. Psalm 39:4-5
 - x. Hag 2:8
5. **Memorize:** 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 & 4:5 over the next 2 weeks; about the judgment seat of Christ for believers.

Day 6

Obedience

1. For this final day, we want to focus on OBEDIENCE, as we as disciples are to be doers of the Word (James 1:22-25). The Bible clearly teaches that obedience is a clear echo of our love for God (1 John 5:3).
2. It is also through obedience that we find blessing and our lives are built on a rock (Matthew 7:24-27).
3. Take this lesson and quickly scan the title and headings – do not re-read the entire lesson.
4. Humbly go before God and ask – “what is one step of obedience that I can take as a result of this lesson?”
5. Perhaps have a section in your journal where you record this step (and steps from future lessons). Or put it in the calendar on your phone. This shows God that we are both intending and committing to obey.
6. Write or speak out a prayer of commitment based on the step.