

THE EQUIPPER

A NEWSLETTER TO HELP YOU IN YOUR MINISTRY

February 1994

Dear Fellow Laborer,

For me, Scripture memory has paid greater dividends for the time spent than has any other form of Scripture intake. It has helped me trust God, obey His Word, avoid sin, defeat the devil, renovate my mind, help others and prosper spiritually. Let me explain.

TRUST GOD Faith is relying on God to do what He says. I have concluded it's impossible to have faith in God without a word from God.

You remember it was by faith that the Israelites crossed the Red Sea on dry land. But when the Egyptians tried to do the same thing, they were drowned. Why the difference? The Israelites had a word from God, the Egyptians did not.

Paul explains it this way: "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17). *Hearing* means paying attention to. *Word* means a specific saying. So *faith comes by paying attention to specific sayings of God.*

All the men and women I know who demonstrate great faith have specific truths or promises of God that they rely on. Like Jeremiah 33:3, "Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know." Those who claim that promise as they pray find that God goes beyond *yes, no* or *wait to I'll do much better than that.*

OBEY HIS WORD Memorizing specific commands is a tremendous help toward keeping them. Jesus said, "He who has My commandments and keeps them..." How can you keep His commandments if you don't have them in your mind?

It is not realistic to say I'm going to obey the Bible today...or even the Book of Colossians. But it *is* realistic and practical to say that with God's help, today I'm going to obey Colossians 3:19 - "Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them."

AVOID SIN It is true - God's Word will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from God's Word. "How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your Word" (Psalm 119:9). When the Bible says, "Flee youthful lusts..." (2 Timothy 2:22), the wise young man does just that. He runs from the place of temptation. He switches channels or clicks off the set.

I have never met a Christian living in victory over sin who was not getting the Word of God into his or her life. God's Word in the heart is indispensable.

DEFEAT THE DEVIL James instructs us specifically to resist the devil. To do that we must use the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17). Here again, *word* means a specific saying. You *resist the devil by quoting from the Scriptures*.

That's what Jesus did. Three times Satan tested Him and each time Jesus responded by saying, "It is written..." and quoting from the Scriptures.

The Bible is God's weapon of choice for spiritual warfare. Without it we are doomed to defeat. Like trying to fight a gladiator with your bare fists.

I have had many small encounters with the devil and a few major ones. In the small encounters a sentence prayer and a verse of Scripture quoted takes care of him. In major conflicts, I've asked others to pray and quote with me, and victory has come.

RENOVATE MY MIND Paul tells us we need to be transformed by renewal of our minds. Do you want a renewed mind? Memorize, review and meditate on Scripture!

George was a sailor, and a new Christian. He talked in his sleep, loud and clear, cursing and swearing all night. Then someone got him started memorizing Scripture. He continued talking in his sleep, but now he quoted Scripture!

From time to time people tell me they worry about what they might say under certain kinds of anesthetic. Have you had that experience? The answer is to memorize, review and meditate on the Word of God. Let it renew your mind and you won't have to worry about what you might say!

HELP OTHERS Isaiah 55:10 tells us the Word of God is seed to the sower and bread to the eater. It is the seed we sow in evangelism and the bread we share in nurturing new Christians.

Memorizing Scripture is like stocking pharmacy shelves with medicines. It is vital that the content be pure and the formula accurate. Then when people come with a particular need you can reach for the right Scripture to help meet that need.

After meeting with a non-Christian doctor for some months, I took him to John 1:12, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name." I emphasized *received* and *believe* and asked him where he stood according to that verse. He saw it right away and said, "I believe, but I haven't received."

When he asked, "How do you receive?" I knew instantly to turn to Revelation 3:20. Good ole Scripture memory!

PROSPER SPIRITUALLY Psalm 1 begins, "Blessed is the man..." Spurgeon says that means a particular man, one in a thousand. Only one in a thousand forsakes sin and meditates in God's Word day and night, he says. But look what kind of people they turn out to be...alive, fruitful, drought resistant and prosperous!

As you drive through New Mexico you can see in the distance long, thin ribbons of green - bushes and trees planted by a river. That's what people are like who meditate on the Word of God. They are trees planted by the river of living water. You are refreshed by spending time with them.

But you can't meditate on God's Word until you have it stored in your memory. As with a computer, you can only call up what has previously been recorded. So if you want to prosper spiritually you need to memorize and meditate on some well-selected quotes from the Bible.

The verses in the enclosed booklet are especially well-selected quotes from the Scriptures. *Beginning With Christ* has stood the test of time.

Fifty-two years ago when I first began to work with Dawson Trotman, four of us went each Sunday morning to a U.S. Naval Armory to hold Navy-scheduled "divine services." As we entered the building we could hear the announcement over the public address system: "Divine services in the lounge at ten hundred hours. Smoking lamp is out." The sailors could attend services if they like, but in any event could not smoke during that time. Not the most appealing invitation.

But 25 or 30 sailors would attend. Daws preached and invited any interested to stay and talk with one of us. Each of us talked with at least one sailor. But we had only 15 minutes. On the way home one Sunday Daws asked us what our man's need was and what Scriptures we had used.

We concluded we needed something to leave with them. So Daws painstakingly wrote *Beginning with Christ*, designed to meet the immediate needs of a new or revived Christian.

Though the average shelf life of a Christian book is two years, *Beginning with Christ* is going strong after half a century.

Billy Graham said that when he first saw *Beginning With Christ* he thought, "I can master that in short order." But when a month passed and he hadn't learned the verses he said, "I began to treat that little pack with more respect."

My hope is that you too will treat this little pack with respect. I send you this complimentary copy because I can think of nothing more beneficial.

So, please use *Beginning With Christ* - for yourself, or as a review, or to help another person get started memorizing Scripture.

His...yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lorne".