

Embracing Our Calling, Culture, and Commission by **R. Scott Pace and David Wheeler**

We live in a YAHOO culture: You Always Have Other Options. The mindset of preference and unlimited choice permeates everything. Consider a common scenario of sitting down to eat at a restaurant. Your server will approach you to take your drink order. If you ask for tea, you will then be asked to specify hot tea or iced tea, sweet or unsweet, lemon or no lemon. When someone returns to take your order, you select chicken. You then are presented with a variety of choices: would you like your chicken fried, baked, grilled, Cajun, or as a sandwich? To keep it simple, you choose grilled. The server then asks what you would like for a side. You ask for a potato and are immediately presented with a smorgasbord of potato options: baked, stuffed, sweet, mashed, or fried. Believing that mashed potatoes will be the simplest, you express your desire. Just when you think you've completed the menu labyrinth, your server clarifies, "White or brown gravy?"

This seemingly absurd yet everyday example demonstrates the nature of what we are conditioned to expect. The seemingly never-ending combinations of options extends well beyond our meals, as almost everything can be tailor-made and suited to our preference. But when it comes to our spiritual growth, there are not unlimited options. Scripture is God's gracious gift and designated means by which we mature. There is no substitute for our source of spiritual nourishment; it's the Bible. If we are going to fulfill God's will, we will accomplish it by the power of God's Word.

READ

Joshua 1:8, Psalm 1:2-3, James 1:25

Joshua 1:8 (NKJV)

8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe 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.

Psalm 1:2-3 (NKJV)

2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.

3 He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;

And whatever he does shall prosper.

James 1:25 (NKJV)

25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

1. What does Joshua mean by keeping the Word in your mouth?

Speaking the truth of the Bible.

Relying on the Word to guide your conversations.

Being ready to answer in God's ways and not ours.

Preventing confusion with the world's standards by speaking the truth of God.

2. How do you meditate on the Word day and night?

To do this you must read God's Word.

When you breath, realize the "ruach" breath, wind, Spirit of God completely surrounds you.

Relate everything back to God's Word.

Compare what you see to the God's truths.

3. Why must we continue doing everything written in the Word of God?

To protect ourselves from confusion with the world's ways.

To guide our paths in the correct directions.

To make it a daily part of our lives.

To overcome weakness.

To please God.

4. What does mean to be prosperous, successful, and blessed?

Prosperous = in good condition spiritually, financially, relationships, etc.

Success = to have insight and prudence, comprehension.

Blessed = happiness.

Tireless devotion and faithful submission to God's Word yields the spiritual fruit and progress God desires for us.

In all three of these passages, it is clear: spiritual growth and success are based on Scripture.

READ Romans 15:4, Isaiah 55:8-9, Romans 12:2

1. What unique qualities does Scripture possess that makes the Word the key ingredient that cannot be replaced?

Romans 15:4 (NKJV)

4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

- I. Scripture records the works of God.
These works are recorded to teach us what God is capable of and to what extent he will go on our behalf.

Isaiah 55:8–11 (NKJV)

8 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD.

9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts.

10 “For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven,
And do not return there,
But water the earth,
And make it bring forth and bud,
That it may give seed to the sower
And bread to the eater,

11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth;
It shall not return to Me void,
But it shall accomplish what I please,
And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

- II. Recounts the ways of God.
Provides divine insight in to the ways of God.

It teaches all who will hear.
It prospers those who follow it.

Romans 12:2 (NKJV)

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

III. Scripture reflects the will of God.
It tells us of what is pleasing and acceptable to God's perfect will.

IV. Scripture reveals who an infinite God is to a finite people.
God reveals Himself in every page and passages.

READ: 1 Corinthians 10:31, Romans 11:35, 1 John 2:6

I Corinthians 10:31 (NKJV)

31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Romans 11:35 (NKJV)

35 "Or who has first given to Him
And it shall be repaid to him?"

1. What does success in worship look like?

True worship is more than gathering, singing, and praying together.

True worship is a lifestyle.

We honor Him with our actions and thoughts.

Success in our walk with Him is spiritual growth.

2. What are some of the signs of spiritual growth.

Overcome temptation.

A desire for the Word, to read it, study it, and live it.

A desire to please God.

READ: 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, Colossians 3:23

1 Thessalonians 4:11–12 (NKJV)

11 that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, 12 that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.

Colossians 3:23 (NKJV)

23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,

1. What does success in work look like?

Mind your own business.
Work with your hands, work physically.
Work every project as it is for the Lord.

This is all great stuff right?
But how do we live it out daily?

READ: Matthew 4:4, Philippians 4:8, 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Philippians 4:8 (NKJV)

8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

Step 1: Submerge Yourself in Scripture.

Listen to Christian radio.

Watch Christian podcast.

Read the Bible.

Study God's word.

Read Christian based devotionals.

(This will take time so "a time" for study must be set aside.

Matthew 4:4 (NKJV)

⁴ But He answered and said, *"It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"*

Step 2: Saturate yourself with Scripture.

Meditate on the Word, Truth of the Lord.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (NKJV)

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Step 3: Submit yourself to scripture.

Chapter 2

Connecting with God through Scripture

We live in a YAHOO culture: You Always Have Other Options. The mindset of preference and unlimited choice permeates everything. Consider a common scenario of sitting down to eat at a restaurant. Your server will approach you to take your drink order. If you ask for tea, you will then be asked to specify hot tea or iced tea, sweet or unsweet, lemon or no lemon. When someone returns to take your order, you select chicken. You then are presented with a variety of choices: would you like your chicken fried, baked, grilled, Cajun, or as a sandwich? To keep it simple, you choose grilled. The server then asks what you would like for a side. You ask for a potato and are immediately presented with a smorgasbord of potato options: baked,

stuffed, sweet, mashed, or fried. Believing that mashed potatoes will be the simplest, you express your desire. Just when you think you've completed the menu labyrinth, your server clarifies, "White or brown gravy?"

This seemingly absurd yet everyday example demonstrates the nature of what we are conditioned to expect. The seemingly never-ending combinations of options extends well beyond our meals, as almost everything can be tailor-made and suited to our preference. But when it comes to our spiritual growth, there are not unlimited options. Scripture is God's gracious gift and designated means by which we mature. There is no substitute for our source of spiritual nourishment; it's the Bible. If we are going to fulfill God's will, we will accomplish it by the power of God's Word.

Our Recipe for Success

Throughout the Scriptures, God clearly identifies his Word as the primary ingredient to determine our spiritual success. In Josh 1:8, as the mantle of leadership is being passed from Moses to Joshua, God states, "This book of instruction must not depart from your mouth; you are to meditate on it day and night so that you may carefully observe everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do" (italics mine, here and below).

Similarly, the psalmist prescribed the same spiritual recipe for godly success. He described the necessary devotion of the blessed man, asserting, "His delight is in the Lord's instruction, and he meditates on it day and night. He is like a tree planted beside flowing streams that bears its fruit in its season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers" (Ps 1:2-3). The ingredients are almost completely the same with the fundamental element clearly identified as God's Word. In the New Testament, God commends the same formula. James tells us, "But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer who works—this person will be blessed in what he does" (Jas 1:25). Again we see tireless devotion and faithful submission to God's Word yields the spiritual fruit and progress God desires for us. In all three of these passages, it is clear: spiritual growth and success are predicated on Scripture. But why? What unique qualities does Scripture possess that makes Scripture the key ingredient that cannot be replaced?

First, Scripture records the works of God. His deeds throughout history, from the miracle to the typical, are recorded in the Bible. Beginning with the creation of the universe, to the flood, the plagues of Egypt and the parting of the Red Sea, the defeat of his enemies, fulfilled prophecies and promises, to the sacrifice of his own Son for

our sins—the list of his mighty works is endless. But these events are not simply recorded for historical reference. As Paul noted, “Whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction, so that we may have hope through endurance and through the encouragement from the Scriptures” (Rom 15:4). In other words, the Bible records the works of God to teach us what God is capable of and the extent to which he will go on our behalf. These truths are meant to teach us and encourage us.

Second, Scripture recounts the ways of God. The Bible does not record God’s works as merely factual history; they are explained with divine commentary. Scripture provides insight into how and why God does the things he does. We are not left to wonder as to God’s motives, his means, or his agenda. Although we readily affirm God’s declaration that his ways are infinitely beyond our ways (Isa 55:8-9), we sometimes fail to recognize that the Lord immediately follows this by clarifying, “For just as rain and snow fall from heaven and do not return there without saturating the earth and making it germinate and sprout, and providing seed to sow and food to eat, so my word that comes from my mouth will not return to me empty, but it will accomplish what I please and will prosper in what I send it to do” (vv. 10-11). God’s ways are certainly not our ways, but through his Word, he discloses his ways to us and informs our understanding. Therefore, we know that he works through his people; he works through prayer; and he works through our circumstances. These ways, among many others recounted in Scripture, help us to determine how we should live accordingly.

Next, Scripture reflects the will of God. Not only does the Bible tell us what God does and how he does it, but it also expresses what he desires. We recognized in the previous chapter that Scripture explicitly asserts several facets of God’s will. In addition, through his works and his ways, we can discern his affections, his desires, and his intentions. These truths help us to determine his will for our lives. As a result, Paul challenges believers to renew their minds and transform their understanding with God’s Word, “so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God” (Rom 12:2). God’s will is clearly reflected in his Word. If we desire to find it, follow it, and fulfill it, his Word will serve as the map to guide us along the way.

Finally, and perhaps most important, Scripture reveals the “who” of God. As finite beings, it is impossible for us to conceive of an infinite and transcendent God. Therefore, it was necessary for God to accommodate himself to us by divine self-disclosure. When we read God’s Word, he is revealing himself to us. Every page and passage teaches us something about who and how he is. This should be our primary goal whenever we come to God’s Word, to know him more fully.

These attributes of Scripture highlight its unique nature and clearly establish it as the key ingredient in God's recipe for success. Therefore, we must devote ourselves to becoming faithful students of his Word and allow it to permeate all aspects of our lives.

Our Reliance on Scripture

Our success in every area of life will be determined by our reliance on God's Word. Scripture provides everything we need to succeed for Christ when we allow it to inform and infuse our lives. As we evaluate several specific arenas of life, we can consider the role of Scripture in the success of each one.

Success in Our Worship

Our worship includes more than singing songs at our corporate gatherings. It is a lifestyle, a disposition of the heart, that submits every area of our lives to the praise and glory of God (1 Cor 10:31). True worship surrenders our lives as "a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God," in a way that ascribes worth and honor to the lordship of Christ (Rom 12:1).

As we noted, Scripture teaches us God's will and his ways, what he desires and what he does. Therefore, when we align our lives with his Word, we can know that we are honoring him. By allowing Scripture to inform and infuse our lives, our lifestyle of worship will be pleasing and acceptable to God.

Although a lifestyle of worship includes more than our corporate praise, it is also epitomized by our collective celebrations as his people. We see the role of Scripture in this aspect of worship as well. The Bible instructs us, "Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts" (Col 3:16). God's Word must saturate our songs. With Scripture as the substance of what we affirm and voice in praise to God, he will use our corporate worship to counsel, instruct, and transform our lives.

Success in Our Walk

Our relationship with the Lord is often described as our walk. The Bible characterizes the personal and ongoing fellowship God has with his people in this way (Gen 6:9). More specifically, it describes our everyday behavior as we journey through life and maintain a close relationship with Jesus. As the Bible instructs us, "The one who says he remains in him should walk just as he walked" (1 John 2:6).

Success in our daily walk with Christ will certainly depend on our reliance on Scripture.

Success in our walk primarily involves our spiritual growth. Jesus affirmed that our spiritual progress, or sanctification, would be accomplished by God's Word (John 17:17). This is why Peter challenged believers, "Like newborn infants, desire the pure milk of the word, so that you may grow up into your salvation" (1 Pet 2:2). Paul instructed Timothy that all Scripture is beneficial for teaching, training, and growing us so that we are fully equipped to fulfill God's will for our lives (2 Tim 3:16-17).

Success in our walk also includes our victory over temptation and sin. We are told that Scripture is God's scalpel for performing spiritual surgery on our hearts, dissecting its thoughts and motives, and cutting out those areas infected by sin (Heb 4:12). At the same time, it is a weapon for battle, the "sword of the Spirit," that equips us to stand firm and resist the spiritual enemies that attack us (Eph 6:10-17). Jesus wielded God's Word and defeated Satan's attacks when the enemy tempted him in the wilderness (Matt 4:1-11). The psalmist affirmed that our way will be kept pure when we keep it according to God's Word (Ps 119:9). Therefore, he determined, "I have treasured your word in my heart so that I may not sin against you" (v. 11). Our walk with the Lord will be successful when we inform and infuse it with Scripture.

Success in Our Work

Oftentimes we divorce our spiritual lives from our daily lives. We are guilty of separating our work from our walk. But God doesn't make that same distinction. Whether it's vocationally through our employment, through our efforts in school, through our dedication to our homes, or through our service in the church, work is part of God's will for our lives that requires our reliance on his Word.

Scripture teaches us that our work, and whatever achievements come from it, cannot be viewed as that which we perform by our determination or our efforts. God reminded Israel that even their ability to work came from him, and, as a result, they must acknowledge and appreciate his hand in all that is accomplished (Deut 8:17-19). The Christian life is often characterized by comfort, but in reality it is depicted as one of sacrifice and struggle. For example, Paul's commendation of the Thessalonians seems to drip with beads of sweat on the page as he affirms "your work produced by faith, your labor motivated by love, and your endurance inspired by hope" (1 Thess 1:3).

From a practical standpoint, your work serves as a primary avenue for your testimony for Christ. As Paul noted, you should “seek to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, so that you may behave properly in the presence of outsiders and not be dependent on anyone” (1 Thess 4:11-12). Sadly, too many times, Christian employees are known for being late, lazy, or lackadaisical. But it ought to be the opposite. Believers should be the ones who are known as the most committed, hardest-working, and responsible employees. You and I must adopt the biblical mentality, “Whatever you do, do it from the heart, as something done for the Lord and not for people” (Col 3:23). When our work ethic and efforts are informed and infused by Scripture, we will be successful in our service for Christ.

Success in Our Witness

The source of salvation is the truth of the gospel (Rom 1:16). But our understanding of the good news of Jesus Christ comes from its revelation through the Scriptures (2 Tim 3:15). Salvation through faith in Jesus’s substitutionary death on the cross for our sins requires a fundamental understanding of God’s holiness, humanity’s sinfulness, and Christ’s forgiveness. These foundational truths are all revealed in the Word of God.

Scripture also informs us of God’s divine mandate for those who have been transformed by the good news to share the good news (Matt 28:18-20). We have the privilege, and the obligation, to participate in God’s redemptive plan by reaching the lost with the gospel. This requires us to make the most of every opportunity as we engage our world for Christ by knowing how to respond to each person (Col 4:5-6). When we inform and infuse our witness with Scripture, we will always be prepared “to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Pet 3:15).

Although these four life arenas are not comprehensive, through them we can recognize the foundational nature of the Scriptures for success in every area of our lives. If God’s Word is to permeate your heart and life, it requires a calculated effort and strategy.

Living It Out

Affirming the significance of Scripture without establishing a strategy to implement it is pointless. Let’s consider the steps that are necessary to rely on Scripture as the foundational truth and fundamental ingredient for success in every area of our lives.

Step 1: Submerge Yourself in Scripture

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For God's Word to permeate our lives, we must immerse our hearts in Scripture. Sadly, most Christians have very limited exposure to the Bible, not because their access is restricted, but because they forfeit the opportunity. Most people are content to absorb biblical truth by hearing Christian radio, listening to an occasional podcast, reading a Christian's blog post, or sitting through a weekly sermon. Although all of these are helpful supplements to a spiritual diet, we must have a steady intake of God's Word for us to become spiritually healthy and strong. There are several ways for us to submerge ourselves in Scripture.

First, we must read God's Word daily. Nobody sits down to eat once a week. Yet many Christians expect to be nourished and satisfied by weekly Bible studies or sermons. Jesus explained that both physical and spiritual nourishment are essential, and Scripture is the source of sustenance for our soul. "Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matt 4:4). As Jesus taught us to pray, every physical aspect of his model prayer has a spiritual parallel. This means that our prayer "Give us today our daily bread" (Matt 6:11) involves relying on God to provide for our basic needs, but also includes coming to his Word for our daily nourishment.

The most effective way to maintain consistency in daily Scripture intake is to follow a Bible reading plan. A variety of available options feature different amounts of biblical intake each day and operate on different schedules, but the goal for each of us must be consistent exposure to the "living and effective" Word of God (Heb 4:12). Daily Bible reading is not intended to be in-depth, prolonged Bible study. This is designed to be an intentional effort to read God's Word, to hear him speak, and to learn to love the Scriptures.

If we are honest, there are days when we read God's Word and don't feel as if we're getting anything out of it. But emotions cannot determine our commitment. If you've ever been outside for an extended period of time on a cloudy day, you may not "feel" as if you are getting sunburned. But when you step into a warm shower, the tingling sensation on the back of your neck might confirm the sunlight's effects. The same is true for reading Scripture. Even when we do not feel as if it is having an effect, our exposure to its radiating power always has an impact on us. Therefore, daily Bible reading is a necessity.

Second, we must also read God's Word devotionally. Devotional Bible reading typically has a guide that includes a specific verse or passage each day with some explanatory thoughts and practical application. Some Christians believe that they've outgrown devotionals. But a refusal to benefit from them is simply prideful. Devotionals are helpful because they provide a particular verse or biblical thought

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that can be prayed over and thought about throughout the day. Although you may be able to identify a verse from your daily Bible reading, you will often find yourself “looking” for that verse rather than simply soaking in the Scriptures. The goal with a devotional is to apply a biblical truth to your life each day.

Your devotional can be read at the same time or at a different time altogether from your daily reading. Like Bible reading plans, these come in a variety of formats. One of the most important factors in selecting a devotional is to choose a trusted author who is theologically and biblically sound. You also should look for a devotional that doesn't completely isolate a verse from its context but rather explains the verse according to the broader purpose of its passage. When you read the Scriptures devotionally, like the psalmist you can pray, “Help me understand your instruction, and I will obey it and follow it with all my heart” (Ps 119:34).

Third, we must read God's Word deeply. Our knowledge of God's Word cannot remain customary and familiar. We must be willing to dig deep to build our lives on the sure foundation of the divine truth (Luke 6:47-48). We must become diligent students of God's Word, who handle it correctly and have no reason to be ashamed (2 Tim 2:15). Too many times, Christians remain shallow in their understanding when God wants us all to grow in our knowledge of him through his Word. God challenges us to grow, recognizing our propensity to be spiritually complacent. Although by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the basic principles of God's revelation again. You need milk, not solid food. Now everyone who lives on milk is inexperienced with the message about righteousness, because he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature—for those whose senses have been trained to distinguish between good and evil. (Heb 5:12-14)

Deeper Bible study requires greater amounts of time and effort. Many Christians make the mistake of trying to accomplish in one devotional reading what should be extended over several days or even weeks. In-depth study does not necessarily follow a specific timeline. It can explore a specific topic, a particular passage, or a biblical book as we are able to spend time diving into God's Word. It can be part of an ongoing study, a follow-up to a sermon, or the homework for a discipleship group. When we attempt to study the Bible deeply on a daily basis, we will more than likely grow frustrated as we frequently fall behind or find ourselves rushing just to complete study material that day. We must make studying God's Word a priority while also making sure that we are spending the time necessary to absorb the information and listen to God's voice. Studying God's Word deeply is an ongoing and lifelong journey that will enrich our lives in every way. When combined with

daily and devotional study of the Scriptures, we will be fully submerged in the life-changing truth of the Bible.

Step 2: Saturate Yourself with Scripture

As we submerge ourselves in God's Word, we must also soak it in and allow it to saturate our hearts. A rock can be submerged in water but not absorb it. By contrast, a sponge soaks it in, so that even when the sponge is pulled out of the water it is still gushing from within.

To saturate ourselves with God's Word we must meditate on Scripture. At the beginning of this chapter, we recognized that the recipe for success included consistently dwelling on God's Word. Joshua was instructed to "meditate on it day and night" (Josh 1:8). The psalmist informed us that God's blessing rested on the one who delights in God's Word and "meditates on it day and night" (Ps 1:2). This involves allowing Scripture to become the backdrop for our thoughts, the screen saver for our minds, and the focus of our daydreams. It is an intentional effort to concentrate on the truth of God's Word and to evaluate all of life through the lens of Scripture.

When we meditate on Scripture, we allow it to dictate our thoughts, saturate our hearts, and permeate our lives. When we are preparing a savory meal for the grill, we often marinate the entree and allow it to soak in all the flavors of our favorite sauces. Similarly, we must marinate our hearts with God's Word, soaking it in, and allowing its satisfying goodness to nourish our souls. We meditate on Scripture when we voice God's Word as the substance of our prayers. We also meditate on it when we contemplate its meaning, submit to its authority, and consider how to apply it to our lives.

Saturating ourselves with God's Word also means that we memorize Scripture. Sometimes we commit verses to memory as a result of carefully meditating on them. However, most of the time memorization requires study and repetition. You may be reading this, thinking, Well, that sounds good, but I stink at memorizing. I can't remember anything. Yet when prompted, you can recite your address, your phone number, your birth date, your passwords for multiple sites, and countless other practical facts. You also can sing the lyrics to your favorite songs without strain or maybe quote inane sports statistics. You may object, "That's not the same thing. I use those things every day." My point exactly! Anyone can memorize; it just requires regular effort and commitment.

Many people see memorizing Scripture as reserved for the spiritually elite or the intellectually gifted. But committing God's Word to memory is really just allowing Scripture to implant within your heart (Jas 1:21). We have recognized the personal benefits as we observed the success that results when our worship, our walk, our work, and our witness are informed and infused with Scripture. This becomes possible when we memorize God's Word, and the Spirit can bring it to mind at the appropriate time or point of need.

We also can recognize how memorized verses of Scripture can equip us for ministering to others. An encouraging note in a card or text, a word of advice or personal counsel, a prayer shared during a difficult time, a thoughtful response to a doctrinal question or cultural situation, or cross references when preparing or teaching a Bible study—all are practical ways our ministry to others will be enhanced by memorizing Scripture.

Practically speaking, memorizing Scripture must be approached with pure motives and a realistic strategy. The goal is not to impress people; it is to impact people. The power of God's Word can penetrate hearts and change lives. To memorize Scripture effectively, we must be steady and consistent. For example, a verse a week is not mentally taxing or overly impressive, but, over the period of four years, it has the potential of more than two hundred verses committed to heart. You would be a walking Bible!

Scripture is also best memorized in context and with content. Knowing where a verse is located and the context around it helps the Scripture attach to our understanding and more readily "stick." Therefore, we should memorize the reference, or address, of the verse. This will also allow you to point others to the verses as you minister. In memorizing Scripture, it is also helpful for the content of the verses selected to be relevant and applicable. If you are struggling with worry or lust, choose verses on those topics. If you are going through a difficult time, study Scriptures on trials, faith, and hope. If you are focused on a specific topic or doctrinal truth, commit to memory some verses related to your subject and passions. All of these tips can help you faithfully memorize Scripture and saturate your heart with God's Word.

Step 3: Submit Yourself to Scripture

Knowledge without application is empty and fruitless. To be transformed by God's Word, the most important step is our submission to its authority in our lives through our obedience to it. Submitting ourselves to Scripture requires us to consider how we regard the Bible and, as a result, how we respond to the Bible.

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First, we must treasure God's Word because it's valuable. Our submission to Scripture is directly related to how we view it. The Bible is God's divine self-disclosure, revealing himself to us (2 Tim 3:16). As such, it is perfect and without error, or "inerrant." We also recognize that it is "inspired." It is God talking to us personally as he speaks through what he spoke to the prophets and by the human authors (Heb 1:1; 2 Pet 1:20-21). Although it is God's direct message to us, many Christians leave it in their car, on their nightstand, or on a shelf throughout the week and pick it up only to carry it to church.

But when we recognize it as God's Word, we must learn to treasure it. Though it is not our most expensive possession, it should be our most valued earthly possession. The psalmist understood this and declared the Scriptures to be "more desirable than gold—than an abundance of pure gold" (Ps 19:10). When we recognize its incredible worth, we will consume his Word and it will become the delight and joy of our hearts (Jer 15:16). We should be willing to gladly submit our lives to his immeasurably valuable divine revelation.

Submission to Scripture also means that we should trust God's Word because it is reliable. The Bible guides us and instructs us as we navigate through life (Ps 119:105). Because it is inerrant and inspired, we can also have confidence that it will not mislead us in any way. This means that it is "infallible." But it is not just a book of suggestions. As God's Word, it deserves and demands our obedience. The promises it contains, the assurances it offers, and the trustworthy counsel it provides are all accessed and experienced through our submission to it.

The verses in the recipe for success confirm this. Joshua was instructed to meditate on God's Word, so that he could "carefully observe everything written in it" (Josh 1:8). James instructed believers that obedience must complement their hearing and understanding, not as "a forgetful hearer but a doer who works" (Jas 1:25). Likewise, Jesus taught that it was the one who hears his words and "acts on them" who establishes life on the sure foundation of his Word (Matt 7:24-27). If we want to know about God, we can know the Bible, but if we want to know God, we must obey the Bible!

If we follow God's recipe for success, we will recognize the need to rely on Scripture in every area of our lives. This requires a response and strategy that helps us to become lifelong students of God's Word. When we submerge ourselves in Scripture, saturate ourselves with Scripture, and submit ourselves to Scripture, God will use

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his divine truth to conform us to the likeness of Jesus and guide us as we find, follow, and fulfill his will for our lives.