

Know It by Heart

by Rodney Navey

We highly recommend you memorize key verses in the Book of Romans and lead your family to do so as well. Since Romans is a letter written to help us better understand the Gospel and the impact it has on our lives as followers of Jesus Christ, it makes sense that we could highlight key verses to lead us down the road of understanding and explaining salvation. Many have called this “The Roman Road.”

MEMORIZE THE ROMAN ROAD

Traditionally, five verses are included in “The Roman Road.” No problem if you want to stick with the main five, but we’re adding in two more as bookends. Our goal is to provide a clear, succinct way to share the Gospel with anyone:

- Romans 1:20 *“For His invisible attributes...”*
- Romans 3:23 *“For all have sinned...”*
- Romans 6:23 *“For the wages of sin...”*
- Romans 5:8 *“But God shows His love for us...”*
- Romans 10:9 *“If you confess with your mouth...”*
- Romans 10:13 *“Everyone who calls...”*
- Romans 12:1–2 *“I appeal to you therefore, brothers...”*

Work hard to memorize the verses completely and their addresses. Yes, that means word for word and every word. No, not just the general idea or a loose rendition.

MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE WORD FOR WORD

Why word for word?

Every word is inspired by God (*2 Timothy 3:16*).

Meditation is aided by correct recall (*Joshua 1:8*).

When sharing with others, they should get an accurate account and address for Scripture (*2 Timothy 2:15*).

It's also good for the brain to work on details. Our kids are stretched and strengthened by healthy mental exercises, and we adults need to stay sharp and keep growing too.

Scripture memorization, in general, is a lot of work and requires review. But it has great rewards. Invest in your relationship with God. Invest in witnessing to unbelievers. Invest in discipling those who are saved. And by all means invest in loving, learning, and living the Scriptures.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION

Here are a few suggestions to help with the process:

Write each verse.

You may want to do this every day for a while. Write the verse on a napkin when you are having lunch. Write it on a note card. If you have artistic ability, write it out with flare. If not, use a computer to put together a nice copy.

Speak each verse.

Read it out loud each day, especially when you are first learning it. Say it to yourself and say it to others. Memorizing Scripture is easier when you do it with others. They can hold you accountable and challenge you.

Carry each verse.

Take it with you while you are memorizing it. Soon, the passage will be in your heart, but for now, take your note card with you. You'll have moments while you are waiting or having a break that you can work on it. You'll be amazed at how many moments you can find in the day to take a look at it, especially if you'll put your phone down (i.e. unless you are using your phone to aid your Scripture memory).

Play each verse.

One helpful game is to use a white board or a sheet of paper to leave out certain words. Children enjoy guessing which words are missing. As you leave out more words, more memory is required to quote the passage.

Celebrate each verse.

Once the passage is completely memorized, enjoy a nice reward. Take the family out to dinner or get some ice cream. Go to the Christian bookstore and get a good book to read or game to play.

Keep each verse.

Don't just drop the verse once it is memorized. Review, review, review! From time to time, read back over it. If you've memorized it as a family, periodically use it for devotions. Keep it before you and your family, or you will lose it.

Share each verse.

You will have many opportunities to share the verses you memorize with yourself and others. The more you use them, the more they will stick. Preach to yourself—you need to hear certain things from God. Share with others. It's always great to have a Word from God.

Again, Scripture memory is work, but it's great work because it's God's work. David Mathis notes in *Habits of Grace: Enjoying Jesus through the Spiritual Disciplines*: "Scripture memory, at its best, is about feeding your soul today and mapping your life and mind onto the very life and mind of God... When we learn the Scriptures by heart... we're listening to and learning the voice of our Creator and Redeemer Himself" (pp. 67–68).

WHY SHOULD YOU MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE?

Before we get more specific about memorizing “The Roman Road,” let’s take a look at one more list. Why memorize Scripture in general? After all, we have the Bible in print, on our computers, on our tablets, and on our phones. Do we need to commit the time and brain power necessary to do this?

Yes, based on at least six reasons:

Address Sin

Scripture memory is required if you are going to address the sin in your life: “I have stored up Your Word in my heart, that I might not sin against You” (Psalm 119:11). That’s enough reason to engage in the process for yourself and your family. Jesus modeled the use of the Word in fighting temptation. Throw your lot with Him.

Divine Guidance

Scripture memory is required for divine guidance at any moment: “Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 111:105). When you or your children are making decisions and living life, what does God draw from in your hearts and minds to lead you? The clearest and surest way He leads you is through His Word. In the immediacy of a given moment and the thought processes of each day, your heart will be ready to receive His guidance.

Be Prepared

Scripture memory is required for ongoing training to do God’s work: “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16–17). Training occurs through each avenue of Bible intake; but can you see the value of having God’s Word at His disposal in your heart and mind? He may correct or convict you at any given moment. He may desire to lead you in a relationship or in ministry to another person. Will you be prepared and ready?

Meditation on His Word

Scripture memory is required to obey God’s command to meditate on His Word

day and night: “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” (Joshua 1:8).

Hiding Scripture in your heart puts you in a much better position to fulfill God’s will of meditating on His Word day and night. It’s a matter, then, of training yourself to think through it as you go through your day and as you settle in for the night.

Effective Prayer

Scripture memory is required to pray according to God’s will (or at least more likely): “If you abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you” (John 15:8). How else does His Word abide in you? You memorize it; you hide it in your heart. The more His Word is stored within your heart and mind, the more you will know how to pray. His Word is His will, and unless you pray according to His will, your prayers are not going to be effective (1 John 5:14–15).

Can you pray in God’s will without memorizing Scripture? Well, yes, but it’s less likely. The less you know His Word, the less likely you are to know His will. You should be prepared to pray about situations and for people at a moment’s notice. If His Word is in your heart, you’ll be ready.

Life Change

Scripture memory is required for life change and fruitfulness: “His delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither” (Psalm 1:3).

It’s possible to carry God’s Word around at all times. You were created with the capacity to memorize so that you could remember God, His ways, and His Word. As you meditate on what you have memorized, He grows you and shapes you into a person of character and integrity. His Word is a sword that cuts, (Hebrews 4:12–13), and like a fire or hammer that breaks in pieces, (Jeremiah 23:29).

God will transform your mind and heart by the power of His Word, (Romans 12:1–2). His Spirit uses Scripture to convict, teach, and mold. Changed hearts and minds lead to changed lives. A changed life lived for Him will bear much fruit and bring Him much glory (John 15:5). The Word in your heart makes a lot of sense, doesn't it?

In his book, *The Discipline of Grace*, Jerry Bridges offers wise counsel: “We cannot effectively pursue holiness without the Word of God stored up in our minds where it can be used by the Holy Spirit to transform us... memorize Scriptures that deal with the particular temptations to which you are especially vulnerable. Then ask the Holy Spirit to bring them to your mind at times of temptation” (p. 175).

BACK TO THE ROMAN ROAD

You preach the Gospel to three different audiences. First, you preach to people who are not followers of Jesus Christ. You do so because you obey your King, but also because you want them to understand how much God loves them. Secondly, you preach to yourself. You need reminders of how much God loves you. Thirdly, you preach the Gospel to other believers to encourage them in their walk with Christ.

When you memorize the verses that make up “The Roman Road,” you are prepared to preach or to share the best news in the world. No matter where you are in life, you never outgrow your need for the Gospel. As you mature in the faith, it's a matter of growing deeper in the Gospel.

VERSES & KEY POINTS

During the study in Romans, you will examine and discuss these verses in their context. For now, commit to hiding them in your heart and understanding the key ideas in each verse.

ROMANS 1:20

“For His invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.”

- God created the world.
- He reveals Himself through creation.
- Everyone is created by God and responsible to Him.

ROMANS 3:23

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

- All people are sinners by nature and by choice.
- The measurement of a person’s heart and behavior is the perfection of God.

ROMANS 6:23

“For the wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

- Sin has eternal consequences.
- The ultimate death is separation from God.
- God has provided a relationship with Him that cannot be earned by works.

ROMANS 5:8

“But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

- God loves you.
- The cross proves His love.
- We don’t deserve His love.

ROMANS 10:9

“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

- Confessing Jesus is Lord means to surrender and repent.
- Believing God raised Him from the dead indicates trust in His work.
- Being saved means being saved from sin to a relationship with God.

ROMANS 10:13

“For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

- Everyone includes any one.
- Calling on His name means to ask for forgiveness and a relationship with Him.
- God promises to save everyone who calls on His name.
- When He saves us, He adopts us into His family.

ROMANS 12:1-2

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 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.”

- Authentic followers of Christ offer themselves completely to God.
- We were created to worship God.
- Growth in faith means His followers are less like the world.
- Growth in faith means transformation into Christ’s likeness.
- Followers of Christ do God’s will.

I

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“But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

SOLUTION

PROBLEM

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V

ROMANS 10:9

“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

RESPONSE

VII

ROMANS 12:1B–2A

“Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind”

CHANGED LIFE

VI

ROMANS 10:13

“For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

ASSURANCE

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

ROMANS 15:13

ASSURANCE

Everyone includes any one.

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When He saves us, He adopts us into His family.



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