

# American Decency Association

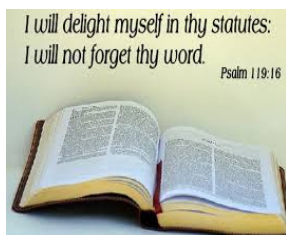
PO Box 202, Fremont, MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org

Encouraging Christians to guard their hearts

February 2014

## Stockpiling Weapons Through Bible Memorization

by: Bryan DeWire



Besides the Bible, *When I Don't Desire God* is the most life-changing book I've read. I use "life-changing" carefully and intentionally. It has changed the way I go about my day-to-day life more than any other book written by men.

As I read this book, I desperately wanted my life to radiate with joy in God. And as Jesus told his disciples, "*These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full*" (John 15:11). So, the joy of Jesus comes into our lives and gives us fullness of joy through his word, "these things I have spoken to you."

**Gather Portions**      **Extended**

Therefore, Piper highlights "The Worth of God's Word in the Fight for Joy" (chapter 7) and then teaches "How to Wield the Word in the Fight for Joy" (chapter 8). In the latter chapter, he spends extended time encouraging his readers to memorize God's word. Here he says, *How shall we use the word of God to fight for joy? The first answer I have given is to read it with a plan and regularity. The next answer I give is to memorize verses and paragraphs and chapters and even whole books of the Bible.* (p. 119)

You might think, "Are you serious? You think I can memorize whole books of the Bible?" For the sake of your deep, lasting, satisfying joy in God, yes! As Joshua 1:8 says, "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." God's words — the "Book of the Law" — was to remain on the lips of this revered old-covenant leader.

But keep in mind that hiding God's word in your heart is a process. As Piper advises, *If you are not a memorizer at all, shift up to memorizing a Bible verse a week. If you only memorize single verses, shift up to memorizing some paragraphs or chapters (like Psalm 1 or Psalm 23 or Romans 8). And if you have ventured to memorize chapters, shift up to memorize a whole book or part of a book. Few things have a greater effect on the way we see God and the world than to memorize extended portions of Scripture.* (p. 121)

### Joy Direct and Indirect

Knowing that this call might seem too high and lofty for some, Piper addresses the questions: Why would I spend so much time and effort on memorizing such long passages? How can I do so? His first answer:

*When you memorize the Word of God, it's there directly giving joy to*

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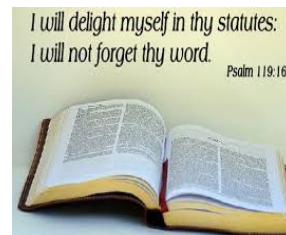
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**Psalm 119:11**

I have hidden



your word  
in my heart

so that I  
might not sin  
against you.

[Continued from page 1]

*you and (if you speak it) to others, and it's there indirectly serving your joy by transforming your mind. How shall we obey the command, "Be transformed by the renewal of your mind" (Romans 12:2) if we neglect to saturate our minds with the thoughts of God? Ask yourself: Of all the spiritually minded people you have known — those who seem to walk most consistently with God and are in tune with God's Spirit — do they not all overflow with Scripture? (p. 120)*

Hopefully our hearts burn when we read these words, and we're spurred on to pursue God with large investments of time and energy, and say to God, "You are worth it all! O, how I want to know you!"

**Remembering His Word**

We encourage you to

make the small investment to read Piper's section "A Radical Call to Major Memorization" on pages 121–122, which includes parts of Andrew Davis's, "An Approach to Extended Memorization of Scripture". And consider reading all of chapter 8 of *When I Don't Desire God*.

Let us join the psalmist in crying out to God, "I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word" (Psalm 119:16).

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**A Personal Note from Bill Johnson:**

In my early years of teaching in the public schools, I had a 30 minute drive to and from school. I began to memorize three passages per week as I traveled. I had never memorized scriptures before but had heard that many who took it to heart found it to be spiritually strengthening. I gave myself to it faithfully, learning new verses and reviewing those previously learned.

After several years, I discovered that God had used Scripture memorization to develop a basis for His calling on my life: encouraging people to "pursue holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." Romans 12:1,2 became a bedrock of my life and ministry calling.

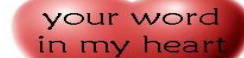
To this day, I find myself drawing from God's word while in the car, talking with others, and in public speaking. I continue to stand amazed at the recall I have for particular verses. I have surprised myself how readily I could launch into a passage that I hadn't recited for months or even years.

God used memorizing scripture far beyond what I could have ever imagined. Those scriptures have helped to convict, counsel, and encourage me personally and to communicate my intention of being a man who desires to abide in and be led by the very word of God.

May some reading this pick up the challenge of "stockpiling weapons through Bible memorization."

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