



Κατανῶμεν *Let us consider...*



Memorization: Then and Now By Jeff Cymbaluk

GCA has significantly altered its elementary and junior high Bible curriculum under the direction of Mr. Cymbaluk. Instead of weekly, GCA has added daily Scripture memorization because of the truth of Galatians 6:7-8. In this article, Mr. C explains how God has changed his life through memorizing the Scriptures.

As a young man, I realized the power of the Word of God memorized. It was different than simply reading it because memorization allowed His Word to be a constant presence. At the age of twenty, I decided to memorize two verses a day—giving ten minutes to do it. I began with some easy passages in the Psalms and worked my way through to books like I Peter and I John. Soon, I found that I could memorize up to ten verses a day in that time. The power of memorization was startling, because of the exponential growth of the understanding of Scripture. Passages made total sense when put in the context of their whole book and memorization put the entire book at my disposal for context.

Yet by this time, being in my early twenties and saddled with a form of legalism, the memorization of Scripture was very painful. Accompanying each time of memorization was a realization of how far short of what God really wanted I fell. After two years, and sixty chapters memorized, the realization dawned that there was no point in memorizing more if what had already been memorized could not be lived, so I took a long break from the discipline.

But the memorization did not take a break from me. It was through passages memorized in Romans that God purposed the legalism to be broken. I had

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The mission of Grace Classical Academy is to provide an education designed to help our children know the love, grace, truth and holiness of our glorious God and, from this understanding, strive for excellence in knowledge, wisdom and service.

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**Do not be
deceived: God is
not mocked, for
whatever one
sows, that will he
also reap. For the
one who sows to
his own flesh will
from the flesh
reap corruption,
but the one who
sows to the Spirit
will from the
Spirit reap
eternal life.
(Galatians 6:7-8
ESV)**

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to learn the meaning of grace, **both for myself and expressed to others**. The first lesson was the most difficult. If goodness is the goal of legalism, and, at the same time, being aware of how miserably short of God's desire I fell, how was grace to be received? How do you deal with waking in the morning knowing that mistakes would be made? How can bitterness be avoided toward the only one who could stop this (God)? Why is He not changing me? Does He even care? The answer to these questions was in what had been memorized. "For God has consigned (bound) all to disobedience, that He may have mercy on all." (Romans 11:32) Paul speaks this truth and breaks into a praise of God's wisdom and this was a lesson that God would not let me pass by: Coming to grips with my sinfulness was an absolute necessity before growth in Christ was possible; coming to grips with my sinfulness had to take place before grace could be extended to others. There was no other option. Without that Scripture there would have been complete despair. Even with it there was a struggle to make sense of why God would allow living in hopeless sinfulness. However in time wisdom was gleaned from the failures. Through this process a deep grace was learned that could have been received in no other way. It also led to faith in *a God who saves* rather than a faith in my own merits.

These struggles resulted in a twenty year break from memorizing entire books of the Bible. Yes, verses here and there would be memorized, but missing was the amazing benefit that is realized when whole books of the Bible are memorized. In time, due to the wakening of His grace, the desire to memorize was again present. There was now an understanding that God would continue to reveal my sinfulness but would also give the grace needed to grow in Him. Round two began with a book that would revolutionize my understanding of Scripture—the book of Galatians. Though I had studied Galatians before, I was not prepared for what would result from memorizing the entire book. Astoundingly, even more grace was found. Grace to the person who had been grappling with grace and its place for twenty years. For the first time the whole picture became clear. Not only did every story from the Old Testament point to Christ, it was evident how God painted a picture of His hand of grace in history through the lives of the patriarchs that could only lead to a salvation by grace through faith. These stories were beautiful, living, life-changing pictures that brought freedom.

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Then He gave me insight into why everyone struggles with a desire to prove themselves worthy. “In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.” (Galatians 4:3) These elementary principles turn out to be, by context both in Galatians and Colossians, a striving to earn God’s favor. Humans begin as legalists and it takes maturity to leave that and live by faith! It took the Word of God fermenting in my life for twenty years to recognize that I was not alone in the struggle with legalism, it is a universal experience for those who seek to come to God.

Finally, for the last three years a simple verse has proven a wonderful guide—Galatians 5:6. “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.” Living life by a godly set of moral rules and attitudes had always been the standard by which my life was evaluated, but now there are only two questions that serve the standard for life: How is my faith and how is my love? These two aspects are central to the Christian life. A life without love—but full of faith—was empty and useless. I Corinthians 13 pointed out that faith that could move mountains, but did not have love, was nothing. Love is the substance of our lives—it makes our lives full. To live with faith but without love was exciting but empty. But the reverse was equally troubling: a life with love but no faith was full but bland. Faith gives life zest and excitement as we look forward to the next challenge that God puts before us. Love makes our response to these challenges pure and right.

But this year, God is revealing a third component of Galatians 5:6—“working.” After working so hard to avoid legalism for twenty years, it was necessary to be reintroduced to the function of obedience. And more than just a head knowledge of the right place for obedience, this time my heart actually got it—neither salvation nor my identity was being earned by obedience. I Corinthians 5:6 states, “Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?” From this Scripture it is obvious that there is no small sin—it spreads. Learning to identify and address those small areas of complacency present areas of greater unfaithfulness and sin. Though still striving to obey, it is not a striving for salvation but for growing in faith and in expressing love for God.

Memorization has been a gift in my life. Beginning as a young man and placing large chunks of Scripture into my mind eventually bore fruit. The passage in Galatians 6:7, 8 is true. “Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.” The Word placed in my life took years to grow fruit but it did its work and has now allowed me to continue to sow more Scripture into my life that will again yield fruit. This year, GCA is opening this door for our students as well. We have begun a program of memorization that will place large chunks into the student’s minds and hearts— knowing that God will not be mocked, these students will one day reap through this sowing.

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love. (Galatians 5:6 ESV)

Gratitude



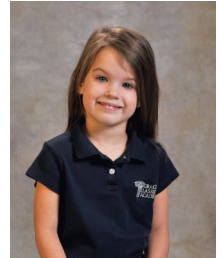
"The freedom to worship God."

Lilly Tolbert (2nd)



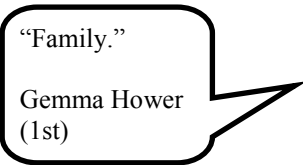
"Snow."

Allie Hathcock (K)



"Pigs in a Blanket."

Caleb Morris (6th)



"Family."

Gemma Hower (1st)



"Blankets."

Mary Tate (5th)



The elementary students were asked to name one thing they were thankful for during chapel, and no one could repeat an answer. Here are sample answers from the question, "What are you thankful for?"



"The Reformation."

Chandler Hathcock (3rd)

"My stuffed animal, 'Pinky-pie.'"

Lilly Greer (1st)

"Dishwashers."

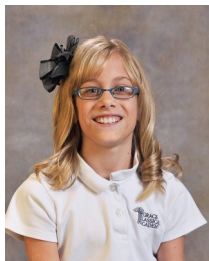
John Gano (6th)

"Prayer."

Garland Groves (3rd)

"The Trinity."

Cody Dale (1st)



"Books."

Natalie Frazier (4th)



"Lightbulbs."

Avery Mercer (4th)



Letter from Mr. V

Dear GCA Family,

What an amazing creation is the creature called man-so distinct and apart from the rest of the animal kingdom and creation in general. The genius of a creation that makes very real moral choices and is yet dependent could only come from the holy and all-wise Father. And, creation was only the beginning of the story. Knowing that all would sin, the Father again demonstrates His genius in providing a Savior and Redeemer for sinful man that neither violated justice nor mercy. Someone has said that in Christ justice and mercy meet. Because of how He created us, our repentance has meaning, our worship has meaning, and our love has meaning. Because of how we were created how we respond to one another has meaning. My heart overflows with praise and worship to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for the wonder and beauty and goodness of the amazing plan that we are able to see and be a part of. Praise be to the Father for Christ Jesus who became the child born in Bethlehem: Immanuel, God with us.

What an honor and blessing to be involved in the lives of the students, families, and staff at Grace Classical Academy: a place united in its goal to bring an opportunity for every student to be well-equipped to serve in the grand plan of our Lord. Looking back at history, looking at the present reality, and looking forward to what has been promised, words fail to express the wonder, gratitude, love, joy, and peace that fills my heart this Christmas season. May His name be praised!

It is my prayer that the wonder and glory of what God has done fill your heart during the wonderful time of celebration of our Lord's birth.

In Gratitude,
Lonnie Vandiver

Staff Birthdays

December

December 5 - Robin Harrison

December 11 - Curt Brannan



January

January 6 - Judy Daugherty

January 16 - Nancy Greenwood

January 20 - Lisa Loyd

January 30 - Jedidiah Moss

February

February 3 - Coby Cullins

February 7 - Jeff Cymbaluk

God with Us: A Christmas Concert



1st-8th Grade History Day





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January 2015

- | | |
|-----|-----------------------------|
| 1-6 | Christmas/New Year's Break |
| 1 | New Years Day |
| 5 | Tuition Due |
| 5-6 | Teacher Training
9:00 AM |
| 7 | 2nd Semester Begins |
| 8 | Skating Party 6-8 PM |
| 30 | Hat Day |

February 2015

- | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|
| 2 | Tuition Due |
| 14 | Valentine's Day |
| 16 | President's Day
No School |
| 20 | Battle Grammatica Playoffs |
| 26 | Skating Party 6-8 PM |
| 27 | Mismatch Day |

March 2015

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 2 | Last Day for Reenrollment
Discount/Tuition Due |
| 6 | End of 3rd Quarter |
| 8 | Daylight Savings Time
Begins |
| 9-13 | No School/Teacher Work
Week |
| 9-10 | Teacher Training
9:00 AM |
| 10-11 | Optional P/T Conferences |
| 20 | Dots and Stripes Day
All-School Open House
6:30 PM |
| 27 | Etiquette Banquet
6:30 PM |