

After a few hours on a live Bridges to People training one believing friend, an educated and successful man, told me: „If you had given me that explanation right at the beginning, I would have accepted all that practicing much more easily.“ By „explanation at the beginning“ he meant the topic of learning something by heart and practicing. I presented him with a pile of Bible quotations on very interesting principle of remembering or repetition as found in the Scripture.

Here is a very narrow selection, and only from the New Testament:

John 14:26 Advocate, the Holy Spirit will REMIND you of all that I have told you.

2. Peter 1:12 Therefore, I am going to keep on REMINDING you of these things, even though you know them and are grounded in the present truth.

2. 1 Peter 1:15 I will do my best that you may always REMEMBER all these things after I am gone.

2. Peter 3:1 I am writing a second letter in which I REMEMBER to awaken your pure mind.

Some would rightly relate this to memorizing Bible verses. This is very, very helpful! But to Corinthians Paul says:

1 Corinthians 15:1 I REMIND you of the Gospel that I preached to you and which you received.

When Paul reminds them of the Gospel, it is a broader reminder than just individual verses. It is to be a reminder that will transform our lives:

Revelation 3:3 REMEMBER how you received and heard my word, keep it, and repent.

(Repentance means a change of our mind and life.)

Occasionally I meet a number of Christians who have the idea that being led by the Spirit means dropping preparation, learning nothing, thinking nothing, just going and saying whatever comes into their mind. Some refer to the instruction of the Lord Jesus for disciples to speak without preparation. But look at the context for which the Lord suggests it: *Luke 12:11-12 When you are dragged into the synagogues and before governments and rulers, DO NOT WORRY about how or what you would defend yourself or what you would say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that hour what you ought to say.*“ And the Lord Jesus repeats this at the end of His ministry, *Luke 21:14-15 Keep it in your hearts NOT to prepare*

beforehand how you will defend yourselves. For I will give you speech and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or refute.

This is about adversaries and persecution! And the main point is that the disciples are not to be intimidated in such situations. Otherwise, the Master sends his disciples to the villages and towns before him and puts very specific words in their mouths. Luke 10:9 Say to them, „The kingdom of God has come near to you.“ So they know exactly what their main message is to be. And if they encounter resistance somewhere, they are to shake the dust off their feet and utter the same key idea they have memorized: Luke 10:11 But know this: The kingdom of God is at hand.

Similarly, the apostle Paul is not reluctant to use the same well thought through and proven approach over and over again, when entering synagogues and presenting who Jesus was from the Scriptures whenever possible. And he involves a number of his co-workers in these repeated „techniques“. (2 Timothy 2:2)

The apostle Peter writes: 1 Peter 3:15, Dedicate your hearts to Christ and be **READY** to give an answer to anyone who asks you the reason for your hope.

In other words, having the basic procedure memorized and **TRAINED** is a tremendous help to our ministry. Especially when someone is just starting this ministry. This simple „memorization“ plus **PRACTICING** is a stepping stone for us; a base that the Lord uses over and over again.

„If you had given me the explanation at the beginning,“ a believing friend told me at a training session, „I would have accepted all the practicing much more easily...“ I myself used to be reluctant to learn anything by heart: „That’s unnatural, telling people something learned.“ I had utterly delusional and prideful notion that natural is what I just make up on the spot. Through many unskilled and unsuccessful attempts, I confirmed to myself again and again how unnatural I was, saying supposedly clever things that led nowhere. It was only after a long time when I made the discovery, which I am describing to you here in another lesson: that „What I have learned really well is natural for me!“

Lord Jesus, it’s amazing to me to watch the disciples so bravely quoting Scripture after Your physical departure that even their determined and violent enemies recognize in them that

they used to be with You. (Acts 4:13)

Additional links for inspiration

Philippians 3:1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. It is not burdensome for me to write the same things to you again, and it will be an assurance to you.

1 Corinthians 11:2 I commend you, brethren, for remembering me in all things, and for keeping my instructions as I delivered them to you.

John 8:31 Jesus said to the Jews who believed in him, If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples.

Acts 11:16 I remembered the Lord saying: John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit

Matthew 16:9 Do you not yet understand? Do you not even remember the five loaves for the five thousand...?

Revelation 2:5 Remember from where you have fallen, repent, and begin to act as before! If not, I will come to you soon and move your lampstand from its place, if you do not repent.

Colossians 1:23 ...if indeed you remain grounded in the faith and firm in it, and if you do not depart from the hope of the gospel which you have heard proclaimed...

John 15:7 If ye abide in me, and if my sayings abide in you, ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

1 John 2:24 Let that abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If what you have heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.

1 John 2:14 I have written to you, little children, that you have known the Father; I have written to you, fathers, that you have known Him who is from the beginning; I have written to you, young men, that you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the Evil One.