

***Rest for Your Soul* Episode 2 Podcast**

Wendy Blight:

Hi, my name is Wendy Blight, and welcome to our podcast series, *Rest for Your Soul*. And what we're talking about today is really answering the question: Can memorizing Scripture really help me? No better person to invite into that than the person I've spent the last few years with memorizing Scripture, Nancy Elam. We have been friends for a long, long time, early on, it was through our daughters competitively cheerleading together, we'd see each other at church. And then I started a Bible study that I prayed, and for Nancy to come, and I invited her a couple of times, and then she finally came. And it's been an amazing friendship ever since. Eventually, her stepping up into leadership, and just watching you grow in your faith has been beautiful. So would you just tell our friends a little bit about you?

Nancy Elam:

Well, thank you for having me. I'm excited to be here, a little bit nervous but that's to be expected. Wendy, you've been such a key role, first of all, in just my whole walk, and I've told you before, such an encourager, and I wouldn't be memorizing Scripture if it wasn't for you. So I am married with three children. Adult children now. And just the friendship that we have acquired over the years, led from Bible studies to starting a meal ministry to now memorizing Scripture. Which we did a while ago, started that in your studies.

Wendy Blight:

Yes, we did. We started memorizing Scripture. Well, you'd memorized Scripture all the way back when we, when I wrote a study on the book of Hebrews. And that was kind of your introduction to it.

Nancy Elam:

It was. So the Hebrew study was my second study that I did with you. And you had a memory verse for each week, which there's 13 chapters. Yeah. And I was like, there is just no way that I will be able to do this. My memory is horrible. And you encouraged everyone and encouraged me. And before you knew it, I had, at the end of the season, memorized 13 Scriptures. And yeah.

Wendy Blight:

And it was, what was sweet about that was not a whole lot of people took that challenge wholeheartedly, right? No one memorized 13, except for Nancy. So that was very impressive that she did that. But the reason Scripture memory became so important to me on this anxiety journey is in finding ways, this is something I did during my times of solitude. That's being still with God, not nec- I could do it outside other- people could be around me, I could be reading my Bible and apart, but memorizing Scripture is a good thing to do when you're just having some quiet time. And how it came for me is that my anxiety was so great that the way I escaped it was to watch TV. And anxiety went away until it didn't. And that's when the show ended. And then it all came back. And three words I heard from the Lord, one night, when I was sitting there was changed your position. Change your position. And I felt like what the Lord was telling me is quit

watching TV and go somewhere else and open My Word. And so that's exactly what I did. And I want you to know, I had tried memorizing Scripture before, and I never kept up with it, because I just felt it was hard. And it wasn't, it just wasn't working. But I have to tell you, when you go to Scripture, it talks about- to Joshua. In Joshua 1:8, it says, "The Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you be careful to do according to all that is written." And then to the Israelites, God Himself said, "These commandments I give you today are to be upon your hearts." And then it goes on to tell them to teach them to their children, and bind them on their foreheads and tie it on their arms and put it on the gates of their houses. And then the psalmist writes this promise from the Lord. "Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord and on His law he meditates day and night. He's like a tree planted by streams of water." This is so beautiful when we, when we spend time in God's Word, when we meditate, when we memorize it, "...that yields its fruit in season. Its leaf does not wither. All that he does, prospers." And, I just, when I started reading verses like that, I was like, that's what I'm missing. I'm in a parched, dry place. And God's Word is a sacred well of Living Water that we can go and drink from. And that's part of what this does. So Nancy, when I gave that challenge on social media, it was during COVID. We couldn't go out anywhere. I said, Well, I will- I kind of want to start doing this with other people to hold me accountable. So we had lots of women and we were only to memorize seven, right?

Nancy Elam:

That's right, seven weeks.

Wendy Blight:

Seven weeks of Scripture. So tell me why you said yes to that journey.

Nancy Elam:

I, well like I said, you know, I'd memorized the Scriptures back in 2011. And then life happened. And I just stopped memorizing Scriptures and those Scriptures that I memorized and knew so well became kind of spotty, because I wasn't practicing them. I wasn't really meditating on them. And I was just excited to be able to get to learn and start again. Yeah.

Wendy Blight:

Yeah. So that you stepped into that. So would you? Well, let's talk about blessings and benefits, right? Let's go to the blessings and benefits of Scripture. So we each sort of listed, we sat together the other day, and we talked about this. And the one I said, I wanted to start with is, it's a weapon of warfare, right? It's praying Scripture, we have an enemy of our souls. Praying scripture to the enemy of our souls is one way that we can fight back. And the Ephesians chapter six, of course, is the famous one about the armor of God, the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, the belt of truth, the sword of the Spirit, the shield of faith in the shoes of the gospel of peace. So we have all those pieces, and I wish we had time to talk about them, but we don't. But 1 John 4:4 is a truth that tells us, Nancy, right, "Greater is the One [the Holy Spirit] Who lives in us than the one who lives in the world." So when we are praying God's Word, we know that the One who lives in us that's putting that Word out of our mouths, and with power, and then the other, there's Romans 8:37-39. That just reminds us we're more than

conquerors. And there's nothing in this world that could separate us from God's love. And we need to stand on that. So yours, the one you chose was about filling our prayers.

Nancy Elam:

Filling our prayers, like you said, it just really brings power to our prayers. Isaiah 55 talks about how when His Word goes out, it will not return to Him void, but will accomplish the purpose for which He sent it. And so when you are praying God's Word, for me, my mind kind of just goes all over the place when it's time to pray. So by memorizing the Scripture, it allows me to kind of tap into that, and gives me words to pray, and what better way to pray than God's Word.

Wendy Blight:

That's beautiful.

Nancy Elam:

Also, I think that when you're memorizing Scripture, for me, it really makes the, His Word come alive and active, Hebrews 4:12. And it just makes it more meaningful. And when you are needing it for yourself, or whether you are trying to encourage someone, you have something to point them back to Jesus.

Wendy Blight:

Because a lot of times when we pray, Nancy, we go I don't know what to pray. So if you don't know what to pray-

Nancy Elam:

That's me.

Wendy Blight:

Yeah! So if you don't know what to pray, and you're really wanting to grow your prayer life, filling it with Scripture is a great way to do that. And I talked about one of the blessings and benefits is to know God and Jesus better. And so just looking for ways to praise Him, and Colossians 3:15 and 20 is one of our memory verses. And we're not, I'm not going to do the whole thing here. But I want to read keywords that talks about who Jesus is. It says He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. So by praising Him, we can say thank You, Jesus, that You are the image of the invisible God, You are the firstborn over all creation. It goes on to say He is before all things. And by Him all things hold together. So if your marriage is struggling, you can say, by Him, all things will hold together. If you have a rebellious child, there's just so many ways, and then it talks about that, for God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Jesus to remind us that He's Jesus, He is Jesus, and He is God. So those are so beautiful, and then 2 Samuel 22, it says, "The Lord is my Rock, and my Fortress, and my Deliverer." Those are, those are ways we can focus on God's names, and praise Him through His names in our times of solitude. He is my Rock, in whom I take refuge, my Shield, my Stronghold, my Savior. Those are such powerful words to claim. And then we talk about El Roi, He's the God Who Sees, to remind ourselves, if we know that name of God, like He saw Hagar, and how when she was pregnant and desperate and alone and wandering in the wilderness. He saw her and came

to her and she wasn't even an Israelite. And He still came to her because she was His daughter. And so I wrote this little prayer. And I want to read it because I really feel like God laid it on my heart that someone needs to know God sees them. So listen, if that feels what you feel like, El Roi draw close to Your daughter today. Remind her that You really do see her. All throughout her day may she feel Your presence and experience Your love. Make Yourself known to her in very real ways, just as You did Hagar. Open the eyes of her heart, Lord to hear You and see You and feel You and receive what You have for her and I ask this for her in Jesus' name. Amen.

Nancy Elam:

That was beautiful, Wendy. And you know, I mean, there is definitely, when you're memorizing Scripture, like you said, it's a way to know Jesus and the person that He is to you with all of the refuge and shelter and everything. And there's so much wisdom. We go to Him for wisdom. I think Psalm 11, or Romans 11, says, "The depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God." I mean, if you want wisdom, why not go to somebody who has that kind of wisdom?

Wendy Blight:

Because His paths beyond tracing out. It's those- I think, hopefully, you know, we can just tell you that there's a lot of blessings and benefits that come from it. But now it's actually doing it, Nancy. So let's talk about the practicality of memorizing Scripture. Because this is something that a lot of people go well, then how do I do it? If I'm supposed to memorize Scripture? How do I do it? So we're going to divide up a little bit, and I'm going to say, choose a verse. So in another one of these podcasts I talked about my verse, the Lord gave me for peace was Isaiah 26:3. And so you can pick a verse. So I'll, just as an example, Isaiah 26:3 and 4, actually, they go together. So first, get a notebook. I forgot mine. But this is a notebook. Nancy and I each have a notebook. So you could use a journal, a beautiful journal, but you have a notebook, and you just start to write your verse the first time, just put it in there. And she's going to talk later about doing it in your phone. That's great. But part of memorizing Scripture is writing it out. There's something about our brain and writing it out. Second, then you learn it phrase by phrase. So Isaiah 26:3 says, "He will keep in perfect peace, the one whose mind is steadfast..." First phrase, right? Whose mind is steadfast. "Because he or she trusts in Him." Trusts in God. So those are two phrases. We don't- won't even do three and four. But You will keep in perfect peace, the one whose mind is steadfast - phrase one - learn that phrase. And as soon as you finish, then go to the next phrase: Because they trust in You. But always say the first phrase with the second phrase. And you do that until it's all done. And then you can move on to the next one. So Nancy, tell some other things about just helping keep that in your mind, in your brain.

Nancy Elam:

So for me, the way my brain works, reciting and writing are very important. I, like you, would write the phrase and then come back with the second phrase, but then once you learn that verse, for me, when I go on to the next verse, I would always say the first verse or the verse before that. So by week seven, at the end of the challenge that we did a couple of years ago, when I got to week seven, I was repeating verses 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. And then once I memorize a verse, I would, I have a notebook that I just learn it from, if there's a word that I stumble on, I typically- I know you circle-

Wendy Blight:
I circle.

Nancy Elam:
-or highlight, I like to write it in caps, because it just really emphasizes that word. And that helps me and then once I memorize it, I have another notebook that all my memory verses are neatly written. And it's not chicken scratch.

Wendy Blight:
Yeah. And tell about your phone.

Nancy Elam:
Like, okay, so yeah. So once I started memorizing verses, I additionally, in addition to putting them into my notebook, I would put them into my notes section on the phone. So that whenever I was at the doctor's office waiting, or in line waiting, I can pull up those verses and study them, go over them, maybe encourage somebody with them.

Wendy Blight:
We meet together about every two months. We try our best to go through all our Scriptures. And y'all this is no, this is no joke. We are at 57 and they're not all the same. So our initial probably 20 are the same. And then sometimes we have the same verse, but we have to get together because like she said, if you don't, it helps to have that accountability because it's fun. But it's saying them and keeping them. This has been almost two years. And that's- this is hard work. It takes patience, but it's beautiful. So let's share in the time we have left a few examples of how God has then used it. Because for us, we're filling ourselves with that Living Water. With that- that's going to make us flourish and have abundance inside of us, but it's also for other people. So share a story that you have.

Nancy Elam:
Yes. So um, I hide God's Word or God's Word in my heart. For me when times when I'm struggling, I'm, you know, anxious, whatever. But I also like to use it to encourage people. And I just this past week had a friend, text me a prayer request and her request, I texted her back, just a little prayer. And I immediately thought of one of my memory verses that I was able to just not have to stop and go look, I could get immediately back to her and send her that verse. And everybody is always so appreciative of that. They really are.

Wendy Blight:
Yeah, because it's not your word. It's God's Word and that living and active Word is speaking over them.

Nancy Elam:
Yes.

Wendy Blight:

And I wish we had more time. We both have incredible stories of how that happens. But we're going to tend- trend towards closing now. And as we close, these are some words that I wrote down that we talked about. It's not about perfect. It's about progress. Yeah, that's what, don't worry, if you don't get every word right, it doesn't matter. It's not about perfect. It's about progress.

Nancy Elam:

And there's a memory verse for because I am a perfectionist. So it's not about perfect, but for me, sometimes I have a hard time with that. But then Romans 8:1, "There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." So that's a verse that I say to myself a lot.

Wendy Blight:

In fact, like, it's more important to remember that address in case you want to share it with somebody. That address meaning the Scripture that Romans 3:5 or whatever, and but also to remember that every word that you hide in your heart, is this living and active seed, that God is planting in either your heart or someone else's heart. That God's Word is manna. Right? It's bread from heaven. And so it feeds us. It's healing to our bodies and health to our bones. It tells us in the Book of Proverbs, and-

Nancy Elam:

It sustains us.

Wendy Blight:

It sustains us and it's peace to our souls. So why wouldn't we want to do it? And when we say we've memorized all those verses, I don't want you to go, oh, I could never do that. Because you know what, we started one. And we never planned to do this. We just were having fun doing it. And it was almost a competition sometimes.

Nancy Elam:

Yeah, it was, it's much better to do with a friend and you know, hold each other accountable. But in a fun way.

Wendy Blight:

Yeah. And it is a way to spend times of solitude. It's that- I always want to go back to "Rest for Your Soul" is about finding the times to sit and be still with God. Healing doesn't come, especially when you're in a state of height - overwhelm this heightened overwhelm, this panic attacks. The way God made our brains and our body to work, it can't recalibrate itself, with just sort of pressing on or saying the prayer. God can do anything, but it's highly unlikely without putting in some hard work to be still before God, and doing the prayer time that we're talking about. And then also just complete silence with the Lord, sitting quietly with the Lord, which I wish we had time to talk about. But do you want to close with our memory verse that was like-

Nancy Elam:

Yeah, I would. But before we close, if you don't mind, just something that, don't be afraid to start. You can start small. You don't have to memorize these long verses three, four lot- or three, four verses at a time. One verse, and I jokingly said to Wendy, everybody can memorize God's Word and the shortest verse in the Bible, I think is 11:35. John, John 11:35? But it's, "Jesus wept." So I know that all of you can memorize that verse. And when you're crying, just remember that Jesus wept and when your friend or your family member is crying, then you know you can just let them know Jesus wept and it's okay. And it's gonna be all right. Yeah. Yeah.

Wendy Blight:

Thank you. Alright, so we're gonna end with one of our memory verses. So-

Nancy Elam:

This like is our memory verse.

Wendy Blight:

This is our memory verse. So you start girl.

Nancy Elam:

Okay.

Wendy Blight:

Oh, yeah, we'll say the verse at the end.

Nancy Elam:

Okay. Do not fear,-

Wendy Blight:

-for I am with you.

Nancy Elam:

Do not be afraid,-

Wendy Blight:

for I am your God.

Together:

I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. Isaiah 41:10.