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Faith & Values

He carries Scripture in his mind & heart

By Art Toalston

“A lot of people will say, ‘This guy knows the whole Bible.’

“Well, I really don’t,” Rollin DeLap admits. “The reason they say that is because most people have memorized so little” of “the Word of God.”

DeLap seems to use a capital W for “the Word,” attaching a deeper sort of respect to the Bible than mere paper and ink.

When he started memorizing Scripture passages 50-plus years ago, he was a college student who “never dreamed” how it would impact his life. But it led to a career of speaking at campuses nationwide, exhorting collegians to put the Word of God in their hearts.

“People respond to the Word of God,” DeLap, 71, says. “It’s not my authority, but it’s God’s authority. ... All I am doing is delivering it from my heart to theirs.”

Most people are shaped by “all the other words in their lives from the culture” – from TV, movies and music, DeLap says, yet they remain “hungry just to hear the Word of God coming off somebody’s lips straight to their heart and life.”

When he was first challenged to memorize Scripture as a college sophomore, DeLap says he focused on three verses a week. Later it became a verse a week, “52 weeks a year.”

When he speaks of the Word, DeLap says it is “not just another book of history or philosophy.” Beyond setting forth “principles to live by” such as the Ten Commandments, DeLap says it offers “the most important message that God has given to all mankind” – salvation drawn from Jesus’ life and, particularly, his death on the cross and resurrection from the dead.

DeLap continues to employ the Scripture memory method he has taught to students over the years: He writes the passage on a 2½-by-1½-inch card and records the reference (where it is located in the Bible, such as Genesis 1:1) before and after the verses. (He has sold a starter kit at his speaking engagements over the years, with each \$10 packet containing 36 cards with key Scriptures already on them, several dozen blank cards for people to add their own memory verses, a leather pouch and a “Memorize to Evangelize” instruction booklet.)



ART TOALSTON

Rollin DeLap, who has memorized Scripture 50-plus years

With each Bible passage he memorizes, DeLap first focuses on the reference. He then adds the first phrase of the passage, continuing to repeat the reference before and after each repetition; gradually, he commits the full passage to memory phrase by phrase. He reviews his recent memory verses every three to four weeks by rotating the cards in his leather pouch.

“The more you say [a verse] and the more you review it, the more it becomes a part of your life,” DeLap says. “It soon becomes what I call ‘your verse.’ ... It feels like the verse belongs to you.”

And there are times when the verse “begins to explode in your mind and heart. That’s the thrill of the Word -- it comes to life.”

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Queries for further information about Rollin DeLap’s Scripture memory plan, “Memorize to Evangelize,” can be sent to him at rbdelap@aol.com or 509 Downy Meade Drive, Franklin, TN 37064.

For an expanded version of this story, go to www.ClusterPaper.com on the Internet.

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