

Your Word I Have Hidden in My Heart

by David McWilliams

Harrison Okene is a man who knows the value of memorizing Scripture, having it hidden in your heart so it is always there when you need it, even if you do not have a Bible close at hand.

In May 2013, Harrison Okene was working as a cook aboard a tugboat in the Atlantic Ocean off the Nigerian coast when a heavy swell caused his vessel to capsize and sink to the seabed. Three days later, rescue divers sent to the scene were looking only for bodies and had already pulled up four.

So when a hand appeared on the monitor in the rescue boat, showing what one of the divers saw via his head-cam, everyone assumed it was another corpse. The diver acknowledged that he had seen the hand and then, when he went to grab the hand, the hand grabbed him.

All of his shipmates had been lost, but Harrison Okene had been able to find an air pocket inside the sunken ship where he survived for those three days. Okene was given oxygen, led to safety, and placed in a decompression chamber onboard the rescue boat to recover.

Okene later recalled his mental state during his three-day ordeal at the bottom of the ocean. When he found a cabin of the sunken vessel that felt safe, he began the long wait, getting colder and colder as he played back a mental tape of his life. He thought of his mother and friends, but mostly his wife of five years.

As the temperature dropped, Okene began reciting Scriptures his wife had sent him via text message the night before his boat sank. He later recalled, "I started calling on the name of God. I started reminiscing on the verses I had read before I slept that night. I had read the Bible from Psalm 54 to 92. My wife had sent me the verses to read that night when she called me before I went to bed."

Psalm 54 contains the words of David who is on the run from King Saul. They would give strength to a man whose life was hanging in the balance.

"Save me, O God, by Your name, and vindicate me by Your strength. Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth...Behold, God is my helper; the Lord is with those who uphold my life...I will praise Your name, O Lord, for it is good. For He has delivered me out of all trouble..."

4 Reasons To Hide God's Word In Your Heart

Strength in times of trouble

Trapped in a sunken ship, Harrison Okene was no longer in a position where he could read the Bible. However, he had enough of it in his head that he was able to gain strength from it.

That I might not sin against You

"How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You." Psalm 119:9-11

Treasuring God's commandments in our hearts will help us to keep from breaking them. 1 Corinthians 10:13 promises Christians a way of escape when temptation comes their way. Hide God's word in your heart and the way of escape will be easier to find when you need it most.

To be ready to give a defense

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear..." 1 Peter 3:15

You will be most effective in reaching someone with the Gospel if you are able to give an answer when asked. In other words, be ready to give a defense. Your defense will be weak if you repeatedly have to say, "Let me get back with you on that one."

To save your soul

"Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls." James 1:21

If you allow the seed of God's word to be planted in your heart, let it take root, and then nourish and treasure it, it will indeed save your soul.