

Scripture Memorization

Memorizing Scripture is one of the most effective means of Scripture engagement. Because Scripture engagement is about reflecting on the Bible and mulling a passage over in our minds, having a passage memorized makes the process of reflection available to us at all times. Memorized Scripture allows us to dwell continuously on a passage throughout the day.

In an age when Bibles are readily available to us, it might seem that the work it takes to memorize Scripture is not worth the effort. Most of us don't memorize much of anything, so why should we memorize the Bible? Didn't people in the past need to memorize Scripture because the Bible was not readily available? In reality, there are actually numerous and critically important spiritual reasons for Scripture memorization.

REASONS TO MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE

First, Bible verses that are memorized will come back to us. Memorized Scripture is particularly helpful when we're being tempted. Jesus Himself combated the half-truths of Satan by quoting back to him Scriptures that He had memorized ([Matthew 4:1-11](#)). [Psalm 119:11](#) is clear about the relationship between memorizing Scripture and its power to help us resist temptation: "For I have written your Word on my heart, that I might not sin against you." As the saying goes, "Don't forget what you learned in the light when you're in the dark." Scripture memory, done in the "light" times when we are strong in our faith, will come back to us during the "dark" times of temptation. When we are feeling the need for encouragement, comfort, or need strength to stand firm in our faith, God's Words are readily at hand.

Memorized Scripture is also helpful as we serve other people. We can bless others when we have an appropriate passage to share. In [Colossians 3:16](#) we read, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom." When giving advice to others who are hurting or struggling, God's Word, readily available to us if we have memorized it, is powerful to bring healing and encouragement. Also, being able to quote specific passages as we share our faith will help others to hear God's Word and can be used by God to bring others to Christ ([Romans 10:17](#)).

Memorizing Scripture is a powerful tool to help us to live out our faith. It is important to keep in mind that memorizing God's Word is not the final objective since we are called to be "doers" of the word ([James 2:14-19](#); [Matthew 7:24-27](#)). In [Deuteronomy 30:14](#) we read, "But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it."

WHAT TO MEMORIZE

What passages of Scriptures should we memorize? Some people prefer to memorize shorter passages, often individual verses. Verses can be chosen based on particular topics that have meaning for the learner (e.g., God's forgiveness, comfort, promises). Some memorize verses in preparation to counsel others or to share Christ. Passages on theology can be memorized (e.g., attributes of God, how to become a Christian). Others prefer to memorize chapters or whole books of the Bible. See the Resources page for more specific ideas on how and what to memorize.

CONSIDER MEMORIZING WITH OTHERS

Scripture memorization can be done individually, but it also can be done in groups. Memorizing Scripture together can be very powerful for an entire small group or a family. Memorizing with others can be a great encouragement and help us stay accountable to our memorization goals.

CONCLUSION

Followers of God have a long rich history of memorizing Scripture. From the time that the first books of the Bible were written people have been memorizing Scripture in order to help them live faithfully. It is clear that Jesus memorized Scripture. Both the Old and New Testament authors consistently quote Scripture. The emphasis on memorization has not been lost in the Church since there are still countless Christians who are devoted to memorizing God's Word. Do you know someone who consistently memorizes Scripture? Ask them what it has meant to his or her spiritual growth and my guess is that you'll get a glowing testimony!

Memorization Practice Tips

1. Look at a variety of Scripture memory programs and then pick one that you believe will work for you (the Memorization Resource page is a good place to start).
2. Most people find memorizing Scripture to be difficult at first (it gets easier with practice), so some determination is helpful.
3. Start small. Pick a few verses or a short passage and give yourself plenty of time to complete your memory goal. It is more useful to start small, succeed, and see the impact of the memorized Scripture in your life than to set unrealistic memorization goals, fail, and never try again. The goal isn't the quantity of Scriptures memorized; the goal is to reflect on your passages and let God's Word impact your life.
4. Pray for God's help in memorizing and in letting his Word change you.
5. Have a specific time of the day that you will memorize so that it becomes a habit. If you memorize at random times of the day, it is often easy to forget and skip a day, which often results in skipping numerous days.
6. Memorize your passage word-for-word and also memorize the reference. Memorizing exact wording actually helps you remember longer. Knowing the reference will help you find the verse in the future in case you forget some of what you're working to memorize.
7. Review your memory passages every day to keep them on your mind throughout the day and so that over time you will not forget them.
8. If at all possible, find someone else to memorize Scripture with you. That way, you can push each other to engage more deeply with the verses and keep each other accountable to stick with the program.

Scripture Memorization in Small Groups

Small groups are the perfect place for Scripture memorization! Memorizing is a powerful way to help group members think about what they have been learning in a small group study throughout the week. Group rather than individual memorization provides an accountability system for members and gives your group opportunities to bond through the shared experience of memorizing the passage. A group could memorize one key verse from a study, or stretch to memorize a longer passage (e.g., [Romans 12](#)) or even a book of the Bible. Make the process fun and encouraging, not a race or something to feel guilty about. Singing a Scripture song as a group is an excellent way to memorize a passage and to come together as a group at the same time. There are also memory games you could play together or acronyms that could be developed to help your group. Experiment to discover what works for your group.