

Scripture Memory Principles

Why we should memorize Scripture

A. It helps us

1. It renews our mind (Romans 12:2)
2. Purifies our heart (Psalm 119:9; Hebrews 4:12)
3. It helps us resisting temptation (Psalm 119:11; Matthew 4:1-11)
4. It helps us to know God (Psalm 119:10)
5. It provides guidance (Ephesians 5:17)
6. It aids us in worshipping God (John 4:24; cf. John 17:17)
7. We are commanded to meditate on God's Word (Joshua 1:8)
8. It helps our prayer life (John 15:7) & is powerful (Ps. 29:1-11)
9. It helps our study of the Bible (2 Timothy 2:15 3:16-17)
10. It can protect us against wrong doctrine (Ephesians 4:14)

B. It helps others

1. It helps us to evangelize unbelievers (ex. Acts 2:14-36)
2. It helps us to teaching believers (Psalm 119:24)

Why we don't memorize Scripture

Excuse: "I have a poor memory."

Excuse: "I don't have time."

Excuse: "I am too old."

Excuse: "I have tried before and failed."

Excuse: "Why bother now that I have my new computer program."

Excuse: "Memorizing Scripture will make me spiritually proud."

The real reason is that we choose not to.

The plan for Scripture memory

1. Decide on a time when you will memorize Scripture.
2. Decide how you will select verses to memorize.
3. Decide on a translation to memorize.
4. Decide on a goal for how much you will memorize.
5. Purchase cards to use for memorization.
6. Use cards that are convenient for you.
7. Decide on a review system.
8. Find someone else who also desires to memorize Scripture for motivation and accountability.

The practice of Scripture memory

1. Select the memory verse.

Some people use systems that select the verses for you. The value of this is that it generally provides you with key verses that are important for the Christian life and ministry.

Some people prefer to select their own verses. The value of this is that the verses that are selected tend to be more meaningful to you and thus easier to memorize for the long-term.

2. Understand the verse contextually.

This is the biggest problem with Scripture memory. We will memorize a verse thinking we know what it means when we really do not.

This not only occurs because of our weakness and failure to observe the context, it also happens as others fail to observe the context and then pass along misinformation.

3. Write the verse on a card with its reference (and topic if desired).

Be sure you have written the card out accurately.

Carry the card with you.

It may be helpful to write on the card the date you memorize it for accountability.

An alternative to cards is now Bible memory software for PDAs. If you have a PDA, laridian.com sells the best Bible software, including a Scripture memory program called Memorize! for Palm OS. It imports the verse from an excellent Bible program called My Bible and gives you to opportunity to quiz yourself.

4. Commit the verse to memory.

Pray for the Lord's blessing and be confident you can memorize it.

Read the card silently several times and aloud at least once.

Mentally divide the verse into phrases.

Repeat the reference and first phrase until memorized.

Check to be sure the phrase is memorized accurately.

Repeat the second phrase and then add it to the first phrase.

Repeat the reference, first and second phrase until memorized.

Continue this process through the entire verse or passage.

Have someone listen to your verse and check it against the card. Be sure your helper is not viewing this task as burdensome. This can be an opportunity to stimulate others to know God's Word.

5. Review the verse.

*Add the verse to other verses that have been newly memorized.

*Review your newly memorized verses every day.

*Your verse is no longer new when you can quote it perfectly without hesitation at any moment. This will take about a month or less if you use it.

*Review the verse each week until you have memorized so many verses that you have to spread your reviewing out over a month or longer.

*Eventually, the verses you know well can be memorized infrequently, even annually.

* If you begin to lose a verse from memory you can put with the verses you review more often.

* A key to Scripture memory is review.

6. Apply the verse to your life and ministry consistently throughout the process.

The application of a Bible verse to your life and ministry will guarantee you will retain it in memory. If you do not use it, you will ultimately lose it.

The don'ts of Scripture memory

1. Don't "kind of" memorize verses. Not only did God inspire every word of Scripture but if you do not memorize it perfectly today you will lose it tomorrow. Perfectly means knowing every word in the correct order without having to hesitate to think about it.

2. Don't forget to memorize the references as carefully as the verses themselves.

3. Don't feel you have to know one verse perfectly before you can start on memorize another verse. It is very possible to memorize two or more verses at the same time.

4. Don't consider waiting to be a waste of time but an opportunity to memorize or review.

5. Don't think your mind is too old, slow, forgetful, busy, etc. to memorize Scripture. We all have memorized many things.

6. Don't consider a verse that gets assigned to you to memorize to be less important to memorize than one you select yourself. All Scripture is profitable (2 Timothy 3:16) you may one day appreciate having memorized the verse.

8. Don't lose heart in reviewing past memory verses.

9. Don't depend on anyone else. Purpose to memorize for your sake, not to please someone else. Plan to continue memorizing regardless of whether anyone else does or not.

10. Don't memorize passages of Scripture in the order in which they are written. Instead, memorize each verse separately and out of order. Then review the passage in order. This will help you memorize the verses more accurately, particularly those toward the end of the passage. Reviewing them in order will help you understand the flow of the passage.

11. Don't set a Scripture memory goal that is too low. If it is too easy, then you will not feel you have to work at it and may put it off and not get around to it.

Scripture memory for those who are memorizing assigned verses

Be sure to understand the true meaning of the memory verse. Do not assume that the meaning that is assigned by the memory program is accurate. You cannot delegate your responsibility in interpretation to others.

Since all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, reproof, correction and training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16), all memory verses have value. This truth should motivate us to memorize all assigned verses. Understanding their true meaning will help our motivation even more.

However, while all Scripture is profitable, not all Scripture is necessarily equally profitable at a given point in time. Accept the inevitability that you will not use some assigned verses often enough for them to become meaningful to you. This is one downfall with assigned memory verses. Unless we see the meaningfulness of a verse to our life, we will lose it from memory over time.

View the people who are memorizing with you in the right way. View them as encouragement rather than competition. The more they excel in Scripture memory, the more we all should benefit from them. Don't memorize to be better than someone else, to impress people or to gain awards for ourselves. These motives may work in succeeding in Scripture memory, but the end does not justify the means. These motives appeal to the fleshly side of man and we ought to mature beyond this.

Bible memory verses often taken out of context

A verse out of context is a pretext. We all have probably used Bible verses to say things that are simply not meant by the biblical author. We should understand what the Bible says and not divorce words from their context. Bible verses are often taken out of context when we have heard others use a verse in a certain way and believe that understanding to be correct. Then every time we read the verse in the Bible we impart to the verse what we think the meaning is, rather than reading it for what it says. This is a problem even if our misunderstanding does not lead us into doctrinal error. We still miss the true meaning of the verse that is misused. Furthermore, it begins to warp the context for other verses