

3 Keys to Scripture Memory

- 1) **Scripture is worth memorizing.**
 - 2) **You can do it.**
 - 3) **Repetition is the key.** After all, "We remember what we review."
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10 Techniques for Increased Effectiveness

1) Go slow – It doesn't matter how many you are able to get through if you have no understanding of what you're saying or won't be able to remember them for later. Remember, the goal is transformation (See Rom. 12:2); it's not a competition! So do a little a lot. Rather than try to cover 15 verses at a time once a month, it is far better to add one verse a week and review *at least* once a day. Remember, our brains are made to forget. What we do remember are the things we review and/or meditate on... for good or for bad.

2) Pick a translation and stick with it – There are many good English translations of the Bible available today. However, while I would advise reading/studying from several different translations, I would strongly encourage doing any sort of intentional memory work only from one. This not only will make the memorizing go quicker; it will also make memorizing verses that are next to each other flow well together (e.g. Rom 12:1 and Rom 12:2 which are both in the Topical Memory System); not to mention it will more likely keep you from giving up out of frustration. (*Note: If you don't know which translation to use and will be beginning from scratch, I personally would recommend the NIV or the ESV. They neither one sound archaic and are both faithful to the words and meanings of the original languages. But

again, there are many good English translations, so if you have a different favorite, go for it!)

3) Memorize word for word – The temptation will often be to say "Well, that was pretty close, and the idea is pretty much right." However, this will not only cause greater memorization frustration down the line, it will also keep you from being confident of what the Bible says when you are away from it. When your co-worker says to you that all ways to God are equally valid, it's one thing to think "I'm pretty sure Jesus said that's not quite right." It's another thing to know for sure that John 14:6 says "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"

4) Know what you're memorizing – Similar to going slow, this one too is about understanding. Before committing time and energy into drilling some words into your head, take some time to find out where they come from. For example, is it a quote? If so, from whom? To whom were they speaking? Were they responding to something that had just happened? If so, what? If not, does this quote introduce a new topic/teaching? What other topics are in the immediate context of the verse at hand? After all, it's one thing to memorize the words of Matthew 2:8 "He sent them to Bethlehem and said, 'Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.'" It's quite another to realize that this was a manipulative lie told to the wise men by King Herod!

5) Let it settle – Another way of saying this comes from Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly". While memorizing certainly takes brain work, the brain work is just the entry point to

getting the Word deep in your life. Rather than learning words to check them off of a list, actually live it out! Or as James 1:22 puts it, "Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves, do what it says." For example, when you memorize a verse like 1 Thessalonians 5:17 "Pray continually" rather than saying, "Well that was easy to memorize!" let it challenge you to examine the prayerless times of day or seasons of your life, and ask, "where do I find my trust, hope, strength during these times?" Then allow this verse to motivate and encourage you in your continual relationship with God through prayer.

6) Have someone/thing to keep you accountable – Whether it is a person who is committed to help quiz you regularly, or an automated flashcard program on your computer or portable device, or even a regular item on your daily to do list, have some way of making sure that days and weeks don't go by without being reminded to review. If a lot of time passes between reviews it can be nearly the same as starting over from scratch, which can easily result in giving up out of frustration. So, find a way that you can make Bible memory work as a natural part of your daily routine.

7) Start with the ending – This one seems counterintuitive, but it is extremely important, especially with longer passages. Remember that the more we review the better we remember, so if we start at the beginning, that part becomes easy, but then half-way through it gets easy to get stuck. On the other hand, if we start at the end – adding pieces thought by thought – then the parts we know the best begin where we otherwise might have gotten stuck. Now when we reach those points, it gets easier and easier as we are in the home stretch!

8) Say it out loud – Engage as many of your senses and as much of your whole body as you can. Stand up, move around, use hand gestures, invent your own form of sign language, put the emphasis on different words, etc. In short, do anything you can think of to be more fully active in the memorizing process, rather than just letting your eyes scan the words and hope that somehow passively it will sink in to your brain.

9) Memorize the address – Oh, the frustration of confidently knowing what the Bible says, but not being able to find it in there when needed! Simply make sure that you say the address at the beginning and end of each passage you memorize. (Because sometimes you want to know "what John 3:16 says" and sometimes you want to know where to find "For God so loved the world...") Plus, this has the added benefit of being able to find it again if you ever lose your memory verse card.

10) Be encouraged – If at the end of one year you have four verses memorized, do not become discouraged and begin looking at all the verses on the list (or in the Bible!) that you don't have memorized. Instead, rejoice, that by God's grace you have four verses of His Word tucked deep inside you where no one can take them away. You have four verses to meditate on when you're stuck in line, or driving down the road, or lying awake in the dark of the night. You have four verses to listen to as you seek God's guidance and His will, even if there isn't a Bible around for miles! And not just any verses, but ones that you know intimately; that you have spent time with; that you have studied, pondered, and prayed many times before. Ones that when you hear someone else quote them, a part of you thinks, "Hey, that's *my* verse!" Because, in a way, now it is!!