

Memorizing the Bible

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November 1, 2004

Memorization - "Writing the Word of God on my heart so that I can repeat it perfectly."

Many of us have memorized a verse here or there, or even completed a series which might have 12 or 24 verses. And that is all good. But some people have memorized whole books of the Bible. I know two who have memorized the whole Bible.

Most people who do memorize use skills based on sheer repetition; that is, they say a verse over and over until they can say it correctly. Then the next day they do that again. Eventually they have it down fairly well - for about six months. I did this for years.

One day, after I had finished university and graduate school, a man who claimed to have memorized the whole Bible came to the campus where I was working. He spoke to our group there and after speaking he was asked about the memorization. He commented, "Well, I am fresh on the New Testament right now. Name a chapter." After ten minutes of people calling out a chapter reference and hearing him *immediately* begin giving it to us in King James English, he said, "Would you like to learn how to memorize?" We all said yes.

Being who I am, needing to take things apart to see what makes them work, I have experimented with this system a lot. Eventually I went back to the system pretty much as he taught it to us. I have had the chance to teach this to about 8000 people all over the world.

Here it is for you.

1. What are the benefits of Bible memorization?

a. preparation for spiritual warfare - In Matthew 4 Jesus did not say to Satan, "hold on a minute while I look for a verse on that." We need to have a prior memorization of the Word, have it in our heart - our affective center, so we can face the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

b. foundation for holy living - as committed Christians we all want to do what God wants us to do. A lot of what He wants us to do is given to us in the Bible. After I memorized Ephesians I saw many ways to apply it to life. I began to see 3-5 applications from specific verses every day. Then I thought: and there are 65 more books! I think God would be seen much more in our daily life, and we would be more ready to obey Him if we knew more scripture.

c. basis for understanding and integrating all truth - the Bible is the main source of truth for Christians. But it is not our only source; we have parents, Christian friends, practical wise non-Christian friends, science, reason, our own experience. All these are sources of learning for all of us. But the Bible gives us a solid foundation and sets the standard for integrating all other truths into a coherent system of knowledge. The Holy Spirit works with all this.

d. increase self-knowledge and self-worth - You can memorize it! You really can! You can also use this same method to memorize anything - recipes, people's bios, textbooks, to do lists, anniversaries. It can really help you in hundreds of ways.

2. How can I memorize?

a. Pick a topic (telling the truth; being a good husband and father; etc.) and a passage (1 verse to a chapter on that topic) and a version of the Bible you like (how do you want to have this memorized forever?).

For example, you can begin with Ephesians six, verses 10-18, which is one of the three primary passages on spiritual warfare.

b. Memorize five verses daily

1) read the first verse out loud three times

Eph. 6:10 "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might."

Go ahead, right now, and say this verse above out loud three times. Look at it and make sure you are saying it correctly each time.

2) write the verse one time, looking at it in its biblical form and making sure you write it correctly

Go ahead and write it on the line above.

3) read what you wrote above here, out loud, three times

4) say the verse without looking at it

That's it! You did it!

5) repeat steps 1-4 with each verse [they are listed below]

6) After each step 4, say the accumulated verses together

c. Follow a review pattern Review each set of verses once daily for one week.

Review consists of saying the verse. If you cannot remember some verse, look it up and read it out loud twice.

For example, if you are memorizing Eph. 6:1-18 it might look like this:

First week: Eph. 6:1-24

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
am memorize vs. 1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-24
pm review: vs. 1-5	1-10	1-15	1-20	1-24

Second week Eph. 1:1-23

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
am memorize vs. 1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-23
pm 6:6-24; 1:1-5	6:10-24; 1:1-10	6:15-24; 1:1-15	6:20-24; 1:1-20	1:1-23

d. Use what you have memorized

- 1) teach a Bible study
- 2) in conversations and witnessing
- 3) in prayer and personal application
- 4) with comparative Bible study
- 5) get others to memorize with you
- 6) keep a prayer and application notebook

e. Recognize levels of memory work:

after six months you can double the number of verses

after one year you can omit the steps of writing it down
and reading what you wrote.

3. Will I memorize? People do not memorize for three reasons:

1. they never begin
2. they quit
3. they have never learned how to memorize

Now you only have two reasons. Enjoy!

Eph 6:10-18 (New American Standard Version):

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you

will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. 14 Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.

A grammatical outline version (highlights the main points and the connections):

- 10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.
- 11 Put on the full armor of God,
 - so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.
 - 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood,
 - but against the rulers,
 - against the powers,
 - against the world forces of this darkness,
 - against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.
- 13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God,
 - so that you will be able to resist in the evil day,
 - and having done everything, to stand firm.
- 14 Stand firm therefore,
 - having girded your loins with truth,
 - and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,
 - 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;
 - 16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith
 - with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.
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- 18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit,
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 - be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.