

Ten Steps to Scripture Memorization

2012.2

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1. Plan

Decide to memorize Scripture based on the value of God's word for personal spiritual growth, gospel witnessing, and a clear mind. Claim God's commands to memorize His Word (Deut. 6:4-9; Deut. 11:18-21; Deut. 32:46-47; Ps. 1:2, 3; Ps. 119:13, 15-16; Ps. 119:93, 97; Prov. 3:1-4; Prov. 7:1, 3; Prov. 2:1-5; Josh. 1:8; Job 23:12; I Chron. 29:18) knowing that they are promises (Josh. 1:9). Trust that His Word will accomplish what it was sent forth to do in your life (Isa. 55:11; Acts 20:32; James 1:21).

As strength of body comes through exercise, use of the mind strengthens our brains and increases our ability to remember. The hippocampi (component of brain associated with memory) of London Bobbies and New York taxicab drivers are much larger. Their consistent use of brain memory in navigating through these huge cities has given them "more than with what they started" in terms of actual brain mass! Excuses of age and present ability pale in the light of the truth about the wonderful brain God has given us. Remember that God wouldn't ask us to do something that we were not able to do. Know that it is possible and plan today to do what it takes to write God's Word on your heart!

2. Pray

Jesus said, "without Me, ye can do nothing" (John 15:5b). Satan will oppose your progress to become saturated in God's Word (2 Cor. 4:4)! You cannot be successful without God's help! Kneel and earnestly tell God that you have decided to memorize Scripture. Tell God that you want to do this because you want to know Him and share this knowledge with others. Ask Him for a willingness and success to do it consistently and progressively. Remind your Saviour that it is He who commanded you to keep His Word. Acknowledge your weakness and dullness, believe that He will help you, then rise from your prayer on the authority of His Word to "perform the doing of it" (2 Cor. 8:11). You will need Him at every step to help you be strong in His Word.

3. Version

Choosing a single Bible version for memorization has been helpful to many successful Scripture memorizers. Choose a Bible version and stay with it when memorizing to avoid confusion in your own mind and in the mind of others. The best versions are literal translations; save

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paraphrases for other reading. The King James Bible is a well-known, well-loved version for memorization. It is a more literal translation, and lofty language to help with memorization. Studies show that poetry and lofty language enhance memory.

Consider whether or not the version you are considering is copyrighted or not. Federal law requires proper citation of the name of the work under copyright whenever it is used by way of reference or quotation. Permission furthermore must be gained from publishers if quotations exceed a certain limit. If a publisher disagrees fundamentally with the end-user, they technically would be able to refuse special licensing in these cases.

The KJV and other versions which are without copyright could be greatly advantageous because of the freedom to use and quote without permission or specific reference to the publisher. The memorizer does not have to obtain permission to quote any volume of these works or bother to reference the publishers in any writings or sermons. This is a worthwhile convenience. Furthermore, the Strong's concordance with Hebrew and Greek definitions make the King James version an old standby in a Scripture memorization program along with the reasons already given, although there certainly are other good versions besides the King James. Multi-lingual students, however, will find it greatly beneficial to memorize in their native tongues.

4. Verses

Primarily, seek God's wisdom for choosing verses to memorize. Ask Him to show you which ones are right for you. You should especially memorize "present truth" (2 Pet. 1:12). Present truth is truth that has special relevance to your life today. Memorize verses that make your heart burn (Luke 24:32) which are "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16). Make a special effort to learn verses about the sanctuary and truths especially applicable today.

A volume of two verses per week will suffice most students during their first year of memorization. Such a pace, if consistent, will yield 100 verses in one year, 500 verses in five years, 1000 verses in ten years etc. A steady pace will prevent burnout or disinterest and ensure understanding and retention.

When choosing Bible verses, choose smaller and more interesting passages at first. Isaiah 28:10 says, "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little". Determine to eat God's Word one verse (bite) at a time and choose verses well to satisfy your daily spiritual "diet".

5. Sacrifice

In the parable of treasure in Matt. 13:44, a man found treasure hidden in a field while he was plowing it. The story is that he "immediately" went and sold all he had in order to afford to buy the field.

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The man in the parable was wise. He cheerfully sacrificed his small wealth in order to gain greater riches. What a return! Have you made every sacrifice to fit God into your life? Anything standing in the way of being successful in storing up God's Word is an idol to be sacrificed. Do you have any idols like useless web surfing, frivolous music, or unprofitable television shows or movies? Any other course besides giving them up for consistent study and meditation would be foolish. The parable showed that delaying gratification turned to high yield in the end, regardless of what others must have thought at his sacrifice. David said, "I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil." (Ps.119:162). Have you rejoiced at this opportunity to learn God's Word? Then make any sacrifice to keep it.

Sacrifice to memorize God's Word and meditate on it day and night. Don't make excuses for not procuring this treasure. Do you have little time? Perhaps you could buy less stuff, live more simply and have to work less, to say nothing of the Internet, videos, magazines, and T.V.

Are you low on brain energy? Pray to God to help you be strong and then do what you can to follow His laws of physical health. Consider learning to run a 5k with a mobile phone app, or finding another exercise plan more appropriate for you. Increase your daily water intake to three quarts, eliminate caffeine, nicotine and all unhealthful drugs and follow Daniel's diet in Daniel 1. Search for God's help in sleeping, eating, drinking, breathing, and temperance and then follow what He tells you to do! Your brain will be stronger if you do this.

Do you need motivation and a desire for the Word of God? "O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him." (Ps. 34:8). "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Ps. 119:103). "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12). This may not be your experience. If not, shut and keep off all frivolous and fictitious entertainment and sports. Those include amusing T. V. and Internet sites. Change your mental diet to wholesome "food" and you'll soon have your tastes changed to appreciate the wealth and sweetness of God's Word! Sell all that you have for the heavenly treasure as the man in the parable and enjoy God's Word eternally!

6. SRE

Be satisfied with nothing less than 100% word-for-word memorization of a verse. Memorizing using Short, Repetitive Exposures is the preferred way to memorize by many people.

Wisely use available time while waiting or performing menial tasks to make short, repetitive, exposures of your mind to God's Word. Consider pasting waterproof paper, blank ID cards, or laminated documents on bath tiles with rubber cement. It may be effective for you to add ten or twenty minutes to your day for productive memorization and meditation.

You may expose your mind to the light of God's Word at various times of the day by prayerfully reading a Bible, a verse pack or a sheet of paper with Bible verses on it. You will thus fix it in your mind. It will take discipline, but by beholding you will become changed and assimilate that

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verse on the tablet of your heart. Your mind is like film, and you are changed into what you behold (2 Cor. 3:18). Thoughtfully and prayerfully reading a text between thirty to one hundred times is enough for most people to memorize it.

Read the text prayerfully and repeatedly until a portion can be said without looking. Seek to understand the verse. Memory is closely linked to understanding, and understanding to the will, so will to obey God's Word (Jn. 7:17). Visualize the writer, the circumstances and the characters in the story. Try to feel what they felt, see what they saw. Then say that memorized phrase for twenty to thirty seconds without looking at the text to transfer that part into short-term memory. Repeat and add until the entire verse is in short-term memory.

7. References

Knowing a reference can be invaluable. For instance, if your memory fails on the words of a verse, the next best thing in an embarrassing situation is to know where the verse is found so it can be read. If a friend desires to know if the verse you are sharing is within the Scriptures, you should be able to satisfy that inquiry. You have right to test others' statements by Scripture and they have the right to expect the same from us therefore "...be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." (1 Peter 3:15). While a reference proves that the text is in Scripture, other benefits are ability to turn and read the context of a memorized verse. Context gives a deeper understanding or the placement of that text within the chapter and book of the Bible.

Learn the book reference first then chapter, then verse. Say the complete reference before and after you repeat each verse. Guard it as the LORD guarded Israel before and behind (Is. 52:12). Knowing where in the Bible it is guards the truth. Never say a verse without saying where it is found before and after you quote it.

8. Keep

Hundreds and thousands of Bible verses can be kept by meditating - thinking - on them. Properly digesting and assimilating God's Word is necessary. Prayerful thinking on newly memorized verses for forty days, several times a day (as one would eat), is indispensable for understanding and keeping it retained. After ten days the Word gets really sweet, and only grows sweeter. The Bible has four examples of people who assimilated spiritual food for forty days.

1. Moses lived forty days on Mount Sinai in the presence of God without food or drink while receiving the law of God and instructions for the sanctuary (Ex. 34:28; Deut. 9:9).

2. Israel was forty years in the desert "each day for a year," the number of days searching Canaan (Num. 14:34), During this time they ate only "spiritual meat" (manna) (1 Cor. 16:3, 4; Ex. 16:35), and "spiritual drink", "that He might make thee know that that man doth

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not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.” (Deut. 8:3).

3. Elijah did not eat for forty days after feeding on food provided to him by an angel while fleeing from Queen Jezebel to Mount Sinai (1 Kings 19:8).

4. Jesus Christ did not eat for forty days but was sustained by God’s Word in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1, 2). Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3 in saying “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” (Matt. 4:4).

Daily recite each memorized verse twice daily for forty days/six weeks. Conduct weekly and/or monthly recitations of each verse after this to keep them sharp in your mind.

9. Give

God commanded Israel to keep His Word in their hearts (Deut. 6:6) and then give it to others. He said, “thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” (Deut. 6:7). Joshua 1:8 likewise reads, “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night ... for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.” Speaking God’s Word to others ensures that you remember and continue to receive its blessings. If you prayerfully think of verses day and night they will burn in your heart and you will naturally want to speak of them to others (Luke 24:32). Don’t hold back an appropriate verse to encourage or enlighten a fellow traveller. The blessing of giving God’s Word will return to you.

10. Encourage

We are social beings. We are able to encourage and derive encouragement from others. Eccl. 4:9, 10 speak of this: “Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.” Deut. 20:8 says, “What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren’s heart faint as well as his heart.” Heb. 10:24, 25 therefore admonishes, “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

Meeting with others to pray, sing, quote verses, testify and exhort is an ingredient to success in your Scripture memorization plan. Consider starting a Scripture Memorization Club at your church or joining one online.