

HOW TO MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE

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If you know your name, address and telephone number, then you can no longer say, "I just can't memorize." We memorize words to songs, important dates, and the names of new friends. We certainly *can* memorize Scripture. The real question is how long it will take. You can't expect to memorize a passage five minutes before class. For most people it will take about three consecutive days to put it into long-term memory. Plan on a schedule something like this:

- a. 10 minutes per verse to memorize it the first time.
- b. 5 minute review right before bed, for three evenings (this allows your subconscious to work on it while you sleep).
- c. 5 minute review the first thing in the morning, for three days.

First, you'll want to read the text and its context until you clearly understand its meaning. It is much easier to memorize words that make sense to you. Close your eyes and try to picture the scene: Who said this? To whom? When? What was going on? How did (s)he feel? etc. Pretend that you are the author, writing or speaking this for the very first time. Act it out using lots of gestures, facial expressions, and vocal inflections.

Always do your work aloud. That allows both your eyes and ears to work together to drive this message into your mind. Read the first phrase of the verse. Then close your Bible and repeat it (aloud) over and over (about 10 times). Do it right the first time! It takes much less time to memorize it right the first time than to rememorize it later. Then read the next phrase, close your Bible, and do the same thing. Then put the two of them together, repeating them both over and over until it becomes comfortable. Add a third phrase, etc. until you have completed the whole verse. You may need to peek at your Bible periodically to be sure that you are saying it exactly right, but the goal is to say it *without looking at your Bible*. This will take anywhere from 5 to 20 minutes per verse (for most people about 10 minutes).

HELPS FOR MEMORIZING SCRIPTURE

1. Walking while you memorize helps some people learn better. Take your Bible to a place where you can be alone and talk aloud. Target key words for emphasis; outline its key ideas in your mind.
2. Chalk boards can be of great value, especially the one that is in the classroom where you will write out your verse. Write that whole verse on the board and read it several times. Then erase 1 or 2 words and read it through a couple more times. Erase a couple more words and read it again. Repeat the process until you are "reading" a blank board. Surprisingly, when you write it out the next day in class you will still be able to look at the board and see the words in your mind.
3. Tape recorders can be used at home or in a car. Read the passage into the tape clearly and slowly about a dozen times. As you replay the tape (while driving, walking or working), say the verse along with the tape, making sure you have every word exactly right. You may also want to record only parts of the verse at the end of the tape, forcing yourself to say the verse without any kind of help. Eventually, however, you must say the verse without the support of the tape at all.
4. Writing out the verse on a piece of paper takes a little longer. But it is the best way to see how you will do in the actual classroom.
5. 3 X 5 cards can be taken with you wherever you go. Write out the verse(s) and whip it out in lunch lines, stop lights, grocery stores, etc. Use your "dead time" productively. Write out every verse for the whole semester, tape them in order to the back of the door.
6. Music is perhaps the most powerful help for memorization. If you can sing your verse, that is, put the words to music, you will memorize them in no time and keep them for a long time.
7. The shower is a great place to memorize. Make a photocopy of or laminate your passage and tape it up. The toner from a copier won't run if it gets wet so you can leave it up there for weeks at a time.