

Practical Advice Regarding Memorizing Scriptures

By Jason Hilburn

The Bible says, *“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee”* (Psa. 119:11). Memorizing the Word of God will help us fight against temptations, and it will also comfort us, give us hope, and make us more equipped to carry out our greatest responsibility, which is to teach others (Matt. 28:19-20). Recently someone wrote and asked how I recommended memorizing Scriptures. As I typed the reply, I thought this would be good information to share with others also. With that said, I do not claim to be the world’s top expert on this subject. There are many others who have memorized more Scriptures than I have, and others may have different ideas that have worked for them. The following advice is merely my opinion, based on what I have found to be the best way to memorize Scriptures.

First of all, get one Bible that you like the best. When choosing a Bible, my top priority is that it must be a reliable translation. I memorize from the King James translation. If the Bible comes with commentary added, be very careful, because many have been led astray by the uninspired writings of men. I look for genuine leather Bibles, because they should last longer. I also look for text that is easy to see when reading, so I don’t have to strain my eyes too much.

Whichever Bible you choose, always use that one Bible for all your reading, studying, memorizing, and teaching if at all possible. After a while, you will “see” the pages in your mind to a certain degree, reminding you where certain passages are, and solidifying the Text in your mind. Again, always use that Bible for memorization—not a computer or phone, and not some printed out copy of verses. Some people write verses to memorize them, and that is OK if that works for them; but that opens up the door for copyist errors, and if you memorize a verse the wrong way, it can be very difficult to correct that in your mind in the future.

Choose a passage you want to learn (perhaps a favorite passage or something pertinent to a lesson you will be teaching). If you are not sure where to start, try Psalm 23. With only six verses with which you are probably already familiar, you can memorize it relatively quickly (and you will have memorized a whole chapter of the Bible!).

Whichever passage you choose, begin with the first few words of the first verse only. Repeatedly say the first few words aloud until you can say them perfectly several times without looking at the Bible. Remember that every word of the Bible is inspired, and it is important to get every word exactly right when memorizing. Critical doctrines can be changed by simply changing one word (“not” – Gen. 3:4); changing the tense of a verb (“am” vs. “was” – Matt. 22:32); or even changing one letter (“seed” vs. “seeds” – Gal. 3:16). It is also important to actually speak the words aloud (not just saying them within your mind), because the audio adds another layer (along with visual input) to help solidify this in your brain’s memory.

After you have memorized the first small section of the Text, move on to the next phrase or set of words. Say those words aloud, adding the previous part that you already memorized. Continue adding more and more until you reach your goal. Then have someone “test” you, because you may have been saying something slightly wrong without even realizing it. That is the best way I have found.

I also listen to the Bible in audio format, and will sometimes set it to repeat only the chapter

or verses I am studying or memorizing. I do this while I am driving and doing other “mundane” tasks. There are audio CD versions of the Bible, and there are Bible apps available for smartphones with audio, such as *YouVersion* and *Bible.is*. There is also a website called *ScriptureTyper.com* which you may find helpful.

Do not doubt yourself or underestimate your abilities. Set high goals for yourself. You can memorize entire chapters, or even books of the Bible, if you set your mind to it. That may not be your goal, but it can be done with enough effort. I hope this has helped you!

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