**Memorizing Scripture**

But there’s one more important aspect of having God’s Word in us: learning scripture by heart. In this discipleship course we will go deep into God’s Word and memorize a text during each lesson. The goal of this lesson is to explain why it is important to memorize Bible texts and how it can be effectively done.

* God said we should commit His word to memory! (Proverbs 7:1-3; Deuteronomy 11:18-19)
* God’s Word works in us and transforms us. (Hebrews 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:13)
* God’s Word in us gives us strength to obey and helps us to overcome temptations. (Psalm 119:11; Proverbs 6:20-23)
* The Holy Spirit reminds us of what we have learned. (John 14:16)
* God can use us more efficiently in encouraging and leading others to Christ. (1 Peter 3:15)
* When we learn God’s Word by heart, it increases our intellectual ability in every area. (Psalm 119:99)
* When we learn God’s Word by heart, we will always have it with us, even when an actual Bible isn’t available.

The question remains: How can Bible texts be so ingrained in our minds that we do not lose them after a couple of days or weeks? How can they remain in our long-term memory? It is possible, so let’s explore the way!

1. Believe that you can learn Bible verses by heart! At first, it may be hard and unusual. But it is possible if you really want it. It only takes diligence, persistence, and a few minutes every day.
2. Use the right tools. Just like every handyman has the right tools for his work to be efficient and good, so we too need the right tools for memorizing Bible verses. The most important tool is a pack of flashcards that you can easily carry. On one side of each card you will write a book, chapter and verse number. On each card’s opposite side you will write out the verse. Carry these cards with you at all times. Another beneficial tool is a marker, which you can use to mark the most important words in each verse.
3. When you learn a Bible verse make sure you understand its context. It is much easier to learn a verse when you know why and to whom it was written than if you isolate it from the passage in which it is found.
4. Use any free time you have to go through your memory verses. You can learn while you are on a walk, waiting at the bus stop, or any other downtime you may have. It is a perfect way to learn many Bible texts by heart without having to reserve a specific time during the day. Remember, you only need a few minutes every day.
5. Choose a Bible translation that is faithful to the original. The work you put into learning is worth storing it word for word in your mind. Bible versions that are paraphrases, such as The Message or the Good News, have their place. But they are not ideal for memorizing scripture. In the end, we want our minds filled with what God actually said, not an approximation or interpretation.
6. Learn the text word for word. God’s Word is holy. That is why we should take it seriously and not add to or take away from it (see Deuteronomy 4:2). We are investing precious time into learning Bible verses. It would be a shame to impress a variation full of mistakes into our minds! So learn the text exactly as written in the Bible. Do not forget! It does not require more effort to learn a text right then to learn it wrong. So make it a rule for yourself to learn the text word for word.
7. Repetition deepens impression! When you want a new Bible text to be ingrained in you, then repeat the first part until you can recite it from memory. Then learn the second part and quote both parts from memory. Repeat this until you can recite the entire text word for word from memory.
8. Learn the text reference as well. Begin by reciting the text reference, then the text, and end with the text reference again. This way you will learn where the text is actually found and not just know it’s somewhere in the Bible.
9. In the beginning you will want to start with memorizing shorter texts. Longer texts are harder to remember and repeat. Once you have more practice, and it has become a part of your lifestyle, you can work on longer texts.
10. Spend time contemplating the verse you are learning. Think about each of the individual words and their meanings. Ask yourself what God wanted to say with this verse.
11. Remember to recite the verse often so that you will not forget it in a couple of days. When you learn a new Bible text word for word, write the date on the flashcard and add it to the cards you carry around with you. Repeat this verse every day for the next two months. You only need a couple of minutes every day to repeat your verse. Remember to use the free minutes you have throughout the day! Once you have reached the two months mark (check the start date on your flashcard), put your card in a small box. Now you will repeat this text only once a month. If you use this method, Bible verses will be committed to your long-term memory.
12. Decide how many Bible texts you want to learn per week. You can begin with one Bible verse per week. The number of flashcards you will carry around will steadily increase: 1,2,3 … 8. The first card will then move into the box. From now on every week another text will be added and an old one will be transferred into the box. This way you will eventually be repeating 8 or 9 verses a day. Be faithful to your commitment!
13. During Bible study you will constantly come across new verses that you would like to memorize. Write yourself a reminder or write them immediately on a flashcard. When it is time to learn new verses, you have the freedom to choose which ones. Ask God to show you Bible verses that He would like to use to impact your life at the moment. When a certain verse really speaks to you, do not wait until the next week or month before you learn it. Add it immediately to your daily recitations.
14. Find someone you can memorize Bible verses with. Keep each other accountable and recite the text to one another. Accountability is an important key to staying committed.