

Memorizing Scripture

We memorize all kinds of unimportant things from commercial jingles, to songs, to jokes. It certainly isn't wrong or a sin to memorize these things, however, how much more is it important to memorize God's word?

Psalm 119:11

Your word I have treasured in my heart,
That I may not sin against You.

Philippians 4:4-9

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near. ⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. ⁹ The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

This passage tells us that it is very important what we are thinking about. Dwelling on these things means that we are taking our thoughts captive and making a conscious choice of what we think about.

I Corinthians 10:5

We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ

When you have scripture memorized, you can take it with you wherever you go and whatever you do. Driving in your vehicle is one place where you should not be reading the Bible for safety reasons. However, that does not prevent you from meditating on scripture as you drive.

Another important reason for scripture memorization is that God's word should be used during times of temptation. It is not probable that you will be tempted while reading or studying God's word. It is when we don't have it in front of us that we need memorized scripture to battle temptation.

When asking students to memorize scripture, it is also important that students know and understand the meaning of the verse. This is highly important. Memorizing words that you don't know or understand the meaning is not of much use.

What verses should students memorize?

- Verses about salvation so that they understand salvation and can explain it to others.
- Verses about God and His nature.
- Verses on what we should and shouldn't do after salvation.
- Verses about the power of God available to us.
- Verses that contain the promises of God for us.

- Verses that would help us give answers to people for the hope that is within us.
- Verses that are not taken out of context.
- Verses about the blessings we have in Christ Jesus.
- Verses that go along with the lesson that you are teaching.

Young students should be given partially verses to memorize. Please do not change the words of scripture in doing this. For example: Romans 3:23 is a short verse that states:

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Even this verse can be shortened for preschoolers or young students who have difficulty with memorization to **for all have sinned**

What version should we use?

You should use a good translation that is easy to understand. Do not use paraphrases. I would also not use the King James Version unless it is the only acceptable version of your local church. The King James Version is actually written in old English and is difficult to understand unless you grew up with it. The Thees and Thous in the KJV are the way people addressed each other and it is not special to God. The more modern translations have recognized this and don't use language that is no longer in use.

I would recommend:

- the New American Standard Bible, Updated edition NASB
- The New English Version NEV
- The New International Version NIV
- The New King James Version NKJ

I would not have students memorize out of the Amplified Version, because it adds interpretation and many more words making it more difficult to memorize.

Is it okay to use multiple versions?

No matter what version you use, it is important to teach students what a translation is and why it is necessary. The scriptures in the Hebrew and Greek are without error, but need to be translated into English for us to understand them.

Using multiple versions can be confusing for students. I have seen Bible teachers use multiple versions in the same lesson, book or sermon because they like what one version says over another. If you do this, you should be careful that you are choosing a verse in a particular version because it is truer to the original meaning not because it proves your point better. We should not pick and choose verses to prove our point, but to communicate what God is saying through the scripture.

I would stick to one version in my teaching and memorization.

Another problem in using multiple versions for memorization is the problem that I have. I grew up using the KJV, switched to the NASB, switched to the NIV because the church I was going to required it, and switched back to the NASB. I now use the NASB, update. I have difficulty remember the exact wording of a verse of scripture because I have memorized in all of these versions and get them mixed up. It also makes it more difficult in using a concordance or doing a keyword search because of the mixing of these versions