

SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION

4 SESSIONS



SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION DISCIPLESHIP LESSONS

When you think about what spiritual practices are essential for a student to learn, Scripture memorization probably isn't the first thing that comes to mind. Prayer, reading the Bible, and being active in a Christian community are fundamental practices that we're eager to teach students as they develop their spiritual rhythms.

But when we consider what Scripture memorization actually is and does, we see that it's a core piece of these practices. We want students to learn how to pray according to God's Word? Let's teach them to recite Scripture in their prayers. We want students to learn how to read and interpret the Bible? Let's teach them to pick apart and savor every word to the point that it becomes ingrained in their minds. We want students to learn how to engage in meaningful community? Let's teach them to speak the Word to one another.


Training students to memorize Scripture will exponentially enhance everything else we are trying to teach them. It's a tool that can be applied to any aspect of life in any stage of life. When we teach students memorization, we feed them for a lifetime.


SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION - SESSION 1 60 min


MAIN IDEA

Memorizing Scripture is a practice that is commanded and demonstrated in the Bible. It deepens our connection with God and helps us understand Him more.


INTRODUCTION 5 min


 **SAY** Memorizing Scripture is one of the spiritual disciplines we can use to grow in intimacy with God. It is the experience of internalizing who God is, what God has said, and what God wants from us. All of this informs how we go about our day-to-day lives. By having the Word of God rooted in us, we are transformed from the inside out, and are able to be who God wants us to be.

 **SHARE** What has been your experience with memorization? How has memorizing impacted your own spiritual life? What are you most excited for others to experience when they practice memorization? What hope do you have for how this lesson will impact your student's spiritual life?


 **SAY** Over these next few lessons, we are going to learn the benefits of memorizing Scripture, how to memorize effectively, and how to create a lifestyle and habit of memorization.


UNDERSTANDING YOUR OWN LITERACY 5 min

 **FACILITATE** Share past experiences with memorization. Have you ever tried memorizing Scripture? Were you ever a part of a community or program that memorized Scripture? Did you enjoy it? What were some challenges you encountered?

 **PREACH** Recognize that memorization may come with a connotation of academics and achievement. Some may have learning disabilities or other challenges that can hinder success. Some may view success merely as the ability to recite content. In Scripture memorization, success is not based solely on the ability to recite verses but on how it transforms our lives. We measure success by quality, not quantity.


BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS OF SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION 10 min

 **SAY** Knowing what the Bible says is foundational to being a Christian. Knowing isn't just reading and passively absorbing; it is actively learning and remembering. One of the ways we learn and remember the Bible is through memorization.


 **TEACH** Scripture memorization is a spiritual discipline by which we intently study and commit God's Word to memory. It can be verses, paragraphs, chapters, or entire books of the Bible. It is not about rote learning but about allowing the Word to take root in us to transform us.


Today, we are going to look at what the Bible says about memorization. For centuries, memorization has been used by Jews and Christians to foster a deeper connection with God and His Word. This practice isn't merely a tradition of the faith, but a command from Scripture.


There are many passages that teach memorization as an essential practice. Read and discuss a passage that refers to memorization, such as: Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Proverbs 2:1-5, Proverbs 7:1-3, or Psalm 119:11. Explain how these passages demand biblical knowledge founded in memorization.


 **SHARE** How has memorization helped you better learn and remember God's Word?


BENEFITS OF MEMORIZATION 10 min

 **SAY** Aside from the fact that the Bible commands us to memorize, there are many benefits of having the Bible memorized. The best example of this comes from Jesus himself.


 **TEACH** Read Luke 4:1-13 and discuss how Jesus utilized Scripture in this scenario, how having Scripture memorized benefitted Jesus, and what this example means for us.

 **FACILITATE** How do you think having the Bible memorized could help you in your daily life? How can having verses memorized help you fight temptation, pray according to God's Word, foster meditation, respond to others' questions about God and Christianity, etc.?


 **SHARE** What difference has memorization made in your life?

 **PREACH** The Bible is God's Word to us. It is God-breathed, meaning it was inspired by Yahweh, and was written and recorded by humans. The Holy Spirit, who knows the thoughts of God (1 Cor 2), revealed these thoughts to the Bible's human authors and inspired them to pen the words that we now call Scripture. Through the Bible we learn who God is, what He has done and will do, what He cares for, and what He expects of us. We don't have to guess or search deep within ourselves to figure out what the all-knowing, all-powerful Creator is thinking - He has already revealed all that we need to know. We have the thoughts of the God of the Universe at our fingertips. So when we memorize Scripture, we are memorizing God's mind. That is why practicing memorization brings us closer to God and helps us live according to His Word.

MEMORIZATION LAB 30 min

 **SAY** While we haven't yet covered some of the how-tos of memorization, which we will discuss in later session, I'd like to spend the rest of our time actually practicing memorization to help get our feet wet. Do you have a verse that you would like to try memorizing together? (Prepare some suggestions. Some possibilities include: Psalm 119:11, Hebrews 4:15, Romans 8:28.)

(Spend time memorizing)


 **FACILITATE** *At end of your time together:* What was the experience of memorizing like for you? What challenges did you face? (If they were not successful in memorizing, provide encouragement on whatever level of effort was shown. Encourage them to try again.)


SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION - SESSION 2 60 min

MAIN IDEA


Preparing properly and applying the best techniques can help us be more successful at memorizing.

RECAP 5 min

 **SAY** Last session we talked about the importance and benefit of memorizing Scripture. Today we're going to discuss how to memorize effectively.

 **FACILITATE** What has held you back from memorizing Scripture? What methods have you used for memorizing (either Scripture or academics)? Which have you found to be most effective for you?

BEFORE YOU BEGIN 10 min

 **SAY** Many people avoid or give up memorizing Scripture because they believe it is too difficult or they haven't been successful in the past. Memorization requires consistent effort and dedication in order to see results. It also helps to use strategies that are effective - to swim with the wave rather than fight against the current.


 **TEACH** Before beginning:

- **Pray** - it's important to remember that memorizing is not just a cognitive activity; it is also a spiritual one. Ask God to give you the ability to retain the text and to use it to transform your life.
- **Select an appropriate translation** - Choose a translation that is easy to understand and maintains the integrity of the text. Don't select a translation that is heavily paraphrased or uses difficult language.
- **Select a passage** - Decide which verse, section, chapter, or book to memorize. Memorizing sections of multiple verses is preferred to preserve the context. For those with little experience memorizing, this would be a goal to work up to.
- **Create a schedule and set goals** - Make a plan and stick to it. Try to memorize every day or every other day. Break passages into manageable chunks and set

a timeline for when you will complete each section. Goals help you stay organized and boost motivation. Consistency multiplies results like compounding interest.

- **Apply the mind & heart** - Don't just regurgitate the words; think about what the passage means and how it relates to your life. We retain information better when it means something to us.
- **Identify a supporter** - Having someone memorize with you or check in on your progress can help keep you accountable. Share with a friend and encourage each other through the process

TECHNIQUES 10 min

 **SAY** Everyone is different and what works for one person might not work for another. You might need to do a bit of trial and error to figure out what works for you. Once you figure it out, try to mix up the strategies you use - variety stretches the brain and reinforces learning!


 **TEACH** Here are some strategies for memorizing a passage:


- **Read it aloud** - Research shows that reading something out loud fosters better retention than merely reading something silently or listening to another person read it.
- **Listen to it** - Many Bible apps offer an audio feature, or you can record yourself reading the passage. Listening to the recording while driving or doing mindless tasks can reinforce learning. You can also listen to the passage while following along by reading it. Active listening and reading done together can help strengthen retention.
- **Post it around places you frequent** - Posting the passage in places you see often reminds you to memorize in the moment. Hang a notecard or print-out on your mirror, above your sink, on your elliptical, inside your car visor, or even in the shower (covered in plastic of course!).
- **Make it a game** - Write the passage on a white board and recite it aloud. Progressively erase a few words and continue reciting it until you can recite it

entirely from memory. Try writing out the first letter of each word in the passage and reciting it by looking only at the initial letters.

- **Use apps** - The Bible Memory App or Verse Locker are great tools for memorization. They can be used anywhere, anytime, and offer a variety of systems to help you learn and review.
- **Use mnemonic devices** - Acronyms, rhymes, associations, sequence, and visuals are all key tools you can use to memorize. Determine if there is anything unique about the passage that your brain can latch onto. Try visualizing the text or coming up with associations that can trigger your memory.
- **Repeat** - Simple techniques like repeating the text over and over again and covering the page with an index card while reciting can promote learning.

MEMORIZATION LAB 30 min

 **SAY** We're going to spend the rest of the time memorizing. Let's review the verse that we memorized last session.

 **SAY** Let's try memorizing the same verse using some of the techniques we learned today. Which of these techniques would you like to try using today?

(Spend time memorizing)

SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION - SESSION 3 60 min

MAIN IDEA

Memorizing larger portions of Scripture helps us better understand and use the Bible. Memorizing in community both encourages us in the practice and equips us to go out and multiply.

RECAP 5 min



FACILITATE Review the verse that you memorized since last session. What was the experience of memorizing like for you? What challenges did you face? (If they were not able to memorize things fully, provide encouragement on whatever level of effort was shown and celebrate their intentions. Encourage them to try again.)




SAY Last session we reviewed strategies for how to memorize. Today, we're going to discuss extended memorization and memorizing in community.


EXTENDED MEMORIZATION 15 min




TEACH Extended memorization is memorizing large passages of the Bible, such as a paragraph, chapter, or book. We often think of Scripture memorization as memorizing single, isolated verses. Memorizing single verses is great and can be helpful, but the benefits of memorization really come to life with extended memorization. By memorizing larger passages of the Bible, we keep the words in their original context and allow the Holy Spirit to use the verses that we might overlook. When we cherry-pick verses and remove them from their context, we put ourselves in danger of misunderstanding or misapplying Scripture. When we memorize entire passages, we meditate on every single word that we're memorizing, giving the Holy Spirit an opportunity to teach us about things we would probably gloss over.

This is how Christians throughout centuries have memorized the Bible. Verse numbers weren't added to the Bible until 1500s. You couldn't isolate sections by verse numbers because they didn't exist; people simply memorized entire thoughts. Memorization was also a large part of the Jewish tradition in the Old Testament. Jews, even as young as children, would memorize entire portions of the Torah.

 **PREACH** This may sound unachievable to you. You may feel like you wouldn't be able to memorize a chapter or a book of the Bible. But I believe that you can. Not only because dedication and hard work will produce results, but because you have the power of the Holy Spirit in you. The Spirit that literally raised Jesus from the dead is in you, and such power can certainly help you remember a couple hundred words.

 **SHARE** If you have any experience with extended memorization, share about your experience. What did you think before you did it for the first time? What was the process like? What challenges did you face, and were you able to achieve your goal? How did it feel to achieve your goal? What benefits did you see from memorizing an entire passage?

MEMORIZING IN COMMUNITY 10 min

 **SAY** The Christian life is meant to be lived in community, and this includes practicing the spiritual disciplines with others. Memorization can and should be done with others.

 **TEACH** Memorization with others can be done in different ways.

- **Talk about it with others** – Share what you're doing with other people. This can be a great conversation starter, especially with those who have never practiced memorization.
- **Have someone listen to you recite a passage** – Having someone listen to you recite something you've memorized has multiple benefits. First, it is one of the best ways that you can review. They can give you feedback in real-time as to whether your recitation is correct. It also is a great way to encourage someone else to memorize. Seeing what you're able to accomplish may give them the inspiration and confidence to try memorizing.
- **Memorize a passage with someone else** – Invite a friend to memorize a passage with you. You can provide mutual encouragement and keep each other accountable to your goals. You can also discuss what you're learning from the passage. If you already meet regularly with a friend to study the Bible, try memorizing together – it's a great way to mix it up and bring a fresh perspective.
- **Memorize with a small group** – Decide to memorize a passage as a small group. This is a great way to introduce the practice to those who have never

tried it. Members can keep each other accountable and provide encouragement.

By memorizing in community like this, we are equipping ourselves to go out and multiply, and we are also creating disciples by instructing and walking alongside others as they grow in their relationship with God.



FACILITATE What could memorizing in community look like in your life?

MEMORIZATION LAB 30 min



SAY We're going to spend the rest of our time memorizing.



FACILITATE Do you have a passage (paragraph or section of a chapter) that you would like to try memorizing together? (Prepare some suggestions. Possibilities include: Psalm 1, a section of James 1, or a section of Philippians 2).

(Spend time memorizing)


****Note: if they were not able to memorize the verse or don't seem ready to move on to a larger section, recommend trying the same verse again or a longer singular verse before moving on to a passage.***

SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION - SESSION 4 60 min


MAIN IDEA


Developing the habit of memorization is an essential part of our spiritual rhythms.


RECAP 5 min

 **SAY** Last session we reviewed extended memorization and memorizing in community. Today we're going to wrap up by discussing how to foster rhythms of memorizing and incorporate it into our regular spiritual routines.


FOSTERING RHYTHMS 15 min


 **FACILITATE** Do you have a current spiritual routine? What is it? What challenges have you faced in maintaining that routine?

 **SAY** Fostering rhythms is an essential part of staying spiritually healthy. Having a rhythm and routine helps us stay the course in the mundane and in the difficult times when we feel overwhelmed, distracted, discouraged, or wandering.

 **TEACH** Think of what happens when you hear your favorite song. You hear the beat and your body and mind instinctively know what to do. Your foot begins to tap along. Your body sways in time. You don't have to think about keeping time - your body takes over. When we create rhythms, we give ourselves a pattern to fall back on.


 **SHARE** How have rhythms and routines helped you in your spiritual life?


 **TEACH** In order to effectively incorporate memorization into our lives, we must create rhythms. While rhythms help give us a pattern, they are not created passively. We must actively work to develop them. Think about how to create this rhythm in your current life. What time of day do you have enough mental stamina to work on memorization? Is it easier to make it a part of your regular time with God, or make it a separate practice at a different time? How often - daily, weekly? Where is a convenient place - do you have access to a quiet space?

 **PREACH** Creating rhythms requires prioritizing. We have to decide that memorizing is worth it and then intentionally carve out the time to do it. There may be times when we don't feel like memorizing, especially when we have a lot of studying


to do and exams to prepare for. It's okay to take breaks from memorization, especially when we don't have the capacity for it to be effective, but if we don't prioritize it, it will eventually fall to the bottom - and even off - of our list.

DEVELOPING A HABIT 10 min

 **SAY** When we practice these rhythms for long enough, they become a habit, and in turn, create a way of life. Memorization becomes natural and what we learn becomes a well springing up and flowing out at every turn.


 **TEACH** Part of developing the habit of memorization includes reviewing content that we've memorized. We will inevitably forget the things we memorize, and without consistent and continual review, it will be lost. There is the phrase "use it or lose it." If we don't "use it" by continuing to review and solidify the content in our brains, it will be lost.

We should review what we learn each session, as well as over the course of time. Review what you've learned at the end of each session, and then review the same thing at the beginning of the next session before moving on to something else. Every session should include learning something new and reviewing what you've already learned. Try to circle back and review it every few months once you've completed it.


 **SHARE** How has review helped you? Or conversely, how has a failure to review memorized content affected your ability to remember it?

MEMORIZATION LAB 30 min

 **SAY** We're going to spend the rest of the time memorizing.

 **FACILITATE** Review the verses that you memorized last session. What challenges did you face memorizing a larger passage this time? Is there anything you think you could do differently to overcome those challenges?

(Spend time memorizing)

 **FACILITATE** Wrap up with a discussion about this series of lessons. How have these sessions impacted your understanding of memorization? How has Scripture memorization impacted your relationship with God and others around you? What is your plan regarding memorization moving forward?

CREDITS

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