

Part One:

Introduction and Overview

Introduction:

Why Scripture Memory Is Important—

God sent the Holy Spirit to provide comfort and to help us overcome temptations. John 14:26 assures us that in His effort to arm us for our spiritual battle, the Holy Spirit calls to memory the precious promises of our Lord. *However, the Spirit can only call to memory that part of God's Words that has been placed in our hearts and minds. That is the reason Scripture Memory is so important.*

Unfortunately, even when we recognize and genuinely believe that learning God's Word is important, it is very easy to put it off for a "more convenient time" or to "give it up altogether because it requires too much effort." Basically, Scripture Memory is an individual decision, done in the privacy of our own hearts and homes. Therefore, external encouragement and motivation is needed to keep us going when it is easier to just give up. This is especially true for children.

Without doubt, the best way to commit Scripture to memory is to simply make a conscious effort to memorize the words—to repeat them over and over, until they remain firmly placed in your mind. Unfortunately that task is not as simple as it seems, for it requires more time than most are willing or able to spend and it requires sustained dedication to continue the process.

Fortunately, Scripture can also be learned through indirect methods, by integrating Scriptures into other things that we do. Learning songs that are based on Scripture and creating art that includes Scripture verses help to bring the Word of God into our lives. Games, crafts, puzzles, and other activities can also be used to encourage memory of God's Word.

How Hide His Word in Their Hearts can help promote Scripture Memory—

While we, as Children's Ministry leaders, all recognize the benefits of memorizing Scripture, we are not always successful in promoting the idea in the programs that we plan for our Sunday School and Youth classes. The purpose of Hide His Word in Their Hearts is to offer some ways that you can encourage the child or children in your care to "hide His Word in their hearts."

First, because familiarity with the Bible as a Book may encourage an interest in the words it contains, Hide His Word in Their Hearts suggests a number of activities that deal with the Book itself—the divisions, the books, etc.

Then, Hide His Word in Their Hearts provides a great variety of activities that can be used by individuals or by groups. Some of the activities require action; others can be used as quiet time fun.

Hide His Word in Their Hearts also suggests some special challenges that you can use to create a whole program that is intended to generate interest in Scripture Memory and even provides outlines that you can use to create events based around Scripture Memory activities.

Hide His Word in Their Hearts provides a number of helpful resources, including ready-to-use puzzles and activities, templates for game pieces, and lists of “recommended” verses to learn. (Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of “good” verses to memorize; it is merely a starting place to help you begin to plan a systematic program to encourage Scripture Memory.)

A Challenge to Encourage Scripture Memory—

Whether you organize a full stand-alone Scripture Memory program like Challenge of the Lamp; plan a short-term Scripture Memory emphasis course like Quest for the Treasure of Logos Mountain, or just make Scripture Memory a priority within your other sessions, your effort will surely be rewarded, for we are promised that “...the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”(John 14:26)

The challenge to all readers of this book is this: Realizing that “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work, (II. Tim. 3:16-17),” will you make Scripture Memory a priority in your overall church program?

Notes / Tips—“Breaking through some of the barriers to Scripture Memory”

Barrier 1: I’m not good at memorizing.

Even a few verses are better than none

Some people don’t make the effort to learn Scripture because they think the expectation is too high—they know that they can’t learn a verse a day, so why start the program.

To these people, I offer this note: if a verse a day is too much, do two verses a week—or one. If one a week is fearful, try two a month...The point is: it is not necessarily the goal that is important; rather, it is the continued attempt that promotes the planting of God’s Word in your heart.

If you memorize only one verse—that is one verse more that you have “hidden in your heart”. Remember, No Scripture that is faithfully stored in our hearts, and in our memory, is wasted.

Exact wording is not always critical

Many Scripture Memory programs require that people repeat verses exactly as they are written in whatever text is deemed the acceptable translation—complete with reference.

While this is certainly helpful, even necessary, in a formally monitored program; this author believes that memorizing Scripture for the purpose of storing up spiritual “ammunition” for our spiritual battles does not require such a stringent approach. Remembering most of the text, with or without the reference, will still provide the spiritual crutches that aid us in our attempt to walk in the path of truth.

Even partial verses help the Spirit to work

For some people, memorizing is really, really difficult. Often, these people, even though they realize the importance of memorizing Scripture, don’t attempt it because they know that they have problems memorizing anything.

To these people, I offer this little tip. Partial verses—even mere phrases of a verse—can bring comfort or help in time of trouble. If you are lonely and afraid, remembering that Jesus said “I am with you always,” is going to bring as much comfort as remembering “and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age,” found in Matt. 28:20.

Barrier 2: Memorizing Scripture is boring.

Working alone on anything can be boring—especially if the task is mostly just continual repetition. The good news is that it doesn’t have to be!

The answer, of course, is: make it fun!

Working together with other students, turning the task into a game, creating a project that uses the verse—these are just a few possible ways to take the “boredom” out of the process.

God’s Word is living and exciting. Leaders, encourage the children in your charge to find the excitement.

A Note for Adults—

Unless you have already memorized the entire Bible, there’s still work to be done!

Schedules, poor memory, and no motivation are probably the leading excuses that adults offer when asked why they don't try to learn more verses. For the ones who realize the need, but still find it difficult to begin, I offer the following tips:

1. Fill your life with Christian songs that are derived from Scripture. Make a point to learn which verses are used in the songs and think about the verse when the song is played.
2. Fill your home with wall hangings, dishes, note cards, etc. that include Scripture verses. And make a point to read the verses over every time you see them.
3. Encourage children in your home or at church to learn Scripture verses. Help the child study the verses he is trying learn. Help the child do puzzles or activities using the verses.
4. Use Scripture in your prayer life. Identify a few special "praise verses" and use them as a part of your praise time. Begin by reading them over and over as you begin your prayers and continue each day until you don't need the open Bible to begin your praises. Then, select other "praise verses" and begin the process again.
5. **Volunteer in areas at church that encourage Bible memory, like Sunday School, Youth classes, or special Scripture Memory Programs.**