

Memorizing for Life!

When do you have a verse memorized? It's not when you can quote it!

You see there is short term memory and long term memory. You can memorize something short term in just a few minutes – and forget it just as easily! But for a verse to truly be memorized long term you need to have quoted it word perfect 100 times! Three times a day for a month will just about get you there!

And you are much more likely to remember something that is significant to you.

This is why I love to memorize verses with those I meet with – I have found getting off to a good start can really help someone succeed in developing this discipline.

1. When the Lord lays it on my heart to have someone memorize a verse, we start our time together praying, asking the Lord to help us not only memorize the verse but also understand it and give us wisdom to know how it can make a difference in our life.
2. Next we read through the verse in context and then break it into phrases. You can have so much fun with this – bring colored pens and have them create word art on a 3×5 card. It's amazing when you create a visual like this how it can help start you remembering.
3. Then we tackle memorizing the first phrase. We go back and forth repeating it to each other, taking turns being the reviewer – and note when you are serving as reviewer make sure you are looking at your card so you're certain you're memorizing the right words. In the midst of repeating one can easily make mistakes!!! (Even when the verse has been memorized for over thirty years! ;0)

If someone struggles with memorizing, I will ask the Lord to give creative ideas – either a rhythm or a song or sometimes we'll use sign language. It's amazing how helpful this can be! With one student, a dancer, she found choreographing the verse really helped her. Did she ever get a great workout reviewing! :0)

4. Only after she has quoted the first phrase word perfect a couple times, will we move onto the next phrase. We'll seek to learn that second phrase then add it onto the first phrase and keep going back and forth saying those two phrases together. Hearing and saying are both helpful – but again, when you are reviewing make sure you're looking at the card!!!

5. If she's a kinesthetic learner we may even move around learning each phrase in a different place (this is really helpful with kids! But you'd be surprised at how even college students love this!) You need to be thorough, but you don't want it to be boring.

7. So you keep adding on one phrase at a time, not stopping until the whole verse can be quoted word perfect.

8. Then we go back to the first phrase and start asking questions about it. The goal here is to really understand what the verse says... and what it doesn't!

For example, when memorizing John 16:24, "Until now you have not asked for anything in my name, ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete" For that middle phrase I'll ask, "Receive what?" And how would it be different if the verse read, "and you will receive what you ask for?" "So what is the Lord promising here?!"

9. And I'll share different cross references that can help us understand this part of the verse even more. For example, James 1:17 states "Every good and perfect gift comes from above..."

It's vital she understands that God is the giver of good gifts. Yet we don't always know what's good. So there's a real safety in this. God promises whenever we ask, we will receive... something! And because He is good, it will be good! But if we ask for something that's not good, we'll still receive – you never leave the Lord empty handed! – but because He loves us and protects us it may not be what we ask for. But whatever it is will bring us joy!

10. Each time we move to the next phrase I'll have her review me saying the whole verse and then review her saying it. By the time our one on one is finished, she is off to a good start towards quoting that verse 100 times!

11. The most important part of our time comes at the end when we each determine how we can apply the verse in our life during the coming week. This is so critical! Because once someone starts experiencing first hand the value of this verse lived out, that's one of the strongest motivators for memorizing scripture ever!

This is why I don't start with a lengthy discussion of why she should memorize, instead we dive in and let her discover this for herself!

12. And we always start our time the next week sharing what happened as a result of our application!

So there are two assignments I give whenever I do this with someone – one is to do the application she's come up with. The other is to keep reviewing the verse.

But it's vital neither assignment be vague. (check out the previous post on how to make your assignments SMART) Remember the goal is to review it 100 times so it's lodged in her long term memory! No one makes that goal without intentionality! So I ask her to review her verse three times a day every day and we create boxes! :0) You can do this on an index card or an iphone! Work with her to determine what will work for her. And I really encourage you to do it with her!

Scripture memory is one of those things that seems so easy initially ~ just memorizing a verse, especially a short verse isn't that difficult ~ but remembering it for life takes much more intentionality and effort! Yet I have found over and over the effort is so worth it! Because when applied, when you live out what you're memorizing, it really does add life to your life because you don't just know in your head that God's Word is more precious than silver, you've experienced the incredible value of it first hand!

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