



## *Appendix A*

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# HELPS AND HINTS ON HOW TO MEMORIZE

*(Warning: If you haven't already begun memorizing longer portions of Scripture, you may find the detail in this chapter a little overwhelming to just read through "cold turkey", without being able to apply it to Scripture you're actually working on. So, if in reading, you find yourself starting to lose it, just put it aside for now, but remember that it's here in case you want to browse through it later.)*

In this chapter we have tried to cover a broad spectrum of ideas so you can pick and choose to find out what works for you or at least give you a springboard for your own creativity.

### *When to Memorize:*

1. Some people like to plant a portion of Scripture in their mind just before going to bed. This gives them an opportunity to meditate on it before dozing off to sleep. They feel that by sleeping on it the Scripture penetrates their sub-conscious for better absorption giving them a better start than if they began during the day. They review

during the day, and when they're ready to add another verse, they memorize it also in the evening. When they have conquered that one, they review the two together before dozing off and so it goes.

2. People with busy schedules sometimes feel that Sunday is a day already dedicated to worship and is a good time to concentrate on memorizing God's Word. They are thus able to devote a block of time to it in a way that may not be possible during the week. This has definite advantages but there are other factors that should be considered.

If Scripture memorization is confined to Sunday, it would be important to review during the week, because without it, efforts could be lost in the interim. Also, it's as we meditate on God's profound truth and constantly review, that the powerful Word has opportunity to consistently bathe our souls and feed our spirits. This is the secret of retaining Scripture and is a beautiful part of the journey. If you limit your time only to Sunday, and this aspect is overlooked, you could miss much of the joy and blessing inherent in the application.

A Sunday schedule may also be more adaptable to younger minds than to those that are further along life's journey. When the years start stacking up on us, we seem to do better with shorter, more frequent sessions as opposed to the more concentrated, less frequent approach. But this is a decision that only you can make for yourself after experimenting and determining your own capabilities.

3. There are those who like to work memorization into their work-a-day world. They tend to pursue it at times when their hands may be busy, but mental concentration is not a requirement. Memorizing and reviewing then becomes a normal part of their day, while they are grooming, working around the house or in the yard, driving the car or lying in bed. (More about this later.)

*Ways to Memorize:*

Of course, it's convenient to memorize directly from your Bible, but you may find the binding wearing out prematurely by opening it frequently to the same place. Also, you may need something more versatile because a book may not be easy to tote around or keep track of when you're pursuing a busy schedule.

1. 3x5 cards offer a handy alternative. Professionals suggest that there is special significance in writing out the Scripture yourself as part of the memorizing process. However, you can type it, if you prefer, or copy it directly from your Bible (enlarge it if you like) then cut it down and tape it to your card.

You then have a handy little item to use in any way that fits your agenda. Some who use this method tape the card in a place where they spend most of their time. Then they review as they move to other areas. Others tie it on a string around their neck or just carry it around with them, so it's always handy for reference. You can put it by your phone to review while listening through all those recorded messages, stash it in your pocket or purse to

consult as you wait for appointments, or place it on the car visor for use when you're detained in traffic. It fits into almost any situation and in almost any corner of your work area.

As you progress and add to your cards, you can keep them in a box or secured with a rubber band handy for review.

2. When I started memorizing, I liked to be able to view an entire chapter so I enlarged it on a copy machine to a size that could be easily seen by my weakening eyes. Copies were then taped up in places I frequented. One went on my bathroom mirror, handy for when I put on makeup, others went on my bedroom mirror and by my kitchen sink, so no matter where I was there was a handy reference. They also served as good reminders to get back to memorizing if I got sidetracked. Should the Sandman give me a hard time, and I was reviewing during the night, they were handy for prompting when I got stuck and just had to know the next word before morning. A friend copies her Scripture as above, and then reviews it with her husband on their morning walks.

3. Others like to type out their chapter, double-spaced, on a full sheet of paper and work from that. They find it helpful to work line by line, so they can review more carefully. One gentleman who uses this method, lies on his bed in the evening to go over his Scripture. It must work well because he always quotes word perfect. (I understand his wife also hears him reciting while lolling in the bathtub.)

4. If you find yourself trying to hurriedly scan a passage of Scripture before racing off to work, you may want to try this: Rather than breezing through a quick portion that you'll probably forget by the time you get to the car, try, in the short time you have, to just meditate on one verse or part of a verse. Jot it on a 3x5 card and take it along with you. As you have breaks in the day, memorize just that short passage while you're waiting on the phone, eating your lunch or at other times. It will take a while for you to remember it without looking, but it'll soon become a permanent part of your thinking. As you add to it, little by little, you'll be surprised at how fast verses grow into paragraphs and paragraphs into chapters.

### *How to Begin:*

The Chinese say: A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. And it follows that the journey continues one step at a time. This is the way to memorize Scripture. Take that first step and then continue on one small step at a time.

Don't look at a chapter and say, "I'm going to memorize this chapter." Look at the first verse and say, "I'm going to memorize this verse".

We've alluded to the futility of trying to eat an entire elephant at one sitting. Remember the "one bite at a time" part? When you begin memorizing, start with a bite-sized chunk, a verse, a sentence, a phrase — whatever is comfortable for you. Stay with that portion until you have it thoroughly in mind. It may take you part of a day, an entire day, a week or more. Just never go on to your next bite until you've completely "digested" the one prior.

When this is accomplished, work on your next segment until you know it well. It's best to begin a new verse when your mind is fresh, then after you've memorized it, say it along with the verse(s) you've already learned. Then comes the review. Start from the beginning and say the first verse, adding the others you've memorized until you can quote them all together with no fumbling or stumbling. As we have said so often, you'll soon learn that memorizing Scripture is made up of *rote repetition, meditation and constant review*.

So begin your base by memorizing the first bite sized chunk. Then continually build on it always making sure that you know the previous ones well, before progressing on to the next. We will discuss the review later in this chapter, but I mention it here because it is a basic part of memorizing.

### *Jogging Your Memory:*

As you memorize, you'll occasionally experience what we call "stone walling" when all of a sudden your mind just goes completely blank. You can be going along quoting something you know well, but suddenly you find yourself treading water. This happens to even the most experienced professionals. So what do you do? Frequently, all it takes is a word or sometimes even just a letter to trigger complete recall. There are built-in methods of self prompting that can help jog your thought processes when this happens.

I should warn you, though, this next section may be a little confusing to just read through without a working background to associate it with. There is a lot of detail, but don't let it confuse you. If you find yourself getting bogged down, just put it aside for a while to review later when you have something tangible to apply it to.

**Remembering Proper Sequence:**

**Noting the Alphabetic sequence can help:**

I Peter 2:13 - *Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men.* I could never quite get it straight: was it “every *authority instituted* among men” or “every *institution authorized* among men”? Remembering the alphabetic sequence took care of it. The “A” of *authority* comes *before* the “I” of *instituted*: ...*every authority instituted among men.*

I Peter 2:15 - *For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men.* It's not always easy to remember whether it's the “*ignorant talk of foolish men*” or “*foolish talk of ignorant men*”. But it's easy to remember that verse 13 is in alphabetic sequence but the reverse is true in this verse. Alphabetically, the “I” of *ignorant* comes *after* the “F” of *foolishness* thus: ...*the ignorant talk of foolish men.*

II Peter 1:5 - *For this very reason, make every effort to add to your Faith Goodness; and to goodness, Knowledge; and to knowledge, Self-control; and to self-control, Perseverance; and to perseverance, Godliness; and to godliness, Brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.* At first this long list may be intimidating, but notice: the first letters of the dominant nouns walk you up and down the alphabet: F,G,K - S - P,G,B. And it's easy to just add *love* on the end.

Jude 14 - *See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of His holy ones.* I had trouble remembering whether it was “*See, the Lord is coming with thousands of his holy ones*”, or “*Look, the Lord is coming with thousands of his holy ones*”. Here you have an alphabetic sequence of consecutive letters. **S-T:** *See, the Lord is coming...*

### **Just plain logic is often adequate:**

Psalm 1:1 - *Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.* Note the verbs - *walk - stand - sit*. A natural sequence.

### **Establishing Meaning and Order of Importance:**

You may find it helpful to review the passage thoroughly to establish the meaning. Then the sequence may become clear.

For example in Colossians 3:18 - 4:1 the sequence is: wives/husband; husbands/wives; children/parents; fathers/children; slaves/masters; masters/slaves. This series could be difficult to keep in correct order without making some association between them.

It's helpful to realize that family relationships are more important than those outside the home. Also, the one who is to be submissive is mentioned first. The most important part of the family is the *wife/husband* relationship, and the wife is to be submissive to her husband. Therefore, the wife is mentioned first



and then the husband. Next in importance is the children who are submissive to their parents. Then come the slaves who are answerable to their masters.

But if you look at I Peter 2:13-17, you will find the sequence of importance here is reversed and Peter, instead of starting with the most important relationship, builds up to it. The responsibility of Christians toward governmental authority is addressed first, then their relationship to non-believers, believers, and to our Lord, then back to governmental authority.

### **Visual Association:**

Visualization is another way to spark your memory especially if you are having difficulty with the sequence of a long list.

The method described here is based on ten words that serve as a key. Once you remember the key, the association follows, almost automatically. The following is a suggested key, but you may develop your own very easily if you so choose...

|       |   |        |
|-------|---|--------|
| one   | - | run    |
| two   | - | zoo    |
| three | - | tree   |
| four  | - | door   |
| five  | - | hive   |
| six   | - | sick   |
| seven | - | heaven |
| eight | - | ate    |
| nine  | - | dine   |
| ten   | - | den    |

To illustrate its use, let's apply my *vivid* imagination to the beatitudes.

The first beatitude is:

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:3)*

The first key word is *run* which tells us this is number one, the *first* beatitude. So visualize a man *running* toward heaven. He is very lean and lank like most runners. However, the further he runs, the worse he looks. In fact he looks very *poor*, thus the first beatitude, *Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

The word *zoo* goes with *two*. So for the second beatitude visualize your favorite *zoo* creature, try an elephant crying with his mate lying beside him, and a zoo-keeper trying to comfort him, thus:

*"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." (Matthew 5:4)*

The third key word is *tree*, so for beatitude number *three*, you may visualize a group of monkeys in a *tree*. All of the monkeys are close to the trunk of the tree and quite secure except one that is very shy or *mEEK*. He keeps edging out toward the end of the branch until suddenly the branch breaks off and the monkey crashes into the dirt (the earth). Hence:

*"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth." (Matthew 5:5)*

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In review, you remember the key word for *one* is *run*, hence the runner and the association with *poor* and *heaven*. Number *two* key word is *zoo*, so you visualize your *mourning* zoo animal being *comforted* by the zoo-keeper and the association with those who mourn being comforted. Number *three* is *tree*, so you think of your *meeek* monkey in a tree getting his mouthful of *earth*. Thus the meek inheriting the earth. I'm sure by now you have the idea and do not need more of my imagination.

Visual associations are included here to be used only in specific instances and are not recommended for general use. Although books have been written promoting this process as a method of memorizing longer portions of Scripture there is a danger involved when it is utilized. Such visualizations can be helpful for prompting when needed, but if they dominate the entire process, you could become hopelessly entangled in a legalistic endeavor. The meditating and delighting part of memorizing Scripture as laid out in Psalm 1 is a vital part of the blessing. If you replace the Scripture with visual associations, you could find yourself meditating on visualizations instead of the Word and thus inhibit the work of the Holy Spirit. Always remember, it's not just memorizing the words that is important. The joy and power of Scripture is realized only as you give the Holy Spirit opportunity to impress the powerful Word on your mind and soul through meditation and heart involvement. It is through meditating and delighting in God's Word, His written

communication to you, that your communion with Him, the Author, flourishes into precious intimacy.

### *Other Helpful Associations:*

#### **Words Beginning With the Same Letter:**

I Peter 2:23 - *Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly.* I found myself getting confused in quoting this verse until I noted the consecutive words starting with “J”. Then I knew if *judges* and *justly* were not in consecutive order, I was not saying it correctly.

I Peter 3:17 - *It is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.* Note all the words beginning with “I”.

Rev 2:13 - *Yet you remain true to My name.* Note the two consecutive “Y’s” and two consecutive “T’s”.

#### **Acronyms:**

Although acronyms do not *always* contain vowels, they frequently do, and whenever I see a word beginning with a vowel I look for an acronym, especially if it’s in a place where I’m having trouble.

I Peter 2:18 - *Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect....* The first three letters of the last three words, spell **WAR** (Not a great association “meaningwise”, but “wordwise” it’s a good reminder.)

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I Peter 3:13 - *Who is going to harm you....* The first letters of the first three words spell **WIG**.

Psalm 91:2 - *I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress."* Acronym: **HIM**.

Rev. 1:10 - *On the Lord's Day, I was in the Spirit and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches."* It's difficult here to keep the wording verbatim because it can go so many ways. e.g. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day and behind me I heard a loud voice...." To keep it straight, I think "**onion**" and remember that the verse starts with "**On**" and that the next two clauses start with "**I**".

I Peter 2:1 - *Therefore rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit....* I worked for doctors for 14 years, so whenever I get to this point, I think, "doctor - **MD**": **Malice and Deceit**. (Not intended personally for doctors, please.)

Revelation 1:4 - *Grace and peace to you from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come...* Although *grace and peace* are common blessings in the epistles, there are other blessings such as *grace, mercy and peace* and *mercy, peace and love*. Here again is a medical acronym to help keep it straight. **GP**: **Grace and Peace**.

Revelation 1:6 - *...to Him be glory and power forever and ever!* The same acronym applies. **GP**: **Glory and Power**.

### Repetition of Words:

I Peter 3:9 - *Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult... - evil, with and insult are all used twice.*

I Peter 3:18 - *For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.* The word *For* that begins this verse and this sentence can be used as a reminder that this word is repeated several times in the context.

Jude 14-15 - *Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of His holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."* The words, *thousands, all, and ungodly* are all used more than once. Also note the acronym, **TUT: Thousands Upon Thousands.**

### Miscellaneous Associations:

I Peter 2:11 - *Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world....* After *Dear friends*, there is a string of words starting with vowels: *I urge you as aliens and...* (Even though the "Y" of *you* does not technically qualify, the other two letters of *you* are vowels.) You also have three words in a row beginning with "A" which is quite unusual: *as aliens and....* When I get to this verse I always think, "Oh, yes, this is where we have all the vowels."

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Psalm 1:4 (KJV) - *The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.* I frequently misquoted this verse until I noted that *wind* ended with the letter “D” and that the next word - *driveth* started with that same letter. Then I knew, if I didn’t have back to back “D’s” I wasn’t saying it correctly.

I Peter 4:8-9 - *Above all, love each other.... Offer hospitality to one another....* It’s very easy to think *love one another* as it is in 1:22 but take note that *love* ends with the letter “E” and the next word starts with the same letter. It is E - E: *lovE Each other*. In the same way you know that *hospitality is to one another*. O - O: *tO One another*.

I Peter 5:1 - *...a witness of Christ’s sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed....* Notice: *who also will*. Here are two words starting with the same letter separated by a word beginning with a different letter (often a vowel). I call this a *sandwich*. In this verse it’s easy to think, “who will also share”, or omit the “also” altogether, but if you tuck away in your thinking that there is a *sandwich* here, it helps to keep it straight. **WAW: Who Also Will.**

Occasionally you’ll run across a *sandwich* of the same word separated by another word as in Jude 15 mentioned in the last section: *thousands upon thousands*.

I Peter 2:21 - *To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you leaving you an example, that you should*

*follow in His steps. Sandwich: you leaving you. (Also notice the repetition of the word you in this sentence.)*

For a specific verse that you may be having problems with, it may help to break it down by noting the first letter of each word, and perhaps even making an association, as a sentence, with them. This is very detailed and would only be useful in a short section where you were having significant problems.

### **First Word and/or Letter Associations:**

By noting specific words or even letters that start a verse, you can often make associations that are helpful when needed. (You will notice from the personal examples given here that I was memorizing in the King James Version for the Psalms, but in the New International Version for I Peter.)

Psalm 25:7 - ...*for Thy goodness sake, O Lord.* When I get to *good-ness* in verse 7, a light goes on to remind me that verse 8 starts with the word, *good: Good and upright is the Lord....*

I Peter 3:2 - ...*when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.* The word *your*, near the end of verse 2, reminds me that verse 3 starts with this same word: *Your beauty should not come from....*

Unlike the narrative in the New Testament, each verse in a Psalm may be a complete thought in itself independent of other verses. It is, therefore, often



helpful to have a prompt for the first word or even letter in each verse to start you off. The illustrations given here may be difficult to just read through, so you may want to scan them for now, but take note that they are here for reference if you need them, especially if you are memorizing in the Psalms.

Psalm 103: For this Psalm, I am aware that the first 2 verses start with the words *Bless the Lord* and the next three start with the word *Who*. Remembering the first word or two in verses 6-10 is not difficult either: *The Lord; He; The Lord; He; He*. Then for verses 11-19, I have noted just the first letter of the first word in each verse. These fall easily into three groups of three: F-A-L, F-A-F, and B-T-T. Then the last three verses begin with the word *Bless*. And that is the Psalm.

This next illustration is not at all easy to follow, but it worked for me, and if you can find your way through the maze, it may at least give you an idea of how you can use a similar line of thinking to your advantage. (You may find it helpful to have your Bible open to Psalm 25 as you scan through it.)

Psalm 25:18 starts with the word *Look*. *Look upon mine affliction and my pain...* I use this word as an indication of how the next three verses begin, but in reverse. The last letter in *look* is “K”. Verse 19 starts with the “K” sound. *Consider mine enemies....* Verse 20 starts with “O”, but then the actual “K” comes into play. *O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed....* Verse 21 has a double prompt. Because “L”

is the first letter of the key word *look* I'm alerted that this verse starts with "L". But also when I get to the word *let* in verse 20, it registers that this is the word which begins verse 21. "*Let integrity and uprightness preserve me...*"

Now, are you thoroughly confused? If you were memorizing a similar passage, I would hope it might make a little sense, but if not I'm sure it was mind boggling to try plowing through it. Hopefully, enough has filtered through to at least give you the idea of what is intended.

### *Review:*

It is said that the three most important factors to remember in buying real estate are: Location! Location! Location! Similarly, the three most important factors in the memorization of Scripture are: *Review! Review! Review!* I can't emphasize this enough. Unless you establish a sound base, meditating and reviewing thoroughly as you go along, it will be like trying to build a house without a foundation. At some point it'll come crashing in on you. The secret of retaining what you have learned lies in constant meditation and review. This is all part of the blessing. We have found no quick and easy methods, nor do we recommend them.

When starting a chapter, it's important to consistently return to the beginning for review. However, once you get well into the chapter or book, it will be helpful to vary the places you begin, and even to recite by paragraph going backwards (if you know what I mean).

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As we have mentioned, some authorities maintain that the first five minutes of concentration are the most productive. By starting in different places, you exercise your mind in different areas while it is fresh. This will initiate a more uniform memory pattern. If you start all reviews at the beginning of the chapter, there is a tendency to become very familiar with the first part of the chapter or book while never thoroughly grasping the last part.

When you are well into memorizing a book, it often becomes difficult to review all of the previous chapters each time you review. One solution is to review one or two chapters progressively each day of the week and then do a comprehensive review of the entire book (or as far along as you have memorized) only once a week.

As mentioned in another section, some like to review just before dozing off at night, and when they awaken early. Those who suffer from insomnia have long hours to fill and often enjoy great blessing as they review, pray, and meditate on Scripture they have memorized. If they use 3x5 cards, they usually keep them next to their bed for handy reference.

Others find it helpful to write or type out their Scripture for review. This immediately points out any misquotations they may have picked up along the way, but it also helps to impress the text more firmly in their minds.

When preparing to present a passage in public, or when I want to *polish* it, I like to quote it along with an audio tape or CD. This immediately identifies areas that need work. Incidentally, if you're quoting to a group, no matter how well you may know the Scripture passage, it's important to have someone close by to prompt you in case you need it, or else have your Bible

handy to refer to should you find yourself “stone walling” in the middle of it.

*In Conclusion:*

Be sure to keep your eye on the goal. Don't ever forget that the joy of memorizing Scripture is getting to know the Author not the legalistic exercise of just knowing the words. As you memorize God's powerful Word, letting it fill your mind and thrill your soul, you'll find your daily walk enriched and your focus sharpened in new and exciting ways. Divine insight is then perpetually available for you to tap into *for teaching the faith and correcting error, for resetting the direction of (your) life and training (you) in good living.* (II Timothy 3:16, Phillips)

If the Lord tarries and we go into persecution as many predict, the Scripture you have memorized will be an invaluable reservoir to draw from, not only for you, but also for family and friends as well as for others around you.

Never forget that this is a *forever* investment - *“The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of the Lord stands forever.”* (Isaiah 40:8) God's Word stands forever! What you memorize from the Word is *eternal* truth. It will go with you right on into eternity. We know of several avid memorizers who have already gone on ahead and are now probably enjoying quoting their Scripture to the King of kings.

Again, if you've tried to read this chapter without having actually started on your journey of memorizing Scripture in context, you probably found it quite confusing, but don't let it throw you. Just put it aside for now and

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when you find yourself in need of some practical pointers remember that it's here. If you haven't done it already, the most important thing for you to do right now is just dive in and get started. Be sure to go as slowly as you need to and *always remember*, the most important thing is....

*above all - enjoy!*