

Chapter 1: Why Memorize?

From the time most people become Christians, they quickly begin to see the value of knowing the Bible. They also begin to realize how important it is to memorize it, and to know where passages are. They start by reading the Bible in its entirety, and quickly it becomes a conglomeration of many stories and passages. They become frustrated trying to remember where everything is. Furthermore, they find that it is quite difficult to memorize, and begin to go back to the flawed, modern day point of view discouraging memorization.

Yet, from the beginning of time, memorization has been an essential and valuable tool for man. Oral tradition was carefully preserved and memorized when paper and writing were scarce. We have found that in persecuted countries, the foremost regret of many Christians was that they wished they had memorized more Scripture. To them, God's Word is more valuable than gold.

In spite of what people may say, you don't really know something until you memorize it. The best and most talented workers and artists are those who do not have to constantly refer back to every detail, but have much of their craft etched firmly in their memory banks.

There are people who say they cannot memorize, yet they can rattle off every evening program for the week, with the appropriate times and days. They can sing jingles from TV and radio verbatim, yet they say that Bible memorizing is too difficult. The truth is that it is not a matter of *difficulty*, but a matter of *priority*. They know well what they value most, and what they spend the most time with. And typically, the Bible is not it.

Most Christians are convinced that the Bible is the Spirit-inspired Word of God. And if they really believe that, what could be more important to know than the words of their Creator? Yet, many of us treat it as a duty and chore, and simply reading two or three chapters a day makes them feel they have accomplished a great work for the Lord! Then they spend two to four hours at the television, and wonder why they know so much more about reality shows than God's reality.

I think one of the main reasons people feel this way, is because they haven't taken the time to understand the concepts of memory. They could probably rattle off sixty-six programs and their times on television and radio, but they don't know the order of the sixty-six books of the Bible. We get bogged down thinking that memorizing a chapter word for word is all that there is to good Bible memory. Of course this is important, but I believe it is the end product of really memorizing the Bible.

Bible Memorizing Really is Fun!

Bible memorizing can be fun! And it should be fun, and a fulfilling part of your life. There are so many memory techniques to make memorizing easier; that once you work with them you will find memorization of God's Word one of your greatest enjoyments.

The Initial Challenge:

Before we start, I'd like you to test your knowledge of the Bible books. Without any help, get a piece of paper and pencil and write the Old Testament and New Testament books in order to the best of your knowledge. This will show you your actual status at this time. I find most Christians do fairly well with the New Testament, mixing up maybe five or six books, but not as well with the Old Testament. If you do well with both, please continue through Phase I so you can learn memory techniques that will help you through Phase II, and help you teach others. Phase I also helps you understand why the Canon was put in the order we have today.

If you are like most of us, you had a bit of trouble. Don't be discouraged! After going through the next couple chapters, you will know all 66 books, in and out of order, just by playing cards!

The Key to Memorization:

I believe there is a misconception about Bible Memorization that has held people back from really getting a thorough knowledge of the Bible. Whenever you think of memorizing, you think of rote, verse by verse, word-by-word memorization. People are bogged down for years memorizing one little passage, neglecting the rest of the Bible.

Again, I don't discourage word for word memorization. I have memorized plenty of books myself, and it is the ultimate goal. But that is the final goal. We should be memorizing the structures of the books, and their contents before we try to go word for word. This is the concept behind this method.

The Bible has a little passage in Isaiah 28:10 saying: *"For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, and there a*

little.” I call this approach the *Layered approach to Memorization*, and I divide it into *four Phases*. **Phase I** is memorizing the *Books* of the Bible, in and out of order. **Phase II** is memorizing the *Chapter Titles* of each book, and **Phase III** is memorizing the various *sub-sections* from each chapter. **Phase IV** is memorizing *verse by verse*.

Remember your old science books that would show a skeleton, and then put a layer of nerves or muscles, etc. on clear pages that you would add until you get the complete picture? That is how I feel memorizing is done the best. Learn the structure first, then add layer by layer, which makes for a logical, painless way to memorize. You’d be surprised how simple it is when you take your time just playing card games to develop a well rounded knowledge of the Bible in general, and then further develop phase by phase into a thorough, in-depth grasp of it.

Again, how quickly and how much you learn is all a matter of priority. I remember playing a little card game years ago that had famous authors like Mark Twain and Nathaniel Hawthorne on one side, with their books on the other side. The object was to guess which author wrote the book. That little game gave me a grasp on authors that at 8 and 9 years old I would never had known, and the authors stuck with me all of my life. How well do you really want to know God’s Word? Is it important to you? Well, I am convinced that if you have the desire, this is one of the most painless ways to do it.

In this book you will be using and making card games. All that is required are poster or foam boards and lots of index cards. And when you find how fun and easy it is, you will want to share this with your church friends. It is something you can do alone, or with your friends and family. And when you’re done, you’ll say, “Now why didn’t I think of that!”

One suggestion. It is easier and more fun if you find someone to read through the game with you the first time. One can read while the other works the board. Then switch the next time. I've found that three to five times is usually all it takes for people to know the books in and out of order. If it takes longer or shorter for you, it doesn't really matter. The books and order never change, and in no time you will have a perfect grasp of the Bible books: both Old and New Testaments!