



DOES YOUR CAMPUS MINISTRY VALUE SCRIPTURE MEMORY

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"Bible memorization is absolutely fundamental to spiritual formation. If I had to choose between all the disciplines of the spiritual life, I would choose Bible memorization, because it is a fundamental way of filling our minds with what it needs. This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth. That's where you need it! How does it get in your mouth? Memorization." Dallas Willard

Dr. Howard Hendricks of Dallas Theological Seminary once said that if it were his decision, every student graduating from Dallas Theological Seminary would be required to learn one thousand verses word perfect before they graduated.

Do you regularly memorize scripture? Do your students?

How many students in your ministry know more than 50 Bible verses by heart?

How many staff members know more than 100 verses they can quote word perfectly and use in their disciple-making ministries?

Is scripture memory part of your college ministry culture?

My goal in writing this is to help you elevate this essential habit in your ministry!

If I could go back to my twenties, I would put myself on a more strict regimen of scripture memory and force myself to stay consistent with my review everyday.

My commitment to scripture memory over the years has been off and on. The rewards from my limited work have been astronomical.

God has used the verses I have memorized over the last 14 years probably more than any other spiritual discipline, even my quiet time of Bible reading and prayer. (I'm not sure if I'm allowed to say that or not) He has used them to warn and empower me to overcome temptation. Also to correct and renew me in the gospel when I sin.

The handful of times in my life that I believe I have most clearly heard from the Lord was through a verse of scripture that I have memorized.

Most of my personal disciple-making ministry is based on the verses I have memorized.



Having several hundred key verses of scripture memorized has helped me speed the preparation time for speaking at or leading our training times with our student leaders. They've also helped during mission trips overseas where I needed to train people at a moment's notice.

I have lost count of how many times God has used a verse I have memorized to be just what the person needed at just the right moment.

As we were planting our ministry here in Chico, the Lord used key verses to encourage me and keep me going during intense moments of [spiritual warfare and discouragement](#).

Looking back on the last 14 years, the habit of scripture memory has completely transformed my life. The verses I have memorized are one of my most valuable treasures in my life.

Model the importance of memorizing scripture

"I know of no other single practice in the Christian life more rewarding, practically speaking, than memorizing Scripture...No other single exercise pays greater spiritual dividends! Your prayer life will be strengthened. Your witnessing will be sharper and much more effective. Your attitudes and outlook will begin to change. Your mind will become alert and observant. Your confidence and assurance will be enhanced. Your faith will be solidified." Chuck Swindoll

Most people don't have regular and systematic plans to memorize and review scripture. If you don't, I'm not trying to make you feel guilty, but you should try it.

If you're willing to spend 10 minutes a day memorizing and reviewing scripture you can have hundreds of verses memorized in a couple of years.

Teach on the topic regularly and share how God uses it in your life

Scripture memory is a regular topic at our large group teaching as well as our summer training program. Most weeks at the end of our large group teaching we have some suggested memory verses on the topic or passage we taught. We weave stories up front about how the Lord is using key verses and even model scripture memory by quoting the verses we use in our large group talks rather than reading from our notes. When I was a part of the Oklahoma University's Baptist Collegiate Ministries, Max Barnett gave his scripture memory talk almost every year.

Integrate scripture memory into your disciple-making process

Every person who is discipled in our ministry goes through a very simple discipleship lesson on the importance of scripture memory. Scripture memory is one of our "training objectives" that we don't move on from until our disciples are practicing it as a regular habit.

Each lesson of our first discipleship series called "Be A Disciple" has a verse to memorize that goes with the topic we're training them in. Ideally by the end of the first semester they have 10-15 new verses memorized on key topics!



Memorize scripture together

Our [core team](#) of student leaders meets weekly for an hour and a half of training, planning, and prayer. One thing we require in training is memorization of one Bible verse a week. To test each other on these verses, we all get together and practice saying them to one another. This has helped us create unity and momentum as we grow together in this area.

Encourage every leader to pass on the value of scripture memory

Every student leader who disciples freshmen and new believers is trained in how to memorize scripture. This helps reinforce their own commitment as they teach others.

We make sure to warn them of the danger of teaching something you don't do so we continue to keep them accountable to practice this essential habit.

Give them simple and reproducible tools

Keeping tools simple enables students to easily share them with others.

For example, we use "verse packs" developed by The Navigators along with blank cards for students to write the verse on one side and reference on the other. We try to always have those available for students to buy from us so they never have an excuse to not start. There are also a couple of apps that we recommend students use.

We encourage students to keep trying until they find something that works best for them.

Most people really appreciate the structure that a set system gives. I'm not that sold on any specific method, but I think it's very important to choose one and run with it.

Reflection Questions

Do you have a regular habit of scripture memory?

What difference has scripture made in your life?

Which of these practices do you need to implement in order to elevate the value of scripture memory in your ministry?

Resources

- [Memorizing God's Word](#) – I wrote this lesson as a simple way to share the "why" and "how" of memorizing scripture. All you need to do is print it and go over it with a student!
- [Audio message on scripture memory](#) by Max Barnett. We assign students to listen to this to reinforce the values.
- [Topical Memory System](#) by The Navigators
- [Fighter Verses](#) from John Piper and Desiring God
- [Scripture Typer](#) App
- [Verse Packs](#)