

How to Memorize Scripture

Surprisingly, we have a number of separate but linked memories in us: visual, auditory, muscle tissue, cognitive (understanding), emotional (responsive), imaginative, and associative. We want to trigger as many of these memory banks as possible so that they reinforce each other, and turn our short-term memory into long-term memory, quickly and efficiently.

1. **Get excited.** You *cannot* learn something unless you *want* to learn it. Consider how you will use it, and what you'll get out of it. Get pumped; be determined! Adrenalin is a key chemical to make our memory strong and lasting. Make it *fun* and *enjoyable!* That's part of *wanting* it.
2. **Warm up.** As if warming up before exercising, begin with a recitation of something that you have already memorized. This triggers the memory portions of the brain, preparing them to receive new information. *Mary had a little lamb, its fleece was white as snow...*
3. **Stand up.** Don't try to memorize while sitting down or lying down. There's something about being up and moving that helps us to memorize. At the very least, it keeps us awake. You may want silence, or you may want quiet instrumental music in the background – your choice.
4. **Read it.** Take the time to read it, over and over again, until the general content becomes *familiar* to you, and the words are *available* for recall, even if not in the right order.
5. **Restate it.** Summarize it in your own words – it's easier to learn things *you* have said than to remember what someone else has said. So make it your own, and demonstrate that you understand it. If you can't restate it, then you don't really understand it.
6. **Analyze it.** Find and fix in your mind *no more than 7 key words* or ideas in the text that you can use to recall the rest of the text.
7. **Visualize it.** Use your imagination to create a vivid picture of the content of it. The more vivid the picture, the more likely you will remember it. Diagram it if you can.
8. **Recite it aloud.** By saying it aloud, you're actually *hearing* it. And by hearing it, you are creating another memory of what you want to learn. Now you've not only read it, and seen it, but you've heard it, and reinforced it in your mind.
9. **Write it down.**
 - First, *copy* it. This is helpful in itself. It triggers the muscle memory. But more importantly, it associates and reinforces what you have seen and read, with what you have heard, with what you have imagined, with your assessment of it, with what you are physically writing.
 - Then try to *write it entirely from memory*. Get as much down as you can without looking at the original text, even if you have to leave blanks.
 - Then go back to the original and use it to *fill in only the blanks*.
 - Now put away the original and *read aloud what you have written*.
 - Finally, try to *recite it from memory* again, just once. Don't worry if you can't recite it all.

Repetition. Repeat these steps, and keep repeating them, until you can write the whole thing down from memory without referring back to the original. Now it's yours for the asking. **Review** what you have memorized once a week. Otherwise, you will recall only 25% of it within one month.

The Source. It is crucial that we remember where we got the text we are memorizing. That would be *author, book, chapter, and verse*. Repeat the source **3 times** for every time you recite the text. For example, John 11:5, "Jesus wept." John 11:5; John 11:5. Why? Because the source is harder to visualize and remember than the text. And we want to be able to tell others where to find it for themselves. This adds **credibility** to what we have recounted to them.