

Hide It in Your Heart: Scripture Memorization

Why memorize God's Word, and a simple way to learn a whole book of the Bible

Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.

PSALM 119:11

AT A GLANCE

BIG IDEA	Memorizing Scripture puts God's Word where it can help you anytime: in your heart. Ron's method is simple and powerful: write out a short book like a letter, then read it out loud every night until it becomes part of you.
SCRIPTURE	Psalms 119:9-11 · Deuteronomy 6:6-7 · Matthew 4:1-11 · Colossians 3:16 · Joshua 1:8
LENGTH	About 20 minutes, plus a two-month challenge
BEST FOR	Middle school and high school
YOU WILL NEED	Bibles, notebooks or paper, and pens

Start here: what do you already know by heart?

Ask students to recite something they've memorized: a song, a movie line, a sports stat, a jingle from an ad. Most can do it instantly! We memorize what we hear and repeat often. The question isn't whether we can memorize; it's what we choose to fill our minds with.

1 Why memorize Scripture?

- **It guards you against sin.** "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You" (Psalm 119:11).
- **It's the weapon Jesus used.** When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, Jesus answered three times, "It is written..." and quoted Deuteronomy from memory (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10).
- **It goes with you everywhere.** God told His people to keep His words "in your heart" and talk about them "when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). You won't always have a Bible or a phone, but you'll always have your memory.
- **It fills you with God's Word.** "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom" (Colossians 3:16).

- **It helps you obey.** God told Joshua to meditate on His law "day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it" (Joshua 1:8).

2 Ron's method: learn a whole book

Most people memorize single verses. That's great! But there's a surprisingly simple way to learn an entire short book of the Bible. Start with Paul's letter to Titus: only three chapters and 46 verses.

THE METHOD

Step A. Write out the entire book of Titus by hand, like a letter. Don't include chapter or verse numbers; just write it the way Paul wrote it to Titus.

Step B. Read that letter out loud three times every night, for at least two months.

That's it. Here's why it works:

Writing slows you down

You notice every word. Israel's kings were told to write their own copy of God's law (Deuteronomy 17:18).

Reading aloud uses more senses

You see it, say it, and hear it, and that builds memory.

Repetition does the work

Three times a night for two months is about 180 readings. Without even "trying," the words start to stick.

A letter has a flow

Without verse numbers, you learn it as a message, the way it was meant to be heard, and you understand it better.

BACKGROUND FOR THE LEADER

The New Testament letters were originally written without chapter and verse numbers. Chapter divisions were added in the 1200s (usually credited to Stephen Langton), and New Testament verse numbers in the 1550s (by the printer Robert Estienne). Reading Titus as one continuous letter helps students hear it the way the first believers did, often read aloud to the whole church.

3 More tips for memorizing

- **Understand it.** Know what the passage means; it's easier to remember what makes sense.
- **Use cards.** Write a verse on a 3x5 card with the reference on both sides, and carry it with you.
- **Review often.** Keep reviewing what you've learned, or it will fade.
- **Work with a partner.** Quote verses to each other and check each other.

- **Live it.** The goal isn't just to know the words but to obey them.

TALK IT OVER

1. What have you memorized without trying (songs, lines, stats)? What does that tell you about how memory works?
2. Why do you think Jesus answered Satan with Scripture instead of His own words?
3. Which reason for memorizing Scripture matters most to you? Why?
4. Why might reading a whole book as a letter help you understand it better than reading one verse at a time?
5. Will you take the two-month Titus challenge? Who could do it with you?

TAKE IT HOME

Take the challenge: this week, write out the letter to Titus by hand without chapter or verse numbers. Then read it out loud three times every night for the next two months. Find a friend to do it with you, and check in with each other every week.

Hide it in your heart, and it will be there when you need it.

From fifty years of youth ministry by **Ron Whittam**. Share freely with your students and leaders. · The Youth Ministry Living Room · qrprogramming.com/livingroom

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