An Ordinary Believer’s Guide to Memorizing and Meditating on Scripture

Memorizing and meditating on Scripture is one of the best ways to internalize the Bible. The guide below will teach you not only the value of memorizing and meditating on Scripture, but how to go about it as well.

Memorizing Scripture
Psalm 119:11 says, “Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.” Scripture memory is one of the best ways to hide the Bible in your heart. That’s the good news. The bad news is that many Christians struggle with Bible memorization. The tips below will make Scripture memory not only easier, but more profitable as well.

#1: Ask God. . .

. . . to give you a driving desire to memorize Scripture.

#2: Do a Bible study that stresses the value of memorizing Scripture.

(The verses that point out the benefits of meditating on Scripture are a good place to start.)

#3: Set up a memorization plan.

You can start with verses that stand out to you in your quiet time, work on memorizing a book of the Bible, or use a list of verses curated by someone else such as the NavPress’ Topical Memory System.

#4: Explain the verse in your own words.

If you don’t really understand a verse, not only will it be harder to memorize, it will mean less to you. For greater clarity, read the verse in several translations, and then focus on memorizing the verse in your translation of choice.

#5: Say the reference at the beginning and the end each time you practice a verse.

That will help keep you from being one of those Christians that says, “somewhere in the Bible it says. . .”

#6: Repeat the verse frequently.

Engage as many of your senses that you can. Read the verse out loud multiple times. Write it on index cards that you can carry with you to review throughout the day. If you’re having a hard time with a particular verse, focus on learning just one phrase at a time. Don’t go on to the next
phrase, until you’ve truly mastered the previous ones. Record an audio of you reading the verses multiple times and play the audio while you’re doing mindless things such as walking or cleaning house. Recite the verse along with the recording.

#7: Review, review, review.

Review a newly learned verse daily for six weeks. Then move the verse onto a list for weekly review. After another six weeks, move the verse to a list for monthly review. Set aside one month each year to review all of the verses for the year. Don’t learn any new verses during that month so that you can focus on solidifying previously learned verses.

One of the great benefits of memorizing Scripture is that it makes it easier to meditate on the verses. Regardless of whether or not you’ve memorized verses the information below provides the why and how of meditating on Scripture.

**Meditating on Scripture**

Glassy stares, monotonous chants, and the fragrance of burning incense – these are images that often come to mind when we hear the word, *meditation*. Such negative associations have discouraged many Christians from pursuing something the Bible exhorts us to do – meditating on Scripture.
If you’d like to begin to incorporate Scripture meditation into your quiet time routine, here are a few things to keep in mind.

#1: Benefits

Meditating on the Bible has the following benefits: success and prosperity (Joshua 1:8), fruitfulness (Psalms 1:1-3), joy (Psalms 63:1-6), victory over sin (Psalms 119:11), and wisdom and insight (Psalm 119:98-99).

#2: Uniqueness

There are fundamental differences between biblical meditation and the meditation associated with Eastern mysticism. The latter entails emptying the mind. Biblical meditation involves filling the mind with Scripture that points to God.

#3: Logistics

Find a set time to meditate – during morning quiet times, perhaps, or when drifting off to sleep at night. Make sure to start small – just a minute or two in the beginning, then a gradual increase.

#4: Preparation

Begin by asking God to guard your heart and mind from any thoughts or images that aren’t from Him. Confession and repentance from known sins should follow. To rein in wandering minds, ask God to help you focus on Him and His word.

#5: Method.

There’s no one right way to meditate on Scripture. Here are a few that I’ve tried and enjoy. (1) Write the Scripture in your own words. (2) Use Scripture songs as a springboard to meditation. (3) In her book, From the Heart of a Woman (NavPress, out of print), Carol Mayhall using the letters AEIOU for systematic meditation. For example, if you were meditating on the verse, “The Lord is my shepherd” (Psalm 23), you would:
Ask Questions
(What is the function of a shepherd? In what way is the Lord my shepherd?)

Emphasize Words
(THE Lord is my shepherd. Not a Lord, but the Lord – the only true God. The Lord IS my shepherd – there’s no doubt about it. He IS my shepherd, regardless of my actions or circumstances. The Lord is MY shepherd – how personal!)

Illustrate
(Draw a picture of the verse, or link it to a story you’ve heard.)

Other Scriptures
(What else does the Bible say about this?)

Use
(How can I apply this verse to my life?)

Memorizing and meditating on Scripture is a valuable way of drawing closer to God and hearing His voice. Our prayer is that the above tips will help you do just that!