



# FIRST STEPS

STUDIES TO BEGIN YOUR WALK WITH CHRIST  
By Marlon Furtado

## *“Remembering Bible Verses”*

# YOU CAN MEMORIZE BIBLE VERSES!

## YOU HAVE MEMORIZED ALL YOUR LIFE.

When challenged to memorize Scripture, many adults will immediately respond, "Oh, I can't memorize the Bible. I'm just not good at that sort of thing." I realize it can seem intimidating at first. I think it's because people assume that only "Pastor-types" or "Bible teachers" can remember verses. Don't sell yourself short. You can do it. It doesn't matter whether you will ever stand in front of others to teach the Bible.

Ever since you were a child you've been memorizing information. When you were small, it was your address and phone number. Later, it was the Multiplication Tables, the States of our country, and a myriad of other pieces of information. It never stopped. Think about when you started a new job. There were countless details that you had to learn. Memorizing is just a part of life. The same is true for your spiritual life.

The author speaking: I am so glad that my friend Mike Panto encouraged me to start memorizing scripture when I was a brand new Christian. He knew hundreds of verses by heart and showed me an easy and effective method. For over forty-five years now, I have found it to be one of the most encouraging disciplines I've ever practiced.

## WHY MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE?

### **1. It is not to impress anyone with your knowledge of the Bible**

Your motivation to memorize Scripture should never be to draw attention to yourself. It is not to demonstrate how "spiritual" you are or to impress others with how committed you are. It is not like a stripe on your sleeve to show what rank of a Christian you are.

### **2. It is for your spiritual health and knowledge of God's Word**

God has provided His Word to feed your spirit. Memorizing is like preparing a sumptuous meal for your soul. Your faith grows and you better understand God's will for your life.

**Romans 12:2** says, "*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*"

### **3. It is God's Word, after all**

The Bible is not just another book. It is Almighty God's direct communication with us. It is a privilege to have His Word. Many Christians around the world do not have Bibles available like we do in America. When they do receive a portion, they quickly commit it to memory in case the authorities confiscate the Scripture.

### **4. There are practical benefits**

David was one of the greatest kings of Israel during the Old Testament times. He also loved God with all his heart. He failed miserably at times, but he would ask God to forgive him and get back up. One day as he wrestled with how to remain pure in his life, he penned **Psalm 119:9-11**,

*"How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to Your word. I seek You with all my heart; do not let me stray from Your commands. I have **hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.**"*

David discovered that *hiding God's Word in his heart* — memorizing verses of scripture and thinking deeply upon them — played a critical role in his victory over sin. You will also find that God uses the verses you commit to memory to help you in your battle against sin.

## **WHAT SHOULD I MEMORIZE?**

I will share with you the verses that I was encouraged to memorize first. But there is no special order. As you are reading your Bible, having a Quiet Time, or listening to a sermon, a verse or section of verses may particularly impress you. That's a great place to start.

Below are the first five verses I memorized. They deal with various assurances that are available to Christians. Putting these five verses to memory is another place you can start.

- **Assurance of Salvation**

**1 John 5:11-12** - *And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

- **Assurance of Answered Prayer**

**John 16:24** - *Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.*

- **Assurance of Victory**

**1 Corinthians 10:13** - *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

- **Assurance of Forgiveness**

**1 John 1: 9** - *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

- **Assurance of Guidance**

**Proverbs 3:5-6** - *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.*

## HOW DO I MEMORIZE?

### 1. Write it out

Assurance of Salvation

1 John 5:11-12 (niv)

*And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

1 John 5:11-12

My first step is making a small *Verse Card* (about 2" high and 3" wide; you could use a 3 x 5 index card). I put a title (which represents the topic of the verse) at the top with the Scripture reference below it. Then I write out the verse and put the reference again at the bottom.

If you want to memorize a longer passage, use however many cards you need to write out the verses. With all the Bible programs available, you can copy & paste into word processing programs and cut the paper to whatever size you want. There are even apps for your phones that allow you to carry your verses on it.

### 2. Memorize it word-for-word

My goal is to commit the Scripture to memory **word perfect**.

### 3. Work on it a phrase at a time

In the example above, I started by saying "**Assurance of Salvation. 1 John 5:11-12**" over and over until I felt like I had associated the topic and reference.

Then I added a phrase and repeated it several times, "**Assurance of Salvation. 1 John 5:11-12. And this is the testimony**", until I felt comfortable that I remembered it.

Then I added the next phrase and so on, until I had the entire thing word-perfect.

### 4. Redeem the time

Make the most of your time. When you begin to actively memorize God's Word, you will find all sorts of brief moments available. While eating your breakfast or taking a break at work or sitting in the doctor's office, pull out your card and work on it. Each of us can find time in our day to memorize God's Word.

### 5. Don't be too quick to start another verse

Regardless of how quickly you can say the entire *Title-Reference-Verse-Reference* word-perfectly, give yourself several days to make sure it is really locked away in your memory. You want to get to the point where it just rolls off your tongue without having to stop and think of what word or phrase comes next.

## **AFTER THESE FIVE VERSES, THEN WHAT?**

You can always choose your own verses, but after I memorized the Five Assurances, I was shown the *Topical Memory System (TMS)* by The Navigators. The *TMS* consists of 60 verses arranged in five helpful topics. It comes with pre-printed cards in an assortment of Bible translations. You can find it at any Christian bookstore or order from the Navigators website, [www.navigators.org](http://www.navigators.org).

Here's the five topics of the TMS. Each topic includes twelve verses.

- A. Live the New Life
- B. Proclaim Christ
- C. Rely on God's Resources
- D. Be Christ's Disciple
- E. Grow in Christlikeness

Earlier I mentioned that as you read your Bible or listen to a sermon, particular verses will impress you. Use the chart below to record them to memorize in the future.

### Future Memory


## HOW DO I GET THE MOST OUT OF MEMORIZING?

### 1. REVIEW YOUR VERSES

Even though you memorize your verses word-perfect, you will need to review them periodically to keep them fresh in your mind. In addition to your new verse card, carry previously memorized cards with you. Then, in some of those "redeemable moments," refresh your memory.

### 2. MEDITATE ON YOUR VERSES

It will be a great benefit to you to memorize portions of the Bible. But an even greater activity will be to then *meditate* on those Scriptures.

#### WHAT MEDITATION IS NOT

When people first hear the word *meditation* they often think of some Eastern practice called *Transcendental Meditation*, in which a person sits quietly and tries to empty their mind through repeating a "mantra". But this is NOT AT ALL what the Bible means.

#### WHAT MEDITATION IS

Biblical meditation is actively filling our mind with the Scripture and thinking about it from various angles. We do this to get a better understanding of what it means and its implications in our lives. Here are some passages that highlight the practice of meditating upon the Word.

**Joshua 1:8** *"Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; **meditate** on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."*

**Psalms 1:1-3** *"Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he **meditates** day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers."*

**Psalms 119:97, 148** *"Oh, how I love your law! I **meditate** on it all day long. My eyes stay open through the watches of the night, that I may **meditate** on your promises."*

You may have heard how cows "chew their cud". They chew their food and swallow it. Later it comes back up, and they re-chew and swallow it again. This process enables them to extract more nutrients from their food.

As you memorize verses, it is like chewing your food and swallowing it the first time. As you review those verses and think about them, you get more understanding of how it can apply to your life. It's like re-chewing your food to get more nourishment out of it.

This process of **memorizing** and **meditating** is how God will "renew your mind" and transform your life, as **Romans 12:2** instructs us.

*"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."*

## HOMWORK: LET'S GET STARTED