

## **Seven Strategies for Successful Memorization**

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*(Some of these ideas are adapted from Ann Voskamp: <http://www.aholyexperience.com>)*

### **1. Old before New**

Each day, begin by reviewing verses you've already memorized before learning the next verse. The goal of this memorization project is retention, and you can only retain what you review, so...

### **2. Rinse and Repeat**

The only way to retain learned verses is to review them again and again over an extended period of time. (See number 6 below.)

Tie your reciting to routines: when you brush your teeth, comb your hair, make the bed, drive to work, make a habit of saying the verses you've already memorized. I used to recite mine while breastfeeding my babies; now I say them when I rock them before their nap.

This repetition helps you to review and memorize—and to meditate on God's Word “day and night” (Psalm 1:3).

### **3. Take a Mental Screen Shot**

Use your mental point-and-shoot and take a brain “photograph” of the verse: read each new verse several times, burning each word into your mind like light onto film. Then close your eyes and try to “read” the verse with your mind's eye.

### **4. Acronym It**

I find it helpful to write the first letter of each word on the blank facing page of my notebook (if you're using note cards, write the acronyms on the back). Thus, 1 John 1:1 reads: Wdtywwftb, ww hh, ww hswoe, ww hlaatwoh, ctwol—

(We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—)

If I can't remember the words, I can look at my acronym, which gives me a memory trigger while at the same time forcing me to come up with the word myself. I found this an invaluable tool as I memorized Ephesians. It helped me memorize each verse much faster than through repetition alone.

The acronym also allows me to test myself to be sure I've correctly memorized each verse: I simply look at the letters and know if I've got the words right.

## **5. Location, Location, Location**

Memorize the location of each verse. This makes it much easier to memorize long passages and not inadvertently skip verses when reciting whole chapters.

I learned this the hard way. When I started memorizing Ephesians, I thought the verse numbers got in the way of the text's flow (and they do), so I skipped them. By the time I finished memorizing chapter 2, though, I would frequently get tangled up: does that verse come here? Or is it in the next chapter?

Trust me. You want those verse numbers.

## **6. The Rule of Three**

Once you've got the verses memorized, you need to fix them in your mind. Every day for three months recite your memory verses. All of them. Tie this recitation to routines (as in number 2 above).

## **7. Say it (or skip it) on Sunday**

After your three months of repetition, you'll still need to review once a week. You could recite all of your verses in one go (every Sunday, say). I find this daunting, so I recite one chapter each day during the week and rest on Sunday.

Either way, it's a good idea once a month to *read* through your memory verses to catch any mistakes that have crept into your memorization.