

# CREATIVE WAYS TO MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE

*Engaging and Practical Techniques for  
Memorizing Scripture Effectively*

Jeremy Kluth

Founder,  
Scripture Alive Ministries  
([www.ScriptureAlive.com](http://www.ScriptureAlive.com))

- 1) Understand the Meaning
- 2) Visual
- 3) Auditory
- 4) Kinesthetic

# 1. Understand the Meaning

The most crucial element before you even get to the creative part of memorizing it is that you have to understand it. You must memorize the *thoughts*, not just the words. You do a huge disservice if you're just trying to simply spout off words from memory. But if you think about the meaning and what's happening in the passage, you will be able to experience it more richly and be able to retain it longer. Once you understand it, you are able to move on to the creative part of memorizing it.

Now when you memorize, you are a teacher of yourself. And a good teacher uses all three types of learning styles. To refresh your memory, the three main styles of learning are **1) Visual 2) Auditory 3) Kinesthetic**. You will see below for different ways to memorize using the three different learning styles. You will also notice that the styles are simplified into concise, memorable phrases--see it, say it, and do it.

Each tool from the sections are meant to be engaging and fun techniques for you to use that will help you memorize Scripture faster and retain it longer. As a result, each time you memorize Scripture, it should be an enjoyable and life-giving experience. Each of us are on a Scripture memorization journey with each of us at different stages of the journey. Whether you've never memorized Scripture before or you're a seasoned memorizer, there is always the next step to take. Hopefully, this resource will be able to equip you to take that next step and grow in your maturity and understanding of who God is and what His Word says.

As mentioned above: no matter what kind of learner you are, in order to be a good teacher of yourself, you should make sure to use all three learning styles. Fortunately, several of the tools in each section are already combining different learning styles. But if there is something that you are doing that is missing one of the three learning styles, make sure to add something in.

For example, if you are writing it out, you are involving visual because you are seeing the words you are writing and kinesthetic because you are writing out the letters and words with your hand. So, in order to add in auditory, say it out loud while you're writing it or afterwards.

## 2. Visual (SEE IT)

### WRITE IT

This is a simple, but effective way to engage visually with whichever Scripture you are memorizing. By writing it out, you are connecting your brain with your hand. This creates new pathways in the brain which helps you to deeply embed the verse in your heart and mind. It's no wonder then that God affirms this practice:

**"And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children...You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).**

For those familiar with The Navigators Topical Memory System, they standardized the model of having pocket-sized notecards with a notecard holder. Writing it down on notecards with

the verse reference on one side and the verse on the other side is classic, but you can also write it in a notebook, on sticky notes, a whiteboard, or whatever you have accessible to you.

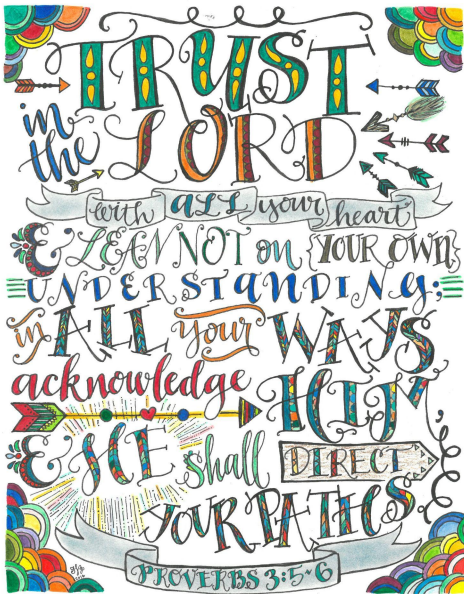
## TYPE IT

Similarly to writing, this is a great way to connect your eyes, your hands, and your mind. Some people prefer writing on their laptop or tablet as opposed to writing it by hand, so this is a great technique for those who are in the same boat. I use this technique but in a slightly different way. As someone who memorizes whole stories and books of the Bible, you can imagine it would be quite difficult to type (or write) out every word.

So, instead, I will copy and paste the passage and print it out. Then I will fold it up small enough for it to fit in my back pocket. This way, I am still utilizing the visual style of learning as I look at the passage and memorize it. Then, by always having it in my pocket, whenever I am out and about and I am trying to recite the passage but am struggling with a word or phrase, I have immediate and easy access to it.

## DRAW IT

You don't have to necessarily be artistic to be able to draw the Scriptures. It can be as easy as writing a verse with different colors, shapes, and simple images associated with the words. Consider this example of Proverbs 3:5-6. Although this would take some time and effort with all the different colors and additional shapes, almost anyone can draw something like this. One standout association is the word "direct" with the sign drawn around it. You can see this person is connecting the word with the thought/meaning of direction which in turn makes it more memorable.



On the other hand, you can be quite artistic and creative with detailed drawings of ideas or images to really connect the words of a verse and the meaning of it like this word picture of 1 Corinthians 10:31. It's a visually stunning image with the almonds in the left hand representing the word "eat" and the water representing the word "drink." Both are strong examples of word pictures that will help Scriptures go from your head to your heart.



## VISUALIZATION

There are quite a few ways to incorporate visualization into memorizing but I will present to you two. The first is to create visual images. Associating a verse with unique and interesting visual images that stand out in your mind will make it that much more memorable. Creating something memorable in your mind in connection with a verse will help you to better recall it. For example, with Psalm 34:8, you could imagine yourself as a chef at a restaurant testing out a new recipe that looks amazing and you take a bite (taste and see that the Lord is good.)

The second way, known as the Memory Palace (or Method of Loci), is similar but you take a place you know well in your memory (like our childhood home) and link it with the new verse(s) you want to learn. It has been used for centuries to store up huge chunks of information (many world memory champions employ this technique). It is considered one of the most effective ways to memorize Scripture that can be utilized whether you're a pre-teen or senior. I'd do a disservice trying to clearly articulate how this works as I don't personally use it, so I'll let my friend [Josh Summers do the honors](#).

## GAME IT

You may be surprised to hear this, but Scripture memorization can actually be fun! It is still a spiritual discipline, so it does take effort and planning, but there is much opportunity for fun. This hopefully comes from what you're actually memorizing and the joy of storing up more of God's truth in your heart for yourself and others, but this also can come in the form of different games to engage your brain and more effectively memorize verses.

One simple way is to erase words as you go. You start with writing out the whole verse and saying it out loud. Then you erase a few words and try saying it again. Continue until the verse is blank. Another game (which is a whole memory system in itself) is the first letter technique. You write the first letter of each word in a verse which works as a visual aid to help you memorize. Either write it on a note card to take with you on the go or even buy/create your own [MemBands](#) for verses you want to memorize and meditate on.

## APPS

This could be categorized under game it, but apps encompass more than just games. They have review tools, databases to store the verses you've memorized and give different practical tips. Whether it's Verse Locker or The Bible Memory App or a different app, there are a good number of apps that can help you effectively memorize and review Scripture. For the most part they are free, but there are some that do cost some, but are well worth it. I'll let my friend Josh Summers take this one again as he wrote a [very helpful review on the best memory apps](#).

## 3. Auditory (SAY IT)

### SING IT

Just like the drawing technique, this one does not require you to be a musician or even a great singer. These techniques are meant to be used for your own personal memorization. The key is to pick techniques that you enjoy. So, even if you know you don't sing well, but you enjoy singing, then by all means do it! Whether it's singing a verse to a familiar tune (like "Mary Had A Little Lamb") or your own tune, you'll find that combining music with Scripture can really help those verses you memorize stick.

If you're a parent with especially young kids, I highly recommend checking out Songs for Saplings. It is a holistic educational tool that teaches Biblical truths (so Scripture along with doctrines) to children in nations and languages worldwide. The music makes these timeless texts stick longer and go deeper, forming students' hearts and prayers. Here is an example of [1 Peter 1:25](#).

### SONGWRITE IT

In contrast to singing it, this one does require a certain level of musical skill to add this to your Scripture memory tool belt but not as much as you might think. Abigail Houston, founder of [Melodically Memorizing](#) is not classically trained but her family is very musical and she has had just a deep love for music and has been singing since she was little. What I love about the songs is that she creates them word for word with the Scripture references. So if it is one to two verses it might be only 30-60 seconds and if it is a bigger chunk it is more like 90-180 seconds. As I recommended for parents with little kids, I would highly recommend this for those who want inspiration to create their own songs or to use the songs to learn Scriptures.

### RECORD IT

Some definitely do *not* like the sound of their own voice and can't imagine recording themselves saying a verse, and you may be in that boat. And that is perfectly okay. Again, pick tools you enjoy. But you can also still utilize this by having someone else record the verse. Maybe you really like your spouse's voice; ask them to record it for you. Then that way you get to hear their lovely voice while meditating on and memorizing God's Word—a win-win!

This can also be a very effective tool for those who are busy/in busy seasons. One of the lies the enemy tells us is that we are too busy to memorize Scripture and when we don't make Scripture memory a priority, it makes it that much harder to commit to creating a lifestyle habit out of it. But this is an excellent option to counteract that busyness because you can combine it with other activities you're doing already. So, once you record it, you can listen to it and repeat it during your commute to work, on your lunch break, to the grocery store, making dinner, etc.

### ACCENTS OR VOICES

Now we're getting into my kind of territory. Having a theatre background and doing solo dramatic Scripture presentations, I have just a little experience in needing to create different voices for characters. And I find it just so entertaining playing around with a variety of accents and voices. The thing is that being alone with limited distractions, you can give yourself permission to look and sound like a goon. No one is watching you or recording you. I

would challenge you to step beyond your comfort zone.

Even if you don't go so far as to do a New York accent when reciting John 3:16 or as a game show host reciting 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, experiment with emphasizing different words and changing the inflection in your voice. By allowing yourself to engage with Scripture in this way, you may find yourself gaining new insight into the meaning of a passage and you will better lock in Scripture by not repeating it with the same cadence and rhythm over and over again.

### **ACT IT**

Speaking of new insight, acting the Scriptures is an even greater tool to understand and explore a passage. I haven't done a book report in a long time, but whenever I would read a book in school, I always remember discussing the tone of the author. We would discuss what they were feeling and what they were trying to convey. Their tone of course can change throughout the course of the book and we had to pay attention to when that happened. And what better way to understand that than to read it out loud?

In regards to Scripture, a good example is the drastic difference in tone between the letters of Galatians and Philippians. Although both letters are written by Paul, are written around the same time, and are addressing a first century church, their tones are not even remotely the same. But you might miss this if you were to just read these letters silently or read it audibly but in monotone. So do yourself a favor by acting the Scriptures. And a simple way to act it is to try different emotions (happy, sad, afraid, etc.) or intentions (to persuade, to impress, etc.)

### **RECITE IT**

At the end of the day, you may be someone who does not consider themselves a creative person nor are you inclined to be creative when it comes to auditory learning. If that is you, there is nothing wrong with doing the tried and true method of repeating verses out loud. As an actor, I learned that you have three friends when it comes to learning your lines: 1) Repetition 2) Repetition and 3) Repetition. The more you say the Scripture out loud, the better you will be at repeating it without needing to look at it.

## **4. Kinesthetic (DO IT)**

### **HAND MOTIONS**

Factoring out all the musical ways someone can learn Scripture, hand motions may be next in line for the most effectual because there are a variety of elements involved just like music. And it's common to have kids learn a song while also doing hand motions so the neat thing is that you can easily combine this with music to cement Scripture in your mind that much easier. But it can really be effective too because it involves doing something physical and anyone can create motions that will be memorable for themselves. (This is great to do with your kids!)

It's not rocket science; there is no right or wrong way to do it. To make it really easy, let's look at Ephesians 6, the armor of God passage. There are already memorable visual images included in the passage so the only thing to do is to add actions to those images. Verse 17 says, "and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God." In this instance, I would be as literal as possible. I would bring my hands forward and pretend to take the helmet from a helmet rack and put it on my head. Then I would "grab" the sword by crossing my right hand over to my left hip and taking it out of the holster. Then I would

finish with opening up both my hands to represent the Bible. See? Simple, easy, memorable.

## **DANCE IT**

By nature, this technique is not really an isolated one; it would most likely be a combination of music, hand motions, and physical movements, which is excellent. As mentioned in the beginning, it is important to use all three learning styles. And like the music and hand motions, this can be as complex or as simple as you want it to be. If you are a dancer or dance choreographer, I say dance and choreograph your heart out. This could even be good for a group activity. There are times where small groups memorize a chapter or book together, so it could be that you have a group of Christian friends who love to dance and you do an entire dance set to a chapter or book of the Bible. Although this may not be for most people, this is certainly a unique way to memorize Scripture.

## **ACT IT OUT PHYSICALLY**

The difference between this and "Act it" is hopefully clear. You are not just verbally emoting but you are using your body to bring a passage to life. I strongly recommend this for any Bible story you want to memorize because they are the easiest types of passages to use this technique because of the narrative, the characters, the emotions, etc. Many of the stories give us the exact blocking of a scene as well. Daniel 3:19-21 clearly states, *"Then King Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace."*

And although I don't have kids, I can imagine how fun it would be to do something like this for Christmas as a family with Luke 2 or to learn David & Goliath. And what's powerful about combining movement with Scripture is that there is a connection that your brain makes and it allows you to remember the story more easily. There have been times I present a story where I forget the line but remember the next movement triggering in my brain the next verse.

## **GO FOR A WALK**

For me, it's always a plus when I can be active while memorizing Scripture.. I tend to do this often when I am memorizing a new passage. There is a beautiful park close to my house with a big pond and several walkways, so in the morning when I am most alert, I'll take a nice 45-minute walk around the park and memorize throughout. If you're an avid treadmill user, the same concept can apply and if you can really multitask, you could get in a jog or a workout. In this case, it would probably be best to use the "record it" technique where you listen to it and say it out loud.

And there is something to be said for the effect that exercise can have with your memorization. You will enhance your ability to learn something by being active. Personally, I know that it causes me to be more alert and focused and I can better engage with a passage as opposed to sitting down.

## **\*\*\*GAME IT, DRAW IT, and TYPE IT**

Techniques like gaming it, drawing it, and typing it have the great value of being crossovers of the different learning styles. There is a tactile nature to all of them so you are able to DO THEM as you SEE THEM. You can easily SAY THEM out loud to incorporate all three learning styles. So, be a good teacher of yourself; use these techniques, combine all three learning styles, and have fun while you store up God's Word in your heart!