

Marlin Hoffman's Method for Memorizing God's Word

Introductory Forward

by Donald L. Potter
June 22, 2003

In February of 1974, I met the late Brother Marlin S. Hoffman at the Abilene Christian College Lectures. Brother Hoffman was a short man, full of dynamic enthusiasm for the work of the Lord. At the time he was selling his books, *The Power of Prayer and Fasting*, *You Can Memorize God's Word*, and *1000 Choice Verses of God's Word*. Each of these books mightily impacted my life and helped me to enjoy a life of great victory in the Lord. He taught many students at Abilene Christian College to seek the Lord's perfect will through Scripture memorization, prayer, and Biblical fasting. I only heard him preach once, but that sermon was filled with dynamic spiritual power.

In this document, I will share with you the fundamentals of **Marlin Hoffman's Method for Memorizing God's Word**. I used this method to memorize several books of the Bible when I was a student at the Sunset School of Preaching in Lubbock, Texas and throughout my years of ministry for the Master. I also used it to learn Spanish, Greek, and other difficult subjects. I know of **no better method** for memorizing Scripture. He wrote of his method, "**A unique plan that will help the Bible student memorize Scriptures. For self-improvement, can also be used to memorize names and dates in history, rules and equations in mathematics, prose and poetry, lesson outlines, or anything of importance.**"

I would like to tell you **my story** in order to motivate you to use Brother Hoffman's method. For much of my early life, I thought I could not memorize very well. I memorized the names of the presidents in high school, and the Gettysburg Address, and a few other things; but overall, I thought my ability to memorize was very poor. Brother Hoffman had a unique way of firing up his students. He convinced me that with his method I could memorize anything. In a class on the Pastoral Epistles, Brother Parker Henderson challenged us to memorize the books we were going to be studying. He said that if we would memorize all of I Timothy and Titus and one chapter of our choosing from II Timothy, we would automatically get a hundred for the course without having to take the exams. We had to quote the books to Brother Henderson himself. I immediately went to work on memorizing them. Brother Hoffman's method worked just as he said it would!! I quoted all of I Timothy, Titus and II Timothy chapter 2 to Brother Henderson. Later I memorized I Thessalonians for Ted Kell and quoted it to him without a single mistake. Hiding these Scriptures in my heart has been a source of continual blessing throughout the years. I heartily recommend Brother Hoffman's method, and pray that God will help me to spread it far and wide through the www.donpotter.net web site.

THE METHOD

To avoid slurring and running words together, the rate of speech should be held to about 165 words per minute in reading or quoting God's word. To pause properly in speech for punctuation, one must *stop*, not just slow down. *Short* pauses should be allowed for commas, *medium* pauses for colons and semicolons, and *long* or *full* pauses for periods and dashes. However the uninspired word and comments of a speaker may be slower or faster with a variation in tone and loudness to hold the attention of the audience.

In quoting book, chapter and verse, a medium pause should be made between the chapter and verse or verses. Please study carefully the following examples: Matthew 5:3; Matthew 5:17 and 18; Matthew 5:43 through 48. In each case, a medium pause follows the number 5.

In all doing and teaching, one must have the proper sense of values to please God, and help save others. The immortal soul of man is truly priceless, far more valuable than his necessary food. A healthy body and mind, with great vitality for a long and useful life, are worth more than the finest of apparel, even a king's clothing. When any Christian really believes that his soul and body are more important than food and clothing or anything else, the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, the lust of other things, and the pleasures of his life will have little power over him. His interest and enthusiasm for daily study and memorization of truth, living righteously by the faith that works through love, and saving his and other souls will increase and multiply beyond human imagination. Since it is impossible to serve God and mammon, and there is no profit in even gaining the whole world and losing one's soul, *being righteous is all important*.

In this world, which is a proving ground, the Bible is the word of life for men of all nations to prepare them for eternal life. I sincerely implore that you read it and find this out for yourself. Do not read chapters and books here and there, but read and study both the Old and New Testaments, over and over again, that you may have a complete picture and good understanding of God and His will. This should be done daily in addition to the memorization of choice scriptures. You will not only find it full of real men and women who were either righteous or unrighteous, but also of things that you have wondered about and been troubled all your life, as men have always been; and the more that you read, the more it will become plain to you what things are worthwhile and what things are not; what things make men happy – selflessness, right dealing, speaking the truth, and readiness to give everything for what they really want to accomplish in life, and most of all, the wish that they may have the real approval of Jesus Christ, who gave everything for them, including His life; and the things that are guaranteed to make men unhappy – pride, selfishness, cowardice, greed, and everything that is vile and sinful. When you read and diligently study the Bible, especially the New Testament, handling aright the word of truth, you will find the key to all things that you must *do* and *teach* to have real happiness now and forever.

It is generally customary for a speaker to stand while lecturing, teaching or preaching. Therefore, for the best results, all practice in reading and memorizing of scriptures should be done in an audible manner, while standing in good posture behind a pulpit or stand. Heels should be six to nine inches apart, with feet turned slightly out for better balance and relaxation. A gesture to help illustrate a point is all right now and then, but not too many; for the mind of the audience will be distracted from the lesson. All fear and self-consciousness should be avoided or eliminated from the mind. To develop a good voice for public speaking, all words in daily practice should be read and quoted clear and loud enough for any person with normal hearing to hear and understand at the back of a large classroom or small auditorium. In all practice and speeches that are delivered to the public, intense concentration, genuine sincerity, necessary enthusiasm and good understanding should be cultivated with persistence and determination for improvement toward perfection.

Remember, that if an audience believes that a speaker is truly interested and loves everyone, that he really wants to help and encourage all, most anything can be said without offense. Therefore, it is very important to cultivate a friendly look and winning smile at all times; or the way that a speaker looks and acts has much to do with his ultimate success or failure; whether others dislike or love him.

It is easier to smile than to frown. A smile costs so little but gives so much. It enriches those who receive, without making poorer those who give. It takes but a moment, but the memory of it sometimes lasts forever, and can be most important to the receiver. No one is so wealthy or powerful that he can get along without it, and no one is so poor but that he can be made rich by it. A smile helps create happiness and peace in the home, fosters good will in business, and inspires friendship. It brings rest to the weary, cheer to the discouraged, sunshine to the sad and lonely, and is nature's best antidote for trouble. Yet it cannot be bought, begged, borrowed, or stolen, for it is something that is of no value to anyone until it is given away. Some people are too tired, hopeless, or wicked to give a smile. Give them one of yours, as no one needs a smile so much as he who has none to give. So, *smile, smile, smile!*

Since 1935 with many various experiences in dealing with myself and others of all ages, we have found for best results, that about 6 verses of scripture of average length should be read or quoted with proper expression per minute at this rate of speed, more people will be able to follow and understand the truth that is taught, and more good will be ultimately accomplished. When any speaker has the proper timing in his speech, he does more good to all concerned. He is like the fine rains which fall more gently from heaven, and soak deeply into the earth, and give life to many living things.

The **main feature** of my method for memorization of scriptures is *daily repetition, seeking perfection in all things*. All new material is read and quoted 8 times on the first day of study. On the second and consecutive days, the number of repetitions is decreased daily by one count — using the 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3 and 2 count on all scriptures that are memorized. Please study the following diagram:

| | READ | QUOTE | TOTAL |
|--|------|-------|-------|
| 1st day | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| 2nd day | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| 3rd day | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| 4th day | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| 5th day | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| 6th day | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 7th through the 30th days, every day | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Thereafter, every 1 to 4 weeks, as needed..... | 1 | 1 | 1 |

ON THE FIRST DAY, after the scriptural material has been chosen for memorization, and broken up into paragraphs and smaller parts for better use, one is ready to begin work for at least thirty minutes. This time for daily training can be increased to an hour or more, as progress is made, and the voice grows stronger, if desired for greater success. From 6 to 14 words, or one to two lines of print in a Bible or New Testament with double columns, generally dividing parts at a punctuation mark, should be read correctly with the proper expression four times, ever keeping the eyes on the words which are being read; then, looking away, quote from memory four times, as read four times. The second or following part of one to two lines of scripture should be read four times, and quoted four times, in the same manner as the first part. On the first day, all other parts should be properly divided, read and quoted, as the first part. Remember that each part on the first day is read and quoted 8 times.

ON THE SECOND DAY, all parts are to remain separated, as on the first day of study. Each part should be read correctly with the proper expression three times, constantly keeping the eyes focused on the material which is being read; then, looking up, quote from memory four times, as read three times. On the second day, each part should be read and quoted 7 times. If any new verses of scripture are added on the second day of study, all parts should be read accurately four times, and quoted four times.

ON THE THIRD DAY, all parts are to remain separated, as on the first and second days of study. Each part should be read three times without mistakes, and with the right timing and expression, concentrating on the words that are read; then quoted three times. There should not be any difference in the quality of the reading and quoting of God's word. On the third day, all parts that were used on the first day of study should be read and quoted 6 times. All parts of new verses which were added on the second day are to be read three times, and quoted four times. All parts of new verses which were added on the third day are to be read four times, and quoted four times. In order to avoid confusion, let it be stated now, that any new verses of scripture which are added from day to day are to be read and quoted, repeated exactly, as the material used on the first day.

ON THE FOURTH DAY, about three to four lines, two parts, or most single verses should be put together; then read twice with the proper concentration, timing, accuracy and expression; and quoted three times in like manner. On the fourth day, all parts are to be read and quoted 5 times.

ON THE FIFTH DAY, about six to eight lines, four parts, or two verses of scripture should be read properly in an audible manner two times, and quoted likewise twice. On the fifth day, each part of two verses is to be read and quoted 4 times.

Do not forget to read and quote the book, chapter, verse or verses at all times, with each passage of one, two or more verses of scripture. For example, if the passage that is read and quoted contains only one verse of scripture, the book chapter and verse should be added to the words of the verse, and read and quoted together on the fourth day. If the passage contains two verses of scripture, the book, chapter and verses should be added, read and quoted together on the fifth day.

ON THE SIXTH DAY, all passages of three and four verses of scripture with book, chapter and verses are to be put together; then read once and quoted twice. All other passages of one and two verses, or four verses of larger passages are also to be read one time and quoted two times. On the sixth day, all passages or parts should be read and quoted 3 times.

ON THE SEVENTH DAY, all passages of five to eight verses of scripture with book, chapter and verses are to be read together one time, and quoted one time. All other passages of one to four verses, or eight verses of larger passages are also to be read once, and quoted once. On the seventh day, all passages or parts are to be read and quoted correctly 2 times.

ON THE EIGHTH DAY, all passages or paragraphs of nine to sixteen verses of scripture are to be read one time and quoted one time. However, any passage or paragraph, which contains more than 10 verses of scripture, would be better for use if divided into smaller parts. All other passages or paragraphs of one to eight verses are also to be read once and quoted once. On the eighth day, all passages are to be read and quoted right 2 times.

ON THE 9TH THROUGH THE 30TH DAY, as on the eighth day, all passages of scripture should be read once and quoted once each day. Unless a reliable person is available to listen and correct mistakes, it is always best in reviewing scriptures to read correctly each passage before quoting the same, that errors may be avoided at all times; for mistakes made and repeated very many times, they become very difficult to eliminate. For greater success in retaining scriptures in the mind, the daily repetitions can continue for more than 30 days if desired. Would you like to possess great power to quote God's word? Fantastic results can be obtained by reviewing scriptures daily for six months or more. For eleven years, my young son, Larry, trained in this manner, and he was definitely the most accurate in quoting the scriptures that I have ever heard or trained. On one test over a period of more than two weeks in reviewing scriptures, he quoted about 5,000 verses of scripture before he made a mistake that he could not correct himself from memory.

AFTER 30 DAYS OR MORE, all passages of scripture should be read and quoted with the proper concentration, accuracy, timing, sincerity and expression —at least once each week for six months; a year would be better: then read and quote as often as necessary to retain in the memory. Lasting results, that are very useful, can be obtained by reviewing all older material every 1 to 4 weeks for life.

The powers of the human mind to think and reason righteously, to concentrate intensely without anxiety, to memorize and know truth to guide in the true worship of God, and to really help one to live and proclaim the truth to others who are lost in sin, will improve greatly in time if one has real faith in God, and ever studies, meditates, prays and commits to memory God's holy word and commandments — never to be forgotten.

If you had not fully made up your mind to spend some time in the daily study and memorization of the scriptures, may the Lord help you to do so by the time that you finish reading this booklet at least twice; six times would be much better. Yes, if you will read it a half dozen times, you will understand and remember more fully the things that you must believe and do to be really successful in your efforts. How about reading this booklet from cover to cover for six consecutive days? Then, read and reread from day to day the instructions for reading and quoting the passages of scripture on the first, second, consecutive days and longer periods of time — and fully follow these instructions. In due time, if you do not grow weary in well doing, you will prosper and have good success in the memorization of God's word, and beyond anything that you ever dreamed or imagined.

Final Note by Donald L. Potter: The above plan was taken from *You Can Memorize God's Word*. Copyright 1967 by Marlin S. Hoffman. It was dedicated to "TO ALL MY STUDENTS." It was printed by *Quality Printing* of Abilene, Texas.

I believe Brother Hoffman would want us to harness the power of the Internet to introduce a new generation to his powerful method for memorizing God's Word. It is with this *high and holy purpose* that we make this chapter from Brother Hoffman's book available through the www.donpotter.net web site.

First published on the Internet, 6/22/06.

I have recently retired from 21 wonderful years teaching for the Ector County Independent School district as an elementary bilingual teacher, dyslexia instruction, Instructional Resource teacher, and junior high Spanish teacher. Now I am teaching Spanish and Remedial Reading for the Odessa Christian School where I am instructing my students in the fine art of memorizing Scriptures with *The Hoffman Method*. 8/18/06, 4/26/08. Card Template added 4/13/12.

The card on the next page is a template you can use to help you to memorize Scripture or anything else you need to be able to recall verbatim. Print off as many copies as you need and write the words to be memorized on the blank side, then follow Brother Hoffman's plan.

Marlin Hoffman Universal Memory System

| | <u>Read</u> | <u>Quote</u> | <u>Total</u> | <u>Check</u> |
|-------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Day 1 | 4 | 4 | 8 | _____ |
| Day 2 | 3 | 4 | 7 | _____ |
| Day 3 | 3 | 3 | 6 | _____ |
| Day 4 | 2 | 3 | 5 | _____ |
| Day 5 | 2 | 2 | 4 | _____ |
| Day 6 | 1 | 2 | 3 | _____ |
| Day 7 | 1 | 1 | 2 | _____ |

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