

TLCBiblical.com Video Series

107 Tips For Memorizing The Books Of The Bible

1. Introduction

Memorizing the books of the Bible is an essential skill that will make your study and reading more enjoyable and productive. In this video we'll talk about some ideas to help you memorize the books and why you should do that.

2. Why memorize the books

Nothing is more frustrating than having to turn to a table of contents to locate a book of the Bible. In a class or worship setting this can mean that everyone else has moved on to the next passage and you're still looking for the last reference. There are a couple of ways that folks try to deal with that but eventually you'll need to learn where each of the books is so you can get to them quickly.

Tabs are a help that some people add to their Bibles. These show the book names and are attached to the pages using a self-adhesive strip. These sound like a good idea but there are a few problems that might arise. First the tabs stick out a bit from the Bible pages and have a tendency to get bent if you use a Bible cover. The tabs can also cause tears on the pages when turned quickly or accidentally pulled. Although the book names are displayed more conveniently you will still have to know about where a book is or you'll have to read through the tabs like a list.

Thumb indexes are another popular choice but may be less practical than tabs. Many Bibles will list multiple books on each of the index cutouts and you will still have to locate the beginning of the books from among the group. Most thumb indexes are recessed in the pages and while they might speed up locating a particular book will require more time since you will need to position your Bible so you can see them. Just as with the tabs, you will still need to know about where the books are or you will have to read through the entire list. Recessed thumb indexes can also make turning pages more difficult as well.

So what's the best way to quickly find a passage in your Bible? Simple. Memorize the order of the books and you won't need to rely on tabs, tables of contents or thumb indexes. Knowing where the books are will go a long way to helping you not only find verses or books more efficiently but it also helps understand the idea of establishing the context of passages which is another essential skill. So here are some ideas and suggestions for accomplishing this.

3. As a list

Most Bibles have a table of contents and you can use this as a starting point. Page numbers won't be important so don't worry about those. Once you know the order of the books you will be able to pick up any Bible or version that uses the standard arrangement and locate passages. We want to view the table of contents as a list.

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There are 66 items in the list but don't let that overwhelm you. I suggest that you begin by memorizing the books in groups of 2 to 4 at a time. Recite these at least twice a day without looking at the table of contents. When you are comfortable with the first group add the next one or two books and continue reciting them at least twice a day. You can also practice these by writing them down which provides a visual reminder.

Practice turning to the books as you say the name. You can do this for books at intervals or you can do them randomly but as you are turning to the book, recite the list in order of the books preceding the one you are turning to. That will not only reinforce memorization but will also give you practice using your knowledge in a class or other study environment. Continue reciting the books in order starting from the beginning of the list at least twice a day.

If you forget a book or get confused while reciting them take a deep breath and then start from the beginning once more. If you're really stuck check the table of contents and refresh your memory. Don't try to force yourself to remember. It's okay to use a visual cue when needed.

If you follow these steps on a daily basis you will have mastered the list in a short time and will be able to turn to any book that you want quickly. Stay in the habit of reciting the complete list of books at least once or twice a week to make sure you haven't forgotten them. That will keep your skill fresh.

4. In groups

In a couple of lessons we'll group the books which will be a valuable tool in memorizing their order. Some of the groups are smaller while others are larger but the larger groups can be divided up to make them easier.

Follow the same procedures for memorizing the books in groups as outlined for the list method and use your table of contents if need be.

Memorizing the books in groups can help build a sense of history which will be useful when we talk about establishing the context of a passage. Being able to establish the proper context goes a long way in helping us understand the Bible and the order of the books is an essential element of this.

5. Next

In the next video we'll discuss how to establish context and why it's so important.