

## Podcast 248 Transcription Memorizing the Books of the Bible

Sometimes, the more absurd the illustration, the more it will stick in your mind.

Scott: Welcome to the Building Faith Families podcast with Steve Demme! I'm your host, Scott Moore. Thanks for joining us today! Good morning, Steve. How are you doing today?

Steve: I'm well, Scott. How are you?

Scott: Good! The world is still spinning, and I'm going to act as if it's going to keep spinning.

Steve: That's right. God is still God, and even though I get concerned by things I read, I'm not concerned when I read the right stuff, which is God's Word. Heaven and earth may pass away, but My word will endure forever. We're going to build on that today.

We discussed on our last broadcast about developing the habit of daily Bible reading. In this episode we're going to talk about memorizing the books of the Bible in the order they appear in Scripture. There's nothing in the Bible that says you have to know the order of them, but it does help when you're looking for a passage to know where to look.

We're going to start with the New Testament books, and then we're going to do the Old Testament books. This is something that we can learn individually, but when learning it as a family, we can help each other. Perhaps what I teach today can be tweaked to develop a better strategy for your family. I don't think there's one way to do anything, but I'm going to give you some ideas and some principles, and perhaps those things you can adapt to your family and come up with something that's totally unique, fun, and special. The more the children are involved in this process and it's not just coming from the top down, I think it will prove more successful.

Let's pray. Father, thank You for Your Word, and thank You for men of God in the past that have been moved by Your Holy Spirit to record and to work with You and to write and to convey meaningful lessons from the past to us. And I thank You that Your Word is eternal and that You're eternal, and I pray that You would help us to find ways that we can learn Your Word together and perhaps memorize the books of the Old and New Testaments. In Jesus' name, Amen.

When I was in seminary – I met somebody that taught us a fun way to memorize the books of the New Testament. I used it with my youth group and it helped them. Since then, I have adapted this strategy with other groups of junior and senior high school students. Some of them have commented many, many years later that they still remember the books of the New Testament because of the way I taught them.

I think it's important, when you're teaching something to young people, to make it fun. The modern term for this approach is edutainment. I picked up another tip from Jerry Lucas who was a basketball player and Rhodes Scholar. He discovered

that that the more absurd the illustration, the more it will stick in your mind. As we were talking about memorizing hymns a few podcasts ago, I talked about how I illustrated a “purpose firm” by drawing a picture of a dead fish, or “porpoise firm.” It is so bizarre that it sticks in your mind. By making it fun and absurd these visual images help cement the information in your brain. I have noticed that after you have learned the information you’ll often forget the crazy stuff, but you’ve retained the content.

Perhaps you’ve seen the meme on social media of a picture of a minnow with an arrow pointing to the minnow’s fin. The question on the picture is, “Do you see it?” And if you do you verbalize, “Yes, I see the minnow fin,” which is how you pronounce acetaminophen. This is a common ingredient in many over the counter drugs since it relieves pain and lowers a fever.

If you would rather watch me teach this approach on a video, go to: <http://www.buildingfaithfamilies.org/family-activities-memorize-new-testament-books/>

See if you can follow along with me. In the Old Testament there are 39 books, and if you multiply 3x9 you get 27, which is the number of New Testament books. When you add 39 and 27, you get 66, which is the total number of books of the Bible. Interestingly, Isaiah has 66 chapters, so I think of Isaiah like a little miniature Bible.

In the New Testament, the first four books of the New Testament are called the gospels. You can have your kids draw a picture of a church. This is where the gospel is preached, and the gospels are Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. We’re going to look at the picture of the church and think, “This is where the gospel is preached – Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.

Next comes Acts of the Apostles. I’m going to give you some different ideas for this book. Perhaps you walk out the door of the church and there’s a large axe chopping wood, or maybe Paul Bunyan’s axe is leaning against the front door. You begin with Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, listening to the gospel on Sunday morning, then walk out the door and you see an “axe.” If you want to make your illustration more biblical, you might say, “Let’s think of acts as we’re walking out the door to apply what we’ve learned in the church.” Now that we’ve heard the gospel, it is time to apply or act on what we have heard.

The next illustration represents R-C-C: R for Romans, the two Cs for First and Second Corinthians. I’m going to give you two ways to remember R-C-C. The first way I learned it was seeing a soda machine as you came out of the church and saw the axe as you walked towards the local park. I like to adapt this to the local geography in your neighborhood. This soda pop machine sold Royal Crown Cola. R-C-C. Another idea is RCC for Roman Catholic church. Maybe there is a catholic church nearby. Now you’ve got the word Romans and you’ve got Catholic Church, C-C, First and Second Corinthians.

When I am teaching this to my kids or a group of young people, I stop frequently and review what we've had already. So I say, "Let's go back to the church. What happens in the church?" Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. Come out of the church. Acts. See the soda machine or the Roman Catholic church, and now what do you have? Romans, First and Second Corinthians. Now already we've learned eight of the New Testament books.

A we're heading for that park, we see nice benches where you can sit there and watch people go rollerblading or walking. On one of the benches is Goliath eating popcorn. I hope you can visualize this large man sitting on a park bench eating popcorn, or perhaps if you don't like Goliath, you can pick a man named George. Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians. Goliath Eating Pop-Corn - G-E-P-C.

At the park we notice cheerleaders practicing their cheers, which go like this: Thess-Thess-Tim-Tim-Ti! The two "Thesses" are First and Second Thessalonians, the two Tims are First and Second Timothy, and the "Ti" is Titus.

After we observe their cheers, we notice two young men from the local wrestling team practicing. These two guys are Philemon and James. Philemon, though, turns out to be the champion, and after an arduous match he pinned James. Now we say that Philemon, He-bruised James. That gives us the next three books of the Bible - Philemon, Hebrews, and James.

I'd go back again and review all the way up through, and probably I'd be doing the motions while the kids just keep saying them, but we need to keep reinforcing these illustrations in the proper order by repetition.

James was so beat up by Philemon, and feeling his bruises, that he went home and got into his P-J-s, P-J-J. The P stands for First and Second Peter, the first J stands for First, Second, and Third John, and the second J stands for Jude. The last book of the Bible and the New Testament is Revelation, and we're done.

Let's do a quick review. In church, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. Walk out the door, Acts. Pass the Royal Crown Cola or the Roman Catholic church, Romans, First and Second Corinthians. We see Goliath eating popcorn on a park bench. Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians. The Cheerleaders - "Thess! Thess! Tim, Tim, Ti!" First and Second Thessalonians, First and Second Timothy, Titus. Two guys wrestling, first guy Philemon wins - Philemon, he bruised James. Philemon, Hebrews, and James. Then James puts on his P-J-s - First and Second Peter, First, Second, Third John, Jude, and then Revelation.

The Old Testament is not as fun, and I haven't been able to think up anything near as clever, but I think that if you just follow along this, it will give you at least an outline or a sense of the order of Old Testament books. Remember five numbers: 5-12-5-5-12.

The first five books of the Bible are the Law. The next 12 books of the Bible are historical books. These are followed by another 5 books which are wisdom or poetry.

Then there is a large section composed of 5 major prophets. They're only called major prophets because of the number of chapters in them, not because they're any better than the minor prophets. The last 12 is the number of minor prophets because they're shorter. I did some calculating and found that the average length of the major prophets is almost 40 chapters per book, while the minor prophets are between 5 and 6 chapters per book. That's why they are referred to as major and minor prophets. 5-12-5-5-12.

The first five books of the Bible are called the Pentateuch. Penta means five. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. The next 12 books are historical. The first three books are Joshua, Judges, Ruth. These are followed by First and Second Samuel, First and Second Kings, then First and Second Chronicles. These historical books are chronological. Joshua succeeded Moses. After Joshua died, there was the period of the Judges; Samson, Gideon, etc. Ruth is in the period of the Judges.

After Ruth a great prophet arises, Samuel. He is recorded in First and Second Samuel. Samuel anoints the first king, Saul, and the second king, David. So now we have got 1 & 2, 1 & 2 Chronicles. Then these kings disobey God and they are taken into captivity, and finally return under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah. Esther takes place in a foreign kingdom.

The more familiar you get with the Bible, the more the order of the books will make sense. 5 books of the law, 12 books of history, then 5 books of wisdom or poetry, which are: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon. These are followed by 5 major prophets. There's really only 4 major prophets because you have Isaiah, Jeremiah, and then there's a little bitty book right after Jeremiah called Lamentations, which is only five chapters long. Jeremiah wrote both books, and Lamentations is made up of laments or prayers of Jeremiah. He was suffering watching Jerusalem be overrun and her citizens being taken into captivity. The third major prophet is Ezekiel, which is 48 chapters, and then Daniel.

In doing some research I found something interesting. Jeremiah has thirty-three thousand words and is the longest book in the Bible. Genesis is second, Psalms is third, Ezekiel is fourth, and Isaiah is sixth. Thus three of the longest books of the Bible are fittingly found among the major prophets.

The 12 minor prophets follow, which are Hosea through Malachi. Now, when I learned these, I just learned them three at a time. Hosea, Joel, Amos. Obadiah, Jonah, Micah. Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah. Haggai Zechariah, Malachi. By the way, ladies and gentlemen, I am not reading these. I have memorized them.

Here are the books of the Bible in order: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, First Second Samuel, First Second Kings, First and Second Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, First and Second Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, First and Second Thessalonians, First and Second Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, First and Second Peter, First Second Third John, Jude, Revelation.

I should have timed myself. When you have memorized all the books in order, this knowledge makes you more familiar with Scripture. Perhaps you can get a white board out and you can have your kids brainstorm, “How can we illustrate the Gospel?” Or maybe you know people named Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Draw little pictures of them. Or, “How can we show Goliath eating popcorn? Let’s all draw a picture of him.” Anything you can do to engage and make it multi-century is helpful. Then keep going over it. Repetition works. Find out what works for your family. Maybe have a reward when everybody’s learned them, such as playing miniature golf or giving each other backrubs. I don’t know, find something that serves as an incentive. I do hope that people will have fun and become more familiar with Scripture.

Thank You, Father, for Your Word, and thank You for some interesting and clever ways that have come across my path that have helped me and helped others, and I pray that You, by Your creative Holy Spirit, will inspire families to figure out ways that they can learn the books of the Bible in sequence and so they’d be more comfortable searching the Scriptures. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Thanks for joining us for the Building Faith Families podcast with Steve Demme. If you have a question for the show, email Steve at [spdemme@gmail.com](mailto:spdemme@gmail.com). If you have a question for me, you can reach me at [scott@unsocializedmedia.com](mailto:scott@unsocializedmedia.com). Thanks for joining us. Have a great week!