



Meditation

RENEWING TECHNIQUE

We've all been there. You need to memorize the state capitols, or the presidents in order, or the symbols for the metals in the periodic table. So you read the list over and over, or maybe read it aloud, or make flash cards. We think by simple repetition, we can commit the list to memory.

Many people use mnemonic devices to help remember things. A mnemonic device is any learning technique that helps with information retention or retrieval. For example, you may put a rubber band around your wrist to remind you to do something, like water your plants or take out the trash.

The word "mnemonic" relates back to the Greek goddess of memory and remembrance, Mnemosyne. Supposedly she was the mother of the muses: history, music, poetry, dance, comedy, and astronomy. Each of these fields required a good deal of memory so the Greeks invented a goddess specifically to help.



Long before the Greek invented their gods, ancient Hebrew literature used mnemonics to help with memorization. Psalm 119 is a great example. That chapter has 176 verses divided into 22 groups, one for each of the 22 characters that make up the Hebrew alphabet. In the original Hebrew text, each verse in each group begins with the same Hebrew letter.

Studies have shown that the deeper the level of mental processing, the more the content will be remembered. The longer you think about something, when you stop to consider its source, its historical context, where it fits in a sequence, or things it may be associated with, the more likely the thing will be stored in your memory. In other words, the more you meditate on something, the more you will remember and understand it.

Some people think of gurus or monks when they hear about meditation. But there are two basic types of meditation. Open meditation (OM) is the observation of thoughts, feelings, and emotions and it makes no judgment. It sometimes is called "Mindfulness" and has its origins in Buddhism. Focused Attention (FA)



meditation involves concentration on a single thought or object. We see FA meditation mentioned numerous times in the Bible.

God told Joshua, “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” (Joshua 1:8)

God designed our brains, and He made them to be able to remember. It was His idea to use meditation as a mnemonic device. If you find yourself skimming through your daily Bible passage, you’ll probably not retain much of the truth it contains. Instead, slow down and meditate. Pick one verse and consider these things:

- Who was this written by and who were they writing it to?
- When was this spoken, in Jesus’ day or maybe during the early church?
- Does this passage have an association with another passage or concept?
- What does it say just before and after this passage? What’s the context?
- Does this passage tell me anything about how I should act today?

Use your God-given ability to meditate on worthy things, like His creation, His Word, and His ways. Then pray with King David, “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.” (Psalms 19:14)