

Memorizing Bible Passages

Saint Augustine provides us with an image for short, effective prayers that are based on Scripture. He describes the prayers of monks in Egyptian monasteries of the third century AD. The monks' prayers were short and to the point, and the monks continuously repeated them, as if trying to bombard God with prayer. We too can pray this way by memorizing short passages of Scripture and repeating them regularly.

To do this, find short passages of Scripture that you can memorize and pray when situations in your life call them forth. In other words, let your daily life trigger your prayer. Here are some examples of this kind of prayer:

- ✿ "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28) could be a prayer whenever you walk by a cross or crucifix.
- ✿ "May the favor of the Lord our God be ours. / Prosper the work of our hands!" (Psalm 90:17, NABRE) could be a prayer before a test.
- ✿ "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46) could be a prayer before you go to sleep.
- ✿ "How great are your works, LORD!" (Psalm 92:6, NABRE) could be a prayer whenever you are outdoors with God's creation.
- ✿ "A clean heart create for me, God" (Psalm 51:12, NABRE) could be a morning prayer as you set out on a new day.

You can create your own daily Scripture prayers. As you read and reflect on Scripture, write down short phrases that appeal to you. Then ask yourself, "What things in my everyday life do these phrases connect with?" Then when you experience these things, they will trigger your memory and you can pray the Scripture phrase.

A rich source for such prayers is the Book of Psalms. Each week at Mass, a psalm is used as a response between the first and second readings. Listen carefully to the refrain, and create a short prayer out of it. Think of how this prayer connects to ordinary tasks in your life. Then each time one of these tasks occurs, say your psalm prayer.

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A clean heart
create for me, God.

—Psalm 51:12, NABRE