

Memorizing Scripture Together

Leader Guide

A note from the author:

Thank you for purchasing *Memorizing Scripture* for your church or small group! My hope is that reading the book and beginning to hide God's Word in your heart as a group will not only encourage you in your individual spiritual disciplines but also strengthen you as a group of believers in Jesus. I've had the joy of memorizing passages of Scripture with my church before, and I've found it to be a unifying practice that deepens our love for the Lord and for one another.

This guide is designed to facilitate discussion within your group after each chapter has been read. It's likely that you'll assign a chapter to read, give everyone a week to read, and then come together to discuss what you've read and learned. *Memorizing Scripture* is comprised of an introduction followed by nine chapters, so you can use week 1 to discuss the introduction and get to know your group members. Feel free to use the questions provided as a guide, but it's okay to let the conversation go in another direction as the Lord leads. If you'd like for your group to work on a passage to memorize alongside the book study, see the Small Group Memorization Challenge at the end of this guide.

May the Lord bless both your discussion and your growth in hiding His Word in your heart! I'm praying God will use this book as a tool to knit your hearts together as the body of Christ and to see the endless benefits of storing up His Word like the treasure it is.

In Christ,

Glenna Marshall

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Small Group Discussion Questions

Introduction: The Long-Lost Spiritual Discipline

1. Why should we memorize Scripture when we have so much access to the Bible?
2. What has been your experience, if any, with Scripture memorization in the past? Take some time to share with the group.
3. What is your biggest obstacle in trying to memorize God's Word?
4. Read John 17:17. What did Jesus pray for us? How has God chosen to make us holy?
5. What do you hope to benefit from learning how and why to memorize Scripture?

Chapter 1: Know His Voice

6. Read John 10:1-6. What does it mean for us to know the voice of Jesus? How can we recognize His voice in a noisy culture of self-proclaimed "truths"?
7. There aren't explicit commands in Scripture to memorize it, but there are many exhortations and precedents for meditating on God's Word. Discuss some that you have seen in Scripture. (Examples might include Deuteronomy 11:18-19, Joshua 1:7-8, Psalm 1, Psalm 119, Colossians 3:16.)
8. What is the correlation between meditating and memorizing? (See Psalm 1:2)
9. Psalm 119 gives a list of benefits we can enjoy when we devote ourselves to Scripture. Of the benefits listed on pages 25-26, which ones appeal to you the most? Why?
10. Why must we be on guard against legalism when we begin memorizing Scripture?

Chapter 2: You Can Memorize Scripture

1. Do you consider yourself someone with a poor memory? Why doesn't that exempt you from the call to meditate on God's Word?
2. God designed your brain to store new information. What tips and tricks have you tried in the past to memorize things? Think about online passwords, information for a test in school, people's names, where you put your car keys, etc. How can utilizing similar methods help you purposefully memorize Scripture?
3. Of the tools mentioned in this chapter, which one will you try first?
4. What's your why behind Scripture memorization? What is your goal in hiding God's Word in your heart?

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Chapter 3: How and When to Memorize Scripture

1. Why is it important to memorize verses in context? How does this encourage us to memorize larger passages of Scripture?
2. We don't have to create new time to memorize. Rather, we can redeem the time we already have! Think of a daily task when your hands are busy but your mind is not. When could you pair memorization work with that task? Share your answer with the group.
3. While it's important to gather tools and new methods to try, it's vital that you implement those tools and methods on a regular basis for memorization to become a habit. How will you incorporate Scripture memorization into your daily rhythms?
4. Verse, chapter, or book? Wherever you plant your heart, God can bring forth much growth in the process of memorizing His Word. What passage will you begin memorizing first?

Chapter 4: To Love Your God

1. Discuss the importance of loving God with all your mind as well as your heart.
2. How does Scripture memorization deepen your knowledge of and love for God?
3. What passages could you memorize to help you think deeply on the character of God or the superiority of Christ? (Some examples might include Romans 8:31-39, Ephesians 2:11-22, Colossians 1:15-20, Hebrews 1:1-4.)
4. What is the connection between having lasting joy and loving God when you don't feel anything?
5. If you are experiencing a spiritual dry spell, why is it important to keep meditating on God's Word? Complete the exercise through Psalm 145 at the end of chapter 4 and share what you learned with the group.

Chapter 5: To Hate Your Sin

1. According to James 1:14-15, where does temptation begin? How does Scripture memorization aid us in fighting temptation right where it starts?
2. How does God's Word protect us like a weapon? (See Eph. 6:10-18.) How did Jesus wield the Word well when He was tempted?
3. How does God provide a way out when we are tempted to sin? What are some practical ways that you can see your way out in a moment when you are faced with temptation?
4. Our defense against sin must be both reactive and proactive. How do we proactively prepare ourselves to stand firm in obedience to God's Word?
5. Think through the times in your day when you are especially prone to give into temptation. What verses or passages could you commit to memory to rehearse during those times?

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Chapter 6: To Remain Steadfast

1. How did Elisabeth Elliot define suffering? Why is it important in group settings like this not to compare trials or suffering?
2. Scripture memorization can feel especially difficult when you are suffering or going through a trial, but the slow, plodding process of meditating on God's Word is a gift that sustains us in suffering. How does God's Word carry us through trials?
3. If you are not suffering now, how can you prepare yourself to endure a future trial?
4. God gave us the psalms of lament to help us pray through and process our sorrows. If you are suffering now, how can a passage like Psalm 13 minister to you in your current circumstances? If there's another passage that's been especially meaningful in suffering, share that with the group.
5. If your suffering seems to be open-ended with no end in sight, how can a passage like 2 Corinthians 12:8-10 carry you through, one day at a time? How does shifting your focus from your pain to God's strength and faithfulness help you endure?

Chapter 7: To Renew Your Mind

1. You are renewing your mind with something. What are some regular influences that shape the way you think and act?
2. Read Romans 12:1-2 together. God wants all of you, including your mind. Why is it in your best interest to offer every part of you—even your thoughts—to the Lord?
3. Discuss the concept of coram Deo, living before the face of God. Why is there no separation of sacred and secular in the life of the Christian? What does that mean for daily living?
4. How does Scripture memorization help us to stay awake in a world that is lulling us to sleep and dulling our hearts to true worship of and love for God?
5. Renewing your mind takes time. What is God doing in your heart and mind as you slowly work on hiding His Word in your heart?

Chapter 8: To Encourage and Exhort

1. Why do our "Christianish" platitudes so often fall short when we are trying to encourage others?
2. Glenna talks about two ways we often err in trying to exhort a fellow Christian. We've all struggled to find the right words to say to someone who needs uplifting. Share a time when you have been a "well-meaning hammer" or an "unintentional heretic."

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3. Why can it be unhelpful to speak God's Word to someone in a glib way when we've not spent time meditating on or praying through Scripture ourselves?
4. Why is context important when we are encouraging someone with a verse of Scripture?
5. How can memorizing Scripture aid you in gospel conversations?

Chapter 9: For All of Life

1. What does it mean to live a Scripture-shaped life?
2. How does memorizing God's Word grow you in wisdom? What verse or passage or book of the Bible has helped you at a time when you didn't know what to do?
3. How can memorizing Scripture deepen your certainty of God's love for you?
4. How does meditating on Scripture help you discern the difference between true and false teaching?
5. Read Romans 15:1-7. Why did God give us His Word? How does that encourage you to make Scripture memorization a regular part of your life?

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Small Group Memorization Challenge

This portion of the leader's guide is optional but will help you learn Psalm 1 together as you read *Memorizing Scripture*. Take a few minutes at the beginning of each discussion time to rehearse the verses together.

Week 1

Read Psalm 1 together. Then read Psalm 1:1 together.

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers.”

Instruct group members to read and recite Psalm 1:1 on their own each day. Encourage them to utilize some of the tips and tools in the book. It is most helpful to read a new verse aloud ten times before reciting it aloud ten times. Encourage them to do this each day.

Week 2

Review Psalm 1:1 by reciting it together. Read Psalm 1:2 together.

“...but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.”

Instruct group members to recite Psalm 1:1 and to read and recite Psalm 1:2 on their own each day.

Week 3

Review Psalm 1:1-2 by reciting it together. Read Psalm 1:3 together.

“He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.”

Instruct group members to recite Psalm 1:1-2 and to read and recite Psalm 1:3 on their own each day.

Week 4 Review Week.

Review Psalm 1:1-3 by reciting it together. Take turns reciting aloud if the group members feel comfortable. Feel free to use the review game found in the appendix of *Memorizing Scripture*.

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“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked nor stands in the way or sinners nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does he prospers.”

Instruct group members not to add any new verses but to spend this week rehearsing verses 1-3 each day.

Week 5

Review Psalm 1:1-3 by reciting it together. Read Psalm 1:4 together.

“The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.”

Instruct group members to recite Psalm 1:1-3 and to read and recite Psalm 1:4 on their own each day.

Week 6

Review Psalm 1:1-4 by reciting it together. Read Psalm 1:5 together.

“Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;”

Instruct group members to recite Psalm 1:1-4 and to read and recite Psalm 1:5 on their own each day.

Week 7

Review Psalm 1:1-5 by reciting it together. Read Psalm 1:6 together.

“...for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.”

Instruct group members to recite Psalm 1:1-5 and to read and recite Psalm 1:6 on their own each day.

Week 8

Review Psalm 1:1-6 by reciting it together. See if any group members feel comfortable reciting the whole passage.

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked nor stands in the way or sinners nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the Lord, and on his law he

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meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does he prospers. The wicked are not so but are like the chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous, for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.”

Instruct group members to recite the entire Psalm each day this week.

Week 9

Review Psalm 1 by reciting it together.

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked nor stands in the way or sinners nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does he prospers. The wicked are not so but are like the chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous, for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.”

Have each member recite the Psalm aloud, if they are comfortable doing so. Alternatively, pass out a piece of paper to each member and have them write Psalm 1 using the first letter method.

Instruct group members to keep reviewing Psalm 1 each day this week.

Week 10

Review Psalm 1 by reciting it together.

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked nor stands in the way or sinners nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does he prospers. The wicked are not so but are like the chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous, for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.”

If time allows, have some group members share what they have learned as they have spent ten weeks meditating on this psalm.

Instruct group members to choose a new passage to memorize but to review Psalm 1 once a month to keep it fresh.