



# COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Best Seller / Week 3

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

## BOTTOM LINE

Memorizing Scripture makes you stronger.

## GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To encourage students to memorize one or two Bible verses.

## SCRIPTURE

*I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you (Psalm 119:11 NIV).*

*“Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5b NIV).*

*“In your anger do not sin” (Ephesians 4:26a NIV).*

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7 NIV).*

*Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise (Proverbs 19:20 NIV).*

### CONTEXT OF SCRIPTURE

The psalm we’re looking at this week reminds us that having God’s Word ingrained in our minds and hearts can actually keep us from sinning. By memorizing Scripture—which is the way we “hide” Scripture in our hearts—we’re more likely to identify bad decisions and make good decisions in difficult moments.

## TEACHING OUTLINE

### INTRODUCTION

How many of you love to memorize information? Now how many of you hate doing that?

Memorization is funny because sometimes we NEED to do it and sometimes we WANT to do it.

### TENSION

Now, some of you have already figured out where I’m going with this. If the Bible is the number-one bestseller of all time, then it’s probably number one for a reason.

Memorizing the Bible helps us apply what it says.

But you already know the problem: We don’t want to do it.



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## TEACHING OUTLINE

But, in the next few minutes, as crazy as it sounds, my goal is to move memorizing the Bible from the NEED TO category to the WANT TO category.

Knowing portions of the Bible, particularly knowing them by heart, can make you better at life.

### TRUTH

Let's take a look at one verse. This is from the book of Psalms, the same book we looked at last week—and it's basically a book of prayers and songs that people wrote about God.

So, what does it mean to hide something in our heart? Basically, it's saying it has become a part of you.

This writer is saying that he has taken the time necessary to make sure that God's Word—and what it says about life—is so important they're not just a part of his brain. They've become a part of his heart.

Our brain uses information to make decisions, but our heart is where our emotions live. Scripture can get into where our emotions live.

Knowing God's Word can literally stop you from sinning. Think about it like this. Be honest in your own mind about something you do that you know is wrong.

Here's what those things we don't feel very proud of all have in common: They seemed like a good idea at the time.

Memorizing Scripture is THE thing that helps you see what is a bad idea at the time.

Memorizing Scripture makes you stronger.

### APPLICATION

So, how can you start? First, you can ask someone whose faith you admire what verses have helped them.

This week, find one verse that you want to memorize and just try it.

### LANDING

What if the next time you face a tough decision, you had truth that grounded you and gave you the perspective that your emotions didn't?

## INTERACTIVE

The Interactive for this message happens during the Introduction. Find an image with a bunch of random objects in it. Put that image on the screen in your environment and give students about 30 seconds to write down (or type into

the notes app on their phone) as many items as they can remember from the image. After 30 seconds is up, put the image back on the screen and ask your students how well they did.



# TEACHING SCRIPT

Best Seller / Week 3

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

## BOTTOM LINE

MEMORIZING SCRIPTURE MAKES YOU STRONGER.

## INTRODUCTION

2 MINUTES

Let's start tonight by playing a quick game. I'm going to put a picture on the screen and give you 30 seconds to look at it. No taking pictures, that's cheating. When 30 seconds is up, I'm going to give you 30 seconds to write down, or type in your notes app, as many items as you can remember.



### INTERACTIVE

The Interactive for this message happens right here in the script. Check out the Communicator Guide that precedes this script to find out what to do here.

How did you do?

How many of you love to memorize information? Now how many of you hate doing that?

I think most people hate to memorize, probably because it reminds us of school . . . and yet, most of us have some random stuff packed away in our heads. I have no idea why but I can still remember \_\_\_\_\_. (Communicator Note: Quote something long or random that you memorized and is still stuck in your head—an old, funny song, nursery rhyme, poem, theme song to *Gilligan's Island*, etc. Try to think of something funny.)

Isn't that ridiculous? Anybody else got something like that stuck in your head? Turn to somebody next to you and share your weird memorized thing.

Memorization is funny because sometimes we NEED to do it and sometimes we WANT to do it. Don't believe me? Let's think about it.

# TEACHING SCRIPT

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Many of you know the Pythagorean theorem and the periodic table. Did you *want* to memorize those things? Probably not. You might also know a bunch of random dates from History class, which I'm sure you were dying to memorize, right? What year was the French and Indian War? Who cares, but somebody in here knows, right?

You need to memorize all kinds of stuff—it's part of learning. But you don't always do this because you need to. Sometimes, you memorize because you actually want to.

Let me show you what I mean.

- Can you type a text message without looking because you've memorized the keypad?
- Can you have an entire conversation using movie quotes you know by heart?
- Do you know the stats from your favorite sports team?
- Your password to your phone, your social media accounts, email, and school login?
- Or the lyrics to your favorite song? Or every song by your favorite band?

Or how about this . . . ?

*(Communicator Note: Play a clip of the theme song from "Fresh Prince of Bel-Air" starting with "In West Philadelphia born and raised . . ." Let students finish the line or maybe the whole song.)*

Of course, you know every word!

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## TENSION

2 MINUTES

Now, some of you have already figured out where I'm going with this. If the Bible is the number-one bestseller of all time, then it's probably number one for a reason. And most of you have figured out that I'm going to suggest that you actually memorize parts of it. But before you tune me out, let me tell you why.

Memorizing the Bible helps us apply what it says. You can't possibly apply what's in the Bible if you don't know what's in it. You're not going to turn to your friends who are tempting you to do something and say, "Hold on a sec, I need to go look up what the Bible says about this real quick." That won't happen. You'll need to have God's Word memorized so you have it with you in the moment.

But you already know the problem: **We don't want to do this.**

And that's a problem, because the Bible falls into the NEED TO category of memorization. It feels like the periodic table. Like the dates of the French and Indian War. Like the Pythagorean theorem. It feels like work.

Memorizing the Bible just doesn't seem to have the same thrill as knowing the words to

# TEACHING SCRIPT

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every song on Spotify's Top 50 or knowing every cheat code to your favorite video game.

But, in the next few minutes, as crazy as it sounds, my goal is to move memorizing the Bible from the NEED TO category to the WANT TO category.

For the next few minutes, we're going to talk about what millions upon millions of people already know. It's the reason the Bible is the world's leading bestseller.

And even if you aren't a Christian and really don't agree with the whole God thing, I want you to know this is just as true for you. Knowing portions of the Bible, particularly knowing them by heart, can make you better at life.

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## TRUTH

6 MINUTES

Let's take a look at one verse together. This is from the book of Psalms, the same book we looked at last week—and it's basically a book of prayers and songs that people wrote about God. And all of Psalm 119, the longest chapter in the Bible, is about this very idea—that God's Word can make us better at life. And it says this:

*I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you (Psalm 119:11 NIV).*

So, what does it mean to hide something in our heart? I mean, that's sounds intense. Basically, it's saying it has become a part of you. It's like a song that's stuck permanently in your brain. No matter how hard you try, you can't get it out of your mind. You have captured it and locked it away.

We're not talking about studying for a test where you memorize every state capital then literally forget them all as soon as you turn in the test. It's the opposite of that. This is something that is with you wherever you go and can be recalled whenever you need it.

This writer is saying that he has taken the time necessary to make sure that God's Word—and what it says about life—is so important they're not just a part of his brain. They've become a part of his heart. And what's the difference? **Our brain uses information to make decisions, but our heart is where our emotions live.** And so often we are led with our heart. Our emotions. Many of our best and worst decisions will be made because of our hearts.

So the writer of this psalm decides to hide God's Word in his heart, right next to the decision center. So when a decision is in play and we are processing the possible moves that we could make with our lives, God's Word is right in the mix. But why is that a big deal?

Look at the verse . . .

# TEACHING SCRIPT



*I have hidden your word in my heart—**WHY?—that I might not sin against you** (Psalm 119:11 NIV, emphasis added).*

## **Knowing God’s Word can literally stop you from sinning.**

Think about it like this. Be honest in your own mind about something you do that you know is wrong. Take a second. Think about it. Got any habits you can’t seem to put down? Things you wish you’d never started that now you can’t stop? Any guilt you’re carrying over something that not many people know about you?

Here’s what those things we don’t feel very proud of all have in common: They seemed like a good idea at the time.

Punching a guy in the face seemed like a good idea at the time. Cheating on that test seemed like a good idea at the time. Having sex with your girlfriend or boyfriend, lying to your friends, yelling at your parents, trying drugs—they all seemed like a good idea at the time. Our brains are tricky that way. They can come up with a good reason for whatever our hearts want to do.

Which is why memorizing God’s Word is helpful. Because **memorizing Scripture is THE thing that helps you see what is a bad idea at the time.** No matter what your heart feels like and no matter what tricks your mind plays, if you have the truth in you, you can make better decisions. It gives you eyes to see further down the road.

God’s Word can remind you of what’s true before you do something you regret. **Because at the end of the day, it will be the Scripture in our heart that will get us what we really want long term, and not what we think we want, right now.**

In moments when you feel like lashing out at someone, you can remember that Ephesians 4:26 says, *“In your anger do not sin”* (Ephesians 4:26a NIV).

Or when you’re feeling anxious and you’re tempted to cope in unhealthy ways, God’s Word can remind you: *Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus* (Philippians 4:6-7 NIV).

Or when your coach is on your case and you’re trying to decide whether to quit the team, you can remember Proverbs 19:20 which reminds us to, *Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise* (Proverbs 19:20 NIV).

I could list verses like this all day. If you and I were to sit down and talk, I’m betting that no matter what your issue or struggle is, we could look at God’s Word together and find some passages that would help you make the best decisions in the middle of it. We could find Scripture that could help you live a better life. In other words, we’d find that . . .

**Memorizing Scripture makes you stronger.**



# TEACHING SCRIPT

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Knowing His Word from memory will give you answers in the moments you need it. We all have tough moments when we have no idea what to do and we don't have time to just Google it. Moments when things seem blurry and our minds and hearts are telling us different things. Without knowing God's Word, we end up losing in those moments, but memorizing Scripture will make us stronger.

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## APPLICATION

2 MINUTES

Of course, there's an issue, right? Where do you even start memorizing the Bible?

Well, it will be different for everyone. For me, one of my biggest issues is that when life is going badly, I am tempted to give up on believing God is even there with me. Which could lead to some bad decisions.

And so Hebrews 13:5 is a verse that I have hidden in my heart: *God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you"* (Hebrews 13:5b NIV). And in my worst moments when I'm tempted to think He's given up on me, when my emotions tell me one thing, I have God's Word to remind me what's true. It starts reminding my heart that He's here.

And that can happen for you. You just have to get started.

So, how can you start? **First, you can ask someone whose faith you admire what verses have helped them.** Then, ask them why. Maybe those verses are ones that you want to memorize, too.

*(Communicator Note: Give your small group leaders a heads up that students may ask them this so they aren't caught off guard.)*

Next, begin to examine your life. Most of us struggle with the same things over and over again. It might be anger or lust or self-hatred or greed or gossip or maybe you're just mean. I don't know. But you do. You know what patterns are hard to break and you know where you need help. So why not give this a try?

This week, **find one verse that you want to memorize and just try it.** Write it on a sticky note and put it in your car, on your locker, or on the bathroom mirror. Make it the lock-screen on your phone. As a small group, make a group text and everybody share your verse. Challenge each other. Because as real friends, you want each other to be better at life—and memorizing Scripture can make that happen.

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# TEACHING SCRIPT

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## LANDING

1 MINUTE

As you head out today, I want you to know that the last tough decision you faced won't be the *last* tough decision you face. But what if the next time you face a tough decision, you had truth that grounded you and gave you the perspective that your emotions didn't? What if next time you had a reminder of what is true regardless of what *feels* true? How would your high school years be different if you always had insight for the things you struggle with the most?

The truth is, your Heavenly Father loves you and He wants you to have a full life, a far more awesome life than you would otherwise. That's why He gave you a book to guide you, not to make you miserable, but to help you. Not a book to rely on in desperation, but a book to partner with as you move through life. That's why the Bible is a bestseller. And that's why, maybe the best thing you can do for you, is to **memorize Scripture that will make you stronger.**



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS

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