

## TXT MSG: What We Believe about the Bible

### "MEDITATION: HEART OF FOCUS"

#### PSALM 1:1-6

### This Week's Core Competency

**Authority of the Bible** – I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action. 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

Bible study is the number one practice that the Spirit uses to transform us. Psalm 1 says as much, and research confirms it! Recent research looked at four stages in what it called "the spiritual growth continuum" and analyzed more than 50 factors thought to have an impact on personal spiritual growth. One goal of the research was to identify those factors, called "catalysts," most responsible for moving people from one stage to the next—from "growing in Christ" to "Close to Christ" for example. Four kinds of catalysts were identified: (1) spiritual beliefs and attitudes, (2) organized church activities, (3) personal spiritual practices, and (4) spiritual activities with others. Here's what the researchers reported regarding Bible study: "Reflection on Scripture" is the number one factor across all three movements. But that's only part of the story. When we statistically compare the power of these factors, "Reflection on Scripture" ("I reflect on the meaning of Scripture in my life") is much more influential than any

---

*So the two ways, and there is no third, part for ever.*

*-Derek Kidner*

---

other personal spiritual practice. In fact, for the most advanced segments—Close to Christ and Christ-Centered—it's twice as catalytic as any other factor" (Greg L. Hawkins and Cally Parkinson, *Follow Me: What's Next for You?* 41).

The kind of Bible study that matters to spiritual formation is what the researchers call "reflective," in other words, Bible study that is *active* rather than *passive*—Bible study not Bible listening. Too much so-called "Bible study" involves gifted teachers lecturing *passive* listeners. And while lecture may be an efficient way to disseminate information, it's hardly the most effective way to teach the Bible. People need to encounter God through their own personal reading of God's word. They need to *look closely* at its details, *answer interpretive questions* that will lead to recognition of its meaning, and *reflect carefully* on implications of its message for them personally. They need to do this individually first and then together with others in community.

This kind of "reflective" Bible study provides occasion for Scripture memory and meditation. On the value and practice of these two disciplines one author writes. "Memorization allows us to choose words and images that shape our minds and hearts. It gives the mind somewhere to go when all the media is turned off. Furthermore, memorizing God's Word allows us to access divinely inspired thought and wisdom. And it works in us even when we are not conscious of its doing so . . . To meditate on Scripture choose a verse, chapter or book of the Bible. Don't hurry. Listen to the Scripture. Write down your questions. Use your

con't pg 2

---

imagination. You may wish to memorize a short part of the text to keep it clearly before you. Like a cow chewing the cud, keep returning to your text with your mind and heart. When you are distracted, gently return to your text. Express once again your desire to pay attention. The impact of meditating on Scripture can show up later in our interactions with others" (Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, 177, 173). To "tune out" the media so you can memorize and meditate go for a quiet walk.

## For Discussion

Sharon says she would like to meditate on the law of the LORD, the Bible, but she doesn't know exactly what that means and therefore, doesn't know where to begin. What's more, she's busy and doesn't have the time to do everything she knows she should. She reads the Bible occasionally and wants to study it but hardly ever does because she doesn't have time. Now she has one more thing to add to her "to do" list, meditate on Scripture, and doubts that she'll ever get around to it.

## day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

### Psalm 1:1-6

- 1 Blessed is the man  
who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked  
or stand in the way of sinners  
or sit in the seat of mockers.
- 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD,  
and on his law he meditates day and night.
- 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water,  
which yields its fruit in season  
and whose leaf does not wither.  
Whatever he does prospers.
- 4 Not so the wicked!  
They are like chaff  
that the wind blows away.
- 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,  
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
- 6 For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,  
but the way of the wicked will perish.

### Cf. another translation

- 1:1 How blessed is the one who does not follow the  
advice of the wicked,  
or stand in the pathway with sinners,  
or sit in the assembly of scoffers!
- 1:2 Instead he finds pleasure in obeying the Lord's  
commands;  
he meditates on his commands day and night.
- 1:3 He is like a tree planted by flowing streams;  
it yields its fruit at the proper time,  
and its leaves never fall off.  
He succeeds in everything he attempts.
- 1:4 Not so with the wicked!  
Instead they are like wind-driven chaff.
- 1:5 For this reason the wicked cannot withstand  
judgment,  
nor can sinners join the assembly of the godly.
- 1:6 Certainly the Lord guards the way of the godly,  
but the way of the wicked ends in destruction. (the  
NET Bible)

## EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

In the NIV

- \* Circle "blessed" in v. 1.
- \* Box "but" indicating *contrast* in vv. 2, 6.
- \* Underline "walk," "stand," and "sit" with one line in v. 1.
- \* Underline "counsel," "way," and "seat" with two lines in v. 1.
- \* Underline "wicked," "sinners," and "mockers" with a dashed line in v. 1.
- \* Highlight "law of the LORD" and "his law" in v. 2.
- \* Box "like" indicating *comparison* in vv. 3, 4.
- \* Box "not so" indicating *contrast* in v. 4.
- \* Box "therefore" indicating *result* in v. 5.
- \* Bracket "in the judgment" and "in the assembly" in v. 5.
- \* Circle "the way" in v. 6.

---

## day 2

**EXPLORE** – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Psalm 1:1 describes a truly happy person. Put the psalmist's three-fold description in your own words.
  2. Explain the *contrast* in verse 2.
  3. How can anyone meditate on God's law day and night?
  4. Explain the *comparison* in verse 3.
  5. Verse 3 doesn't guarantee that every single thing this person does will be profitable, does it? So what does it guarantee?
  6. Explain the *comparison* in verse 4.
  7. To what "judgment" does verse 5 refer?
  8. Explain the *contrast* in verse 6.
  9. **Discussion:** Talk about the secret to finding happiness revealed in this psalm.
-

**EXAMINE** – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Most commentators think that Psalm 1 functions as an introduction to the entire book. One writes, "It seems likely that this psalm was specially composed [or selected] as an introduction to the whole Psalter. Certainly it stands here as a faithful doorkeeper, confronting those who would be in 'the congregation of the righteous' (5) with the basic choice that alone gives reality to worship; with the divine truth (2) that must inform it; and with the ultimate judgment (5, 6) that looms up beyond it" (Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-71*, TOTC, 64). The psalm certainly sets the tone for the whole Psalter. By strongly contrasting the happy condition of the godly with the sad state of the wicked and by strongly implying that their happy condition results from them delighting in the law of the LORD, it invites readers to heed the instruction of the psalms that follow and to meditate on them.

Psalm 1 describes two ways: the way of the righteous that delight in the law of the LORD, and the way of the wicked that scoff at his law preferring to delight in their own counsel. Verses 1-3 describe the way that prospers. Verses 4-5 describe the way that doesn't. Verse 6 describes the parting of the ways for both. There "the two ways, and there is no third, part for ever" (66).

"O the happiness of the one," exclaims the psalmist, who refuses to *think* like the ungodly. He doesn't "walk in the counsel of the wicked." Neither does he *act* like the ungodly. He doesn't "stand in the way [pathway] of sinners." Nor does he *hang out* with the ungodly. He doesn't "sit in the seat of mockers." The main point of this threefold picture is to show that the one who is blessed does not follow the godless way of life. Instead, he delights in the law of the LORD so much so that he "meditates" on it all the time—it's always on his mind. The Hebrew verb is interesting. It means literally to "mutter." "This same verb *h-g-h* is used of a young lion growling over his prey (Isa. 31:4), of the moaning of a dove (Isa. 38:14), and as a synonym of 'to speak' (37:30; 71:24). 'He meditates' may mean in our context 'he reads to himself [or recites to himself] in a low tone', and the purpose of this activity is clear from Jos. 1:8: '... you shall meditate on it day and

night, that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you shall make your way prosperous . . .' So this 'mediation' is not merely an intellectual exercise but, above all, it is a study of the will of God for the purpose of doing it" (A. A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms*, NCBC, 1:60). As a result, he is "like a tree planted" or "transplanted" by "streams of water" (lit., "irrigation channels") that provide a reliable source of life-giving water in an arid environment. The same imagery is used by Jeremiah to describe the man who trusts in the LORD. "He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worried in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit" (17:7, 8). The word "transplanted" in verse 3 suggests that "whatever the man does prospers" not because of fortuitous circumstances but because of God.

"Not so the wicked!" declares the psalmist. In stark contrast to the godly person whose life has substance, worth, gravitas if you will, the ungodly person has none of these. The ungodly are like "chaff" carried away by the wind in contrast to the lush tree that no wind can uproot. Therefore, in the judgment they haven't a leg to stand on and are denied access to "the assembly of the righteous." They don't belong with God's people in God's presence either now or in the future.

"The LORD watches over" the righteous but not the wicked, and so they are destined to part company. "The only mention of divine action in this psalm is withheld until the last verse. On the surface, the fates of the righteous and the wicked have appeared to be determined by natural law: the former go the way of a tree planted by streams of water, and the latter the way of chaff. But the process is not automatic. The enigmatic word choice in verse 3 may hint that the mysterious "transplanter" and "irrigator" is revealed now in verse 6" (Craig C. Broyles, *Psalms*, NIBC, 43). The LORD acts on behalf of the righteous, but he lets the wicked perish. Life lived apart from the LORD and his law is doomed.

### *The Message of this Passage*

*Delight yourself in the word of God; meditate on it and heed its counsel if you want to prosper and want God to watch over you.*

---

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you through his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James suggests in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Give Yourself Some Good Advice Based on the Message of this Passage.**
  
- **Pick a verse or verses from the passage to memorize or think about this week.**
  
- **Relate the message of this passage to any of the following:**
  - o Belonging
  - o Becoming
  - o *going Beyond*
  
- **Journal your thoughts on the passage.**
  
  
- **Home Group Discussion** (for those involved in the deeper connections of a home group)  
Talk about the “For Discussion” topic on page 2.

**“Meditation: Heart of Focus”**  
(Use the space below for Sunday’s message notes)

---

# notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 1 **blessed** Lit., "O the happiness of the man," or "How blessed is the one" (the NET Bible; cf., NASB). The word 'happy' is a good rendition of 'blessed' provided one keeps in mind that the condition of 'bliss' is not merely a feeling. Even when the righteous do not feel happy, they are still considered 'blessed' from God's perspective. He bestows the gift on them. Neither negative feelings nor adverse conditions can take away his blessing" (Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, TEBC, rev. ed., 5:78, 79; cf., "O, how very happy is the man!" H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms*, 34). See also 1Ki 10:8.

v. 1 **walk, stand, sit** "We should not read a progression into this verse, as some do. Rather, the poetic parallelism sets up a mirror image, where the second line is more specific than the first. Paralleling the general category of 'wicked' are the more particular categories of 'sinners,' the same group but viewed religiously, and of 'mockers,' the same group but focusing on their speech. Paralleling the activity of 'walking' are the polar postures of 'standing' and 'sitting.' Paralleling the 'counsel' or beliefs of the wicked are their 'way' or behavior and their 'seat' or company" (Broyles, 42).

v. 1 **counsel, way, seat** "Counsel, way and seat (or 'assembly', or 'dwelling') draw attention to the realms of thinking, behaving, and belonging, in which a person's fundamental choice of allegiance is made and carried through . . . the three complete phrases show three aspects, indeed three degrees, of departure from God, by portraying conformity to this world at three different levels: accepting its advice, being party to it ways, and adopting the most fatal of its attitudes—for the scoffers, if not the most scandalous of sinners, are the farthest from repentance (Prov. 3:34)" (Kidner, 64).

v. 1 **mockers** Or "scoffers" (NASB, ESV, the NET Bible); cf., "cynics" (NJB) and "those who have no use for God" (TEV). "The Hebrew word refers to arrogant individuals (Prov 21:24) who love conflict (Prov 22:10) and vociferously reject wisdom and correction (Prov 1:22; 9:7-8; 13:1; 15:12). To 'sit in the assembly' of such people means to completely identify with them in their proud, sinful plans and behavior" (the NET Bible, 9tn on Ps 1:1). "'Scoffers' are the self-sufficient who act with haughty pride (Prov. 21:24), and who refuse to accept instruction both from God and from men (cf. Prov. 15:12; Mal. 3:13ff.). They scoff at the ways of the wise and of the righteous, and thereby they set themselves against God and incur his scorn (Prov. 3:34). 'To sit in the seat of the scoffers' amounts to making light of God's law which ought to be one's delight; it also means identifying oneself with the thinking and planning of the godless (cf. Isa. 5:11f.)" (Anderson, 1:59).

v. 2 **delight** "The positive portrayal of the **blessed** defines that person by what 'turns him on' (**his delight**) and by what preoccupies him (**he meditates day and night**)—in other words, by what he truly values" (Broyles, 42).

v. 2 **law of the LORD** "'Law' in the broad sense refers to any 'instruction' flowing from the revelation of God as the basis for life and action" (VanGemeren, 220). Here "law" certainly refers to the Pentateuch and likely by extension to the entire Old Testament and to the book of Psalms, in particular, since Psalm 1 serves as its introduction (Broyles, 41, 42). The term is nearly synonymous with the "word of God" (Leupold, 35).

v. 2 **meditates** "The Hebrew verb means literally 'to mutter.' It is somewhat analogous to 'reading' (Remember that silent reading is a relatively recent invention), but it also connotes the notion of 'mulling' something over and over. It thus comes to have the derived mental notion of 'pondering'" (Broyles, 42). "This 'meditation' is not merely an intellectual exercise but, above all, it is a study of the will of God for the purpose of doing it" (Anderson, 60).

v. 3 **like a tree** "This tree is able to sustain its greenness and shade even through the dry season of the Middle East because it is **planted** (lit. 'transplanted') by streams (lit. '[irrigation] channels') **of water**. This word choice implies that the tree is able to transcend natural circumstances, but not because of its natural or inherent abilities" [cf., v.6] (Broyles, 43).

v. 3  **prospers** "The prosperity of the righteous does not necessarily extend to the assurance of great wealth but primarily to God's blessing on their words and works (cf. 90:14-17)" (VanGemeren, 82).

v. 4 **like chaff** "Chaff is, in such a setting, the ultimate in what is rootless, weightless (cf. the 'vain and light persons' of Judg. 9:4, AV) and useless" (Kidner, 65).

v. 5 **the judgment** The next line suggests this does not refer to final judgment and admission to heaven but to "judgment taking place when one seeks entry into the temple (e.g., 'Who may stand in his holy place?' 24:3)" and admission to the worshiping congregation (74:2; 11:1) (Broyles, 43).

v. 6 **watches over** Lit., "knows." "For the LORD knows the way of the righteous" (NASB, ESV, NKJV). "The knowledge of God involves not only an objective knowledge about the righteous but also a subjective relationship with them, assuring them that he cares for his own, protects them, and will reward them (cf. 31:8; 37:18; 144:3)" (VanGemeren, 83; cf., Anderson, 1:63).

Connect the **FAMILY**. During this series, Bible stories appropriate for children will be used that complement the adult teaching.

### Experience it!

Experience scripture through the activity-based learning exercise. Dinner is a perfect time to engage the family.

Ask one of the kids to read 2 Kings 22:1-11 and 23:1-3. Having your own Bible and being able to read it is something most people take for granted. Josiah hadn't seen a Bible from the time he was at least eight years old until he was 26. When the Book of the Law (the Bible) was found, Josiah was so excited he made sure everyone was able to hear it being read. Josiah loved the Bible! How do you show your love for God's Word?



### Pray it!

As a parent you can pray God's perfect will for your child by using actual scriptures to guide your praying. Insert your child's name in the blanks as you pray.

God, please help me to find my delight in Your law. I commit to meditate on it day and night. Ps 1:2

### Post it!

Post the kid-friendly Core Competency and the memory verse throughout the house. Lead your children to interact with them as they memorize.

**Authority of the Bible** – I believe the Bible is God's book that tells me what to believe and do.

**Memory verse** – "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." 2Ti 2:15

### Discuss it!

Discover biblical truth by discussing the scripture. Reflective questions are great with older kids.

- \*Explain "He (Josiah) did what was right in the eyes of the Lord".
- \*What did Hilkiah find in the temple?
- \*How did Josiah know "what was right in the eyes of the Lord" if he did not have actual scriptures (Book of the Law) to read?
- \*Describe what Josiah did to celebrate once the scriptures were found.

### Live it!

Live out the Core Competency and build deeper relationships by doing this activity.

Since the Bible is God's book that tells you what to believe and do, it makes sense that you should take care of it. Specially designed PantegoKids Bible covers will be given away to all the kids who attend the MiniMix, Mix or Fix Sunday, March 14. The covers will be a great help for helping kids keep up their Bible and Kid Pix Tokens when they bring them to church each week.



## Challenge

*Kids K through sixth grade receive Kid Pix Tokens for each discipleship activity completed.*

Family completes **Experience It** \_\_\_\_\_ Child memorizes kid-friendly **Core Competency** \_\_\_\_\_  
Family participates in **Live It** \_\_\_\_\_ and **Pray It** \_\_\_\_\_ Child memorizes **Memory Verse** \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's signature \_\_\_\_\_

# 30 CORE COMPETENCIES

## 10 CORE BELIEFS

### **Trinity** *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **Salvation By Grace** *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Authority of the Bible** *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

### **Personal God** *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

### **Identity in Christ** *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

### **Church** *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

### **Humanity** *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

### **Compassion** *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

### **Eternity** *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

### **Stewardship** *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

## 10 CORE PRACTICES

### **Worship** *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

### **Prayer** *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Bible Study** *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Single-mindedness** *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

### **Spiritual Gifts** *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

### **Biblical Community** *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

### **Giving Away My Time** *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Money**

*2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Faith** *Ephesians*

*6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Life** *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

## 10 CORE VIRTUES

### **Joy** *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

### **Peace** *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

### **Faithfulness** *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

### **Self-Control** *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

### **Humility** *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

### **Love** *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

### **Patience** *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

### **Kindness/Goodness** *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

### **Gentleness** *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

### **Hope** *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

## About the Authors

**Tom Bulick** (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than thirty-five years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) for twelve years before accepting the position of Spiritual Formation Pastor at Pantego Bible Church. He and his wife Ruth have been married forty-two years and have one son, Zach.

**Keith Smith** (B.A. in Speech Communication, Texas Tech University and M.A. in Religious Education, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary) is the Family and Children's Pastor at Pantego Bible Church. Keith is a featured communicator for Song of Solomon for Students and speaks at children/student camps across the country. He has developed a number of relational parenting seminars designed to motivate parents to empower their parenting by emotionally connecting with their kids. Keith lives with his wife, Denise, and their two children, Jordan and Alex.



8001 Anderson Blvd.  
Ft. Worth, TX 76120  
1-866-PANTEGO  
Fax 817-275-6403  
www.pantego.org

The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is [tbulick@pantego.org](mailto:tbulick@pantego.org).