

Week 2: Rooted in the Word – Anchoring Your Mind in Scripture

Scripture References: Psalm 1:1–3; Joshua 1:7–9; John 15:5–7; Hebrews 4:12

Focus: Being rooted in Scripture means more than reading it occasionally—it means delighting in God’s Word and letting it shape our minds, choices, and emotions. This session helps participants discover the strength and fruit that comes from a consistent relationship with the Word.

Opening Prayer: Lord, open our hearts and minds. Help us understand how Your Word is a source of strength and clarity. Let this time be fruitful and uplifting. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Icebreaker: What’s your favorite Bible verse and why?

Read: Psalm 1:1-3

*¹ Blessed is the one
who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,
² but whose delight is in the law of the LORD,
and who meditates on his law day and night.
³ That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
whatever they do prospers.*

Summary: When we delight in God’s Word, we become like a strong tree planted by a river. Scripture nourishes our minds and keeps us stable even when life is chaotic. It's not just about reading—it's about meditating and living by it.

The psalm contrasts two kinds of people—those rooted in God's Word and those swayed by worldly influence. Like a tree by streams of water, those who meditate on Scripture are spiritually nourished, stable, and fruitful. Meditating on Scripture means absorbing it deeply, thinking it over, applying it, and letting it shape our worldview.

Modern Illustration:

Think of a healthy tree that survives drought because of deep roots. God’s Word gives us depth and nourishment, so we’re not easily shaken by life’s storms.

Discussion Questions:

- What does it mean to "delight" in God's Word?
- How do you think meditating on Scripture differs from simply reading it?
- What keeps you from consistent time in the Bible?
- What spiritual fruit can grow from being rooted in Scripture?

Relevant Statistic: 65% of churchgoers read the Bible less than weekly (Lifeway, 2022).

Read: Joshua 1:7-9:

"Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸ Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

God tells Joshua that success and courage are tied to obedience to His Word. Repeatedly meditating on the Book of the Law ensures that we will not only know what is right but do it. This passage emphasizes that obedience brings God's presence and favor.

Modern Illustration:

GPS systems guide drivers only when they're turned on and followed. Scripture works the same way—it directs us clearly, but we must be tuned in and obedient.

Discussion Questions:

- How does God's Word provide strength and courage for daily life?
- When have you experienced clarity through a Bible passage?
- Why is obedience necessary to truly benefit from Scripture?

Read:

- **John 15:5-7:** *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you."*
- **Hebrews 4:12:** *For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

Jesus describes the vital connection between Himself and His followers—like branches to a vine. Abiding in Him means staying connected through His Word. The Word is alive and active (Hebrews 4:12), shaping our hearts, revealing truth, and cutting through confusion.

Modern Illustration:

Think of your phone—if it's not plugged in, it eventually dies. Abiding in Christ through His Word keeps our spiritual battery charged.

Discussion Questions:

- What does it look like practically to "abide" in Jesus?
- How does the Word expose and heal areas of your heart?
- What habits could help you stay more deeply connected to God's Word?

Potential Additional Discussion Questions:

- How would you describe your knowledge of scripture? (Expert, Proficient, Novice, ...)
Are you where you want to be? Why/why not?
 - How do you interact with Scripture during the week?
 - What is the best time of day for you to meditate on God's Word? (And why does that work better for you than other times of the day?)
 - Try to flesh out the simile: how is a blessed person similar to a tree by a stream?
 - And how is a wicked person similar to chaff?
 - What does it mean to be rooted in God's Word?
 - How does Scripture impact your thoughts and emotions?
 - Do you truly delight in reading God's Word?
 - What barriers keep you from reading the Bible?
 - How does Psalm 1 help shape our habits?
 - How is meditating on Scripture different from reading?
 - When has Scripture brought clarity in your life?
1. How can you grow in consistency this week?
 - What verse would you like to memorize?
 - How can we help each other stay in the Word?

Psalm 1:1-3 Commentary

1:1 This tells how to become happy. The word translated "happy" in the CSB can also be rendered "blessed." To be blessed by God is to be happy.

Everyone wants to be blessed, but we should define what that means. For many people, being blessed refers to stuff acquired. Yet, one can have an abundance of stuff and be miserable. So, put simply, *blessing* is the God-given capacity to experience, enjoy, and extend the goodness and favor of God in your life—whatever form God's goodness and favor takes. Paul confesses, "I know both how to make do with little, and I know how to make do with a lot. In all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in

need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:12–13). In other words, he had learned to enjoy God’s heavenly goodness regardless of his earthly circumstances.

Interestingly, the psalmist explains what the blessed / happy person does *not* do. First, he does not walk in the advice of the wicked. The biblical metaphor of “walking” refers to how one lives. The fastest way to miss your blessing is to take counsel from those who have no regard for God’s view on life. Second, he does not stand in the pathway with sinners. The blessed person does not hang out with people who will influence him toward sin and away from God. Third, he does not sit in the company of mockers. Mockers make light of serious things, sitting in judgment of everyone and everything. Yet, they fail to allow their critical gaze to turn back to themselves. Notice the progression: walking, standing, sitting. The one who is regularly influenced by people with little regard for God finds himself more and more at home with human viewpoints and misses God’s blessings.

1:2 What does the blessed person do? He delights in the *LORD*’s instruction. To delight in something is to find your joy and pleasure in it. The blessed man or woman finds this in God’s Word, meditating on it day and night. To this, someone may object, “I have a job and a family. I don’t have time to read the Bible day and night!” But the psalmist doesn’t say the blessed person *reads* God’s instruction day and night; he says he *meditates* on it.

To meditate on something is to recall, ponder, and interact with it in the mind. When we meditate on God’s Word, we mentally chew on it until it becomes a part of us. This, in fact, is why consuming God’s Word is often spoken of in terms of eating: “Your words were found, and I ate them. Your words became a delight to me and the joy of my heart” (Jeremiah 15:16; see Psalm 119:103; Ezekiel 3:1–3; Revelation 10:9–10).

When we meditate on the Word of God, we think about how it connects to life. We ask ourselves, “How does the Word speak to the circumstances I am currently facing?” The gap between hearing the Word and being blessed is closed with meditation. Considering life from the divine viewpoint and acting in accordance with it brings the tangible experience of blessing.

1:3 The blessed person is like a tree planted beside flowing streams. Such trees are not easily swayed; they hold their ground. The “flowing streams” in view are irrigation channels, so regardless of how barren the weather, such a tree is positioned to drink from a continuous source of life.

That the tree bears its fruit in its season indicates that the blessed person is productive, maximizing his potential. Importantly, fruit reveals something about the quality of the tree that bears it. If you’re not bearing worthwhile fruit, then it’s because there’s nothing worthwhile inside of you. Moreover, trees don’t eat their own fruit; the fruit exists for the benefit of others. Thus, you know that you’re blessed when you are being a blessing.

That the leaf does not wither doesn’t mean that a blessed person never has negative experiences. Rather, the negative things don’t cause him to wither and die. You know you’re blessed when you bounce back from life’s trials more quickly than you once did.

Joshua 1:7-9 Commentary

1:7–9 Next God said, “Observe carefully the whole instruction my servant Moses commanded you ... so that you will have success wherever you go”. (1:7). Success for Israel, then, involved obtaining their inheritance. To do this, they had to stay tightly tethered to God’s Word.

Ultimately, success for a Christian is not rising to popularity, power, prosperity, or position. Success is fulfilling your God-given purpose in life. To do that, you (like Israel) must meditate on Scripture and carefully observe everything written in it (1:7–8). To meditate on something is to roll it repeatedly in your mind in much the same way that a cow chews its cud. When you do, the Word of God is driven deeply into your soul so that your actions can be driven by God’s perspective rather than your feelings or cultural opinion.

John 15:3-7 Commentary

15:3–5 The disciples were clean through the washing of Christ’s Word (15:3; see Ephesians 5:26). This is how we stay clean too; nevertheless, we must remain in Jesus. A branch that’s disconnected from the vine is useless. We can’t produce fruit unless we remain in Jesus (15:4). The idea of “remaining” or “abiding” in Christ has to do with intimacy and relationship. Jesus Christ is our source, the only One Who can provide the spiritual sustenance and vitality we need to be useful believers. Thus, we need to hang out with Him. You can’t avoid Jesus all week and then show up on Sunday morning expecting growth. We only produce much fruit when we remain in Him (15:5).

15:6 If someone chooses not to remain in Jesus, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. Such branches are gathered and burned. This is not a description of hell and cannot refer to loss of salvation since believers are eternally secure. We’ve already seen that everyone who comes to Jesus will never be cast out. If you could lose eternal life, then it wasn’t eternal to begin with (see commentary on 6:36–40). So instead, the burning is a reference to the consequences of a loss of both fellowship with God and rewards from Him. If you disconnect from the vine for too long, don’t be surprised to find yourself experiencing divine discipline, getting burned, and seeing your spiritual life withering. Such a believer is useless to himself, God, and others. So, if you find such things happening to you, repent! “Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you” (James 4:8).

15:7 To have Jesus’s words remain (or “abide”) in you requires more than merely reading or listening to them. You must internalize them. Another way to describe this is *meditating* on God’s Word, rolling it around in your mind to grasp what it means and how to apply it to your specific circumstances. We must chew and swallow Scripture, so to speak, so that it becomes part of us. When you do this, you can ask whatever you want, and it will be done for you. In other words, prayers get answered when we maintain intimate fellowship with God through His Word. That’s because you’ll find your will aligning with His.

Hebrews 4:12-13 Commentary

4:12–13 Like the Israelites, you will regularly find that your circumstances tempt you to disobey God. Focus on circumstances too long, and His Word will fail to influence your life.

The author reminds his audience that the Word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword. And indeed, Scripture isn't composed of dead words on a page; it's alive. It cuts deep and can separate the spiritual from the earthly. The Word can judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart (4:12). It lays us naked and exposed before God.

Have you ever had an experience with God's Word that made you feel "exposed"? Have you ever heard it preached and felt like it was directed right at you? Have you ever felt your soul sliced open by the Word? Remember, we have no private lives. We don't even get to have private thoughts. Everything is laid bare before the One to Whom we must give an account (4:13).

Closing Challenge: Commit to reading Psalm 1 every day this week and journaling one insight per day.

Closing Prayer: "God, thank You for the gift of Your Word. Help us to treasure it, meditate on it, and apply it to our lives. Give us discipline and desire to grow. Amen."

