

PLANT THEM IN YOUR HEART

A Week-by-Week Scripture Memory

Plan for Families—One Passage

from Every Book of the Bible

DANIEL and JULIE TIGNOR

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GETTING STARTED

We were sitting in church on a Sunday morning when our ten-year-old son leaned over and whispered to me, “2 Corinthians 5:17.” It took me a second to figure it out—he had been drawing comics in a notebook, and I did not think he had really been paying attention—but the preacher had just quoted a verse, and our son had just provided the book, chapter, and verse.

“It’s one of our verses!” our little four-year-old said with excitement and pride. She was listening to a song playlist on YouTube from the recent VBS we had attended and heard the words to a favorite family Bible verse. “I already know this one!” she continued.

We were gifted some home furnishing decorations by some friends at church. “Be strong and courageous” was engraved on wood. Our kids recognized the verse right away. “Joshua 1:9! One of our verses! How special!” they all said.

God’s Word planted in our hearts will return to us again and again. And God’s Word will never return empty. It will produce fruit in time, in season. We do not control the weather, the myriad forces which affect each person, each plant, or the bounty of the harvest.

We prepare the soil, we tend, we clear the weeds, we water, we fertilize, we wait, we pray. God brings the increase. God’s Word planted in your heart will always produce a harvest.

Incorporating Bible verses into your family life and planting verses in your heart and in the hearts of your children will be a continual cycle more than a linear journey—you should return to these again and again. You are not alone on this spiritual journey; God is always with you in every moment, guiding, reminding, comforting, reassuring you with His presence.

Every time you remember the verse in a moment of parenting frustration, every time your child hears one of “your verses” mentioned in Bible class or during a sermon, every time your toddler sings a Bible verse song while taking a bath, every time God stirs one of these verses in your heart just when you thought He was silent—all these moments are God’s grace and mercy breaking into your life with His sacred presence and His sacred words.

We believe, through faith, that His Word will grow and bear fruit in our lives and the lives of others. Let’s join together on this journey. Plant them in your heart, one verse at a time.

How to Use This Book

Adapt this book to your family. Please use this book as a scaffold to help build on what you are already doing in your home to connect with Scripture. You have freedom to take ideas from this book that you find helpful and ignore any ideas that you don’t find helpful. The goal of this book is to empower individuals and families to engage with each book of the Bible and plant God’s Word in your heart while getting a broad overview of Scripture.

Start anywhere. You are free to start in the New Testament at Matthew. You can start in Genesis. You can do two verses each week, one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament. Or you can take two weeks to memorize one verse. If your church is focusing on a particular book, you can start there. Feel free to start anywhere and work your way through at a pace that feels manageable for you, your family, and the ages of your children. Feel free to skip long passages if your children are very young or to adjust the verses and just memorize one part of the verse.

Remind yourself that memorization starts with familiarization. Memorization happens over time, after a lot of repetition. A huge first step in memorization is familiarization. If you or your children can begin to recognize these verses, that is the first step of planting the verse in your heart. Celebrate that!

The goal of this book is not to get you or your kids to recite the verses perfectly. Anyone who has ever crammed for a test and then immediately forgotten all the information knows this. We aren't "cramming" these verses into ourselves or our children for a brief Sunday school performance. We are planting, and planting involves patiently waiting while the seed is buried deep, the plant emerges, grows slowly, and finally produces fruit. Regularly reviewing the verses, returning to them, and repeating Scripture, is the tending and watering we do as we wait for the fruit.

Be consistent over the long haul. One of the most important things to remember is that consistency is the key to familiarization and memorization. Studies have shown that what you do every day matters much more than what you do only once in a while. Five minutes a day or ten minutes a day accumulate into a great reward over time. Even a simple investment of five to ten minutes three times a week will make a lasting impact on you and your children. Since consistency won't happen without planning, make a plan to implement the verses at a reasonable time for your schedule and season of life.

For years, I have done Bible story time most afternoons with our kids. We eat a snack, read from a children's Bible storybook, and review our Bible verses. It never takes very long. Maybe saying the verse on the drive to work or school is convenient for you. Maybe reviewing the verses after dinner each night or putting a sticky note with the verse in your child's lunchbox every day will be most memorable. Do what will work for your family, but make a plan and be consistent.

Some of my children have nearly all of the verses memorized word for word. Some of my kids are only familiar with the verses. Some of my children are too young to say any verses out loud. But even my one-year-old can fold his hands to pray, sing "Jesus Loves Me," and hold a Bible and say "Bible." Some of my children prefer never to recite the verses but always notice them when they are mentioned at Bible class or church.

In a large family with varied ages, varied personalities, and varied temperaments, there are various levels of familiarization and memorization. I

am trusting that our consistency and patience is planting these verses in their hearts in age-appropriate ways. I hope and believe that these verses will come to bear fruit in the lives of my children long after my own life ends. I pray God's Spirit will remind them of these verses planted in their hearts just when their hearts need to hear Him speak to them.

What This Book Is Not

Not prescriptive. This book is not a magic formula. It is intended as a scaffold to support you and offer ideas for making Scripture memorization a part of your daily life. These verses were chosen to be a good start on getting a broad overview and grasp of the biblical story and themes of each book of the Bible. Of course, there are many other good verses to memorize, as well.

Not performative. Please do not make your child “perform” as they memorize these verses, especially if they have no desire to do so. Some children may be eager to recite, perform, or make videos for the grandparents to share all the things they are learning. But for other children, performance of any kind causes serious anxiety, frustration, and resentment both toward parents and toward God or Scripture. You know your children, but please do not put the focus on performance. Don't require perfection. Let “familiarization precedes memorization” become a guiding principle in this process.

Not punitive. These verses should be planted in their heart gently with love. Allow children to listen and hear you saying the verses. Allow children to internalize the verses. Allow children to see you living out the verses and bringing them up in natural ways when situations arise. Do the activities with your children and make them fun. Please never punish your child for not saying the verse correctly or not memorizing quickly enough. Make this experience the most enjoyable part of your child's day. They will associate those happy, safe feelings with God and with Scripture.

If you choose to use rewards, please use them sparingly. I think it is more helpful to make this a regular, normal, enjoyable part of every day rather than motivating kids based on a system of rewards and punishments. We have very

rarely given awards for memorizing Scripture, but we do try to make every Bible story time or review time an enjoyable experience for everyone with a healthy or special snack and fun attitude.

Ideas for Memorizing Scripture

I want to describe some of the things that have been most impactful, helpful, and consistent in our family to help you generate ideas for your own family. Remember that you are in charge of your family routine and culture. You know your children better than anyone, and you know your strengths and weaknesses as a parent. Use all these things to your advantage. If your kids love to act out stories, do that often. If your kids love art and music, use those methods often. If your kids love activity and action, move and explore as much as possible. Rest in the confidence that God will use your unique gifting as a parent and your child's unique gifting to grow and produce fruit.

Each book of the Bible has a dedicated two-page spread to open and use with your family. It includes a brief summary of the book, the selected Bible verse in three versions to choose from, a reflection question, and a “Family Challenge” to complete. Sometimes it is an activity, sometimes an art project or community project, or just a question or Bible passage to read and discuss together as a family. The following ideas, however, can be used for any of the Bible verses. Please read these ideas and reference them if you are getting bored in how you are learning the verses. Try something new from this list. Or use some of the ideas from this list every week with every Bible verse you learn.

Bible story time. We homeschool, and as I already mentioned, we set aside twenty to thirty minutes every afternoon to eat a snack, read a short Bible story from a Bible storybook, and review our Bible verses. The kids never forget Bible story time, and they are always eager to do it—and they are always hungry for that afternoon snack!

Laminate a verse picture. I do a simple web search of the verse and print out a free picture to help the kids associate the picture with the verse. Then I laminate it and keep it on a clipboard. These pictures become our “review”

OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament is the first major division of the Bible, covering the period from the creation of the world to around 400 BC. It is written mostly in Hebrew with a few passages in Aramaic.

The Old Testament tells how people from the very beginning choose sin over their Creator. The narrative quickly focuses on God's selection of Abraham and his descendants to form a nation. God leads Abraham's descendants out of slavery in Egypt and helps them conquer the land He had promised to Abraham.

The people—now a nation called Israel—are led by a series of regional leaders called judges, until Saul is chosen by God as the first king. The reigns of David and his son Solomon represent the peak of Israel's political power. However, the nation splits when ten of the twelve tribes rebel against Solomon's son, forming the northern kingdom (still called Israel) and leaving David's descendants with the southern kingdom (Judah).

The northern kings are all assessed by the Old Testament as failing to follow God, leading to their conquest by Assyria around 722 BC. The kings of Judah are a mix of good and bad, but they too are conquered (by Babylon in 586 BC). The people of Judah live in exile in Babylon before eventually being allowed to resettle in their homeland.

The latter half of the Old Testament is primarily poetic: songs of worship like the Psalms, moral teaching and wisdom literature, and prophetic messages of judgment against Israel, Judah, and their neighbors.

A major theme of the Old Testament is the repeated failings of humanity—especially the sin of idolatry—and, by contrast, the enduring love of God to forgive them and call them back to Himself.

GENESIS

Genesis gives the foundational worldview for the Bible: The world is created by God and is good, but human sin separates the world from its Creator. God begins His plan to restore the world through the descendants of a man named Abraham.

Genesis 1:1

ESV: In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

NIV: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

NLT: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

God is Our Creator

You are God's loved child. He has created you in His image to love you and have a relationship with you. Your purpose on earth is to delight in the God who made you and to show His love to others. In this way, you will bring glory to God and honor to His Name.

The God who made the universe full of billions of stars and galaxies, the God who spoke order into the chaos, the God who separated night from day, the God who created each species of animal and each kind of beautiful plant and flower, *that* God is the God who also created you. He is infinite and powerful, but He is not far away. He created you in your mother's womb. He knows the number of hairs on your head; He has numbered your days and set the time and place that you live. He *loves* you.

Reflect: Spend fifteen minutes in nature in silence. Turn off your phone and other technology. Just sit and listen. Thank God for His creation. Thank God for creating you.

Family Challenge: Take your family to a park for a nature scavenger hunt. You can make a list of things to find before you go, or you can do an impromptu hunt once you arrive. You could look for something God created from each day of the week (1-light; 2-sky, water; 3-plants, flowers, trees; 4-sun, moon, stars; 5-birds, fish; 6-animals, humans), or you could gather up as many different species of plants or flowers that you can find. As you gather things together, thank God for all the things He has made. Sing the Days of Creation song or look for a version you like on YouTube.

EXODUS

Exodus tells how God frees the descendants of Abraham—who are now a nation—miraculously from slavery in Egypt. The rest of the book explains God’s Law that Moses receives on Mount Sinai and what is expected of the people.

Exodus 20:3

ESV: You shall have no other gods before me.

NIV: You shall have no other gods before me.

NLT: You must not have any other god but me.

Worship God Alone

We are made in God’s image, and God has designed us for worship. We can be tempted to worship the good things God has made in creation rather than the Creator. We can be tempted to worship things in the world like health, power, control, security, or independence. But God has called us to worship Him alone. We must not worship the idols around us. We were made to worship; if we don’t worship the true and living God, we will end up worshipping something else.

Western culture can often worship health, prosperity, entertainment and worthless things, independence, security, political power, and control. God will not share his glory with idols, even our refined American ones. He wants our whole hearts. He wants us to live holy lives. He is worthy!

Reflect: Have you ever seen people worshipping something that wasn't God? What was it? How did they worship? Why does God want us to worship only Him? What are you tempted to worship in place of God?

Family Challenge: Make a list of the Ten Commandments together on cardboard. Hang it somewhere visible in your house. Here is a kid-friendly version you can use, or make your own version.

1. Put God first. You should have no other gods before Him.
2. Don't make idols. Don't make or worship any fake gods or images.
3. Respect God's name. Don't misuse or disrespect God's name.
4. Remember the Sabbath day. Keep the day of rest holy.
5. Honor your parents. Respect and obey your father and mother.
6. Do not kill. Never take another person's life.
7. Do not commit adultery. Be faithful in marriage.
8. Do not steal. Do not take what doesn't belong to you.
9. Do not lie. Do not tell lies or say false things about others.
10. Do not be jealous or covet what your neighbor has.

LEVITICUS

Leviticus describes the work of the priests—the Levites who serve between people and God—beginning with Moses’s brother Aaron. God is holy, and it is through a system of gifts and sacrifices that the people are able to approach God.

Leviticus 19:2

ESV: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

NIV: Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.

NLT: You must be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.

You are Set Apart for God

God called the Israelites to live differently from the people around them. He didn’t want them to just follow rules—He wanted their hearts to reflect His holiness. Holiness means being set apart, choosing to live in a way that honors God. When we strive to be holy, we choose what is good, fair, and loving, and we avoid what harms ourselves or others. God has adopted us as sons and daughters, and this is how He calls us to live.

Jesus calls His followers the light of the world. When we are set apart for God, we are like a city on a hill that cannot be hidden. When we are holy as God is holy, we are walking in the light as He is in the light. The darkness around us can feel scary, but God calls us to shine His light in dark places. Those who are searching for God can more easily find Him when we are reflecting His light and being holy as He is holy.

Reflect: Why is the word “holy” so hard for us to use today? Why do we shy away from calling ourselves holy? Would God ask us to do something if it were impossible to do? (See 1 Peter 1:15-16.)

Family Challenge: Turn on a flashlight in a dark room. Now turn the flashlight off. Turn it on and off several times. What do you notice? Just as a flashlight can give light to a dark place, God wants us to be light in our world, set apart for Him to share His light and love with others.

NUMBERS

Numbers gets its name from the census of God's people at the beginning of the book. The book tells of the Israelites' failings on the way to the land God had promised them; these failings keep them in the wilderness for forty years.

Numbers 6:24-26

ESV: The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

NIV: The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.

NLT: May the LORD bless you and protect you. May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you. May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.

God Wants to Connect with You

How do you feel knowing that God desires to be with you? He likes you. He created you. He wants to spend time with you. And He wants you to spend time with Him. His face is always turned toward you, and He desires to shine His face on you.

God wants to give you His blessing and be in relationship with you. He enjoys spending time with you and looking on you, His creation, with love—just as loving parents look into the face of their newborn baby. God is proud of you! Just as a baby looks to the face of its mother and father for love, comfort, and relationship, we can look into the face of our Father in heaven who is always looking on us in love. When we allow God to look on us with love and we look back at Him receiving the love He has for us, we find joy, purpose, and fulfillment.

Reflect: How comfortable are you with “wasting time” with God, just being in His presence? Look at the face of God this week by setting aside time to “waste time” with Him. You don’t have to do anything or accomplish anything. Maybe you want to sit quietly and imagine God with you, sitting beside you. Maybe you want to go for a walk outside or read Scripture in a quiet corner.

Family Challenge: Have a staring contest as a family. Sit or stand facing each other in a circle or across from each other in pairs. Choose someone to say “Go!” to begin. Rules: Keep your eyes on your opponent’s eyes. No laughing, talking, or blinking on purpose. The first person to blink, look away, or laugh loses. Play best two out of three or three out of five rounds for fun. Rotate opponents so everyone gets a turn. Add funny faces or silly challenges after each round to make it more playful.

DEUTERONOMY

Before the Israelites enter the land of Canaan, Moses gives a series of speeches that is our book of Deuteronomy. Moses repeats and reminds the people of the Law that God had given on Mount Sinai forty years before.

Deuteronomy 6:4-5

ESV: Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

NIV: Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

NLT: Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength.

God is One

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—yet God is one God. And the relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in perfect union shows us what love is.

The mystery of the Trinity is the central theme of the Christian faith. God is love: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Triune God desires to unite each of us to His love. We are baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. He has created us to love Him with our whole selves, just as He has given Himself for us and continually intercedes for and comforts us. God is One. God is Love.

Reflect: How do you understand the Trinity? How can you both seek to understand the Trinity and yet leave room for mystery in who God is?

Family Challenge: Look up physical symbols of the Trinity used across various cultures. Then pick one symbol to draw or make a craft with.

Here are some ideas you can look up and choose from: shamrock, a cord of three strands, trefoil, triquetra/trinity knot, Borromean rings, Trinity of Persons (a combination of symbols such as a hand of God, a cross, and a dove in a triangular form), scallop shell with three drops, entwined circles, shield of the Trinity.

NEW TESTAMENT

The second major section of the Bible is the New Testament, although it is only about a third of the size of the Old Testament. It was written in the first century AD in Koine (common) Greek within the context of the Roman Empire. It centers on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth and the spread of His message through the early Christian movement.

The first four books—called Gospels—present complementary accounts of Jesus’s life: His teaching, miracles, and identity as Israel’s promised Messiah. Each Gospel narrates His crucifixion and resurrection, emphasizing that these events fulfill the hopes expressed in the Old Testament.

Much of the rest of the New Testament are letters from leaders of the early church as they work out how the death and resurrection of Jesus bring about salvation to all people. These are written to both churches and individuals, often in response to specific situations and conflicts that have arisen.

MATTHEW

Matthew tells the story of Jesus in a way that reminds his readers of how God worked among Israel in the Old Testament.

Matthew 6:33

ESV: But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

NIV: But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

NLT: Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

Put the Big Rocks in First

Have you ever seen the little demonstration where someone tries to cram a bunch of things (big rocks, pebbles, sand, and water) in a glass jar? If you add the water and sand or pebbles first and then try to add the big rocks, there won't be enough room. But if you add the big rocks first, everything fits.

Sometimes we try to fit God into our already too-busy lives. We see if we have time for worship, or Bible class, or prayer, or quiet time alone with God. If we don't have time, we skip worship, Bible class, prayer, or quiet time. But we must add the big rocks first! We need to seek first God's kingdom. When we seek that first, everything else will fit. God will give you everything you need.

Reflect: How can you rearrange your schedule and rearrange your thoughts to make sure you are seeking first the kingdom of God? Make a schedule of how you will spend your time next week. Can you add the most important things first?

Family Challenge: Do the rock demonstration with your family. Here are the directions if you've never done it before:

1. Show the empty jar or container. Ask: "If this jar represents your life, what should go in first?" (Don't explain yet.)
2. Put in the big rocks. (Maybe one very large rock and two or three smaller ones). Drop them in one by one. The jar will look full.
3. Add the small rocks/gravel. Pour them in and gently shake the jar so they settle into the gaps.
4. Add the sand. Pour it in slowly so it fills the smaller spaces.
5. Pour in the water. Let it soak all the way to the top.
6. Now explain.

If the biggest rock is the Kingdom of God, what are the other large rocks for your family? Family time? Time with community/church friends? Prayer? What are the most important things for your family? How is that reflected in your weekly schedule? Talk about why it is so important to say no to some activities so that you have time to say yes to the most important things. Pray for God to give you courage and strength to put the "big rocks" in first.

After you've done the demonstration with the big rocks first, try to do the opposite: Dump it all out and start at step six and go backwards. Does it all fit in? No! The big rock will never fit unless you put it in first.

MARK

Mark, the shortest Gospel and possibly the first recorded one, focuses on the miracles and parables of Jesus.

Mark 10:45

ESV: For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

NIV: For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

NLT: For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Servant Leaders

Many people like to be in charge. It feels good to be respected and in control. It can feel powerful to be at the top and tell other people what to do. But Jesus calls His followers to a different kind of leadership: servant leadership. He told His disciples that whoever wants to be first must be the servant of all. And He set the example by washing His disciples' feet.

He shows us the mystery of His upside-down kingdom: the meek and humble are exalted, and the exalted are brought low. We do not measure our success by how important we are in this world or by how much power we have; we measure our success by how much we are like Jesus, who was willing to humble himself in service to others.

Reflect: How are you tempted to claim power, prestige, or control? What do you need to let go of in order to follow in the way of Jesus's servant leadership?

Family Challenge: Read Philippians 2:3-11 together. This week can you take turns serving each other, emptying yourselves, and following in the way of Jesus? Maybe that means doing the chore no one else wants to do or volunteering to go last. Maybe you want to wash each other's feet as a show of your service to each other (John 13). Can you practice serving the way Jesus did with a good attitude, knowing that your service brings glory to God?

LUKE

Luke tells the story of Jesus, focusing especially on how the gospel is a reversal for those who are out of power or on the margins, like women, foreigners, and the poor.

Luke 19:10

ESV: For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

NIV: For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

NLT: For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.

Jesus's Purpose

Imagine you are injured severely. You can't get to help on your own, but if you don't get help, you may die. Now imagine a doctor coming to you from far away. The doctor has the right training, the right knowledge, and the right medicine. The doctor even knows your name, knows who you are, and already loves you. Would you refuse to let the doctor treat your injuries? Jesus desires to care for you. Jesus wants to bring you healing like this doctor.

He came to seek and save those who are lost. That's why He came. We don't need to be ashamed to come to Him because we are sinners. He knows we are sinners—that's why he came to save us! Every time we fail, we can return to God again. He is like the old father in Luke 15 waiting and willing to run to us to welcome us home, no matter what we've done. When we reject God's love and forgiveness, He is still waiting for us to return to Him. Don't let your shame or fear keep you from accepting God's love. He already knows you are a sinner. That's why He made a way for you to come to Him.

Reflect: What keeps you from coming to Jesus as a sinner in need of forgiveness? Is it hard to see yourself as a sinner and confess your sins? Is it hard to see God as a loving father ready to welcome you and extend forgiveness?

Family Challenge: Play hide and seek outside as a family. If you can't go outside, hide a coin or a small toy (lamb) somewhere in your house. Take turns hiding it and finding it. Talk about Jesus coming to find you when you are "lost."

JOHN

John emphasizes Jesus as the Son of God who has existed from the beginning. While the other Gospel writers include many short miracles and sayings, John spends more time unpacking a few theologically significant events.

John 14:6

ESV: Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

NIV: Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

NLT: Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.”

The Only Way

Have you ever done a fall corn maze? It can be both exciting and a little scary to be in a field of tall corn and not know which way to go to get out of the maze. There are many paths to take, and from your perspective on the ground below the towering corn, you can't see which one leads to the exit. You have to try one path and then maybe retrace your steps to try again if you are wrong. It's easy to get lost! However, if you could see the whole corn field from above or if you had a map of the maze, it would be easy to see which path is the right one to take.

Like the view from above the maze, the Bible is clear: the way to God is through Jesus, God's Son. Don't waste your time on wrong turns and dead-end paths. Jesus will lead us to the way, the truth, and the life—and life everlasting with our Father.

Reflect: In a postmodern world of options, choice, and subjective opinions, why is Jesus's claim so radical and hard to accept? How is His claim both exclusive and inclusive? (See Luke 5:32.)

Family Challenge: Print off some simple mazes your family can do together. Place them on the dining table at each meal so you can complete the maze and recite this verse. And the next time you attend a fall festival corn maze, remind your family of this verse. You may also want to read Acts 4:12 and 1 Timothy 2:5 as a family this week. Talk about the confidence we have because we know that Jesus is the way to God the Father.

ACTS

In Acts, Luke continues the story he began in his Gospel by telling how the early followers of Jesus are empowered by the Holy Spirit to act like Jesus did.

Acts 2:38

ESV: And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

NIV: Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

NLT: Peter replied, “Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Baptism

When Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased,” as God’s Spirit descended on Jesus like a dove and rested on Him (Matthew 3:13-17). This turning point event marked the beginning of Jesus’s public ministry. It confirmed the identity of Jesus as the Son of God and the Messiah. It fulfilled prophecy that the coming one would baptize with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus’s baptism provides an example for believers to follow in His steps (Matthew 3:15). When we are baptized, we enter the kingdom of God as beloved sons and daughters. And we are given the Holy Spirit as a gift, which is a deposit and guarantee of our inheritance which is to come (Ephesians 1:13-14). God’s seal is on all those who are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He has claimed us as His own—what a promise!

Reflect: Think about when you were baptized. Take time to meditate on the fact that you are now a child of God and that God has adopted you as a beloved son or daughter. Thank God that He has added you to His family and claimed you for Himself.

Family Challenge: Share the story of your baptism with your family. Take time to answer any questions your children have about baptism. If you can, watch a baptism as a family and talk to your children about what is happening.