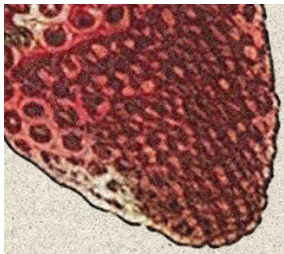
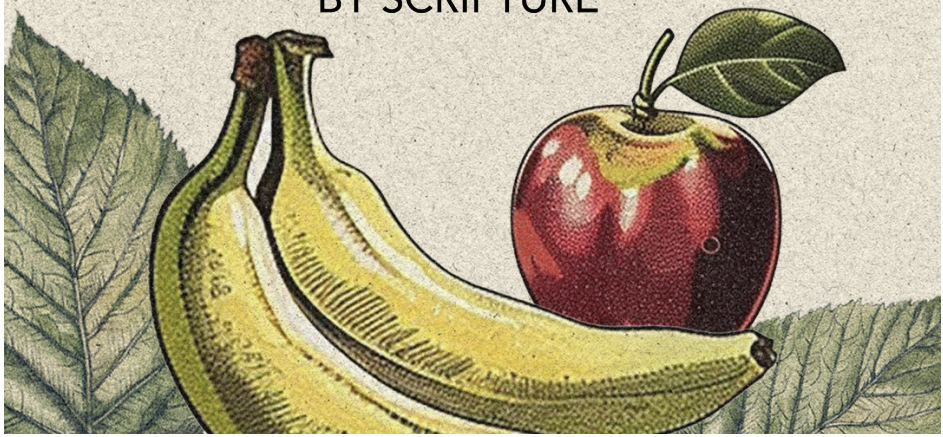


PLANTED

GROWING A FAITH THAT LASTS

SHAPED
BY SCRIPTURE



SHAPED
BY SCRIPTURE

Dr. Scott K. Thomas II

LONEOAK
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

May

AI Ethical Guidelines[1]

As emerging technologies like Al find their way into the realm of ministry and theological writing, I've developed personal guidelines to preserve the integrity of this devotional work:

1. Avoid plagiarism and ensure authenticity: Al tools are helpful for idea generation, word choice, and structural planning, but I avoid copying Al-generated content verbatim. The goal is not expediency but authenticity. My personal study, meditation, and prayer are indispensable to every page written.

2. Maintain human oversight and moral responsibility: Al lacks moral agency and theological conviction. Human discernment is necessary to evaluate the appropriateness, tone, and truthfulness of all content.

3. Use Al to enhance, not replace, human creativity: Al serves as a helpful assistant but never replaces the divine inspiration that flows from prayerful engagement with the text. The Holy Spirit-not a machine-is the true illumination of Scripture.

These guidelines ensure that Shaped by Scripture is not only a tool of spiritual formation but also a product of integrity and pastoral care.

' I have chosen to include this disclosure and set self-imposed guidelines because the use of Al in writing and research remains a point of ethical concern and public skepticism. In the interest of transparency and pastoral integrity, I believe it is important to clarify how these tools were used in a supportive— not substitutive— role in the development of this work.

Shaped by Scripture

Introduction to *Shaped by Scripture*

Shaped by Scripture exists to help you plant God's Word deep in your heart so it can transform your life. This resource is designed to guide you toward Scripture memorization and to equip you with the Word of God. Life in general—and the Christian life in particular—is spiritual warfare. Every believer faces continual pressures from the world, the culture, and the enemy of our souls. Yet God does not leave us defenseless. He gives us His Word to shape us, strengthen us, and sharpen us for victory.

The Bible says in Proverbs 7:2-3, "Keep my commandments and live; keep my teaching as the apple of your eye; bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart." Notice how this verse begins with both a command and a promise: *Keep the Lord's commandments—and live.* When God's Word is hidden in your heart, it becomes your shield, your guide, and your joy.

Why We Created *Shaped by Scripture*

In an effort to promote Scripture memorization and spiritual growth, *Shaped by Scripture* was developed to guide participants in learning, understanding, and applying God's Word. Over the course of a year, you will explore 12 unique themes covering 50 selected verses (with mid-year and end-of-year breaks for reflection). Each monthly booklet introduces a new theme, providing both an "entry point" for new participants and a "re-engagement point" for returning participants.

How to Use This Resource

Each week follows a simple rhythm designed to help you memorize Scripture and grasp its meaning:

- **Day 1 – Memorization & Meditation:** Learn the verse, reflect on the weekly theme, and receive prompts to begin memorization.

- **Day 2 – Contextual Understanding:** Discover the historical and biblical context so you can see how the verse fits into the larger story of Scripture.
- **Day 3 – Theological Insight:** Based on context, explore what the passage teaches about God, His character, and His purposes.
- **Day 4 – Personal Application:** Using the Inductive Bible Study method (Observe, Interpret, Apply), discover how the verse directly speaks into your life.
- **Day 5 – Recap & Reinforcement:** Review, rehearse, and reinforce what you've learned to lock the verse and its truths into your heart.

A Word of Encouragement

For some, memorizing Scripture comes naturally. For the rest of us, it feels daunting. Be encouraged—*Shaped by Scripture* is designed to support learners at every level. By investing a few focused minutes each day, you will develop the skill of Scripture memorization and also a deeper appreciation of God's Word. Over time, you'll look back and realize you've retained far more than you expected, and more importantly, you'll be shaped by the living Word of God.

Dr. Scott K. Thomas II
Senior Pastor

Planted: Introduction

Growing a Faith that Lasts

May 4–29, 2026

The Christian life is often described in Scripture using the image of a planted tree. This image helps us understand that strong faith does not grow quickly or by chance. It develops over time as a believer is rooted in God's truth, shaped by His Word, and sustained by His grace. A planted life is stable, fruitful, and able to endure the changing seasons of life. This theme, *Planted: Growing a Faith that Lasts*, is designed to help believers understand how to cultivate that kind of enduring faith.

Each week in this study highlights an essential part of spiritual growth, showing how God forms a lasting faith in His people. In week one, we begin with being *rooted in the Word* (Psalm 1:2–3). This passage teaches that the person who delights in God's Word is like a tree planted by streams of water. The Word of God is the foundation of a planted life. Without deep roots in Scripture, faith remains shallow and unstable.

In week two, we consider *spiritual influence* (Matthew 5:14–16). Jesus calls His followers the light of the world. A life that is firmly rooted in God's Word will naturally shine. Spiritual growth is not only personal; it becomes visible and beneficial to others. A planted faith produces a faithful witness.

In week three, we turn to *trusting God with the future* (Proverbs 3:5–6). Trust is essential for endurance. As believers grow, they learn to rely not on their own understanding but on God's wisdom and guidance. This trust steadies the heart when life feels uncertain.

Finally, in week four, we focus on *raising the next generation* (Psalm 78:4). Lasting faith does not stop with us. It is meant to be shared. God calls His people to tell the coming generation about His works so that faith will continue to grow beyond our own lives.

Week 1	*Rooted in the Word*	Psalm 1:2–3
Week 2	*Spiritual Influence*	Matthew 5:14–16
Week 3	*Trusting God with the Future*	Proverbs 3:5–6
Week 4	*Raising the Next Generation*	Psalm 78:4

"*But his delight is in the law of 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.*" Psalm 1:2–3

A husband once decided it was time to get in shape. With great enthusiasm, he went out and bought a treadmill—top of the line, digital display, multiple settings, the whole package. He set it up in the house, admired it for a moment, and confidently told his wife, "This is going to change everything."

For the first few days, he used it—not much, but enough to say he had started. Then life got busy. Work picked up. Evenings filled up. The treadmill became less of a priority. Soon it became a place to hang a jacket. Then a couple of shirts. Before long, it was no longer exercise equipment—it was furniture.

Weeks later, his wife looked at the now fully-clothed treadmill and asked, "I thought you were going to use that thing."

The husband replied, "I have every intention. Doesn't that count for something?"

The answer, of course, is no. Intention without action changes nothing.

This simple, humorous scenario exposes a deeper spiritual reality. Many Christians treat God's Word the same way: we own a copy of it; we respect it; we intend to read it, study it, and live by it. But too often, it sits unopened, unpracticed, and unapplied. Like the treadmill, it becomes part of the background of our lives rather than the engine that shapes them.

Psalm 1:2–3 confronts this tendency directly. It does not describe a person who merely appreciates Scripture. It describes a person who is *rooted* in it.

The psalm begins by saying, "But his delight is in the law of the Lord." The word *delight* is important. It moves beyond duty into desire. The blessed person does not approach God's Word as a burden or a checklist, but as something good, life-giving, and worthy of affection. This is not shallow excitement, but a settled joy in what God has spoken.

This challenges us. Many believers know they *should* read the Bible, but few would honestly say they *delight* in it. Yet Scripture teaches that spiritual stability begins not with obligation, but with affection. What we love, we return to. What we delight in, we pursue.

The verse continues, "and on his law he meditates day and night." Meditation here is not emptying the mind but filling it—turning God's Word over again and again in thought. It is slow intentional reflection. It means reading, thinking, asking questions, and allowing truth to settle deeply into the heart.

"Day and night" mean consistent engagement. God's Word becomes a regular rhythm of life, not an occasional event. The person described here does not merely *intend* to engage Scripture; he actually does so, repeatedly and thoughtfully.

This is where many believers struggle. We may attend Bible studies, listen to sermons, or own multiple translations, yet we never move into consistent meditation. We gather information but do not internalize it. The result is a kind of spiritual shallowness—knowing much but being shaped by little.

Psalm 1 then gives a powerful image: "He is like a tree planted by streams of water." This is not a wild tree growing wherever it happens to land. It is *planted*—intentionally positioned in a place where it can thrive. The streams of water represent a constant, reliable source of nourishment.

A life *rooted* in God's Word is not left to chance. It is deliberately placed near the source of life. Just as a tree depends on water, the believer depends on Scripture for spiritual strength and growth.

The verse continues, "that yields its fruit in its season." Fruit takes time. It does not appear overnight. But when a tree is properly rooted and nourished, fruit is inevitable. In the same way, a life grounded in God's Word will eventually produce visible results—character, wisdom, endurance, and influence.

Notice that the fruit comes "in its season." Growth is not rushed. There are periods of waiting, learning, and unseen development. But the promise remains: a life *rooted* in Scripture will bear fruit at the right time.

Finally, the psalm reads, "and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers." This does not promise ease or success as the world

defines them. Rather, it speaks of spiritual resilience. Even in difficult seasons, the person anchored in God's Word does not dry up. There is stability, endurance, and a quiet strength that holds firm.

In contrast, a life built on intention alone—without engagement—remains weak and vulnerable. Like the unused treadmill, it holds potential but produces no transformation. Psalm 1 invites us into something better. Not good intentions, but *rooted* lives. Not occasional exposure, but daily meditation. Not shallow familiarity, but deep formation.

Memorization & Meditation

1. Read the verse aloud - Read Psalm 1:2–3 slowly, out loud, at least twice. Hearing Scripture engages your mind and heart together. Pay attention to the rhythm and weight of each phrase.

2. Write the verse down - Write the verse by hand. Do not rush. Writing helps slow your thinking and strengthens memory. Notice which words stand out as you write.

3. Reflect on the meaning - Ask yourself: What does it mean for me to delight in God's Word? Where have I relied on intention instead of action?

4. Strategy: Break the passage into two parts (verse 2 and verse 3). Memorize one phrase at a time, repeating it morning and evening, adding a new phrase each day.

5. Pray the verse - Turn Psalm 1:2–3 into a prayer. Below is a sample you can use as a help in developing your own.

Lord, give me a true delight in Your Word. Root my life deeply in Your truth. Help me to meditate on it daily, to bear fruit in season, and to remain steady and strong in every circumstance. In Jesus' name, amen.

"*But his delight is in the law of 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.*" Psalm 1:2–3

To understand Psalm 1:2–3 rightly, we must step back and consider its place within the larger context of Scripture. Psalm 1 serves as an introduction to the entire book of Psalms. It is not merely one psalm among many; it functions as a doorway, setting the tone for everything that follows. The Holy Spirit, through the human author, places this psalm first to establish a foundational truth - there are two ways to live - the way of the righteous or the way of the wicked.

Psalm 1 is written in the style of wisdom literature, similar to the book of Proverbs. Its purpose is to teach, guide, and shape the reader's understanding of life before God. Rather than focusing on a specific historical event, it presents a timeless contrast. This means the psalm is less about a single moment in history and more about a pattern of life that applies across all times and places.

Within this framework, verses 2–3 describe the righteous person. The phrase "law of the Lord" refers not only to legal commands but to God's revealed instruction—His Word as a whole. For the original audience in ancient Israel, this would have primarily meant the Torah (the first five books of the Bible). These writings were central to Israel's identity, guiding their worship, ethics, and daily life as God's covenant people.

This covenant context is important. Israel was not simply a group of individuals trying to live morally good lives; they were a people set apart by God, called to live according to His Word. To "delight" in the law, then, was to embrace God's authority and to find joy in living under His rule. Meditation on the law was a way of remaining faithful to that covenant relationship.

The image of a tree planted by streams of water would have been especially meaningful in the ancient Near Eastern setting, where water was not always abundant. A tree near a steady water source would be

unusually strong and fruitful, even in dry conditions. This picture reinforces the idea that a life rooted in God's Word is sustained and nourished, regardless of external circumstances.

Understanding this context helps us avoid a shallow reading of the passage. Psalm 1:2–3 is more than general advice for a better life. It is calling God's people to a life shaped by His Word, grounded in relationship with Him, and marked by steady, enduring growth.

Take Action: Look up Psalm 1:1–6 in your Bible and read the full passage slowly, noting the contrast between the righteous and the wicked.

Reflection Questions:

1. How does knowing that Psalm 1 introduces the entire Book of Psalms shape your understanding of its message?

2. Why is the image of a tree planted by water especially meaningful in its original historical setting?

Memorization Reminder: Continue working on Psalm 1:2–3 by reviewing what you memorized yesterday and adding the next phrase today. Repeat in the morning and again in the evening.

"*But his delight is in the law of 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.*" Psalm 1:2–3

Psalm 1:2–3 presents a clear theological truth: God's Word carries divine power that actively shapes the life of the one who receives it with ongoing meditation. This passage does not describe Scripture as passive information but as a living means through which God forms His people.

First, we must recognize the divine source of God's Word. The "law of the Lord" comes from God Himself. Scripture consistently affirms this origin. Paul writes, "All scripture is breathed out by God" (2 Timothy 3:16). Peter adds that "men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). These statements establish that the Bible does not originate in human imagination or wisdom. God reveals Himself through His Word. Because God speaks through Scripture, the Word carries His authority, character, and intention.

Second, Psalm 1 teaches the transformative power of God's Word in the life of the believer. The person who delights in and meditates on Scripture becomes "like a tree planted by streams of water." This image communicates stability, nourishment, and growth. The transformation does not occur through occasional exposure but through steady, repeated engagement. God uses His Word as an instrument of change.

Other passages confirm this doctrine. Hebrews 4:12 states, "The word of God is living and active… discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." God's Word penetrates beyond outward behavior and addresses the inner life. Romans 12:2 explains that transformation takes place "by the renewal of your mind." As the believer meditates on Scripture, God reshapes thinking, desires, and actions. Jesus Himself prays, "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth" (John 17:17). Sanctification—the process of becoming holier—happens through engagement with God's revealed truth.

This transformation produces visible results. Psalm 1:3 describes fruit, endurance, and flourishing. These outcomes align with the broader teaching of Scripture. Galatians 5:22–23 describes the fruit of the Spirit, which develop in a life shaped by God's truth. Colossians 3:16 instructs believers to "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly," indicating an ongoing, active presence that influences every part of life.

The theological insight of Psalm 1:2–3 is direct: when God's Word takes root in a believer's life through consistent meditation, God Himself works through that Word to produce growth, stability, and spiritual fruit. The transformation reflects the power and presence of God.

Reflection Questions:

1. What does Scripture teach about the divine origin of God's Word?

2. How does meditation on God's Word lead to transformation according to Psalm 1 and the supporting verses?

3. What kinds of fruit or outcome does God produce in a life shaped by His Word?

Memorization Reminder: Continue building Psalm 1:2–3 phrase by phrase. Review all previous portions aloud, then add the next section. Repetition throughout the day will help secure it in your memory.

"*But his delight is in the law of 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.*" Psalm 1:2–3

Psalm 1:2–3 invites us into more than understanding; it calls for personal response. Using the inductive Bible study method, we move from observation to interpretation to application.

First, observation. The passage describes a person who delights in the law of the Lord and meditates on it day and night. This person is compared to a tree planted by streams of water, producing fruit in season, with leaves that do not wither, and a life marked by steady flourishing. The emphasis rests on consistent engagement with God's Word and the resulting stability and fruitfulness.

Second, interpretation. As we have seen, this passage teaches that God's Word, given by Him and sustained by His Holy Spirit, becomes the source of spiritual life and growth. Meditation is not passive reading but active, repeated reflection that allows truth to take root. The image of the tree shows that spiritual strength does not come from circumstances but from connection to a steady source—God Himself through His Word.

Now we turn to application. The central question becomes: Is my life truly rooted in God's Word, or am I living on good intentions alone?

It is possible to agree with Scripture, respect it, and even study it occasionally, while remaining spiritually shallow. The difference between a thriving tree and a struggling one is not intention, but placement. The tree in Psalm 1 is *planted*—intentionally positioned near life-giving water. In the same way, a believer must intentionally order life around regular, meaningful engagement with Scripture.

This means developing rhythms, not relying on feelings. It may involve setting aside a consistent time each day, removing distractions, and choosing to meditate on smaller portions of Scripture rather than rushing through larger sections. It also means asking simple but honest

questions: What does this passage reveal about God? What does it reveal about me? How should I respond today?

Personal application also requires patience. Fruit appears "in its season." Growth often happens slowly and quietly. Yet the promise of Psalm 1 remains firm—when a life is rooted in God's Word, God produces lasting change.

Today, the invitation is clear: move from intention to action. Choose one specific way to engage God's Word and follow through. Over time, that small act of faithfulness becomes the root system of a stable and fruitful life.

Reflection Questions:

1. What specific habits or rhythms can help you move from intending to read God's Word to consistently meditating on it?

2. In what ways does the image of a planted tree challenge how you currently approach spiritual growth?

3. What is one practical step you can take today to root your life more deeply in Scripture?

Memorization Reminder: You are nearing the end of the week. Review Psalm 1:2–3 in full today, repeating it slowly and carefully. Tomorrow, you will aim to recall it from memory with confidence.

"*But his delight is in the law of 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.*" Psalm 1:2–3

This week, we have seen that a lasting faith grows through consistent delight in and meditation on God's Word. Scripture is not merely to be known but lived. When we root our lives in it, God produces stability, growth, and fruit over time.

Recite from Memory
Say Psalm 1:2–3 aloud from memory. Take your time and recall each phrase carefully.

Write It Out
Write the passage from memory. Then check your accuracy and correct any missed words.

Reflect
What has God shown you this week about your relationship with His Word? What needs to change moving forward?

Share It
Share one insight or application from this passage with a friend, family member, or group.

Final Prayer
Father, thank You for Your Word that gives life and direction. Help me to remain rooted in Your truth, to delight in it daily, and to live it faithfully. Produce lasting fruit in my life for Your glory. In Jesus' name, amen.

Spiritual Influence May 11, 2026

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden."

Matthew 5:14

In the late 1990s—more precisely, 1998—a young child received a glow-in-the-dark T-shirt as a party favor. Naturally, he was thrilled about the gift. It was fun, unique, and just a little bit magical. But that excitement changed at bedtime. When the lights went out, the glowing skeleton across his chest lit up the entire bedroom like a low-budget horror film. The child screamed. Mom and dad laughed (after confirming there was no real trauma). And in that moment, they learned two simple lessons: first, do not give children scary glowing clothes; and second, light shines whether you are ready for it or not. All it needs is the right exposure.

That simple, humorous moment provides a helpful doorway into one of Jesus' most striking statements. In Matthew 5:14, Jesus looks at an ordinary group of followers—men and women with no social power, no cultural prestige, and no formal influence—and says something extraordinary: "You are the light of the world."

This declaration comes within the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7), where Jesus describes the character and calling of those who belong to His kingdom. His audience consists largely of common people in first-century Galilee. They live under Roman rule. They do not shape public policy. They do not control institutions. Yet Jesus assigns them a role that carries global significance. He does not say they might become light. He states plainly: "You are the light of the world."

In the ancient world, light carried deep symbolic meaning. Light represented truth, purity, and the presence of God. Darkness represented ignorance, sin, and separation. Cities depended on visible light for safety and direction. A city set on a hill could be seen from a great distance, especially at night. It could not hide, even if it tried. In this context, Jesus communicates both identity and responsibility. His followers reflect His light, and that light is meant to be seen.

This truth carries a clear contemporary demand. Christians do not withdraw from the world; they live within it as visible witnesses. Spiritual

influence does not begin with position or platform. It begins with presence. Every believer, regardless of status, carries the responsibility to reflect the character and truth of Christ. In a world often marked by confusion, fear, and moral darkness, visible faith becomes both necessary and powerful.

This is why the theme of spiritual influence matters. Influence is not first about leadership titles or public recognition. It is about the steady, consistent impact of a life shaped by Christ. Light influences simply by being present. It reveals what is hidden. It provides direction. It exposes what is true. In the same way, a life rooted in Christ quietly but clearly shapes the environment around it.

Jesus' statement in Matthew 5:14 unfolds in two key parts. First, "You are the light of the world." This is a statement of identity. Believers reflect the light of Christ Himself (John 8:12). The source of the light is not human goodness or effort; it is the transforming work of God. Second, "A city set on a hill cannot be hidden." This is a statement of visibility. The nature of light is to be seen. A city set on a hill stands in contrast to the darkness around it. Its presence is obvious. Its influence is unavoidable.

Together, these phrases establish a foundational truth: spiritual influence flows from a visible, Christ-centered life. Just as that glowing T-shirt illuminated the room whether the child wanted it to or not, the life of a believer shines in ways that cannot be fully contained. The question is not whether the light will be visible. The question is what kind of light it will be.

As we begin this week, we focus on the call to live as people whose lives reflect the light of Christ. Spiritual influence begins not with striving for recognition, but with faithful presence. It grows as our lives align with the truth of God's Word. And it becomes most powerful when it points others to Him.

Memorization & Meditation
Primary Verse: Matthew 5:14
Expert Level: Matthew 5:14–16

1. **Read the verse aloud**: Read the verse out loud and to yourself. Notice how the different methods of reading help us think about the words we are seeing.

2. **Write the verse down**: Take a moment to write Matthew 5:14 (or Matthew 5:14–16) in your own handwriting. Writing slows your thinking and helps the words settle into your memory.

3. **Reflect on the meaning:** Consider what it means that Jesus calls you the "light of the world." How does this shape your understanding of your identity in Christ? In what ways does your daily life reflect—or fail to reflect—that reality?

4. **Strategy for Memorization:** Look at the verse throughout your weekly activities. Develop a simple, intentional plan for breaking the verse into small sections so you can practice and retain it throughout the week.

5. **Pray the Verse:**

Lord, You have called me the "light of the world." Help me to live in a way that reflects Your truth and Your character. Let my life be visible in the right ways, pointing others to You. Teach me to walk faithfully so that Your light shines clearly through me. In Jesus' name, amen.

"*You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.*"
Matthew 5:14

Matthew 5:14 emerges from a rich and carefully structured setting within the Gospel of Matthew. The verse appears early in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7), a collection of Jesus' teachings that describe the character and calling of those who belong to the kingdom of heaven. This sermon follows the calling of the first disciples and a season of growing public attention to Jesus' ministry. Crowds gather and Jesus responds by teaching with clarity and authority about life under God's reign.

The immediate context begins with the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1–12), where Jesus describes the inner qualities of kingdom citizens. He speaks of humility, mercy, purity of heart, and deep hunger for righteousness. These qualities shape the inner life of a disciple. As the passage continues, Jesus turns outward, describing how this transformed inner life becomes visible in the world. Matthew 5:13 introduces the image of salt, emphasizing preservation and distinctiveness. Matthew 5:14 then introduces the image of light, emphasizing visibility and influence.

The setting also carried geographical and cultural significance. Jesus teaches in a region where elevated towns and villages were common. At night, these cities would be visible from a distance because of the lamps within them. The image of "a city set on a hill" would have been familiar and concrete to His listeners. It communicated something obvious and observable. Light, by its nature, reveals and guides. A city on a hill serves as a point of reference for travelers, offering both direction and assurance.

Within the broader biblical context, light often represents God's presence and truth. The Old Testament frequently describes God as light and calls His people to walk in His ways (Psalm 27:1; Isaiah 60:1–3). By declaring His followers to be "the light of the world," Jesus places them within this larger story. They participate in God's purpose of revealing His truth to the nations.

The surrounding verses (Matthew 5:15–16) further develop the meaning. Jesus speaks of a lamp placed on a stand, giving light to

everyone in the house. He then connects visible light with visible good works that lead others to glorify the Father in heaven. The context shows that light is both identity and activity. It flows from a transformed heart and expresses itself through a life that points to God.

Understanding this context clarifies the weight of Jesus' words. He speaks to ordinary people and assigns them a visible role within God's unfolding mission. Their lives, shaped by His teaching, become instruments through which others see and respond to God's truth.

Take Action: Open your Bible and read Matthew 5:1–16. Pay attention to how verse 14 connects with the Beatitudes and the images of salt and light.

Reflection Questions:

1. How do the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1–12) prepare the reader to understand what it means to be "the light of the world"?

2. What does the image of a "city set on a hill" communicate about visibility and influence in the original setting?

Memorization Reminder: Continue working on Matthew 5:14. Repeat the first phrase aloud several times today, then begin adding the second phrase. Consistent, daily repetition will help the verse take root in your memory.

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden."
Matthew 5:14

Matthew 5:14–16 presents a clear theological insight into the visible nature of a life transformed by Jesus Christ. Jesus declares, "You are the light of the world," and immediately connects that identity to a public reality: "A city set on a hill cannot be hidden." This teaching reveals that transformation through Christ carries an outward expression. The life shaped by His presence becomes observable in everyday relationships, decisions, and actions.

This visibility flows from a deeper spiritual truth. The light described in this passage does not originate within the believer. Scripture consistently identifies God as the source of light, revealing His holiness, truth, and life-giving presence. Jesus Himself declares: "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). When He calls His followers light, He speaks of a shared participation in His life. The believer reflects the light of Christ, much like the moon reflects the light of the sun. The brightness seen in a faithful life points beyond itself to its true source.

This connection between Christ's light and the believer's life establishes both identity and purpose. A transformed life does not remain private because the presence of Christ reshapes attitudes, priorities, and actions. The character described in the Beatitudes begins to take visible form. Mercy becomes evident in relationships. Purity of heart influences choices. A hunger for righteousness directs daily living. These qualities create a pattern of life that others can see and recognize.

Jesus further explains that this visible light expresses itself through good works. These works serve as tangible demonstrations of God's grace at work within a person. They include acts of kindness, integrity in conduct, and faithfulness in responsibility. Each expression becomes a reflection of God's character. As others observe these patterns, their attention is drawn toward God, leading them to "give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

The inherent visibility of a transformed life, therefore, is not about personal recognition. It is about faithful reflection. The believer lives in such a way that the presence of Christ becomes evident. Spiritual influence grows as this reflected light quietly and consistently points others to God. In this way, the ordinary rhythms of life become a means through which the glory and presence of God are made known.

Reflection Questions:

1. According to today's reading, why is the light in a believer's life described as reflective rather than self-generated?

2. What are some visible ways a transformed life expresses the character of Christ?

3. How do good works direct attention beyond the believer to God?

Memorization Reminder: Continue practicing Matthew 5:14 (or Matthew 5:14–16). Repeat the phrases aloud several times today and begin recalling the verse without looking.

"*You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.*"
Matthew 5:14

Matthew 5:14–16 invites careful observation, thoughtful interpretation, and personal response. Jesus speaks directly to His followers and gives them a clear identity: "You are the light of the world." He then uses familiar images—a city on a hill and a lamp on a stand—to illustrate the visible nature of that identity. Light, by design, shines. It reveals, guides, and makes what is hidden known. Jesus concludes by connecting this identity to action: "let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

This passage calls for reflection on the visible nature of a life shaped by Christ. The words of Jesus establish that faith carries a public dimension. Daily life communicates what a person believes and values. Words, decisions, and responses all contribute to a visible testimony. The identity given by Jesus shapes the way life is lived in every setting.

The passage also clarifies the source of this light. The light present in the life of a believer flows from the presence of Christ. Scripture consistently presents God as the source of light, revealing His truth, holiness, and life. As Christ works within a person, His character becomes evident through transformed attitudes and actions. This reality shapes understanding of influence. Influence grows through a life aligned with Christ and expressed through consistent faithfulness.

Jesus further emphasizes the purpose of visible faith through the mention of good works. These works take shape in ordinary, daily moments. Acts of kindness, integrity in responsibility, and faithfulness in relationships all serve as expressions of a life formed by Christ. Each action becomes an opportunity to reflect His character. As others observe these patterns, attention is directed toward God and He receives glory.

This passage encourages intentional living. A life shaped by Christ reflects His presence in both significant decisions and routine moments. Homes, workplaces, and communities become places where

this light is displayed. Habits formed by obedience and trust in God contribute to a steady and consistent witness.

Matthew 5:14–16 presents a vision of faithful, visible discipleship. The light of Christ shines through ordinary people as they walk in obedience. Through this steady reflection, God's presence and glory become known in the world.

Reflection Questions:

1. What aspects of daily life most clearly reveal what a person believes and values?

2. What kinds of actions reflect the character of Christ in ordinary settings?

3. How does the purpose of glorifying God shape the way good works are understood?

Memorization Reminder: Work to finalize memorization of Matthew 5:14. Recite the verse aloud from memory several times today. For those pursuing the longer passage, begin reciting Matthew 5:14–16 together. Review it at different points throughout the day to strengthen retention and prepare for the end of the week.

Recap & Reinforcement **May 15, 2026**

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden."

Matthew 5:14

This week has focused on the call to live as people shaped by the light of Christ. Matthew 5:14–16 has clarified identity, emphasized visible faith, and shown how everyday actions can reflect God's presence and lead others to glorify Him.

Recite from Memory

Say Matthew 5:14 aloud from memory. If you have worked on the extended passage, recite Matthew 5:14–16. Repeat it slowly and clearly, allowing each phrase to come to mind with confidence.

Write It Out

Write the verse from memory without looking. Afterward, check your accuracy and correct any missed words. This step helps strengthen both understanding and retention.

Reflect

Consider how this passage has shaped your understanding of spiritual influence. Think about how your daily life reflects the light of Christ and where growth may still be needed.

Share It

Share this verse with someone—a family member, friend, or fellow believer. Explain what it has meant to you this week and how it has influenced your thinking and actions.

Final Prayer

Father, thank You for calling Your people the "light of the world." Thank You for the gift of Your Word and the truth it reveals. Continue to shape lives so that Your presence is clearly seen in daily actions and attitudes. Strengthen obedience, deepen faith, and use each life to point others to You. Receive the glory through every word and deed. In Jesus' name, amen.

Trusting God with the Future May 18, 2026

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." Proverbs 3:5–6

Ferdinand de Lesseps stood among the most celebrated engineers of the nineteenth century. His successful leadership in constructing the Suez Canal brought him international acclaim and secured his reputation as a visionary capable of accomplishing monumental tasks. The Suez Canal connected the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea and transformed global trade. Nations honored him, investors trusted him, and the world regarded him as a proven leader in large-scale engineering projects. When discussion turned to constructing a canal across the Isthmus of Panama, de Lesseps appeared to be the obvious choice. His past success seemed to guarantee future achievement.

De Lesseps approached the Panama project with confidence shaped by his earlier accomplishment. He pursued a sea-level canal similar to Suez, trusting that the same methods would succeed in a vastly different environment. However, the terrain of Panama presented dense jungle, unpredictable weather, and severe disease. Engineers faced landslides, flooding, and immense logistical challenges. Despite mounting evidence that conditions required a different approach, de Lesseps continued forward with the same strategy. His confidence in past success guided his decisions. The project collapsed under mismanagement, financial scandal, and overwhelming difficulty. Thousands of workers lost their lives, and the effort ended in failure. His reputation suffered, and the canal required an entirely different plan under new leadership years later.

This historical account provides a sobering lesson. Human beings often look to past experiences as a foundation for future confidence. Success can create a sense of security that shapes decision-making. People carry forward methods, assumptions, and expectations without fully considering present realities. In the Christian life, this tendency can quietly shift trust away from God and toward personal history. A believer may rely on previous spiritual victories, past wisdom, or familiar patterns

instead of seeking the Lord with a present and dependent heart. Past experiences hold value, yet they cannot replace active trust in God.

Proverbs 3:5–6 calls believers into a deeper and more enduring posture. These verses invite a life shaped by continual trust in the Lord rather than confidence rooted in personal understanding or experience. The passage directs attention away from self-reliance and toward wholehearted dependence on God.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart" establishes the foundation. Trust involves confident reliance upon God's character, wisdom, and faithfulness. The phrase "with all your heart" speaks to the center of one's being, including thoughts, desires, and decisions. This trust requires full engagement rather than partial commitment. It calls for an intentional posture that places God at the center of every concern about the future.

"Do not lean on your own understanding" addresses the natural inclination to depend on personal insight. Human understanding often draws from past experiences, knowledge, and perception. These resources can inform wise action, yet they cannot serve as the ultimate guide. Leaning suggests placing weight upon something for support. Scripture teaches that human understanding cannot bear that weight. God alone provides the stability necessary for navigating life's uncertainties.

"In all your ways acknowledge him" expands the scope of trust into every area of life. The phrase "all your ways" includes daily decisions, long-term plans, relationships, and personal ambitions. Acknowledging God involves recognizing His authority, seeking His will, and submitting to His guidance. This acknowledgment moves beyond occasional prayer and becomes a consistent orientation of life toward God.

"And he will make your paths straight" presents the promise that follows faithful trust. God directs and establishes the course of those who rely upon Him. A straight path reflects clarity, purpose, and alignment with God's will. This promise assures believers that God actively leads those who entrust their future to Him.

The contrast between de Lesseps' approach and the wisdom of Proverbs becomes clear. Confidence rooted in past success can lead to misdirection when it replaces dependence on God. The Christian life calls for continual trust that engages the present moment and looks forward

with confidence in God's guidance. Trusting God with the future requires humility, attentiveness, and a willingness to seek Him above all else.

Memorization & Meditation

1. **Read the verses aloud:** Read Proverbs 3:5–6 slowly and clearly several times. Allow the words to shape your understanding as you hear them spoken.

2. **Write the verses down:** Write the verses by hand. Pay attention to each phrase as you write. This practice strengthens memory and deepens focus.

3. **Reflect on the meaning:** Consider what it means to trust the Lord with all your heart. Think about areas where you rely on your own understanding and how this passage calls you to respond.

4. **Strategy for Memorization:** To help memorize the full passage consider dividing the verse into smaller more manageable portions. Below is an example:
   - Trust in the Lord with all your heart.
   - Do not lean on your own understanding.
   - In all your ways acknowledge him.
   - And he will make your paths straight.

   Memorize one portion at a time, then combine them gradually.

5. **Pray the Verse:**

Lord, You are faithful and wise. Teach my heart to trust You fully. Guide me away from relying on my own understanding. Help me to acknowledge You in every part of my life. Direct my path according to Your will. In Jesus' name, amen.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." Proverbs 3:5–6

Proverbs 3:5–6 stands within the wisdom literature of the Old Testament, a collection of writings designed to form godly character through instruction, reflection, and lived obedience. The book of Proverbs is traditionally associated with King Solomon, who reigned over Israel during a time of peace and prosperity in the tenth century BC. Solomon received a reputation for wisdom that extended beyond Israel's borders, and Scripture presents him as a primary contributor to this collection of sayings (1 Kings 4:29–34). The intended audience includes young people learning how to live wisely, as well as the broader covenant community seeking to walk faithfully before God.

Proverbs functions as a guide for daily living under the authority of God. It teaches that wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord (Proverbs 1:7), which means a reverent awareness of God's holiness, authority, and moral order. Within this framework, Proverbs 3 presents a father addressing a son, offering instruction that shapes both heart and behavior. This relational setting adds weight to the words. The instruction carries the tone of personal investment, where the speaker desires the flourishing of the listener through faithful obedience to God. As we learned in January's *Shaped by Scripture* study, Proverbs should not be read as a list of promises; rather, the book is full of wisdom for godly living so that we may receive wisdom and blessing with godliness as our goal.

Proverbs 3:5–6 appears in a section that emphasizes trust, obedience, and reliance upon the Lord as the foundation for a stable and directed life. The surrounding verses reinforce this theme. Proverbs 3:1–4 calls for steadfast love and faithfulness to guide one's life. Proverbs 3:7–8 warns against self-reliance and urges a posture of humility before God.

These verses together form a unified message: a life oriented toward God produces clarity, health, and stability.

The historical and cultural context further strengthens the meaning. Ancient Israel understood life as lived under covenant with God. The people recognized that blessing and direction came through obedience to His revealed will. Daily decisions carried spiritual significance because they reflected one's relationship with the Lord. In this setting, the call to trust God with all one's heart addressed both internal belief and outward conduct. It invited the listener to place full confidence in God's wisdom rather than personal judgment.

Within the broader structure of Proverbs, these verses serve as a central statement of the book's message. They summarize the essence of wisdom by directing the reader toward wholehearted trust in God and consistent acknowledgement of His authority. The declaration that God will make paths straight reflects the covenant understanding that God actively guides those who seek Him. This guidance does not remove responsibility; it establishes a clear and purposeful direction shaped by divine wisdom.

Understanding this context deeps the gravity of Proverbs 3:5–6. These verses do not offer casual advice. They present a foundational principle for life under God's rule. The call to trust, reject self-reliance, and acknowledge God in all things speaks to the core of one's identity and direction. The original audience received these words as essential instruction for living well before God, and that same weight remains for readers today.

Take Action: Read Proverbs 3:1–12 in your Bible to understand the immediate context of these verses. Then read Proverbs 1:7 and James 1:5 to see how Scripture consistently presents wisdom as rooted in the fear of the Lord and dependence on Him.

Reflection Questions:

1. How does the father-to-son setting in Proverbs 3 shape the tone and importance of the instruction in verses 5–6?

2. What role does the fear of the Lord play in understanding why trust in God stands at the center of these verses?

Memorization Reminder: Continue working through Proverbs 3:5–6 by reviewing the first phrase and adding the next portion. Speak it aloud, write it again, and begin connecting the phrases together as one complete passage.

SHINING A LIGHT ON WHO JESUS REALLY IS

ILLUMINATION STATION™

JOHN 8:12

VBS
JUNE 15-19

This year's theme is "Illumination Station: Shining A Light On Who Jesus Really Is".
VBS is open to children in Kindergarten through completed 5th grade. It's going to be a week full of fun, faith, and unforgettable discoveries! Scan the QR Code to register or visit loneoakfbc.org/events.

LONEOAK FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Theological Insight **May 20, 2026**

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." Proverbs 3:5–6

Proverbs 3:5–6 presents a central theological truth grounded in the character of God: the Lord is fully trustworthy, and His nature provides a secure foundation for life. These verses call for trust that rests upon who God is rather than upon human perception or circumstances. Scripture consistently reveals God as faithful, wise, and sovereign, and this passage draws those attributes into a clear invitation to depend upon Him with confidence.

The command to trust the Lord with all the heart flows from the reality that God's character remains constant. He possesses perfect knowledge, unchanging faithfulness, and complete authority over all things. Trust becomes a rational and faithful response to this revealed character. The believer does not move toward uncertainty when trusting God. The believer stands upon the most stable ground available because God's wisdom surpasses human understanding, and His purposes unfold with precision and care.

This theological insight shapes the posture of the heart. A person who recognizes the trustworthiness of God begins to experience a settled confidence that does not shift with changing circumstances. God's character anchors the inner life, producing a steady sense of peace. This peace grows into decisive contentment, where the heart rests in God's guidance and provision. Contentment here reflects more than emotional calm. It reflects a deep assurance that God leads rightly and provides fully according to His will.

The notion that God will make paths straight reveals the active role of His guidance. God does not remain distant. He directs the lives of those who acknowledge Him. His leadership aligns the believer's path with His purposes, bringing clarity and direction. This guidance leads toward fulfillment that reflects God's design for human life. Fulfillment

arises from walking in step with the Creator, where each decision and direction fits within His wise plan.

The connection between God's character and human experience becomes clear. Trust in God produces contentment because His nature guarantees faithful leadership. The believer finds freedom from anxiety about the future through confidence in God's wisdom. This freedom allows for decisive living, where choices reflect trust rather than hesitation. A life shaped by trust in God moves forward with purpose, grounded in the assurance that He leads well.

Proverbs 3:5–6 therefore calls for more than belief. It calls for a life ordered by trust in the trustworthy God. His character invites full dependence, and that dependence produces a life marked by peace, direction, and fulfillment.

Reflection Questions:

1. How does the character of God provide a foundation for trusting Him with all your heart?

2. What does the passage describe as the connection between trusting God and experiencing contentment?

3. How does God's guidance contribute to a life of fulfillment according to Proverbs 3:5–6?

Memorization Reminder: Continue building the passage by reviewing each phrase learned so far and adding the next portion. Speak the full verse aloud, write it from memory, and begin practicing it as one complete statement of truth.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." Proverbs 3:5–6

Proverbs 3:5–6 calls for a deeply personal response that shapes the direction of everyday life. The passage presents a clear movement from trust to action, guiding the believer into a life marked by dependence upon God. The inductive approach reveals how this truth moves from observation to interpretation and into lived obedience.

Observation begins with the commands and response within the text. The passage calls for trust in the Lord with one's whole heart, for a refusal to rely on personal understanding, and for a consistent acknowledgement of God in every area of life. The result follows with clarity: God will make the path straight. The structure presents a progression where trust and acknowledgement lead to divine direction.

Interpretation highlights the central meaning. Trust in God involves a deliberate reliance upon His character and wisdom. The heart represents the center of thought, desire, and decision-making. Trust therefore includes every dimension of life. The instruction to avoid leaning on personal understanding addresses the natural tendency to depend on experience, logic, and preference as ultimate guides. Acknowledging God in all ways describes an ongoing awareness of His authority and presence. This awareness shapes decisions and aligns the believer with His will. Depending on Him results in God's active direction, and He establishes the course of our lives.

Application brings this truth into daily practice. Trust in God takes shape through intentional choices. The believer begins each day with a posture of dependence, seeking God's wisdom in both significant decisions and routine responsibilities. This posture leads to prayerful reflection before action. Decisions become opportunities to acknowledge God by asking how His truth applies to each situation.

Rejecting reliance on personal understanding requires humility. The believer recognizes limitations and submits plans to God. This submission does not remove thoughtful decision-making. It places that process under the authority of God's Word and guidance. Acknowledging God in all our ways transforms ordinary moments into acts of worship where each step reflects trust in His leadership.

The promise of God's direction strengthens confidence. The believer moves forward with assurance that God leads faithfully. This assurance produces steadiness in decision-making and peace in uncertainty. Life gains clarity as trust in God becomes the guiding principle.

Proverbs 3:5–6 therefore calls for a consistent pattern of living. Trust moves from belief into action, shaping the path one step at a time under the faithful direction of God.

Reflection Questions:

1. According to the devotion, what specific actions demonstrate trusting God with all your heart?

2. How does the passage describe the role of personal understanding in decision-making?

3. What does it look like in daily life to acknowledge God in all your ways?

Memorization Reminder: Continue strengthening your memorization of Proverbs 3:5–6 by reciting the full passage aloud and writing it from memory. Focus on clarity and confidence as you connect each phrase into one complete expression of trust.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." Proverbs 3:5–6

This week has established a clear vision for trusting God with the future. The study began by recognizing the danger of relying on experience as a guide for what lies ahead. The context of Proverbs revealed a father's instruction that calls for a life shaped by reverence for God and faithful obedience. The theological insight centered on the trustworthy character of God, which provides a secure foundation for confident living. Personal application then brought this truth into daily practice, showing that trust in God shapes decisions, attitudes, and direction. Together, these truths form a unified call to depend fully on the Lord, acknowledging Him in every area of life.

Recite from Memory
Speak Proverbs 3:5–6 aloud from memory. Focus on clarity and confidence.

Write It Out
Write the verses from memory. Pay attention to accuracy and allow the act of writing to reinforce retention.

Reflect
Consider how trusting God with all your heart should shape your decisions in the coming weeks. Identify one area where you will intentionally acknowledge Him.

Share It
Share Proverbs 3:5–6 with someone. Explain what these verses teach about trusting God and how they have shaped your thinking.

Final Prayer

Lord, You are faithful and true. You lead with wisdom and guide with perfect understanding. Teach my heart to trust You fully in every area of life. Help me to turn from relying on my own understanding and to acknowledge You in all my ways. Direct my steps and establish my path according to Your will. In Jesus' name, amen.

DAILY PODCAST

SHAPED BY SCRIPTURE

Monday - Thursday

Hear the daily devotions and reflection questions.

Friday

Join Bro. Scott for practical insights, spiritual encouragement, and Biblical truth for everyday life.

Raising the Next Generation May 25, 2026

"We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done."

Psalm 78:4

A few years ago, a young father was left at home with his kids while his wife enjoyed a well-deserved girls' night out. By the time she returned, the house looked as though a small tornado had swept through. Pillow forts blocked the hallway, applesauce was smeared across the cabinets, and all three children were dressed in mismatched pajamas topped with superhero masks. Surveying the scene, the mom asked with a raised eyebrow, "What happened here?" The father shrugged with a grin and replied, "We were making memories."

While his definition of "memories" might be questionable, the moment captures a truth: parents and caregivers are *always* shaping the next generation—whether they realize it or not. Every conversation, every example, every choice contributes to the framework of values, beliefs, and habits that children carry into adulthood. Some of these "memories" will be funny stories they tell years later, while others will become the unspoken foundations of their faith—or lack thereof.

The Contemporary Dilemma

In today's world, passing on a Christ-centered faith to the next generation is both more urgent and more complex than ever before. Young people are growing up in an age of unprecedented access to information, much of it unfiltered and often contradictory to biblical truth. The constant presence of digital media, the cultural pull toward individual self-definition, and the erosion of shared moral frameworks have made the task of spiritual formation increasingly challenging.

Statistics from numerous faith-based research groups reveal a sobering trend: a significant percentage of young adults raised in church disengage from active faith practice by their early twenties. While many factors contribute to this drift, one common thread emerges—faith that is

not intentionally nurtured in the home and reinforced by the church community rarely takes deep root.

Psalm 78:4 stands as both a charge and a corrective in this climate. It calls believers—parents, grandparents, mentors, and church leaders—to take personal responsibility in proclaiming the works of God to the "coming generation." This is not a task to outsource to a Life Group hour or youth group alone; it is a lifelong investment in relational discipleship, storytelling, and modeling a living faith.

Understanding Psalm 78:4

Psalm 78 is one of the longest psalms, written by Asaph, and it serves as a historical reflection and a teaching tool. It recounts the mighty works of God in Israel's history—His deliverance, provision, and covenant faithfulness—alongside the repeated failures of His people to trust and obey Him. The psalm's purpose is clear: to use the lessons of the past to inspire faithfulness in the present and future. Verse 4 distills this mission into a single, powerful sentence.

"We will not hide them from their children…"

The "them" refers to the truths, testimonies, and works of God described in the preceding verses. To "hide" here does not mean to deliberately conceal, but rather to fail to pass along through neglect, silence, or misplaced priorities. The psalmist is making a declaration of intent—there will be no withholding, no assumption that "someone else will teach them," no quiet abdication of responsibility.

"…but tell to the coming generation…"

The act of telling is active, intentional, and repeated. Faith transmission is not a one-time lecture, but an ongoing conversation woven into the rhythms of life (see Deuteronomy 6:6-9). The phrase "coming generation" emphasizes that the responsibility is not limited to one's own biological children—it includes all who are younger in age or in faith, those whom God has placed in our sphere of influence.

"…the glorious deeds of the Lord…"

At the heart of our message is not moralism, self-help advice, or cultural traditions. It is the glory of God displayed through His mighty acts—His creation, His redemption, His provision, His guidance. These "glorious deeds" inspire awe and gratitude; they remind us and the next generation that God is not only real but also active and powerful in human history.

"…and His might…"

This phrase underscores the strength, authority, and sovereignty of God. The next generation must know that the God we serve is not a distant idea but the Almighty, able to save, protect, and guide His people. In a culture that often diminishes God to a benign life coach or inspirational concept, this is a critical truth to affirm.

"…and the wonders that He has done."

The "wonders" encompass both the grand miracles—like the parting of the Red Sea—and the personal providences that mark our individual stories. By sharing both biblical history and personal testimony, we connect God's acts in the past with His ongoing work today. These stories help the next generation see that the God of Abraham, Moses, and David is the same God who is present and active in their own lives.

Summarizing the Call

Psalm 78:4 is both an exhortation and a commitment. It calls us to an intentional, generational faithfulness: to speak openly, to testify boldly, and to weave the stories of God's glory into the daily experiences of those who will follow us. This is not about forced religiosity or mechanical repetition; it is about joyfully and consistently pointing the next generation toward the living God.

The responsibility is weighty, but it is also an incredible privilege. When we take this calling seriously, we are participating in something far greater than ourselves—we are contributing to the unbroken chain of

gospel witness that stretches back through history and will continue until Christ returns.

In this week of our *Shaped by Scripture* journey, our focus will be on how to intentionally invest in the spiritual lives of those who come after us. Whether you are a parent, grandparent, teacher, mentor, or friend, you have been given a sacred role in telling the "glorious deeds of the Lord." And when we do so, we are planting seeds of faith that, by God's grace, will grow and bear fruit for generations to come.

Memorization & Meditation

This week's verse is a declaration of purpose—an intentional commitment to pass along the truth of who God is and what He has done. Memorizing it will help you keep that mission in front of you, shaping the way you speak to and invest in the next generation.

Today, our goal is simple: begin planting Psalm 78:4 deep in your heart so it will be ready to guide your thoughts, conversations, and actions.

Read the Verse Aloud
Say it slowly and clearly—once, twice, and even three times. Let your ears hear the words as your eyes see them.

Write It Down
Copy Psalm 78:4 by hand in your journal or on a card. This helps cement the verse in your memory and slows you down to notice each phrase.

Say It from Memory
Cover the verse and try to recite as much as you can. Repeat until you can say it without looking.

Reflect
What does this verse reveal about God's desire for the next generation?

How does it challenge the way you think about your own role in passing on the faith?

Pray the Verse
Lord, give me eyes to see the opportunities You've placed in my life to share Your works. Help me tell the next generation of Your glorious deeds, Your might, and Your wonders. Let my words and actions reflect Your greatness. In Jesus' name, amen.

"We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done."
Psalm 78:4

Psalm 78:4 stands within a carefully structured and intentional teaching psalm designed to shape the identity and faithfulness of God's people. Attributed to Asaph, a leader appointed by David for musical and prophetic ministry, this psalm reflects both artistic expression and theological instruction. Asaph's dual role as musician and seer frames Psalm 78 as more than worship; it is a vehicle for conveying truth that forms the heart and mind of the covenant community.

As a *maskil*, Psalm 78 functions as an instructional composition. Its aim is to recount history and to interpret it, drawing out its theological significance. The psalm surveys Israel's past, highlighting God's consistent faithfulness alongside the people's repeated forgetfulness and rebellion. This pattern provides the foundation for the urgency expressed in verse 4.

Psalm 78:4 appears in the opening section (verses 1–8), where the psalmist establishes the purpose of the entire composition. The declaration, "We will not hide them from their children," communicates a deliberate commitment to make God known. The focus is not only on preserving information but on actively proclaiming "the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done." The content of this transmission centers on God's character revealed through His actions in history.

Within this immediate context, the passage emphasizes that spiritual continuity depends on intentional instruction. The following verses clarify the goal: that each generation would set its hope in God, remember His works, and walk in obedience. The failure to pass on this knowledge leads to spiritual amnesia, which in turn produces disobedience and instability.

This theme echoes throughout Scripture. Deuteronomy 6 presents the teaching of God's Word as continual, life-integrated responsibility.

Joshua 4 illustrates how physical reminders prompt future generations to ask and learn about God's deliverance. In the New Testament, the principle continues through intentional discipleship, where truth is entrusted from one believer to another.

Psalm 78:4 therefore communicates a theological responsibility: the people of God are stewards of the knowledge of His works. Faithfulness includes not only personal belief but active participation in ensuring that the next generation knows, understands, and responds to the greatness of God.

Take Action: Open your Bible and read Psalm 78:1-8. As you read, note the repeated emphasis on teaching, remembering, and responding to God's works. Consider how the surrounding verses clarify the purpose and urgency of verse 4.

Reflection Questions:

1. According to Psalm 78:1–8, what specific outcomes does the psalmist desire for the next generation?

2. What reasons does the passage give for actively teaching God's works rather than assuming they will be remembered?

3. How does the pattern of remembering and forgetting shape the message of the psalm?

Memorization Reminder: Continue working to memorize Psalm 78:4. Practice repeating it aloud several times today, focusing on the progression of thought: *not hiding, telling,* and *declaring God's deeds*. Aim to recall it without looking by the end of the day.

"We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done."

Psalm 78:4

The predominant theological theme of Psalm 78:4 is *intergenerational proclamation*—the covenant responsibility of God's people to declare His works to future generations so that His glory is known and His worship continues. This verse frames the knowledge of God not as private inspiration, but as a sacred trust to be actively handed down. In short, to "Pass the Torch." In doing so, it reveals truths about God's nature, His relationship to His people, and the believer's role in His redemptive plan.

Psalm 78:4 reads: "*We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done."* This statement affirms that God's mighty acts in history are to be remembered, retold, and celebrated so that they inspire faith and obedience in those who come after us. Theologically, this rests on the conviction that God reveals Himself through His works (Psalm 19:1-4; Romans 1:20) and that remembering His works guards against spiritual drift (Deuteronomy 8:11-14).

This theme echoes the *Shema* in Deuteronomy 6:6-7: "*These words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children…"* The instruction to teach is both constant ("diligently") and comprehensive ("when you sit…walk…lie down…rise"). It assumes that the truth about God is not self-perpetuating; without intentional telling, it can be forgotten in a single generation (Judges 2:10).

Psalm 78:4 also affirms God's worthiness to be proclaimed. His "glorious deeds" and "wonders" reveal His power, covenant faithfulness, and sovereign rule. The psalmist's commitment to tell of these works is grounded in worship—recognizing that God's character and actions demand a response (Psalm 145:4-6). This is not merely information transfer; it is doxology in narrative form.

In the New Testament, this theme finds continuity in Paul's exhortation to Timothy: "*What you have heard from me…entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also*" (2 Timothy 2:2). The mission of making disciples (Matthew 28:19-20) is inherently generational, both in terms of biological family and the broader family of faith.

Thus, the theological thrust of Psalm 78:4 is clear: God's people are stewards of His story. Failing to tell it is more than neglect—it is disobedience to God's design for the preservation and spread of His truth. Proclaiming it is not only obedience but also an act of worship, joining the unbroken testimony of God's people across time.

Reflection Questions:

1. What does Psalm 78:4 identify as the primary content that should be passed on to the next generation?

2. How does the pattern of teaching described in Deuteronomy 6:6-7 shape the understanding of intergenerational discipleship?

3. In what ways does proclaiming God's works function as an act of worship according to the entry?

Memorization Reminder: Continue memorizing Psalm 78:4. Repeat the verse aloud multiple times today, focusing on the key phrases: *tell to the coming generations the glorious deeds of the Lord, his might,* and *the wonders that he has done.* Work toward reciting the verse smoothly and confidently without assistance.

"We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done."

Psalm 78:4

Psalm 78:4 presents a clear and active call for the people of God to participate in the transmission of truth. The verse states, "We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done." The language of the verse emphasizes intentionality. The verbs "will not hide" and "tell" describe a deliberate decision to make God known. The content of that message centers on God's actions—His deeds, power, and works—which reveal His character and faithfulness.

This observation leads to a central understanding: God's people carry responsibility for ensuring that His works remain known among future generations. The verse presents this responsibility as communal. The use of "we" identifies a shared commitment within the people of God. Faithfulness includes participation in a living testimony that extends beyond one's own life. The knowledge of God does not remain static; it moves forward through faithful proclamation.

The meaning of this passage highlights that spiritual formation does not occur by accident. The next generation comes to know God through clear, repeated, and purposeful communication of His works. The focus on God's deeds directs attention away from human experience and toward divine action. This shapes a faith that rests on who God is and what He has done. The verse calls for a pattern of life where God's faithfulness is spoken, remembered, and integrated into daily relationships.

Application begins with a recognition of personal participation in this calling. Every believer holds a place within the chain of testimony. The responsibility includes speaking about God's work in Scripture and acknowledging His work in personal and communal life. This takes place in conversations, teaching moments, and intentional discipleship

relationships. Faithful application involves identifying opportunities to share the truth of God's character with those who follow, whether in the home, the church, or the broader community.

This passage also invites a renewed awareness of attentiveness to God's work. Telling requires remembering. Remembering requires reflection on God's activity in history and in present life. A life shaped by Psalm 78:4 becomes a life that notices, values, and communicates the works of God with clarity and consistency. Through this pattern, the knowledge of God continues to grow and take root in the hearts of others.

Reflection Questions:

1. What specific actions in Psalm 78:4 describe the responsibility of God's people toward the next generation?

2. In what ways can intentional "telling" be practiced in daily life and relationships?

3. How does focusing on God's deeds shape the content of what is shared with others?

4. What opportunities exist this week for you to speak about God's work to someone else?

Memorization Reminder: As you finish memorizing Psalm 78:4, recite the verse slowly and connect each phrase to your daily walk. Let the verse shape how you think about your identity, your choices, and the new life you are living in Christ.

"We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done."

Psalm 78:4

This week we have explored the call to actively pass on the knowledge of God's works to the next generation. Psalm 78:4 has reminded us that remembering and telling of God's "glorious deeds" is not optional—it's part of our worship, our discipleship, and our responsibility as followers of Christ.

Recite It

Close your eyes and say Psalm 78:4 aloud from memory. Repeat until you can recite it smoothly and confidently. Let the words roll over your mind until they feel natural on your lips.

Write It Without Looking

Take a moment to write the entire verse by hand without referencing your Bible, check for accuracy. Correct any errors and write it again if needed. Writing reinforces both memory and focus.

Reflect on Your Week

- How has meditating on this verse shaped the way you think about your role in sharing God's works?
- Did you find opportunities this week to tell someone about God's "glorious deeds" in your life or in Scripture?
- What new awareness do you have about the importance of intergenerational discipleship?

Share It

Tell the verse to a friend, family member, or someone younger in the faith. Share how the verse impacted you this week.

Final Prayer

Lord, thank You for the mighty works You have done in history and in my life. Help me never to hide them, but to speak of them with joy and boldness to the next generation. May my life be a living testimony of Your glory, strength, and wonders. In Jesus' name, amen.

EXALT **CHRIST**

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MAKE **DISCIPLES**

|

PASS THE **TORCH**

LONE OAK FBC
3601 Lone Oak Rd
Paducah, KY 42003

270-554-1441 | loneoakfbc.org