



Preach the word. Be ready to do it whether it is convenient or inconvenient. Correct, confront, and encourage with patience and instruction.

- 2 Timothy 4:2 (CEB)

"Keep it in your back pocket." Have you ever heard this saying? The usual meaning is to hold on to some piece of information or some idea that you'll have ready when you need it – when there is an emergency, when you're not sure what to do, when you need some extra support. This month, we're going to fill our back pockets with Scripture that we can have at the ready when we need God's Word to speak into our lives. You will be challenged to memorize a verse every week, and we'll explore how these verses can encourage, uplift, teach, and motivate us in various aspects of our daily lives.

In Your Back Pocket

SEPT 5

WHEN YOU ARE ANGRY OR HURT

Colossians 3:13

What do you do when you're angry? Do you lash out? Do you retreat? Do you bottle up negative feelings? Anger is an emotion that we all experience. Jesus, as he turned over the tables in the temple courtyard, seems to have been angry. The question we face as followers of Jesus isn't whether we *can* be angry. We get hurt sometimes, and we're angry sometimes. The question is: How are we called, as followers of Jesus, to react and respond when we *are* angry?

In response to the hurt and conflict of our lives, the way of Jesus is compassion, forgiveness, and love.

SEPT 6-11

When You Are Angry Or Hurt

Monday

Read Proverbs 29:11. When is anger healthy, and when does it become unhealthy or harmful?

Tuesday

Read Colossians 3:8. Why do you think Paul encourages the church to get rid of anger, slander, and foul language?

Wednesday

Read Ephesians 4:26-27.

How do you think anger can "give the devil a foothold" (NIV)?

Thursday

Read Psalm 37:8-9. What are healthy ways you've dealt with anger, and how has anger become hurtful or toxic in your life?

Friday

Read Colossians 3:13.

What does it mean to you to forgive as the Lord has forgiven you?

Saturday

Read James 1:19-20. In what ways can listening to others and paying attention to your thought patterns help you control your anger and your response?

CIRCLE Study Questions:

1. What is your favorite Bible verse, or one you find most meaningful or helpful?
2. In the sermon, Pastor Brian talked about how the Proverbs are full of warnings about the foolishness of acting on one's anger. What are healthy ways you've dealt with anger? How has anger become hurtful or toxic in your life?
3. In the letter to the Colossians, Paul advises that to bear with one another we must offer forgiveness. How are anger and forgiveness related?
4. What role can listening intently play in how we deal with anger or conflict?

FaithFit Challenge: Memorize Colossians 3:13.

In Your Back Pocket

SEPT 12

WHEN YOU ARE ANXIOUS OR STRESSED

Philippians 4:6

We all have times when we worry, when we're anxious, when we're stressed. Sometimes we can't say no and bring the stress on ourselves. Sometimes the world throws us curveballs. Often, however, if we really stopped and examined our lives, we'd find our stress and anxiety come from worldly cares, or from our own need for control. So what happens if we look to our faith and put our trust in God?

The very best antidote for anxiety and stress is prayer.

SEPT 13-18 **When You Are Anxious Or Stressed**

Monday	Read Proverbs 12:25. What are the effects of worry and stress on your life?
Tuesday	Read Luke 12:22. What are the things you think God would tell <i>you</i> not to worry about so much?
Wednesday	Read Psalm 55:22. What burdens are you carrying that could be shared?
Thursday	Read Philippians 4:6. How is your prayer life, and what do you share daily with God?
Friday	Read Hebrews 13:5. How can reflecting on God's promises help you deal with daily worries and stressors?
Saturday	Read Matthew 6:33. How can keeping priorities straight in our lives help with worry and stress?

CIRCLE Study Questions:

1. What are the greatest stressors in your life?
2. Our culture often encourages us to think we can "go it alone", and we often think we shouldn't burden others with our problems. The Bible, however, encourages us to share our burdens. How would your life be different if you handed your stresses and burdens over to God? What makes it hard to share our burdens with God or others?
3. In Matthew 6:33, Jesus invites his followers to examine their priorities. When you are tugged in two directions, how do you decide which way to go? How can clear priorities help with stress and worry in your life?
4. What is the relationship between your prayer life and your stress level?

FaithFit Challenge: Memorize Philippians 4:6.

In Your Back Pocket

SEPT 19

WHEN TIMES ARE TENSE OR CONFLICTED

Micah 6:8

What happens when you and a loved one disagree? How should we respond to the tension and conflict in our world today? What does it mean to be the church when not everyone believes the same things or thinks the same way? What does unity look like for the people of God? We need tools, as individuals, as families, as communities, and as the church, for navigating the tension and the conflict in our world today.

The Biblical call to unity is rooted in mercy, justice, humility, and love.

SEPT 20-25

When Times Are Tense Or Conflicted

Monday

Read Matthew 4:19-20.

What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus?

Tuesday

Read Psalm 133:1. What are the characteristics of a unified people?

What are the characteristics of a divided people?

Wednesday

Read Romans 12:16. What does true humility look like?

Thursday

Read 1 Peter 3:8. How are unity, sympathy, love, compassion, and humility related?

Friday

Read Micah 6:8. What does the Bible teach as core to the identity of God's people?

Saturday

Read John 17:20-21. What stands in the way of the kind of unity Jesus prays for and desires for us?

CIRCLE Study Questions:

1. Who is the most humble person you know?
2. Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter 12 and 14, and 1 Peter 3:8, emphasize that the attitudes of humility, gentleness, compassion, and patience are required for unity. Which do you struggle with the most?
3. Why does unity in the church matter?
4. What, for you, is core to being part of the church, the people of God?

FaithFit Challenge: Memorize Micah 6:8.

In Your Back Pocket

SEPT 26

WHEN YOU ARE LOST OR UNCERTAIN

Matthew 7:7-8

A big decision looms in front of you, and you just aren't sure what the right answer is. You've faced down a problem and feel like you've tried everything, but you can't seem to get past the hurdle in front of you. You're about to go through something in life, and you don't feel like anyone else can help you or understand. We all have times in our lives of uncertainty, or when we feel lost. Where can we turn?

The Bible presents both a map and a guide for the paths of life.

SEPT 27-
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When You Are Lost Or Uncertain

Monday	Read Proverbs 3:5-6. Where are you right now in your relationship with God? Where do you want to be?
Tuesday	Read James 1:5. What wisdom do you need from God in your life right now?
Wednesday	Read Romans 12:2. What voices have the greatest influence in your life?
Thursday	Read Isaiah 30:21. How can you make space in your life to hear God's voice?
Friday	Read Psalm 37:7. What makes it difficult to be patient and to wait on God's way to emerge or become clear?
Saturday	Read Matthew 7:7-8. What methods can help you to discover God's will for your life?

CIRCLE Study Questions:

1. What's the most lost you have ever been?
2. Pastor Brian said in the sermon that three questions can help us navigate when we are lost. Where am I? Where am I trying to go? How can I get there? How can you use these three questions in your faith life?
3. Read Matthew 7:7-8. Does this passage mean God will give you *anything* you want? Why or why not? What can and should we ask of God?
4. What are practices that have helped you to discover God's way and/or God's will in your life?

FaithFit Challenge: Memorize Matthew 7:7-8.