

*Men of
God
Letting
Our Light
Shine*

*Applications from David,
a Man After God's Heart*

Notes and Comments by John Sullivan

Men of God

Letting Our Light Shine

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Moline, IL

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NOTE TO E-BOOK READERS:

The printed journal, unlike this e-book version, has pages for notes.

You might want to have your own journal, either physical or electronic for this study. There will be a lot of writing in this study.

Table of Contents

Introduction		page i
Section 1	<i>A Humble Man with a Godly Heart</i>	1
Section 2	<i>A Confident Man who Comes in the Name of the Lord</i>	3
Section 3	<i>A Vulnerable Man who Needs Friends</i>	5
Section 4	<i>A Leader who Surrounds Himself with Mighty Men</i>	7
Section 5	<i>A Sinful Man who Confesses and Repents</i>	9
Section 6	<i>A Faithful Man who Inquires of the Lord</i>	11
Section 7	<i>A Strong Man who Praises God's Word</i>	13
Summary		15
Recommended Reading		16
The Heart and Strategy for Memorizing Scripture		17

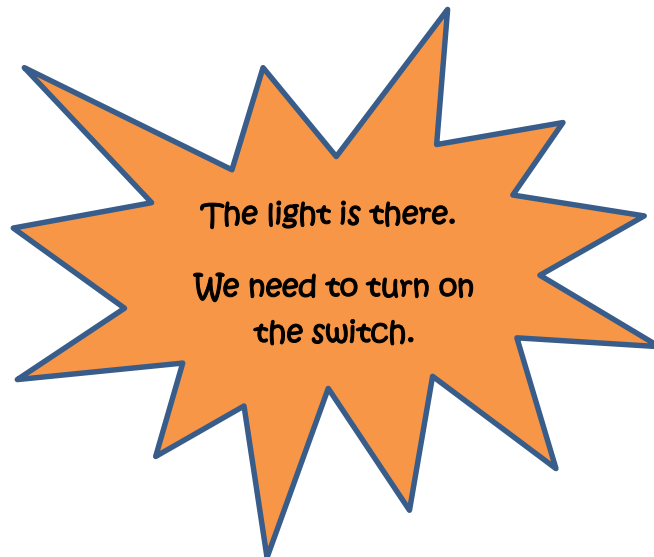
*The LORD is my light and my salvation –
whom shall I fear?*

*The LORD is the stronghold of my life –
of whom shall I be afraid?*

Psalm 27:1

*You are the light of the world.
A city on a hill cannot be hidden.
Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl.
Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.
In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your
good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*

Matthew 5:14 – 16



Introduction

*The LORD is my light and my salvation –
whom shall I fear?*

*The LORD is the stronghold of my life –
of whom shall I be afraid?*

Psalm 27:1

David, the author of the above psalm, was a man of God who let his light shine during his lifetime as shepherd, king, song-writer, and ancestor of Jesus. Because he is described as a man after God's heart (**Acts 13:22** and **1 Samuel 13:14**), he is often the role model used for men who also want to be men of God.

The Bible gives us a lot of information about his life and also gives us many of his writings. Typical for others whose lives are given in such detail, God's Word does not give a glorified, one-sided view of his life. His sins and weaknesses are as clearly described as his faith and victories. He didn't always let his light shine. That makes him someone we can probably identify with.

This journal does not discuss all of the events or qualities of David's life. But it does focus on seven of his attributes that would be worthy of imitation in our pursuit of being men of God. David was:

- *A Humble Man with a Godly Heart*
- *A Confident Man who Came in the Name of the LORD*
- *A Vulnerable Man who Needed Friends*
- *A Leader who Surrounded Himself with Mighty Men*
- *A Sinful Man who Confessed and Repented*
- *A Faithful Man who Inquired of the LORD*
- *A Strong Man who Praised God's Word*

Each of these will help us be men of God who let our lights shine.

NOTE: This journal is not a short, easy-read devotional. It focuses almost entirely on your reading the Scriptures, reflecting on them, discovering what God's Word is teaching you, and writing your thoughts about it. Don't be overwhelmed about it or try to do too much in any day, but do be willing to put some work into it. With God's help, it will reap great benefits in your desire to be the man of God spoken of in **2 Timothy 3:16 – 17**.

You can obviously go at your own pace through this journal, but it is suggested that you spend at least a week on each topic – studying, meditating, praying, sharing, and practicing each one. Use page 15 to summarize key points from each section that you want to really focus on in your life. It would be especially encouraging if you can do this with a group. In fact, if you find yourself in a group setting where men meet one week and women the next week, you will find that personally spending two weeks on each section would not be too slow.

With God's help, we will be blessed with growth in these areas, and we will also be able to help others get to know God better as we let His light shine to them.

John Sullivan
January 2016

*What comes into our minds when we think about God is
the most important thing about us.*

A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*

A man can be no mightier than
his relationship with God allows.

Sam Laing, *Mighty Man of God*

*The LORD does not look at the things man looks at.
Man looks at the outward appearance,
but the LORD looks at the heart.*

I Samuel 16:7b

A Humble Man with a Godly Heart

To be men of God who are letting our lights shine, we have to start with our heart. God saw something in David's heart that he knew would allow him to let God's light shine through him, in spite of all of the mistakes and weaknesses that would describe David's life. He is described as a man *after God's heart* (**Acts 13:22**). At the same time, David knew that God was searching his heart and he humbly welcomed that in his life. David's humility was one of the keys to his godly heart.

Let's begin at that same point in our desire to be men of God who let our lights shine for him.

1. Read **I Samuel 16:1 – 13**.

David was the youngest of the 8 sons, and wasn't even going to be considered by his father. How would you imagine that this humble beginning might have affected David?

Verse 7 is a key verse for us to remember about God's view of us – he looks at the heart, not the outward appearance. Meditate on that and write your thoughts about its importance to you.

2. **Background**

Saul was the first king of Israel. King Saul's life mostly serves as an example of what to **NOT DO** if we want to be men of God. But his life was not all evil. His role as king started with humility and godliness, and there were times when his light was shining brightly in the darkness of that day. His problem was not just sin, because, as we will read in Section 5 of this journal about the life of David, David also had terrible sin. Saul's problem was a failure to repent of his sin. Here are a few incidents from the story of Saul found in **I Samuel** showing why David was selected to replace Saul. Note some of the positive aspects of Saul's life that help you and some of the negative aspects to avoid in your desire to be a man of God who lets his light shine for the rest of your life.

- **I Samuel 9:1 – 2** What impressed people about Saul?
- **I Samuel 9:3 – 20** He inquired of God for help in a personal matter.
- **I Samuel 9:21** His humility.
- **I Samuel 10:1 – 16** Anointing as king; filled with the Holy Spirit; changed man.
- **I Samuel 10:17 – 27** His humble beginnings.
- **I Samuel 11** The Spirit gave Saul courage and victories.

(continued on the next page)

Section I (Continued): *A Humble Man with a Godly Heart*

- **I Samuel 13** Saul's fear led him to sin and be rejected by God.
- **I Samuel 15** Saul's incomplete obedience caused God to regret choosing him.
- **I Samuel 16:14** The Holy Spirit departing from Saul.

Imagine then how it must have felt for God to say in **I Samuel 13:14** that he was going to reject Saul as king and find a man *after his own heart* to rule.

As we go through the life of David, remember and contrast it with what we see about Saul.

3. Read **Psalms 139**.

David knew that God saw his heart very clearly. You can see that David had a great attitude about that and showed his humility by asking God to keep searching his heart. Meditate about what David said here and write down how this psalm impacts you in your humility and continual quest for a godly heart.

4. **Heart and Strategy**

- What are some things that you want God to reveal, refine, remove, or restore so you can be a man with a godly heart?
- What do you specifically plan to do this week to let your light shine?

(**NOTE:** These "*Heart and Strategy*" questions will be found at the end of each topic. You might want to keep a record of your thoughts each time on the Summary page on page 15.)

A Confident Man who Comes in the Name of the LORD

The humility that God found in David's heart, which we saw in the first section of this study, did not mean that David was bashful and timid. As is often the case, true humility before God can allow us to be confident before others.

David's confidence, as evidenced in the famous story of Goliath, was the kind of confidence that we all want if we desire to be men of God who let our light shine – it was the confidence that came from knowing that he was acting in the name of the LORD. Let's pray for that kind of confidence in our lives.

I. Read **I Samuel 17**. Look at these contrasting views of God:

➤ *Defying God - Goliath*

What do you think causes us to get to that point, and how can you avoid it?

➤ *Ignoring God – King Saul*

Saul did not openly defy God, but his fear and lack of action show that he was not even thinking about God's power at work in their lives. He was facing the situation as if God did not exist. What do you think causes us to get to that point, and how can you avoid it?

➤ *Forgetting God – Jonathan*

King Saul's son Jonathan was actually a faithful and courageous man of God. See **I Samuel 14**. We will focus more on him in our next section. But at this event, he was lulled into faithless timidity. What do you think causes us to get to that point, and how can you avoid it?

➤ *Confidence in God – David*

Everything about David in this story is focused on God – not on the difficulty of the situation, or the lack of support from everyone else, or any concerns about his own life. You have to love what he said to Goliath in verse 47, *"the battle is the LORD's."* David knew that God was being defied and that God would help him do something about it. What do you think can help you to get to and stay at that point?

(continued on the next page)

Section 2 (Continued): *A Confident Man who Comes in the Name of the LORD*

2. Below is just a sample of the psalms of David that show his confidence in God. Read them and note how you can apply them to your life.

- **Psalm 18:1 – 2**

- **Psalm 27:1**

- **Psalm 31:1 – 5**

- **Psalm 35:1 – 10**

- **Psalm 52**

- **Psalm 108**

- **Psalm 124**

3. **Heart and Strategy**

- What are some things about your confidence that you want God to reveal, refine, remove, or restore so you can be a man after God's heart?

- What can you specifically do this week to confidently let your light shine?

(**NOTE:** As mentioned before, these "*Heart and Strategy*" questions will be found at the end of each topic. You might want to keep a record of your thoughts each time on the Summary page on page 15.)

A Vulnerable Man who Needs Friends

It is possible to look at heroic behavior like what we are seeing in David during this time of his life, and underestimate how difficult it was for him. We realize, as we saw in the last section, that his confidence came from his faith in God. But we also see, as we take a close look in this section and the next one, that David needed positive friends. Of course, God wants us to rely on him, but he has also made us so that we need godly friends to help us and ones that we can help.

To David's credit, he seemed to recognize this need, and to God's credit, he provided what he needed at just the right time. Let's continue to pray that God will help us be men of God who let our lights shine and that he will provide for us the friendships that can help us do that.

1. Read **I Samuel 18:1 – 4**. Jonathan and David's relationship.

Three statements stand out about their relationship:

- *"one in spirit"*
- *"loved him as himself"*
- *"covenant"*

Think about the heart behind those statements and the strategic decisions that were involved. You don't have that kind of relationship unless your heart is in it and you are willing to do what it takes to make it happen. What are your thoughts about all of that?

Note that this admiration from Jonathan came as a result of seeing David's faith in face of Goliath's defiance of God. Recall from **I Samuel 14** that Jonathan was himself a mighty and faithful man of God. But, for whatever reason, he was faithlessly timid during the time of Goliath. David's faith encouraged Jonathan to get back on the track of faithful confidence. Later on Jonathan would do the same for David. Sometimes you're the encourager; sometimes you're the one being encouraged!

2. Read **I Samuel 19:1 – 7**. Jonathan spoke up for David.

NOTE: This was not just the King that Jonathan was speaking to about David; it was his father.

What do you learn from the way Jonathan spoke up for David?

3. Read **I Samuel 20:1 – 42**. Jonathan protected David.

What stands out to you about that story?

(continued on the next page)

Section 3 (Continued): *A Vulnerable Man who Needs Friends*

4. Read **1 Samuel 23:13 – 18**. Jonathan helped David find strength in God.

This may be one of the greatest descriptions of the purpose of godly friendships. When the goal is to help one another rely on God, the friendship is a true blessing.

How can you do that for your friends?

How can you make sure you have friends like that?

Be a godly friend – have godly friends

5. Read **2 Samuel 1:25 – 27**. How the mighty have fallen!

What do you learn from David's lament about the death of Jonathan?

6. Read **Psalms 133**. The blessing of unified brothers.

If we could ask David why he felt this way, what do you think he might say?

7. **Heart and Strategy**

- What are some things about your heart that God has been revealing to you that you want him to refine, remove, or restore so that you can be a godly friend?
- What do you plan to specifically do about that this week?

A Leader who Surrounds Himself with Mighty Men

In the last section, we saw David's unique friendship with Jonathan. But David did not just have one friend. He surrounded himself with mighty men that had the same vision he had. Unlike our relationship with God, who is always reliable and focused on the absolute best, our relationships with people can sometimes be on the wrong track. That even happened with David and his mighty men. But for the most part, they were positive relationships that encouraged each other to be confident and faithful.

If we want to be men of God who let our lights shine, we need to surround ourselves with men who have the same mission. Let's pray for the heart that would desire those relationships and for the actions that would make them a priority in our lives.

1. Read **1 Samuel 22:1 – 2**. Distress, debt, discontented.

It's hard to believe that David's mighty men came from this beginning. What do you learn from that?

2. Read **2 Samuel 23:8 – 39**. David's mighty men.

Take some time to summarize what is said here about the exploits of these mighty men.

3. In light of what is said about these men, read also **Psalms 144:1** and **Ephesians 6:10**. How do you want these Scriptures to apply to you.

4. Read **Psalms 68**. David's song of triumph and glory.

As is consistent with all of David's thoughts, God is the source of all of this power and He deserves the praise and credit. Let us NEVER understate or overlook that. What does he say in this psalm in praise of God's power?

As much as David believes in the power of God, notice how much he also believes that God gives power and strength to his people (verse 35, for instance.) Compare this to what Paul said in **Ephesians 3:20 – 21**. What are your thoughts about that?

(continued on the next page)

Section 4 (Continued): *A Leader who Surrounds Himself with Mighty Men*

4. Heart and Strategy

- What are some things about your heart for relationships that God is revealing to you that you want him to help you refine, remove, or restore so you can be a mighty man of God?
- What is your plan of action to specifically let your light shine this week?

A Sinful Man who Confesses and Repents

You're probably already familiar enough with the story of David that you know about his sin with Bathsheba. Of course, it didn't end with the sin of adultery; it went on to the sin of murder. It's hard to imagine a man after God's heart doing that, isn't it? But we all know that the battle for purity is one of the hardest battles we face.

If you recall, in the first section of this study we looked at the downfall of King Saul. If you contrast his life with the life of David, most people would not classify Saul's sins as being any worse than David's. In fact, most people would probably say that David's were worse. So what is the difference? Although we don't know everything that God saw, from what we can see one difference is in David's willingness to confess and repent.

It's important to note that if we want to be men of God who let our lights shine, we need to make sure that we get what David got. Like David, our impurity will cause our light to fail. David was certainly not a shining example at that time. But also like David, if we confess and repent of our sin, we can continue to be men of God whose lights are shining. Let's pray for conviction about purity and also for a deeper understanding about confession and repentance.

1. Read **2 Samuel 11**. Adultery and murder.

According to verse 1, David stayed home during a time when kings like himself were normally out in the battle. What role do you think that inactivity might have played in his sin?

Recall from the previous section that Uriah was one of David's mighty men (**2 Samuel 23:39**). What in the world could have happened that David would have stooped this low?

Notice also what David asked his loyal mighty man Joab to do to cover up his sin. This seems to be a turning point in Joab's life, which makes you think about how our sin can impact others also.

What else stands out to you from this chapter?

2. Read **2 Samuel 12**. "You are the man!"

How much courage do you think it took for the prophet Nathan to confront the king?

Think also about how long David has been living with the guilt of his sins by that time. With all you know about all he knew about God, how do you think that guilt affected him during that time? (See, for instance, his thoughts in **Psalms 32:3 – 4** and **38:4** which you will read in more detail later.)

What was David's response to Nathan's accusation and what can we learn from that?

(continued on the next page)

Section 5 (Continued): *A Sinful Man who Confesses and Repents*

3. Read **Psalm 51**. David's psalm of penitence.

Whom does David blame?

Besides washing away his sin and forgiving him, what else does David ask for in verses 10 – 12?

His concern in verse 11 about God not taking away the Holy Spirit from him may have been greatly influenced by what he saw happening to Saul (1 **Samuel 16:14**).

David also wanted to be able to teach others from his experience (verse 13). Does our light have to be permanently disabled because of our sin?

What else do you learn from this psalm about confession and repentance?

4. You may know that this is not the only psalm of David that focused on confession, repentance, and forgiveness. Here are some others. What stands out to you about each one?

- **Psalm 32**

- **Psalm 38**

- **Psalm 103**

5. **Heart and Strategy**

- What are some things about purity, confession, and repentance that you want God to reveal, refine, remove, or restore so you can be a man of God who lets his light shine to others?
- What do you plan to specifically do about that this week?

A Faithful Man who Inquires of the LORD

In many ways, this topic is one that could have been near the very beginning of our discussion about being men of God. If we are going to let our lights shine, we obviously have to be men of prayer.

David clearly knew that. He began his life as a man of prayer. His relationship with God was amazing, personal, and continual.

1. Consider the following examples from the psalms of David, and note what they tell you about the personal relationship he had with God.

- **Psalm 4:6 – 8**
- **Psalm 5:3**
- **Psalm 23**

You can see that David believed that the face of God was shining on him, God was personally listening to him, and that God was actively leading David's life.

However, as we saw in the previous section of our study, David temporarily lost that personal connection with God. Do you think he was praying his shepherd psalm when he committed adultery with Bathsheba and had Uriah killed? Probably not! So, while this study of prayer might have easily been looked at in the beginning of our study of being men of God, it might also be appropriate that we are looking at it now – being fully aware that we are sinners saved by grace when we are approaching God in prayer.

2. **Inquiring of the LORD.** The following Scriptures give examples of some people who did not inquire of the LORD and others who did. What do you learn from each one?
 - **1 Chronicles 10:13 – 14** King Saul did not inquire of the LORD.
 - **1 Chronicles 14:10, 13** David did inquire of God.
 - **1 Chronicles 15:13** David recalls the time when they did not inquire of him.

Now that you've looked at these examples, what do you think is meant by the phrase "*inquire of the LORD*"? It obviously refers to prayer, but what is it specifically teaching you about God and about prayer?

As an additional study, look up other Scriptures where this phrase is used.

(continued on the next page)

Section 6 (Continued): *A Faithful Man who Inquires of the LORD*

3. Read **Psalm 25**. Carefully and thoroughly analyze the content of this prayer and how you can apply it to your prayer life.

4. **Heart and Strategy**
 - What are some things about your prayer life that you want God to reveal, refine, remove, or restore so you can be a man of God who lets his light shine to others?

 - What do you plan to specifically do about that this week?

A Strong Man who Praises God's Word

We close this study about being men of God with another topic that could have been at the beginning of our discussion. Men of God obviously need to be clear about appreciating God's Word. We can't let our lights shine unless we actively let his Word shine on us. In David's words:

*In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust;
I will not be afraid.*

What can mortal man do to me?

Psalm 56:4, 10 – 11

The title of this section brings up a point that we need to have conviction about. It is not a weakness to be someone who praises God's Word. It requires a great deal of strength, and it produces more strength. Not necessarily the strength to do physical labor, but the strength to do what is right in our relationships and in our morality. Everyone probably agrees that it is harder to be pure than it is to be impure. It is harder to love than it is to hate. It is harder to serve than it is to be served. A man of God who trusts God and truly appreciates his Word is a strong man. In David's time, just like today, people may ridicule us for believing and obeying the Bible. But we know the truth: there is nothing that we need to fear from humans if we are following God.

As we finish this study, let's pray that we will be men who will stand on, trust in, obey, and proclaim the Word of God. That may not be accepted to everyone in our world, but it will definitely shine.

I. Read the following statements from David about God's Word and write down your thoughts about applying them to your life.

- **Psalm 18:30** Praising God's Word for being flawless
- **Psalm 25:4 – 5** Asking God to teach me
- **Psalm 27:11** Asking God to teach me
- **Psalm 86:11** Asking God to teach me
- **Psalm 143:10** Asking God to teach me
- **Psalm 37:31** Putting God's law in my heart

(continued on the next page)

Section 7 (Continued): *A Strong Man who Praises God's Word*

- **Psalm 40:8** Putting God's law in my heart
- **Psalm 103:17 – 18** Obeying his precepts
- **Psalm 138:2** Praising God's name and his Word for being exalted above all things.

You see the progression: it starts with truly believing in the praise-worthiness of God's Word; then we sincerely ask God to teach us; we put his Word into our hearts, meditate on it, and obey it. Then we come back with an even deeper appreciation for his Word, with praises which we will gladly share with others.

2. Read **Psalm 19**. Look at David's praises for the Word of God in verses 7 – 11. Think about why he might have felt that way, and why you completely agree with him.

- *Perfect, reviving the soul*
- *Trustworthy, making wise the simple*
- *Radiant, giving light to the eyes*
- *Sure and altogether righteous*
- *More precious than gold*
- *By them is your servant warned*
- *In keeping them is great reward*

For additional study, look up the meanings of the words *statutes*, *precepts*, and *ordinances* to get a deeper appreciation of David's insight about God's Word.

Look also at the hints for memorizing Scripture on p. 17 and think about applying that to your life.

3. **Heart and Strategy**

- What are some things about your strength in the Word of God that you want God to reveal, refine, remove, or restore so you can be a man of God who lets his light shine to others?
- What do you plan to specifically do about that this week?

Summary

Write down one key point that you want to focus on from each section. Commit it to God; devote yourself to it; share it with others. Focus on both your heart and your strategy for making each idea a part of your true character.

Section 1	<i>A Humble Man with a Godly Heart</i>
Section 2	<i>A Confident Man who Comes in the Name of the Lord</i>
Section 3	<i>A Vulnerable Man who Needs Friends</i>
Section 4	<i>A Leader who Surrounds Himself with Mighty Men</i>
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You are the light of the world.

A city on a hill cannot be hidden.

Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl.

Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.

In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:14 – 16

Recommended Reading

There are many excellent resources on being men of God. Here are just a few.

David, Shepherd and King, by Charles Gulston. Published by Zondervan Publishing House, 1980.

For Men Only, edited by J. Allan Peterson. Published by Tyndale House Publishers, 1973.

Mighty Man of God, by Sam Laing. Published by Discipleship Publications International, 1999.

Straight Talk to Men and Their Wives, by Dr. James C. Dobson. Published by Word Books, 1980.

The Making of a Man of God, by Alan Redpath. Published by Fleming H. Revell, 1962.

The Battle Plan for Prayer, by Steven and Alex Kendrick. Published by Kendrick Brothers, LLC, 2015.

Warrior, by Sam Laing. Published by Illumination Publishers, 2015.

The Heart and Strategy for Memorizing Scripture

Heart

Read **Psalm 1:1 – 3; Psalm 19:7 – 14; Psalm 119:9, 11, 18; Jeremiah 20:9; 2 Timothy 3:16 – 17; Hebrews 4:12 – 13.**

Do not give up until the principles of these passages are genuinely felt in your heart. Don't overlook or underestimate this point. After you meditate on these thoughts, answer the following question from your heart:

Why do I want to memorize Scripture?

Strategy

1. **Read it.** Take the Scripture that you want to memorize and analyze it thoroughly and prayerfully. If it's a longer passage, outline it and memorize the outline. Ask God to teach you what he wants you to know and why he wants you to know it. See **Colossians 3:16**.
2. **Write it.** For longer passages, take one section each day. Write it down on a card in your own hand writing. Read it out loud, and practice that section during the day. The next day, repeat the process for another section, while continuing to remember the previous sections.
3. **Speak it.** Incorporate the passage into your prayer. For instance, as you repeat from memory one point of the passage, ask God to help you remember it, obey it personally, and how you can teach it to others. If possible, go for a prayer walk as you repeat what you have memorized.
4. **Obey it.** Scripture is, of course, meant to be believed and obeyed, not just memorized. See **James 1:22 – 25**.
5. **Share it.** It's yours only if you can share it.

Reading; Writing; Speaking; Action

These all contribute to the long-term memory of the passage.

For more ideas, see also: <https://www.biblegateway.com/blog/2013/03/ten-tips-for-memorizing-bible-verses/>

Notes

Notes