

## STUDY GUIDE

**DUTCHTOWN BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**AUTHENTIC**  
**THE DISCIPLINE OF PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY**  
**PSALM 1:1-3**  
**05/22/2016**

### MAIN POINT

To practice the discipline of personal Bible study, we must pick it up, size it up, and eat it up.

### INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**The previous session's application activity challenged you to be alert to a specific hypocritical habit throughout the week. If you're comfortable, talk about your experiences with that habit.**

**What did you like best about our session last week? What questions do you still have?**

**Once we've identified an area of hypocrisy in our lives, how can we move forward toward authenticity?**

**What images or phrases come to mind when you hear the phrase "Bible study"? Why?**

As James MacDonald will help us see, each of the spiritual disciplines of a sincere faith it intended not to be an intimidating obstacle between you and God, but a way of deepening intimacy with the One who has called you to be His child. Our ultimate goal in personal Bible study, the first of these disciplines, is to saturate our minds with God's Word. To practice this discipline, we must pick it up, size it up, and eat it up.

### UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

**ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PSALM 1:1-3.**

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**How would you describe the attitude toward God's Word as presented in these verses?**

**How does that compare to the way you feel about personal Bible study most days?**

It's important to remember that a journey toward authenticity isn't something we feel first; it's something we do. Spiritual disciplines are things we do to enter God's presence and allow Him to change us. We start by taking action, and then our feelings will come later. To that end, James MacDonald will show us how to actually pick up the Word of God and engage in the discipline of personal Bible study.

What did you like best in James's teaching? Why?

What are the biggest differences between hypocrisy and authenticity?

To what degree have you been personally affected by picking up God's Word?

Respond to James's statement: "The greatest student of Scripture in our church has not begun to plumb the depths of what's in God's Word. It can satisfy the greatest minds for a lifetime and beyond."

As we pick up, size up, and eat up the Bible through personal study, we will find that it is a never-ending process. We can read texts thousands of times and, through the power and insight of the Holy Spirit, find them applied to our lives in different ways each time. God's Word can meet us where we are, when we are, for our entire existence.

What changes do you experience as a follower of Jesus when you begin to drift away from the Scriptures?

What practices help you internalize and apply the truths you encounter in the Bible?

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What specific ways are you going to prioritize personal Bible study this week?

Think about these three key questions as you study God's Word this week and write down your answers as you read:

What does the text say?

What does the text mean?

How does the text apply to my life?

## PRAY

As you close your group, pray that God would grow your love for His Word this week.

Visit [LifeWay.com/JamesMacDonald](http://LifeWay.com/JamesMacDonald) to purchase the study guide for more in-depth personal and group study.

## COMMENTARY

### PSALM 1:1-3

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1:1. The psalmist began by declaring how happy is the person who chooses the way of the righteous. Those who choose the way of the righteous are to be congratulated and envied. The righteous do not follow the advice of the wicked or take the path of sinners. By contrast, the wicked begin by following a wayward person's advice or by acting on the principles that govern the wicked person's life. Wicked or ungodly people leave God and His will out of their thinking and understanding.

They are out of step with God's standards of proper conduct.

1:2. Righteous people are those who not only refuse to do what the ungodly do, but focus on one primary goal in life. That goal becomes their delight. That goal or focus is obedience to the Lord's instruction. The word occurs about 220 times in the Old Testament and refers to the Scriptures Israel had up to that point in time, particularly the five books of Moses.

The righteous person delights in the law and also meditates on it day and night. The emphasis is upon the centrality of God's law and a constant referral to it as the source of counsel from God. The expression day and night implies more than a hurried and casual reading of a portion of it each day.

1:3. Those who build their lives in obedience to the Lord are like a tree that has been planted or transplanted beside streams of water. The streams refer to canals that were dug in dry places to bring water into the area. When believers choose the way of the righteous and therefore make the Word of God the source of their lives, God plants them like the farmer plants vines and fruit trees by a more than adequate source of life-giving water. God's Word is that life-giving and behavior-molding stream.

Three results occur. First, the righteous are like the transplanted tree that bears its fruit in season. Second, the righteous will be like the tree whose leaf does not wither. God's Word is like water that feeds our souls and prevents external forces from causing us to shrivel. Neglecting God's Word will cause the spiritual elements in our lives to wither. Third, for righteous people, everything they do prospers. Because they reject the advice of the wicked, the path of the sinners, and actions of the mockers, the things that they do come from practicing the teachings of God's Word.