

# Memorize Psalm 51 for Lent

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On page 3 of this document, I have divided the Grail translation of Psalm 51 into five chunks of roughly four verses each.

If you'd like to use this template, print the psalm, cut out along the lines, and glue each piece onto a 3 x 5 index card or into a small notebook. (I use a Moleskine.)

If you use an index card, leave one side blank. If you use a notebook, glue the verses on the left-hand page and leave the right-hand side blank. The blank side is for your notes, to tally how many times you've practiced the verse, or to write the verse's acronym (see #4 below).

If you memorize the verses on one card/page each week of Lent, you will have the psalm memorized for Holy Week.

## Memorization Tips

*ideas borrowed and adapted from Ann Voscamp ([www.aholyexperience.com](http://www.aholyexperience.com))*

### 1. Old before New

Each day, begin by reviewing the memorized verses before learning the next verse. The goal is retention not merely accumulation.

### 2. Rinse and Repeat

The only way to retain learned verses is to review them again and again over an extended period of time. (See #6 below.)

Say the verses to yourself aloud. Tie reciting to routines: say the verses when you brush your teeth, make the bed, or make dinner. (I recite mine while breastfeeding the babies.) This repetition helps you to review and memorize—and to meditate on God's Word "day and night" (Psalm 1:3).

### 3. Take a Mental Screen Shot

Use your mental point-and-shoot and take a brain "photograph" of the verse: read each new verse several times, burning each word into your mind like light onto film. Then close your eyes and try to "read" the verse with your mind's eye.

#### **4. Acronym It**

I find it helpful to write the first letter of each word on the back of the card. Thus, Psalm 51:1 reads: H m o m G i y k. / I y c b o m o.

If I can't remember the words, I can look at my acronym, which gives me a memory trigger while at the same time forcing me to come up with the word myself. I have found this an invaluable tool as I've memorized Ephesians. I've been able to memorize each verse much faster than through repetition alone.

The acronym also allows me to test myself to be sure I've correctly memorized each verse: I simply look at the letters and know if I've got the words right.

#### **5. Location, Location, Location**

Memorize the location of each verse. This makes it much easier to memorize long passages and not inadvertently skip verses when you're reciting.

I learned this the hard way. When I started memorizing Ephesians, I thought the verse numbers got in the way of the text's flow, so I skipped them. By the time I finished memorizing chapter 2, though, I would frequently get tangled up: does that verse come here? Or is it on the next page?

Trust me. You want those verse numbers.

#### **6. The Rule of 100**

Once you've got the verses memorized, you need to fix them in your mind. For 100 consecutive days repeat your memory work out loud. Every morning while getting ready for the day (in the shower, getting dressed, making the bed, making breakfast), recite your verses. All of them.

#### **7. Say it on Sabbath**

After your 100 days of repetition, you'll still need to review once a week. Every Sunday, recite your verses. Once a month, read through them to catch any mistakes that have crept into your memorization.

## **Psalm 51**

<p><b>Psalm 51:1-3</b> (First Week of Lent)</p> <p>1 Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness. In your compassion blot out my offense.</p> <p>2 O wash me more and more from my guilt and cleanse me from my sin.</p> <p>3 My offenses truly I know them; my sin is always before me.</p>	<p><b>Psalm 51:12-15</b> (Fourth Week of Lent)</p> <p>12 Give me again the joy of your help; with a spirit of fervor sustain me,</p> <p>13 that I may teach transgressors your ways and sinners may return to you.</p> <p>14 O rescue me, God, my helper, and my tongue shall ring out your goodness.</p> <p>15 O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall declare your praise.</p>
<p><b>Psalm 51:4-7</b> (Second Week of Lent)</p> <p>4 Against you, you alone, have I sinned; what is evil in your sight I have done.</p> <p>That you may be justified when you give sentence and be without reproach when you judge,</p> <p>5 O see, in guilt I was born, a sinner was I conceived.</p> <p>6 Indeed you love truth in the heart; then in the secret of my heart teach me wisdom.</p> <p>7 O purify me, then I shall be clean; O wash me, I shall be whiter than snow.</p>	<p><b>Psalm 51:16-19</b> (Fifth Week of Lent)</p> <p>16 For in sacrifice you take no delight, burnt offering from me you would refuse,</p> <p>17 my sacrifice, a contrite spirit, a humbled, contrite heart you will not spurn.</p> <p>18 In your goodness, show favor to Zion: rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.</p> <p>19 Then you will be pleased with lawful sacrifice, (burnt offerings wholly consumed), then you will be offered young bulls on your altar.</p>
<p><b>Psalm 51:8-11</b> (Third Week of Lent)</p> <p>8 Make me hear rejoicing and gladness, that the bones you have crushed may thrill.</p> <p>9 From my sins turn away your face and blot out all my guilt.</p> <p>10 A pure heart create for me, O God, put a steadfast spirit within me.</p> <p>11 Do not cast me away from your presence, nor deprive me of your holy spirit.</p>	