

Bible Quiz Fellowship Tournament Rules

May, 2026 Update

I. Purpose for these rules

The ministries participating in this program have seen the need for unified rules that can be applied at any Regional or National tournament in which more than one of the ministries of Bible Quiz Fellowship participates. These are not necessarily suggested local rules but can be reproduced freely and used in that way by anyone participating in Bible Quiz Fellowship. Bible Quizzing is designed to encourage people to memorize and meditate on the Scriptures, to provide healthy competition and to build Christian character.

II. Purpose for Bible Quizzing

Bible Quizzing has the purpose of fulfilling part of the Great Commission, as found in Matthew 28:20 "...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." We believe that helping people to memorize and meditate upon the commands of Jesus will help them to obey His commands. The Psalmist pointed this out when he said, "I have stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." Ps. 119:11.

Rules

III. Who can quiz?

A. A team will consist of between five and seven quizzers. For the National Tournament, a quizzer's age is based on their age as of April 30th of the tournament year. A quizzer must be at least 11 and not 20 as of April 30th. In addition, a quizzer may only participate in the national tournament for a total of eight consecutive calendar years. (If a quizzer first participates in the National Tournament as an 11-year-old, they can participate until age 18 and may not participate at age 19. If a quizzer first participates as a 12-year-old, they can participate at age 19). An exception to the April 30th date shall be made for quizzers whose eligibility began on or before the April 2022 tournament.

B. Each team must submit a lineup card designating one adult coach and one captain and listing the names of the coach and all team members, along with their seating order. Coaches may enlist assistants, but assistants are not permitted to challenge decisions or interfere with the progress of the quiz in any way. Refusal to submit a correct lineup will result in a technical foul. Submission of an incorrect lineup that is not corrected before the first question of the quiz is read will also result in a technical foul.

1. If a head coach desires to hand off duties to an assistant coach, the Quizmaster must be verbally notified by either the coach or assistant coach. That assistant coach becomes the effective head coach until the Quizmaster is notified that the original head coach is resuming duties. Changing head coaches is considered a substitution and no challenge may be accepted immediately following a coaching change.

C. Team uniforms are not required but are suggested. Clothing should be such as to be modest when sitting, even on a raised platform or stage. Shorts may not be worn for Bible Quizzing.

Quiz Officials

For each quiz, the tournament directors will designate a minimum of three officials. These officials will include at least one Quizmaster, at least one Scorekeeper, and one Timekeeper.

IV. The Quizmaster

A. The quizmaster is responsible for governing all aspects of the quiz. He/she will:

1. Check all the lights before each quiz to determine that they work properly.
2. Instruct the timekeeper to start and stop the clock, calling "time in" and "time out" as appropriate.
3. Read the questions during the quiz. The quizmaster will read each question only once, in the order generated by the software designated by the tournament director (unless a question has been compromised by misreading or other issues) and will make every effort to stop reading the instant a light comes on indicating that a quizzer has jumped to answer the question. The quizmaster may not repeat part or all of a question for a quizzer.
4. Determine and indicate who has the right to answer each question.
5. Determine whether an answer is correct (twenty points) or an error. Twenty points should be awarded as soon as the quizmaster determines the correct question and answer has been given fully and completely. An error should be awarded as soon as the quizmaster determines that any incorrect information has been given, even if the answer is not yet complete.
6. Call any fouls noticed in the course of the quiz.
7. If time has run off the clock inappropriately for any reason, the quizmaster may instruct the timekeeper to restore time to the clock at the quizmaster's discretion.

8. Work hard to ensure that each quiz stays on schedule and finishes on time.

B. If more than one quizmaster is assigned to a quiz, quizmasters should be designated as “primary” and “backup.” The primary quizmaster will then have final authority in all decisions. Backup quizmasters will assist in calling fouls, making decisions about correctness of answers and in all other ways assisting the primary quizmaster in judging the quiz correctly. Except for emergencies, Primary and Backup quizmasters should not switch roles during the course of a single quiz but should switch roles between quizzes when more than one quiz is required.

V. The Scorekeeper(s)

- A. The scorekeeper will maintain the official scoring records for the quiz on paper or computer. He/she will:
1. Make appropriate tally marks as the quiz progresses, indicating errors, fouls, bonuses, technical fouls, timeouts and correct answers on the official score sheet. The scorekeeper must indicate, on the score sheet, which points were scored in overtime, and these points will not be included in team bracket points or individual averages.
 2. Tally and announce the team scores at halftime and at the end of the quiz. He/she may also keep a running score if desired.
 3. Notify the quizmaster when a quizzier has quizzed out or erred out of the quiz.
 4. Notify each team when they receive their third and sixth team errors, and when five, six or seven people from the same team have answered correctly.
 5. Assist the quizmaster in calling fouls and in judging the correctness of jumps and answers.
 6. Record and time each time out used by any team during the quiz.
- B. If more than one scorekeeper is assigned to a quiz, scorekeepers should tally and agree on the official score before announcing the final results of a quiz. Scorekeepers can also consult each other if scores or tallies are in doubt.

VI. The Timekeeper

- A. The timekeeper will operate a time clock or stopwatch during the quiz. He/she will:
1. Keep regulation time for two six-minute halves and keep overtime time for each overtime period. This timekeeping will follow the instructions of the quizmaster to “time in,” “time out,” or restore time to the clock.
 2. The timekeeper shall have discretion to stop the clock if a time out or substitution is requested by a coach, or if they judge that the clock is running but the quiz is not progressing. Timekeeper should stop the clock and say “Time” out loud to notify the QM that the clock has been stopped. The quizmaster retains final discretion over whether the clock should have been stopped.
 3. Notify the quizmaster if a quizzier does not begin to answer within five seconds of being called upon.
 4. Notify the quizmaster if a quizzier has not finished their answer within the allowed 20 or 30 seconds.
 5. Assist the quizmaster in calling fouls and in judging the correctness of jumps and answers.

Quiz Format

VII. Basic Rules and Format of the Quiz

- A. A quiz will consist of all the questions the quizmaster can read within two six-minute halves. In case of a tie score, overtime periods may be added. The first overtime period will be two minutes long; the rest will be one minute each until the quiz is decided.
1. Only teams participating in overtime can be involved in any challenge.
 2. Only those teams whose scores are tied may participate in the overtime.
- B. Three teams will compete at the same time in each quiz, sitting on chairs fitted with electronic pads to help the quizmaster determine which quizzier was the first to jump. (These pads should be generally similar to the pads marketed by Quiz Equipment.) Every effort should be made to use identical pads throughout any single tournament and to notify (well in advance) all participating ministries with regard to what specific pads will be used for the tournament. Audience members, coaches, assistants and substitutes should sit generally behind the quizmaster. No one except table officials should be sitting close enough to the quiz official’s table that they may be able to read the questions. No one may sit in front of the table officials’ table except the fifteen active quizzers.
1. A standard jump is defined as a jump in which the quizzier has placed the pad on the chair, triggers the light and rises completely off the chair. The first quizzier to jump will be called on by the Quizmaster and must stand up. Once standing, the quizzier may assume any reasonable posture and answer the question.
 2. If no quizzier jumps within three seconds after the quizmaster has finished reading the question, the quizmaster will close the question by saying “no question.”
 3. If a quizzier jumps before a question has been completely read, the quizmaster will direct the quizzier to “Finish the question.” This wording will be used for both types of questions.
 4. If time (for a half or overtime period) runs out during a question, but after the quizmaster has begun reading the Scripture reference for that question, the first quizzier to jump must answer the question, and is allowed the full 20 or 30 seconds.

5. If time (for a half or overtime period) runs out during a question, but before the quizmaster has begun reading the Scripture reference for that question, the question is thrown out and the **period** is ended.
6. Errors made by the Quizmaster shall be handled as follows:
 - a) If a question (including quotes) has been repeated as a mistake by the quizmaster, it should be thrown out and time restored to the clock.
 - b) If a quizmaster fails to reset the question set before a quiz, he/she should reset the question set immediately upon noting the mistake and notify all quizzers and coaches that questions may be repeated during the remainder of the quiz.
 - c) If a quizmaster mistakenly rules a quizzers' answer to be an error, when that answer is not yet incorrect and quizzers' time has not yet expired, the question should be thrown out and time restored to the clock.
 - d) If a quizmaster mistakenly rules a quizzers' answer to be an error after the correct question and answer has been given, the QM should reverse the decision and award the points. This may be done whether a challenge has been issued or not.
 - e) Other errors made by the quizmaster shall be corrected at the Quizmaster's discretion prior to reading the next question of the quiz, and time may be restored to the clock at the QM's sole discretion.
7. If a quizzer jumps before the completion of the reference and fails to complete the correct reference **correctly before quoting any part of the verse, and before attempting to form a question and answer**, an error is given and time shall be restored to the clock to the time of the start of the question.

C. Two types of questions will be used. These will follow as closely as possible the rules spelled out in the "BQF Guide to Making Questions." **Questions** will be based on the **2025** English Standard Version of the Bible. In general, the questions will follow these formats:

1. **Interrogative questions** will consist of an interrogative word replacing a key word or phrase from the Scriptures. These will be asked by the quizmaster as follows, "Question, according to (book), chapter, verse, ..." To answer these correctly:
 - a) Quizzer must supply the correct interrogative word (occasionally, another interrogative word may be good enough if the meaning of the question is unchanged), and the quizzer must clearly supply the correct and complete question and answer. Only the first question and answer supplied by the quizzer may be considered, but if no incorrect information is given, a quizzer may add more information to make the first question and answer correct, as long as the quizzer finishes within the twenty second time limit.
 - b) In some cases, a quizzer may receive twenty points if a "flip-flop" is awarded. This means that the quizzer has given the question as the answer and the answer as a question. To qualify as a flip-flop, a question must use the same interrogative as its flip-flop. For purposes of this rule only, who/whom are NOT considered the same interrogative.
 - c) A quizzer must not include any information except what that particular Scripture reference actually says, and whatever helping verbs are necessary to make the question grammatically workable.
 - d) A quizzer must begin to answer within five seconds and finish the answer within twenty seconds after being called upon by the Quizmaster.
2. **Quote questions** will be based on quote verses. Verses that may serve as quotes will be indicated in the practice questions supplied by Bible Quiz Fellowship. These questions will be asked as follows, "Question, according to (book) chapter, verse, 'quote.'" The quizzer will then quote the entire verse. To answer correctly:
 - a) A quizzer must quote the entire verse, word for word and letter perfectly, within 30 seconds after being called upon by the quizmaster.
 - b) A quizzer must begin to answer within five seconds of being called upon. If a quizmaster says "Finish the question" on a quote question, the quizzer must say "Quote" within 20 seconds. The quizzer would still have the full 30 seconds for the quote.
 - c) A quizzer may go back and repeat part or all of the verse, provided that no incorrect information is given, and no words are spoken in the wrong order.
 - d) Approximately 15 percent of the questions should be quote questions.
 - e) If a Quiz Master says "Finish the question" on a quote question, the quizzer must say quote before they start quoting the verse.
 - f) The singular possessive proper names that end in "s" as written in the **2025** ESV quiz portion, i.e., "Jesus' feet" will be accepted when pronounced either way.

VIII. During the Quiz

- A. The role of the **Coach** is to encourage the team, provide strategy and make substitutions. During the quiz:
 1. Coaches must provide a lineup for the table officials before each quiz.
 2. Coaches may make substitutions at any time before the quizmaster says "question," but only after all rulings and challenges have been resolved for any prior question, or after a question is closed when the quizmaster says "no question."

3. Coaches should pray with and encourage their team during the 60 second break between halves of the quiz and the 60 second break before each overtime period.
4. Coaches may call one 15-second "Time Out" during each half of a quiz, after points have been awarded and before the quizmaster says "question." Only the coach may approach the active quizzers during a time out. If a coach has not used their time out during the second half, that timeout may carry over into overtime quiz(zes).
5. Coaches must indicate who will replace a quizzier who has quizzed out or erred out.
6. Coaches may offer, support or rebut a challenge when external distractions disrupt a quizzier, when a question contains typing errors, incorrect information or other types of errors, when the quizmaster reads a question incorrectly, or an error has been awarded. If a coach's challenge is not upheld, that **team** loses the privilege to offer a **coach's** challenge in that quiz. For a challenge to be considered, the coach must ensure that a challenge request is recognized by the quizmaster after an error is awarded, but before any half or overtime break begins, and before any team time out, substitution or other continuation of the quiz is permitted to occur by the quizmaster. A reasonably prompt challenge by a coach shall have priority over any other break or the continuation of the quiz."
7. A coach may ask for a score check if the clock is stopped.

B. The role of the team **Captain** is to provide leadership for the team. Besides answering questions:

1. A captain may challenge a question or answer if information given in the question or answer is incorrect, or if the question contains typing errors, or was read incorrectly by the quizmaster.
2. A captain may challenge an error if external distractions or other factors disrupted the quiz while a quizzier was attempting to answer. For a challenge initiated by the captain; Coaches, assistant coaches and teammates may not intentionally signal a desire to have the captain challenge the previous ruling. If the quizmaster judges that the captain has been intentionally signaled to offer a challenge, the challenge will not be considered.
3. A captain wishing to challenge a ruling by the quizmaster must trigger their light and verbally declare a challenge to the Quizmaster before any half or overtime break begins, and before any team time out, substitution or continuation of the quiz is permitted to occur by the quizmaster. A reasonably prompt challenge by a captain shall have priority over any other break or the continuation of the quiz.
4. If appropriate, opposing captains should be given an opportunity to support or rebut a challenge.
5. In all challenges, quizzers should maintain an attitude of respect and kindness as is fitting for a Christian.
6. Once a quizmaster has considered the challenge, looked up the reference and rendered a decision, that decision is final. No further challenges are permitted on that issue.

C. **Quizzers** may **score or lose points** in the following ways:

1. For each correct answer, a quizzier earns 20 points.
2. When a team has five different people answer correctly in the same quiz, an extra 20 points is added to the team total. This also applies when six and seven quizzers answer correctly.
3. If a quizzier answers five questions correctly with no errors, he/she has "quizzed out, perfect score." The quizzier is awarded a bonus ten points and is eliminated from the quiz.
4. If a quizzier answers five questions correctly, but has received one or more errors, he/she has "quizzed out," and is eliminated from the quiz, but no bonus points are awarded.
5. A quizzier earns an error by answering incorrectly, or by receiving two fouls. Errors follow these rules:
 - a) When a quizzier receives his or her third error, he/she is eliminated from the quiz, having "erred out."
 - b) A team's first three errors are "free."
 - c) For team errors 4, 5 and 6, ten points each will be deducted from the team score.
 - d) For each error after the sixth, 20 points will be deducted from the team score.
 - e) If one quizzier receives two fouls, that combines to count as an error.
 - f) If two different quizzers have one foul each, that combines to count as a team error.

D. **Fouls (or errors)** are called using the following rules:

1. A foul is given for disruption of the quiz while the clock is running.
2. A foul is given for communication with a quizzier after the quizmaster says "question," and before points are awarded.
3. A foul is given if a quizzier's hands touch the chair seat or touch another quizzier during a question.
4. A foul (or error) is given when a quizzier answers out of turn, or without being called upon:
 - a) If a quizzier answers when a member of an opposing team was called on, the quizzier is given a foul and the member of the opposing team may answer the question at the discretion of the quizmaster.
 - b) If a quizzier communicates or verbally attempts to answer when a member of his/her team was called on, the quizzier is given an error and the question must be thrown out.
5. A foul is awarded if a captain requests time remaining but the clock has not already been stopped for some other reason.
6. If a quizzier's light comes on (and then goes off) or stays on after the quizmaster finishes saying the word "question," but the quizzier who won the jump has not risen completely off the chair before being fully recognized by the quizmaster, one of the following must be done:

- a) A foul must be awarded if the light came on before the quizmaster read any part of the reference. The question can then be reused, and any quizzer may answer.
- b) An error must be awarded if the light comes on after the quizmaster begins to read the reference. The question must then be thrown out.

E. A quiz will not end on a foul. If a foul occurs on the final question of the quiz, the foul is awarded and time on the clock is restored to the point where the question began.

F. If a team or individual is awarded a **technical foul** ten points are deducted from that team's score. If a second technical is awarded to the same person in the same quiz, ten points are deducted from the team score, that person is disqualified, eliminated from the quiz and finishes the quiz with zero personal points (any points added to the team score will be removed). If a team receives a total of three technical fouls on any combination of coaches, quizzers or cheering section, that team is disqualified and eliminated from the quiz in last place with zero points and zero bracket points. Technical fouls are awarded for:

1. Failure to submit a correct lineup before the quiz, as detailed above in III. B.
2. Persistent or inappropriate challenges.
3. Unsportsmanlike conduct, or any conduct unbecoming of a Christian by any member of the team.
4. Inappropriate cheering at any time or communication while a quizzer is attempting to answer by any member of a cheering section.
5. If a team is not at the scheduled quiz site on time and is not still engaged in or coming from a previous quiz (to be checked by the quizmaster), the quizmaster will start the quiz. If the team arrives late, a technical foul is awarded, and the team may join the quiz in progress. If a team arrives later than halftime, they may join the quiz with one technical but will finish in third place regardless of their score.
6. Time remaining may only be asked for by the captain or coach when the clock is stopped. A technical foul is awarded for any of the following requests for time remaining:
 - a) A request by the coach while the clock is still running.
 - b) A request by any quizzer except the captain, at any time.
 - c) A request at any time by any coach not currently designated as a team's head coach.
7. It is expected that a quizzer will use a **standard jump** as defined in (VII. B. 1.) or as close an approximation as is medically practical. If a coach has determined a **medical** need for a quizzer to use a non-standard jump during a quiz, the quizzer will use that method throughout the quiz. When the quizzer enters the quiz the first time, the coach must declare the non-standard jumper to the quiz master. A technical foul will be awarded to the coach if the coach fails to declare the non-standard jumper.
 - a) The preferred nonstandard jump is for the quizzer to sit on the pad and trigger the light without rising off the chair. The quizzer may then elect to answer while seated or rise to answer the question.
 - b) A finger or foot jump should be used as a nonstandard jump only if no variation of a standard jump is medically practical.

IX. Tournament Format

- A. A BQF tournament will be governed by the "Tournament Rule Guidelines."
- B. The Bible Quiz Fellowship committee will decide upon rule changes.

BQF Tournament Rule Guidelines

I. Tournament format

- A. Bracket points will be calculated during the round robin portion of a tournament to determine the “seeding” placement of each team in the elimination bracket. The following basis will be used to calculate bracket points:
1. Ten bracket points will be awarded for a first-place finish.
 2. Six bracket points will be awarded for a second-place finish.
 3. Two bracket points will be awarded for a third-place finish.
 4. One percent of the team score for each quiz will be added to the bracket points. For purposes of calculating bracket points or individual averages, points scored in an overtime period are not “counted.”
 5. If there is a tie in bracket points by teams after the round robin portion of the tournament, the tie shall be broken in the following order:
 6. Higher finish in head-to-head quiz during round robin
 7. Placement Points during the round robin
 8. Most First Place finishes during round robin
 9. Most Second Place finishes during round robin
 10. Coin flip with the Tournament Director calling which team is “heads” and which team is “tails” before he flips the coin.
- B. The Championship
1. The three teams in the championship shall be determined by the elimination bracket.
 2. The championship quizzes shall consist of a series with a minimum of two quizzes and a maximum of four quizzes.
 3. The first team to finish in first place in two quizzes shall be declared to be the champions of the tournament.
 4. Second place shall be determined by the most bracket points among the other two teams in the championship.
 5. If there is a tie in bracket points by the other two teams in the championship, the tie shall be broken in the following order to determine the second-place team:
 - a) Placement Points in the championship
 - b) First Place finishes in the championship
 - c) Second Place finishes in the championship
 - d) Total points scored in the championship.
 - e) Fewest errors in championship
 6. The Quizmasters for the championship shall be chosen in the following manner:
 - a) The Tournament Director shall make a list of all the number one rated quizmasters that are not from one of the participating ministries in the championship. He shall contact each of these quizmasters to see if they would be willing to serve in this capacity for the championship. He shall then make a list of all those quizmasters willing to serve in the championship. The Tournament Director shall then take this list to the head coach from each team in the championship as soon as possible before the championship.
 - b) Each team selects one quiz master.
 - c) Tournament director will select the balance randomly to have a total of 4 QMs.
 - d) The QMs chosen by the 3 teams will be drawn randomly and will Quizmaster 1st. Then the remaining of the 4 QMs will be randomly drawn from the #1 ranked QMs and will Quizmaster the remaining Championship quizzes.
 7. Seating for the teams in the championship shall be determined as follows:
 - a) The team which qualified for the championship in the first window quiz shall have first choice of seats for the first quiz in the championship.
 - b) The team which qualified for the championship in the second window quiz shall have the next choice from the remaining two seats for the first quiz in the championship.
 - c) The team which qualified for the championship in the third window quiz shall sit in the remaining seats for the first quiz in the championship.
 - d) The teams shall then rotate clockwise (to the right from the perspective of the quizmaster/to the left from the perspective of the quizzers) for the remaining quizzes in the championship.