

Lectio Divina Exercise

Our question is: How does something thousands of years old help me in my day-to-day life?

Lectio Divina is Latin for divine reading, spiritual reading, or "holy reading," and is a traditional Christian practice of prayer and scripture reading intended to promote communion with God and to increase our openness to God's Word. It is a way of praying with Scripture that calls us to study, ponder, listen and, finally, pray and even sing and rejoice from God's Word, within our souls.

Overview:

Step 1: Choose a text from the Scriptures that you wish to pray. When choosing scripture, length of text can depend on what God is calling you to do – it can be a verse or an entire chapter.

Step 2: Place yourself in a comfortable position and allow yourself to become silent. Some Christians focus for a few moments on their breathing; others have a beloved "prayer word" or "prayer phrase" they gently recite. That practice is known as "centering prayer" or *Meditatio* which makes for a good, brief introduction to *lectio divina*. Use whatever method is best for you, and allow yourself to enjoy silence for a few moments.

Step 3: Turn to the text and read it slowly, peacefully. Take in each portion of the reading, constantly listening for the "still, small voice" of one word or phrase that somehow says, "I am for you today."

Realize that the phrase or word may not jump out at them, but reveal itself slowly. Choose that word or phrase, repeat it, and share it (without elaboration).

Step 4: Read the text again; however, this time place yourself in the Bible scene or in a situation where you are speaking to God. Then we will spend some time discussing the scene or situation you (we) envisioned while rereading the passage.

Step 5: Read the text for a third time and this time contemplate what God is inviting you to do. What do you think is being communicated, what is God trying to tell you, what is revealing itself through scripture? If you wish to reread the text again, feel free, there are unlimited amounts of time one can reflect on a passage.

Suggested Readings: **Matthew 7:13-14** (“the narrow gate”)
Psalms 23 (“The Lord is my shepherd...”) **Mark 4:35-41** (Jesus calms the storm)
Luke 22:39-44 (agony in the garden) **John 15:1-17** (the vine and the branches)
Philippians 2:1-13 (“have among yourselves the same attitude as Christ Jesus...”)

Filling the Holes:

Reflect on these five points and share some of your own examples...

1. To understand God’s CHARACTER

[Jesus speaking] The Father and I are one. I and the Father are one . . . If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. John 10:30

2. To know God’s WAYS

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light for my path. Psalm 119:105

3. To hear God’s VOICE

All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

4. To deepen your FAITH

We are confident of you in the Lord that what we instruct you, you (both) are doing and will continue to do. May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the endurance of Christ. 2

Thessalonians 3:4-5

5. To change your LIFE

Indeed, the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

- What is one thing you know about Jesus that could help explain what you need to know about God?
- What is an area in your life where you need God's wisdom?
- What is one part of your faith that you are most passionate about?
- How could Scripture be used to change your life for the better?

1. Go deeper **STUDY**
2. Do what it says **OBEY**
3. Gather some verses to **MEMORIZE**
4. Commit to a plan to develop a **HABIT** of reading Scripture

Before Next Time:

For personal scripture studies your candidate can try the following:

YouVersion Bible App (available on mobile devices or via email)

In the YouVersion Bible App (*It's free*) you can sign up for a plan that will help you navigate through the Bible.

Scripture Study Guides – Typically at the beginning of each book in the Bible, there is a brief description of the author and why it was written. Some Bibles are even “Study Bibles” with thoughts and questions written in the margins. Scripture study guides go further by breaking down parts of the Bible into reflection questions and devotionals. This gives you an opportunity to dive deeper into something you may just skim. We have also included an example.

Sample of Study Scripture Guide: 1 John 1:1-10

Reflection questions

1. There seems to be some doubt (among John's original readers) that Jesus lived in the flesh. Make a list below of all the words and phrases that John uses to describe his experience with Jesus (for example, "we have heard," and "we have seen," etc.).

2. Do you think first-hand knowledge is important for someone to believe in Jesus? Why or why not?

3. Jesus was always surrounded by doubt. People seemed to want to see miracles to prove that He was who He said He was. Even Thomas, one of Jesus' closest followers, doubted his authenticity (John 20:19-31). Do you or someone you know have doubts about Jesus?