

LIFE with Jesus in Worship

Lectio Divina

INTRODUCTION

Is God saying something to you today?

Lectio Divina is a Latin phrase that means “divine reading.” It describes an ancient way of reading scripture that helps us hear God’s personal words to us.

In *Lectio Divina*, we turn to a short passage of Scripture and read it slowly multiple times, listening for a word, phrase, or moment in the story that the Holy Spirit might lift from the passage and speak to our hearts—a “word within the word.”

Then we take time to ponder or meditate on what has emerged, letting it soak more deeply into us. From there we pray to God about those words.

Finally, we sit quietly with God, enjoying the closeness this conversation with Him through His word has fostered.

THE PRACTICE

Choose a Passage

Select a short passage of Scripture.

Quiet Yourself

Spend a minute or two getting comfortable and quieting your heart, mind, and body. Take several deep breaths. Ask the Lord to be with you and to speak to you through His word.

Read

First Reading. Read the passage slowly through. Take a short pause between sentences or phrases to savor the words.

Second Reading. Read the passage slowly once more, pausing frequently. Pay attention for any word, phrase, or moment in the story that seems to shimmer or stand out to you. Some people like to use their imaginations at this point to ‘see’ themselves in the scene.

Reflect

Listen with both your heart and mind to the phrase or word or moment that came off the page for you. Turn the words or scene over slowly in your mind. Reflect: Is there something the Lord seems to be saying to you through these specific words? How do these words speak to your life, your heart? It can be helpful to write the words down in a journal and reflect upon them in writing.

Respond

Turn your reflections into prayer to God. Express thanks and praise for who He is showing Himself to be or the truths He is speaking to you. Perhaps you also need to ask Him for His provision, guidance, or forgiveness as you respond to the words He has spoken to you.

Rest

Take time to rest in God's presence, to be still. Stay open to God, listening for Him. Remain in peace and silence. Allow the text to work its way to the deepest part of your being. Savor your encounter with God. Don't hurry away.

HELPFUL VERSES

"Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked . . . but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night," Psalm 1:1-2.

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path," Psalm 119:105.

"Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart," Jeremiah 15:16.

"Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God," Matthew 4:4.

INTERESTING QUOTES

"In our meditation we ponder the chosen text on the strength of the promise that it has something utterly personal to say to us for this day and for our Christian life, that it is not only God's Word for the Church, but also God's Word for us individually. We expose ourselves to the specific word until it addresses us personally. And when we do this, we are doing no more than the simplest, untutored Christian does every day; we read God's word as God's word to us," Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

"Truly to hear, and in listening to obey, is at the heart of knowing God . . . This knowing and being known takes place when God's Word so penetrates our innermost being that we become what we hear. We are transformed into God's likeness . . . This is how intimacy with God takes place," Robert Warren.

"The gospel is not a doctrine of the tongue, but of life. It cannot be grasped by reason and memory only, but it is fully understood when it possesses the whole soul, and penetrates to the inner recesses of the heart," John Calvin.

"We live—really live—only through God's regular speaking in our souls and thus 'by every word that comes from the mouth of God,'" Dallas Willard.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before you try this practice:

1. Have you heard of or tried *Lectio Divina* before? What was your experience like?
2. If possible, tell a story about a time when God's word spoke to you personally.
3. How do you feel about giving this practice a try?
4. What do you think you might find challenging about this practice?
5. What appeals to you about this practice.
6. Someone in your group pray for you all as you head out to adopt this practice

After you have tried this practice:

1. Talk about your experiences with this practice.
2. What did you find helpful or good about this practice?
3. Was any part of this practice challenging?
4. How do you think you will engage with this practice going forward?

Note: This practice may also be done *with* your small group.

GROUP LECTIO DIVINA

- Choose the passage you will read. Maybe your group will want to work through a book of the Bible together this way. Someone pray for your group, that God would speak to each one of you through His word.
- One person read the selected passage slowly aloud. Others in the group may close their eyes or follow along in their Bibles, listening for the "word within the word."
- Pause for a minute of silence.
- Read the passage again, doing the same.
- Take some time to Reflect in silence.
- After this predetermined time of silence, share with one another the words or moment that stood out to you and why.
- Pray for one another regarding what the Lord seems to be speaking to each of you.