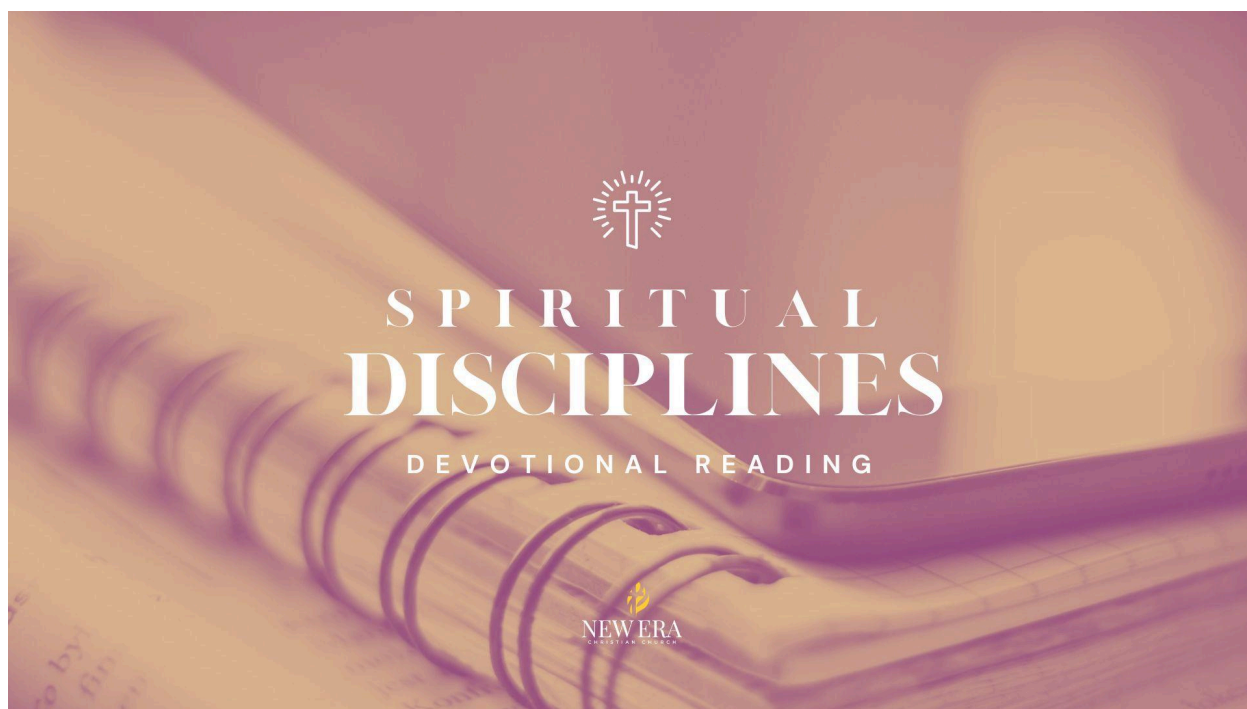




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Introduction

DEVOTIONAL READING - *Lectio Divina* is Latin for "**divine reading**," "**spiritual reading**," or "**holy reading**" and represents a method of prayer and scriptural reading intended to promote communion with God and provide special spiritual insights.

Devotional reading, or *lectio divina*, invites us into this kind of knowing. It is the kind of knowing for which Paul prayed when he said,

I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ and to ***know this love that surpasses knowledge***-that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (**Ephesians 3:17-19**)

The first 1,500 years of church history they practiced Devotional reading. Since many people were illiterate and many that could read didn't have Bibles, *Devotional Reading* offered a way of attending to Scripture as it was read in church, with an ear to hear word from God. Some brief and memorable word or phrase became bread for the throughout the week. Devotional reading is not an exercise in mentally critiquing on getting the text. It exists to **further divine companionship**. Devotional Reading invites us into God's presence to listen for his particular, loving word *to me* at this particular moment in time. In Devotional Reading one listens to the word as it is read aloud, or you read the text aloud for yourself.

Devotional reading of Scripture is rooted in the assurance that every part of the biblical story—letters, parables, Gospels, Prophets, history—is inspired and can give voice to God's word to us.

Devotional reading was traditionally made up of five parts:

1. **Silencio**- quiet preparation of the heart. Come into God's presence, slow down, and intentionally release the chaos and noise in your mind to him.
2. **Lectio**- read the word. Read a Scripture passage slowly and out loud, lingering over the words so that they resonate in your heart. When a word or phrase catches your attention, don't keep reading. Stop and attend to what God is saying to you. Be open to the words. Don't analyze it or judge it. Listen and wait.
3. **Meditatio**-meditate. Read the Scripture a second time out loud. Savor the words. Listen for any invitation that God is extending to you in this word. Reflect on the importance of the words that light up to you. Like Mary, who pondered the word in her heart, explored the ramifications of God's invitation.
4. **Oratio**- respond, pray. Read the Scripture a third time. Now is the moment to enter into a personal dialogue with God. There is no right or wrong way to do this. The important thing is to respond truthfully and authentically. What feelings has the text aroused in you? Name where you are resistant or want to push back. Become aware of where you feel invited into a deeper way of being with God. Talk to God about these feelings.
5. **Contemplatio**-contemplate, rest, and wait in the presence of God. Allow some time for the word to sink deeply into your soul. Yield and surrender yourself to God. Before you leave, you might consider a reminder that can help you dwell on or incarnate this word throughout the day.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How has your faith journey been characterized by a head-heart split?
 - How has God's love moved from being a matter of belief to a real and lived experience?
2. How would you characterize the way you tend to read?
 - How has the way you read Scripture been influenced by?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of scanning and hurrying through material in search of the main idea?
4. How and when have the Scriptures been the voice of God to you?
 - How have they brought you into the presence of Christ?

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

Our desire to know more, read more and study more can be another expression of our culture and its acquisitive nature. Knowing God, not knowing more, is the goal.

DEVOTIONAL READING

DESIRE- to prayerfully encounter and surrender to the living God through attending to Scripture.

DEFINITION- Devotional reading or hearing of Scripture requires an open, reflective, listening posture alert to the voice of God. This type of reading is aimed more at growing a relationship with God than gathering information about God.

SCRIPTURE-

(Psalm 119:36) Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain.

(Psalm 119:97) Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.

(Psalm 119:103) How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

(Psalm 119:111) Your statutes are my heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart.

(Hebrews 4:12–13) For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints, and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. ¹³ Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

(Deuteronomy 30:14) No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it.

PRACTICE INCLUDES-

- prayerfully dwelling on a passage of Scripture.
- Listening deeply to God's personal word to you.
- Reading not to master the text but be mastered by it.
- Staying with one text until the Lord prompts movement to another.
- Reading for depth, not breadth.
- Contemplative and formational reading of Scripture or other devotional texts.

GOD-GIVEN FRUIT -

- Keeping company with Jesus whether or not he speaks to you.
- Seeking and listening for a personal word from God.
- Dwelling in a text until it begins to live in and master you.
- Responding to God's Word with your heart and spirit, not just your rational, and intellect.
- softening of your heart so that the head-heart schism is mended, and you live more and more out of love.
- Having Scripture guide your dialogue with God.
- A growing receptivity and submission to God's Word.

Conclusion:

The Old and New Testaments are words from God to be studied, meditated upon, prayed over, and memorized for the knowledge and objective meaning they contain and the authority from God they carry, and not for the experience or feeling of personal power and inner peace they may stimulate. Sound knowledge comes first; then the lasting kind of experience and peace comes as a byproduct of knowing and communing with God rightly. As long as a person takes this view of the Bible and prayer, he/she is engaging in the same kind of meditation and prayer that Bible-believing followers of Christ have always commended.