

DAILY PASSION FOR THE WORD

How to meditate on the Bible in your quiet time or Bible study preparation

Tackle a chapter or half chapter at a time, spending two or more days on each. Study through a book of the Bible rather than random passages. No hurry, no deadlines, just the joy of hearing from Jesus in His Word.

Be Expectant!

The Bible is God's living Word. As you approach the Bible, pray that God would *meet you*, so you experience God Himself in His Word; *speak to you* as a friend to a friend; *teach you* His truth; *surprise you* with some new insight or discovery; and *transform you* over time into the image of Jesus.

Get Honest with God!

As you approach God in expectant prayer, take time also to think through what the last few days have been like for you. Share honestly with God what and how you are feeling as you approach your time with Him. Share your struggles and joys. Ask Him to speak, over time, to issues in your life.

Look Closely!

- ❑ Read the passage carefully, and write down specifics that you see such as who is there, what is happening, when is it, where is it, and how is it happening.
- ❑ Circle or write down words, phrases or ideas that *connect* by repeating, contrasting, being similar, going from the general to the particular, or stating a cause that leads to an effect.
- ❑ Put yourself into the passage. If it is a narrative, put yourself into the story. What do you see, smell, taste, feel? Chose one of the characters and become them. If it is a letter or law section, feel what it might have felt to get the letter or hear the law. If it is poetry, let the power of the poem and its images sweep over you.
- ❑ What questions does the passage raise in your mind? What words, phrases, or concepts don't you understand? Does the passage turn in any unexpected ways? What intrigues you? Write these questions down.

Meditate!

Step back and read the passage a few times again. Read it as if Jesus were standing right there with you (He is!). Ponder again the points that stand out to you in the passage. What does the passage say or point to about Jesus? Ask Jesus what He has for you personally in the passage. What area of your life is Jesus speaking to?

THE SECOND DAY IN THE PASSAGE

Today you'll look at the same passage, but from a different angle.

Think Deeply!

- ❑ Divide the passage into thought units, paragraphs. See what sentences you think add up to a thought unit and mark that as a paragraph. (These may or may not be the same as the paragraphs in the version of the Bible you are using.)
- ❑ Write a brief title for each paragraph.
- ❑ Consider the questions you wrote yesterday. Look hard in the passage for insights into these questions. Also look at the context of the passage. What comes before it and after it?
- ❑ One of the best ways to move towards answers to your questions is to look for connections among the paragraphs. Is there a word, phrase or idea that repeats? Is there a contrast? Is there a cause in one paragraph and the effect in another; or a string of similar words, phrases, or ideas that run through a few paragraphs? Draw lines between the connected words or phrases to mark them. What do you think is significant about these connections? What light do they shed on possible answers to your questions?

Summarize!

- ❑ Look at your connections, your questions, your points of significance, and the context. Step back and ask yourself: what are the main points of this passage? What is the author trying to say? Why is this passage or story here? Try to write this in an integrative sentence.

Hear from God and Act Boldly!

Look over your whole study from yesterday and today. Do you sense that God is speaking to any part of your life? Is there a promise to trust, a command to obey, or an example to follow or avoid? Is there a deeper insight into God or your experience with God? What action are you going to take in response to what God is saying to you?

Worship Him!

Take the time to worship God and respond to His love for you. Thank Him for speaking to you in His living Word.

The Joy of Community

After you have studied the passage on your own, share it with trusted fellow believers in a Christian community to get their correction, affirmation, and insights. Have at least one fellow believer with whom you share Bible study on a regular basis. Become a part of a small group that studies the Bible seriously.