

## DEVOTIONAL READING

Song of Songs 7:10-12 NIV - I belong to my beloved, and his desire is for me. Come, my beloved, let us go to the countryside, let us spend the night in the villages. Let us go early to the vineyards to see if the vines have budded, if their blossoms have opened, and if the pomegranates are in bloom--there I will give you my love.

### DESCRIPTION

Devotional Reading is about building our relationship with God by encountering Him through His Word. While it is valuable to take times for pure Bible study and scrutinizing, Devotional Reading is for the purpose of experiencing God's love and loving Him back.

As an example, consider a wife who spends time learning about her husband's likes and dislikes so that she can do what is pleasing to him. Compare this to a wife who spends time with her husband, listening to him, hearing of his affection for her, and expressing her love for him. This is the difference between reading for study and reading out of devotion.

To practice Devotional Reading includes approaching the Scriptures with our heart rather than for intellectual understanding.

### CONSIDERATIONS

In your life with the Lord, have you tended toward study of the Scripture or devotional reading? Why do you think that is?

How has God used the Scriptures to speak to you in the past? What did you do about it? How has this changed your way of doing things?

In what ways do you think approaching God's Word **only** for devotion could be beneficial? Harmful?

In what ways do you think approaching God's Word **only** for study could be beneficial? Harmful?

What do you think is the right balance between Bible Study and Devotional Reading? How does one maintain this balance?



### PURPOSE:

To encounter God through His written Word.

To allow the Word of God to penetrate our heart and consequently, our lives.

To listen to God's voice.

### SPIRITUAL FRUIT:

Increased focus on God's voice.

Deeper love for God.

Greater experience of God's love for us.

Developing skill in hearing God's voice.

Softening of our hearts in Christ's likeness.

Alignment with God's will, perspective, and purpose.

## PRAYER

Father, thank you for your love. Help me to understand your love for me and to express how my heart feels about you. Speak to me now through your Word so I can hear your voice speaking to my heart. In Jesus' name, Amen.



## PRACTICE

1. Slow yourself down. Take a breath. Offer yourself to God.
  - Bring a notebook to write things down as desired.
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you select one passage of Scripture to use for Devotional Reading. (Psalms tend to be particularly good for this.) Some good passages include:
  - Psalms 1, 5, 8, 23, 27, 37, etc; The Song of Songs
  - Exodus 15; Deuteronomy 8; Isaiah 54, Isaiah 60, etc.
  - John 8:3-11; John 15:1-17; Luke 1:28-55, etc.
  - Ephesians 3:16-20; 1 Corinthians 13; Romans 8, etc.
3. Invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you as you read the passage one time all the way through – slowly.
  - In general, describe what this passage is about.
  - How is this relevant to your life right now?
  - How did this passage make you feel? For example, happy/sad, sympathetic/angry, loved/condemned, etc.
  - Tell the Lord how you feel. Listen for how He responds.
4. Read the passage again - slowly. This time, as you proceed towards the end of the passage, prayerfully linger on anything that the Lord seems to be highlighting to you.
  - If you were to summarize one thing that God revealed to you from this passage, what would it be?
  - How does this reveal or demonstrate God's love for you? Or His mercy, compassion, faithfulness, goodness, etc.
5. Use the revelation God has given you of His love to express your devotion to God.
  - You can use spoken words, writing/journaling, singing, or drawing/painting, etc. as you feel inspired.

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## ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES:

Psalms 119:36

John 15:1-17

1 Corinthians 13

2 Timothy 3:16

2 Peter 1:20-21

Hebrews 4:12

Psalms 119:97

Deuteronomy  
29:29

Psalms 119:103

Psalms 18:30

Psalms 119:15-18