

Lectio Divina 101: What Are the Steps?

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## Preliminaries

- **CHOOSE** the Scriptures you wish to pray. Don't set a goal of "covering" a certain amount of text: the amount of text "covered" is in God's hands, not yours. A complete word-picture or story is best, but a single verse can work just as well; a whole chapter is too much. Complex doctrinal passages are tough; short narratives from the Gospels and portions of the Psalms are easier.
- **GET** in a comfortable position and allow yourself to become attentive. Some Christians focus for a few moments on their breathing; others have a "prayer word" or "phrase" they slowly recite to become centered.

## The Four Phases of *Lectio*

Praying with Scripture falls into the following four phases. These phases are not air-tight compartments with rigid transitions between them. *Lectio* offers a natural flow from one phase to the next rather than a lock-step march.

### Phase One - *Lectio*: reading.

*What does the text say?*

- **TURN** to the text and read it slowly, gently, out loud. Savor the reading, feel the words in your mouth, listening for the "still, small voice" of a particular word or phrase that says, "I am for you today."

### Phase Two - *Meditatio*: meditation.

*What does the text say specifically to me at this point in my life?*

- **TAKE** the word or phrase into yourself. Slowly repeat it to yourself, allowing it to interact with your inner world of concerns, memories, and ideas. Let your imagination engage the text. Images are not necessarily but invitations into dialogue with God.

### Phase Three - *Oratio*: prayer.

*What does God say to me and what do I say to God through the text?*

- **SPEAK** to God. Interact with God as you would with one who you know loves and accepts you. Experience this God-breathed word or phrase as a means to bless and transform the thoughts and images that God's Word has awakened in you. Give to God what you have found in your heart.

#### **Phase Four - Contemplatio: contemplation.**

*Being still, resting in God's presence, and letting God work through my mind and heart.*

FINALLY, REST in God's embrace. Let go of words and images. Rejoice that God is with you in silence, spiritual rest, and inner receptivity.

- **SILENCE** – “Be STILL, then, and know that I am God” ([Psalm 46:10, CEV](#)).
- **LISTEN** – “each new generation will LISTEN and learn to worship the Lord their God with fear and trembling” ([Deuteronomy 31:13](#)).
- **DWELL** – “One thing have I asked of the Lord; that I might DWELL in the house of Lord all the days of my life” ([Psalm 27:4](#)).
- **ABIDE** – “ABIDE in me as I ABIDE in you .... If you ABIDE in me and my words ABIDE in you ...” ([John 15:1-5](#)).

## **Re-Engaging Daily Life**

As you come up out of the depths of contemplation and prepare to resume your normal activities, first thank God for meeting you in this time. Then ask God to show you what difference can this text make in how you act? What possibilities does it open up? What challenges does it pose?

In summary - when praying with Scripture attend to the Word, attend to God speaking this Word to you personally, attend to your own life-reality, and enjoy time in God's Presence!