

Daily Bible Reading Method

• A Simple 3-step Method for Praying with the Bible •

In Sacred Scripture, the Bible, we hear God's voice; it is a means to encounter God's word calling you. Sacred Scripture is the living Word of God, which guides us and guards us from the many conflicting voices in today's world. How might we train our ears to hear God's voice?

We hear in the Book of Job 33:33 this invitation:..."listen to me; be silent, and I will teach you".

There are three sequential steps in this passage: first, to listen; next, to be silent, and, finally, God will teach you.

From this sequence, we can extrapolate a "method" for praying with Scripture.

- ❖ Begin each session with a prayer of expectation. For example, following is "St. Francis' Prayer to Discern God's Will Said Before the Crucifix":

Most High, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart, and give me right faith, certain hope, perfect charity, sense and understanding, Lord, that I may carry out your holy and true command.

Beginning with a prayer of expectation readies your heart and mind to listen, to be silent, in order for God's word to teach you. It generates an expectation to listen for God's word, rather than simply wishing for an encounter with God.

- ❖ Set aside a designated number of minutes in the morning, and the same in the evening with your Bible – perhaps 15-20 minutes. Begin with your favorite books of the Bible, e.g., Psalms, Proverbs, the prophets Isaiah or Ezekiel, one of the Gospels, the Letters of John, etc. Consider using the Old Testament in the morning and the New Testament in the evening.
- ❖ Read each book with the realization that God's Word is being spoken to you today, not just God's Word spoken to Isaiah, or Paul, etc. Expect God to speak to you through the passage.
 - Read only one chapter, only one, underline, highlight, make margin notes for passages that have a special meaning for you. Feel free to mark up your Bible. Note what strikes you, what moves your spirit.

- Consider getting a composition book to use as a prayer journal for your thoughts and inspirations. Write down in the margin the date and the verse you are reading for that session.
- If you finish the chapter before the end of the allotted time, then sit with the verse(s) and ask God to enlighten the darkness of your heart. This is similar to the old monastic practice of *lectio divino*, of sitting under the Word of God and letting it flow over you with life cleansing water. Pay particular attention to what caught your attention and let it sit with you.
- Again, take that time in the morning to read one chapter in the Old Testament, and in the evening to read one chapter in the New Testament. The next day read the following chapter in the same book, reading that book from beginning to end. And always begin with a prayer of expectation.
- Keep track of any “power verses” you come across. “Power verses” are texts that seem to jump up and grab your attention. Write them down in the journal, or use the blank pages at the end of your bible.
- Also, if your bible has introductory pages before each book, read them and the footnotes, too.
- When you are finished with that book select another, and then another. In roughly 1.5 years you will have read the entire Bible, cover to cover.

May God enlighten you with sense and understanding, and empower you with every grace and blessing you will need this day.

“This Verse from Job Gives Us a Simple 3-step Method for Praying with the Bible”
Fr. Brian Cavanaugh, TOR | June 05, 2018 | Aleteia

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