

# follow Prayer: Lectio Divina

## Introduction to Lectio Divina

Welcome to this session on **Lectio Divina**, an ancient practice of "Divine Reading." While we often approach the Bible to gain information or study facts, Lectio Divina invites us to approach the Word of God as a living encounter. It is a way to move from *studying* the text to *listening* to the Author.

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### What is Lectio Divina?

The term "Lectio Divina" is Latin for "**Holy Reading**" or "**Divine Reading.**" It is a traditional monastic practice of scriptural reading, meditation, and prayer intended to promote communion with God and to increase the knowledge of God's Word.

- **From Head to Heart:** We often approach Scripture as a set of facts to be mastered or a puzzle to be solved. Lectio Divina shifts the goal from "mastering the text" to "being mastered by the Word."
  - **Wringing the Sponge:** Think of a sponge soaked in water. If you just touch it once, you get a little damp. But if you keep wringing it, you get all the water out. Lectio Divina is the process of "wringing" a small passage of Scripture until the life-giving "water" comes out for your soul.
  - **Chewing the Cud:** Much like a cow ruminates on its food, Lectio Divina is about "ruminating" on a word or phrase, letting it settle into your heart and mind throughout the day.
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### Study vs. Lectio Divina

It is important to distinguish between Bible Study and Lectio Divina. Both are vital, but they serve different purposes:

- **Bible Study (The Left Brain):** Focused on analysis, context, Greek/Hebrew meanings, and "What does this mean?" It is a vital foundation for understanding.
- **Lectio Divina (The Right Brain/Heart):** Focused on intuition, relationship, and "What is God saying to *me* right now through this?" It is about being with God in the text.

## Psalm 1: What it means to "meditate" on God's Word.

- **The Tree and the Water:** Psalm 1 describes the person who flourishes as a tree planted by streams of water, yielding fruit in season. The secret to this stability is that they "meditate" on God's law day and night.
  - **The Growl of the Lion:** The Hebrew word for meditate used in Psalm 1 is *Hagah*.
    - In the ancient world, this word wasn't about quiet, silent thought. It was used to describe a lion growling or muttering over its prey (Isaiah 31:4).
    - It is also compared to a cow "chewing the cud"—the process of bringing something up, chewing on it again, and slowly extracting every bit of nourishment.
  - **Physical Engagement:** Meditating in the biblical sense is an active, vocal process. We are meant to "mutter" the Word, tasting the syllables and letting the truth sink into our physical bodies, not just our intellectual minds.
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## The Four Movements of Lectio Divina

1. **Read (Lectio):** Read a short passage slowly. Listen for a single word or phrase that "shimmers" or catches your attention. Don't worry about why yet; just notice it.
  2. **Reflect (Meditatio):** Read the passage again. Think about that word or phrase. Why did God give you *that* word for *today*? How does it connect to your current life, struggles, or joys?
  3. **Respond (Oratio):** Read the passage a third time. Now, talk to God. Tell Him what you are thinking. Ask Him questions. Offer Him your feelings about the word He gave you.
  4. **Rest (Contemplatio):** Read the passage one final time. Sit in silence with God. Enjoy His presence. Let the word settle deep into your "soil."
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## Practical Tips for Practice

- **Pick Small Chunks:** Don't try to do this with a whole chapter. Use 3–5 verses. Narrative stories (The Gospels) or emotional poetry (The Psalms) work best.
- **Continuity:** As you move through the week, try to use the same passage for a few days to see how the "wringing" process brings out different insights.
- **Silence is the Soil:** This practice requires silence. We cannot hear the "still, small voice" of God if the "loud, busy voices" of our world are still ringing in our ears.
- **The "Shimmer" Rule:** If nothing "shimmers" on the first reading, don't worry. Read it again. Sometimes God's word is like a slow-release medicine; it takes time to enter the system.
- **Avoid the "Bible Study" Trap:** If you start thinking about Greek root words or historical context, gently pull yourself back. Those are good things, but they belong in "Study Time," not "Prayer Time." In Lectio, the question isn't "What does this mean for everyone?" but "What is God saying to *me*?"

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## Passages For Lectio Divina

- Theme: Forgiveness
  - Psalm 32:1-5
  - Matthew 18:21-35
  - Luke 15:11-24
  - Ephesians 4:31-32
  - Colossians 3:12-14
  - 1 John 1:8-9
- Theme: Joy
  - Psalm 16:8-11
  - Psalm 126:1-6
  - Isaiah 12:1-6
  - John 15:9-11
  - Philippians 4:4-7
  - 1 Peter 1:3-9
- Theme: Hope
  - Psalm 42:5-11
  - Jeremiah 29:11-14
  - Lamentations 3:21-26
  - Romans 5:1-5
  - Romans 8:18-25
  - Hebrews 6:19-20
- Theme: Trusting God
  - Psalm 62:1-2
  - Proverbs 3:5-6
  - Isaiah 26:3-4
  - Matthew 6:25-34
  - Romans 8:28-30
  - Hebrews 11:1-6