

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina or “*Divine Reading*” is an approach to meditative reading and praying over Scripture. It is a way of encouraging the Spirit to lead us into pondering the deep truths couched in God’s Word. It is not an attempt to attain more information, but it is an experiential process of allowing the Spirit of God, to breathe into us life-giving truths to transform our thinking, feeling and understanding of God and ourselves. Thomas Keating said, “*Divine reading as the monks conceived was not done for the sake of information but for insight.*”

The practice is designed to foster a spiritual frame of mind, and as a discipline it helps us dwell on a biblical passage as a means of seeking an encounter with Christ. Simply put, *lectio* involves focusing on a scriptural text in the presence of God for the sake of radical change in our soul. In essence, it is prayer over the Scriptures.

Our experience with *Lectio Divina* can be understood by the following analogy. A poster art fad surfaced in the early 90’s which was called, “magic-eye art.” This popular and modern expression was composed of lines that were either straight or wavy which resulted in a multi-colored geometric design. At an initial glance, it remained rather abstract, but by gazing deeply for awhile, and adjusting your focus, you are able to see “hidden” in the overall picture a three-dimensional object (e.g. a winged horse or airplane or eagle). A common response upon this discovery is a fervent, “Wow!” The practice and experience of *lectio divina* can yield a similar effect with scripture and the Spirit of God.

The practice of *lectio divina* has a relatively simply format:

1. Read aloud slowly a selected passage at least four times.
2. It is helpful to read different translations, and to read expressively or even dramatically using different emphasis and dramatic influence.
3. After each reading, pause (about 1 minute) and remain quiet before the text until you feel at home with it. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your mind and heart to any message God has for me.
4. Ask God to provide insight – illumination and revelation to discern the meaning of the passage for to me... just where I am now in my spiritual journey.
5. Take note of any phrase or word or image or feelings or a particular thought that surfaces... any of which God may employ to catch my attention.
6. Seek to find one impression or insight that you can grasp which leads to a deeper knowledge of the Lord. What speaks to you? Why? Reflect and linger on what has been brought to your attention.
7. Pray a personal response (or request) to the Lord as a result of what he reveals to you.

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