

Worship and Wonder Practice: Prayerful Reading (Lectio Divina)

"Let the Word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your heart to God" (Col. 3:16)

Lectio Divina simply means ‘divine reading.’ It’s a way of prayerfully reading scripture that focuses on our formation and transformation more than just consuming information. Traditionally, it’s broken down into several repetitive and reflective steps. Below are some steps for you to use, but feel free to break from these steps if it seems like the Spirit is leading in a different direction.

Step 1: Read

Pick a passage. Slowly read it aloud several times. In doing so, you are allowing it to begin to dwell in you richly, opening to the possibility that the Holy Spirit may have something in it for you today. You may find yourself beginning to notice a sentence, phrase or even a word. Pay attention to that possibility as you continue to reread.

Step 2: Reflect

Take the word, phrase, or sentence that has caught your attention and begin to chew it, to ruminate on it with the Holy Spirit. Talk to God about it. How is it touching your life? What is the Spirit stirring within you? Why is it significant to you, in particular, on this day? What might you be resisting? Is it life-giving or heavy? What does it speak to you about God, yourself, or reality? To what is God inviting you? Talk to him about it. Listen for his responses, too.

Step 2: Respond

As you have begun, perhaps, to understand something about this sentence, word or phrase and its significance for you, allow the Holy Spirit to begin to form a prayer in you based upon that. This might develop out of your pondering with God. In the end, your prayer might just be a single sentence, using the very word or phrase itself. It could be a prayer of thanksgiving, lament, desire, frustration, praise, or whatever. When you have received it, feel free to pray it repeatedly to God. This could be something you will carry throughout the day.

Step 4: Rest

Now just sit and rest in the presence of God, receiving whatever he offers about himself or yourself (don’t try to generate some feeling). Remember, if ‘nothing’ is happening, he is still there. He is in the room. He is in you. Sit in his presence. Contemplate what God is doing within you. Marinate in God’s goodness.

Adapted from Biola.edu.