

Lectio Divina

*Oh, how I love your law!
I meditate on it all day long
How sweet are your words to my taste,
Sweeter than honey to my mouth!*

Psalms 119:97, 103

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight.

Hebrews 4:12-13

Devotional reading is not an exercise in mentally critiquing or exegeting the text. It exists to further divine companionship. Lectio divina invites us into God's presence to listen for his particular, loving word to me at this particular moment in time.

from Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us

What is *lectio divina*?

Lectio divina (divine reading) is an ancient way of reading Scripture with God to hear from God through the Scriptures. Traditionally, *lectio divina* was made up of four movements, or steps: *Lectio*, *Meditatio*, *Oratio*, *Contemplatio*. For our practice, we will use the acronym S.O.A.P: Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer.

Practicing *lectio divina*

1. Scripture – Read the passage aloud. What word or phrase sticks out to you? What ‘speed bump’ makes you pause as you read? What verse do you notice more than the others? You may need to read it aloud a few times. That is okay. Write the word, phrase, or verse down.
2. Observation – Read the passage aloud again, this time focusing your attention on your chosen word or phrase. What is going on with this word or phrase? How does it fit in the rest of the passage? Why did God draw your attention to this particular piece of the text at this time? Reflect on what God might be saying to you through this word or phrase in this passage. Write down your thoughts and observations.
3. Application – This is the “so what” part of the practice. Read the passage aloud again, asking God to continue to speak to you through the words. What is God inviting you to through the word or phrase your attention has been focused on? How are you called to respond? Talk to God about what you are thinking and feeling.
4. Prayer – Talk to God about what you have heard through the practice. Thank God for being present and continuing to speak through Scripture today. Ask for help to remember what God has said to you through the practice of *lectio divina*. Sit in God's presence and remember you are loved.