

# Immersed in God's Word, following Jesus – together

*They took note that they had been with Jesus. ~ Acts 4:13*

## Mon, Feb. 12: Learning the Discipline of Lectio Divina

This week's immersion diverges from the normal routine to introduce a type of meditation and prayer using God's Word. You will find space to write reflections each day. Use the provided space or write in a journal of your own.



**Lectio Divina** ("divine reading") is a form of praying that uses Scripture to study, ponder, listen and pray. The desired outcome is a deeper knowledge of scripture, yourself, others, and God. You'll need to set time aside for a slow savoring of the word. If it helps you to be attentive and relaxed -- a candle, cross, or dimmed room can lend focus to your mind. Many people have found "breath prayers" helpful to this end. Breath prayers are very simple and usually very short phrases to coincide with your breathing: Inhale while dwelling on one phrase, exhale with a second (not necessarily aloud); repeat to settle the mind and relax: Here is an example to practice with for today, called "The Jesus Prayer":

*Lord Jesus (while inhaling)  
have mercy (while exhaling)*

There are four areas to engage in *Lectio Divina*. There is a general pattern, but no order is required; move freely between them and trust that God's Spirit will guide you. We will handle the sections in this order -- one day at a time: Reading, Meditation, Prayer, and Contemplation (each explained later this week). While we will dig into the full reading tomorrow, let your meditation for the week start with this phrase from Matthew 6:21:

*where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

*Notes, Observations about what your heart treasures:*



**Prayer for the week:** Lord Jesus, help me treasure You and Your Word in my heart, to treasure Your ways as described in that Word, and to treasure Your Spirit who helps me draw close to You and the Father. Amen.

### **Micro-Meditation: Psalm 32:1-5**

*Read vs. 1-5 2x*

*Mark words or phrases that catch your attention.*

*Meditate:* Talk (or write) with God about those words. Ask Him to impress things upon your heart and mind; expect responses.

<sup>1</sup>Blessed is the one  
whose transgressions are forgiven,  
whose sins are covered.

<sup>2</sup> Blessed is the one whose sin  
the LORD does not count against them  
and in whose spirit is no deceit.

<sup>3</sup> When I kept silent, my bones wasted away  
through my groaning all day long.

<sup>4</sup> For day and night your hand  
was heavy on me;  
my strength was sapped  
as in the heat of summer.

<sup>5</sup> Then I acknowledged my sin to you  
and did not cover up my iniquity.  
I said, "I will confess  
my transgressions to the LORD."  
And you forgave the guilt of my sin.



**Pondering Point:** Some people like to list blessings such as family, friends, jobs, homes, etc. Take a moment to list the blessings God gives you based on Psalm 32:1-5.

## Tuesday, February 13: Area One: Lectio or “Reading”

**Silence:** While not an official part of the four sections, silencing yourself before engaging in *Lectio Divina* is very helpful – necessary, some would say. We look to bring rest or peace (shalom) to our whole person. It may help to stretch your body or take your muscles through a series of clenches and releases from feet to face. Then sit in a comfortable position and take note of your breathing. Breathe gently and deeply for several minutes before beginning to read. Consider a short prayer inviting the Holy Spirit to guide your prayer time – or using a breath prayer as suggested yesterday. (Our Immersion material will teach on breath prayers later in the year, but for now feel free to use the phrase: *Lord Jesus have mercy.*)

**PART ONE, READING:** Once ready, start with **Lectio**, which means “reading”: Read the chosen Scripture as if you are reading the words for the first time. Then, in a second (and even third) pass of the reading, slow down to savor each word until a particular word or phrase catches your attention; then stop. Here is the reading:

*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth,  
where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves  
break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures  
in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy,  
and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where  
your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

Matthew 6:19-21

After a second, slow reading, here are my reflection words or phrase (remember: more words do not equal more spirituality):

Let these words and phrases percolate in you through the rest of the day in preparation for tomorrow (in God’s good favor).

## Micro-Meditation: Psalm 32:1-5

Ps 32:1 Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven,  
whose sins are covered.

### Teaching or Command of God:

He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.



Col. 1:13-14

## THE PROMISE

Acts 10:43

All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.



**Pondering Point:** God is not pleased with any sin, let alone un-confessed sin. Do you have pet sins, nagging sins, or long-standing, yet un-confessed sins? If so, find some quiet time and let God call them out and wipe them out in Jesus' name.

## Micro-Group Connections: A Disciple's Lifestyle



**Micro-Group Moment (MGM):**  
Considering the life of Jesus as a case for participating in Micro-Groups:



As you read the MG episode in Mark 14:32-34, try to discern what Jesus is seeking from His MG partners.

*They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."*

### Things to appreciate about MG/SG from the life of Jesus:

- Jesus finds value in both Small Groups and Micro Groups and participated in both. So can you.
- Jesus lived more deeply connected with some families and individuals than others. So can you.

## Wed, February 14: Area Two: Meditation or “Meditatio”

**MEDITATION:** To prepare for today’s meditation, slow down in silence or soft breath prayers as you did yesterday. Then review the reading and the words of reflection you wrote down. If you skipped yesterday, start there so the devotional time will make sense.

*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

Matthew 6:19-21

*My Word(s) of Reflection (copied from yesterday):*

**PART TWO, MEDITATION:** Repeat that word or phrase that caught your attention, thinking about them in the presence of God – with God. The repetition focuses attention and permits a deepening of awareness. Pay attention to images, shapes, concepts, even colors or textures that occur as you pray. Notice associations and memories that rise within you, note how this passage is touching you today. If you get distracted, simply return to the word or phrase that initially captured you. If a thought is something you need to remember, jot it down, then return to your meditation.

*My notes about images, shapes, concepts, colors, textures, memories, and associations:*

Because Wednesday is generally our *Identity in Christ* day, let's add an identity statement relating to the reading we are focusing on:

**In Christ we are treasured by God who gave His only Son in death that we might not perish but have life through eternity.**



**Prayer:** Father God, thank You for treasuring us as people to be included in Your kingdom – in Your joy. Let Your Holy Spirit produce in us the foundational fruit of love, joy, and peace as we are rooted in Your Word, learning to meditate on it *day and night* as Psalm 1 teaches us. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

### Micro-Meditation: Psalm 32:1-5

Ps. 32:2 Blessed is the one whose sin the LORD does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit.

#### **Teaching or Command of God:**

Encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

*Hebrews 3:13*



## THE PROMISE

Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. *Matt. 5:3*



**Pondering Point:** Do an inventory of your spirit with the Holy Spirit: Do you find any deceit? If not, rejoice in the work of the Lord. If so, pray for God to remove all deceit as you live under His grace and extend that grace to others.

In a week of encouraging quieting before engaging *Lectio Divina*, here is an introduction to the Foundational Five skill of Quieting.

#### **Relational Skill #2, Quiet Habit Builder:**

Simple quiet is a purposeful pause, when we seek a moment to catch our breath within a relational dynamic.

Quieting is when we can look away to recover from the energetic stimulation we experienced in relationship. You can learn more at <https://thrivetoday.org/foundational5/>.



## Thursday, February 15: Area Three: Prayer or “Oratio”

PART THREE, PRAYER: As with previous days, re-immense in your experience from the past day’s meditation. Ordinarily this occurs in one sitting but go with it. After slowing down in silence or breath praying, review the reading from Matthew 6:19-21. Check in with your reflection word(s) and additional reflections from the meditation time yesterday. Again, if you are just starting this week, go back to Monday for this to make sense.

*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

Matthew 6:19-21

Section three of *Lectio Divina* is the latin word “oratio,” meaning prayer. In this section, a prayer is built from the phrase or word that has captured your attention; dialogue with God about it. You may begin with your personal hopes, desires, needs, pains. Then let the prayer expand to increasingly larger circles of people and life. You might consider sketching or painting as an outlet for these prayers as well – a nonverbal, creative response.

*My dialogue with God over personal hopes, desires, needs, pains (don’t forget sketching or painting, non-verbal responses):*

*Other people/situations on my mind, heart, soul and this word:*

### Micro-Meditation: Psalm 32:1-5

*Ps 32:3-4* When I kept silent, my bones wasted away  
through my groaning all day long.

For day and night your hand was heavy on me;  
my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.

#### **Teaching or Command of God:**

There is no soundness in my bones because  
of my sin. My guilt has overwhelmed me like  
a burden too heavy to bear. *Psalm 38:3b-4*



## **THE PROMISE**

*Proverbs 28:13*

Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper,  
but the one who confesses and  
renounces them finds mercy.

**Pondering Point:** Have you learned that keeping sins secret



heightens their power over you? Have you learned that  
confessing your sins – to God and fellow disciples – often  
breaks the stronghold of such sins plaguing your life?



## Fri Feb 16: Area Four: Contemplation or “Contemplatio”

PART FOUR, CONTEMPLATION: Our Last section is contemplation, a segment of time reserved for resting in God. The goal is to be still while letting your time of prayer continue in appreciation of God Himself. The intent is to enjoy God purely for who He is. In many styles of *Lectio Divina*, this completes the experience. But I remind you that this is not a rule or law, but a suggested experience – including the order.

Before you engage in the contemplative section, review your ***Lectio Divina*** work this week to prepare for today’s devotional practice:

- Practice a period of silence, resting in quiet peace
- Review the reading from Matthew 6:19-21

*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

- Call to mind your key word or phrase
- Review the images, shapes, concepts, colors, textures, memories and associations from Wednesday
- Review your dialogue with God over personal hopes, desires, needs, pains – and others you had come to mind

Now simply enjoy God for who He is and for what He has done in relation to all that arose in the week regarding your key word or phrase. Rest in Him, giving Him any anxiety, struggle or pain, thanking Him for all joys and accomplishments. Include all relationships so that none of them fall outside your life with God.

Again. It bears repeating. Ordinarily you would perform all four areas in one sitting, which you have opportunity to do tomorrow with the story of the week.

Notes from my 'Lectio Divina' of Matthew 6:19-21:

### Micro-Meditation: Psalm 32:1-5

Ps 32:5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you  
and did not cover up my iniquity.  
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD."  
And you forgave the guilt of my sin.

#### Teaching or Command of God:

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves  
and the truth is not in us...

1 John 2:8



**THE PROMISE**

1 John 2:9

...if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just  
and will forgive us our sins  
and purify us from all unrighteousness.



**Pondering Point:** Notice that God forgives the sin and the guilt of the sin? Some of us could benefit from that truth – and let go of our guilt over sinful choices. What about you?

## Saturday, February 17: Scripture's Story for the Week



Check out Bible Project's description of the Bible as a form of ancient Jewish meditation literature: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/bible-jewish-meditation-literature-h2r/>

### Jesus Faces Opposition

**Luke 9:51-56**



As you prepare to practice the *Lectio Divina* in one sitting, here are your basic points:

- Practice a period of silence to slow down.
- LECTIO: Read Luke 9:51-56 once (see below), as if you've never heard it, then read it a second time – mulling it over *slowly until a word captures your attention; then stop*
- MEDITATIO: Meditate on that word or phrase, paying attention to the images, shapes, concepts, colors, textures, memories and associations that arise.
- ORATIO: Dialogue with God over personal hopes, desires, needs, pains that you are finding rise in you, as well as any people or situations that enter your mind or heart.
- CONTEMPLATIO: Rest in God – being still while letting your time of prayer continue in appreciation of God Himself.

Here's a story from God's Word. Write reflections on the next page.

*As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" But Jesus turned and rebuked them. Then he and his disciples went to another village.*

Luke 9:51-56

My Key Word or Phrase:

My Reflections:

## Sunday, Feb 18: Call to worship God, to gather together

Come and experience a larger scale practice of *Lectio Divina* with worship this weekend.

*But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."*

~ Jesus, John 4:23-24

**Worship Quote:** You never go far away from us, yet we have difficulty in returning to you. Come, Lord, stir us up and call us back. Kindle and seize us. Be our fire and our sweetness. Let us love. Let us run.

~ Augustine of Hippo