



Lectio Divina

*A 7-Day Guide into an
immersion with Christ*

We have put together a guided daily meditation in *lectio divina*, which can be accessed through:

- "SF Lighthouse" App (visit android/ios app store and download 'SF Lighthouse' click podcasts)
- www.sflighthouse.org
- Spotify: "[Practicing the Beloved](#)"



How do we read the Scriptures? When reading, what aim do you have in mind? We may feel they are far beyond the scope of our understanding. Some read for answers, others for wisdom, some to find truth. Some read for literal meaning, some read out of duty, some for "daily bread." I heard a speaker say once, read until you feel fed—that could be a verse or a chapter. Still for some, the Sacred Writings are too intimidating to even begin. Yet they are one of the most ancient scripts available. They contain poetry, history, mythology, metaphor, parables, allegory, prophecy, and mystery. Taken together, the Sacred Writings may be the single most exciting book available to man.

Perhaps, we need a new aim in our reading. Rather than reading to extract something from scripture, what if we read instead, to be read. In this manner of reading, we don't focus on understanding, uncovering, learning, or any such thing; rather, we open the text, while concurrently opening ourselves to be read by them.

Lectio Divina, translated Divine Reading, is an ancient approach to reading Scripture. I find this approach removes all the weight, and intimidation of wading through Sacred Writings and invites the wind of the Spirit to blow from the pages straight into our hearts. It shifts our hearts from doing to receiving. We can open



the pages with a sense of childlike eagerness that says, *What might you have for me today, I am open.*

The History

To be sure there are many ways to read and to study Sacred Writings. Lectio Divina is a more devotional approach that marries reading and praying together and views the Sacred Writings as an access point into the Holy. Origen, a third-century theologian coined the term Lectio Divina, however, St. Benedict in the 5th century ascribed a methodology to this, prayerful way of reading.

This week, we will focus on a single Lectio movement each day. For each movement, we will use a different scripture reading.

Prayer:

Let us begin our week with a questing prayer. Take a few moments and invite God into your Lectio practice this week. Work through the following movements in prayer, then close out your prayer in a moment of silence. For each prompt below, embellish, expand, and express from your own heart what is relevant as it relates to your life.

1. *Give Thanks*
2. *Surrender yourself to God (will, plans, intentions, life)*
3. *Release something in trust (a fear, anxiety, control, hang up, offense)*
4. *Forgive something and ask for forgiveness*
5. *Express your requests as it relates to your Lectio Practice this week*
6. *Offer worship*
7. *Pause*

How do you read Scripture?

LECTIO

Lectio- Read & Receive Lectio Divina: Jeremiah 29:10-14

10 This is what the Lord says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. 11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. 12 Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile."

Today, all we will do is read, which is the first movement of the practice. Before you read, take a few deep breaths, release all your distractions, bring yourself into this moment. You belong in this moment. You are investing in yourself and you are worth this. All else is suspended. No one is judging you, there is no expectation of you. Your heart is open and receptive to God. You are entering a sacred space. No one exists in this moment, but you and your loving God.

In a moment you will read the above verse three times. Read slowly and out loud if it helps you to slow your pace. With each pass, devote your attention to a different intelligence center. (explained below). These do not have to go in any order. Begin with the intelligence center that is most natural for you first.

First pass: Intellectual Center
Use the first pass to become acquainted with the passage overall, the setting, the characters, the plot, etc. What piques your interest, where does your curiosity pop? What are your initial observations? Simply notice your intellectual reaction without judging it or needing answers, certainty, or facts. Are there questions, doubts, or intrigue coming up?

Set time for 2 minutes. Pause and sit in your mental processing

Second Pass: Emotional Center
How does the passage make you feel? What do you sense about how God feels? How is your relational self affected? Notice how your emotions are reacting to this reading. Where are those feelings located in your physical body? Do you feel any resistance to what you read? What are these word/s speaking to you, tugging at, connecting to?

Set time for 2 minutes. Pause and sit in the emotions elicited

Third Pass: Instinctual Center
Did you experience a sense of unexplained knowing, realness, authenticity? As you read, did anything ring true? Did you have any instinctual sensation of something that was right, good, reliable? Do you feel challenged in any way? Or are you challenging back? Notice your gut reaction/s.



Set time for 2 minutes. Pause and sit in the mystery of your instincts

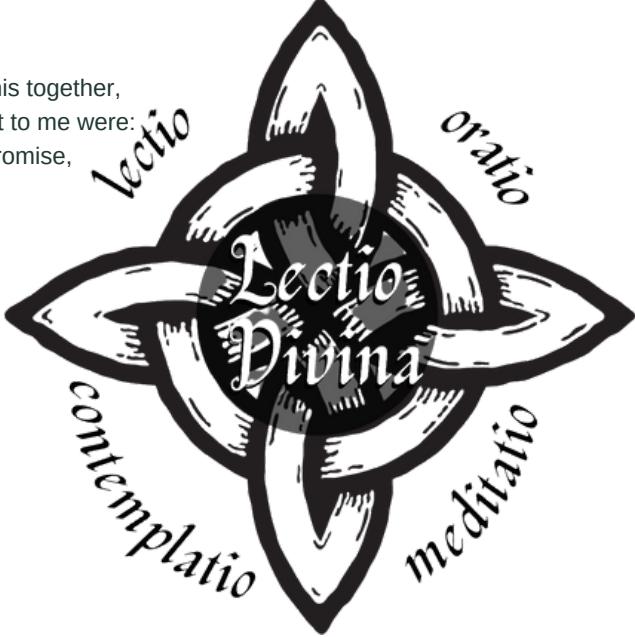
Now, answer these questions: Which word or phrase stuck out to me most? What word's/phrases drew me in? When I read these verses, to which part did I feel most connected? What verse/phrase or word/s do I keep revisiting?

Set timer for 1 minute: Repeat that word or phrase a few times, letting it settle in you.

Set timer for 1 minute: Reflect on your reading experience, not to understand it, but simply to observe it. Consider the wonder of this moment, the reality that your reading elicited intellectual, emotional, and guttural responses from you. Consider that perhaps you may not be a Biblical scholar your mind, body, and heart experienced something from reading this ancient text.

Your intellectual, emotional, and guttural responses deserve more attention and that is what we turn our sights toward, tomorrow. Today, recline in the wonder of knowing, you have not read the Sacred Writings, but rather, they have read you!

For the sake of doing this together, the words that stuck out to me were: "seventy years, good promise, for I know"



ORATIO

Tuesday: Oratio- Feel & Express
Lectio Divina: Mark 9:2-8

Oratio is the next natural step in Lectio Divina, making today the day of expression! Today we will combine Lectio (reading) with Oratio (speaking). As with yesterday, prepare yourself for the reading: take a few deep breaths, release all your distractions, bring yourself into this moment. The space you enter is sacred.

(Lectio) read the passage three times, through your three intelligence centers. Notice how your whole self is responding—mind, body, heart, and the spirit within you.

2 After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. 3 His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. 4 And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus. 5 Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." 6 (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.) 7 Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" 8 Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

Ask yourself, "what verse/s, phrase/s, or word/s seemed to woo me most? Repeat them aloud or sit with them until you feel connected to them.

Set your timer for 9 minutes.

Begin to express yourself out loud in prayer. This expression can be gratitude, wonder, desire, frustration, sadness, hope, observations, questions. There is no wrong way to do this and there is nothing you can say at this moment that is out of bounds or too much for God to handle. After all, who else can we be completely open with than God? As you express yourself, you may begin to feel God's desires, hopes, love, compassion, and adoration for you. Pause and absorb them if this happens.

If you are drawing a blank and have nothing to express or no questions for God, you can simply ask God to guide your prayer, transform you with the reading of the words, draw near to you. You can simply say, "nothing is coming up for me to express, all I know is I felt drawn to these words (repeat them), so I will repeat them over and over. As I do, will you draw near to me?"

Will you pray through me?" Or say, "I am so distracted, please give me something to pray." Again, there is no wrong way to do this.



Congratulations, you just completed 9 minutes of discursive prayer!

Below is a snapshot of my experience with this passage:

My Lectio: " is it good for us to be here?"

My Oratio: Father, this passage reminds me of the moment The Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness— an arid place, a lonely place, a sad place. In this passage, it is Jesus who leads the disciples into a scary place. They were frightened and their fear caused them to ask, " is it good for us to be here?" I find myself asking that question right now in my life. When I feel uncertainty, fear, lostness, I tend to think I am dislocated from your will. Is it good for me to be here now, where I feel like a nymph, something under-construction, lacking purpose, form, or identity? Is it good for me to be here? How many years did Jesus feel purposeless in His life? In my past life, I was so sure of myself, now I feel everything but. My ego is in shambles and I wonder if you will inspire me with any mission at all. Loving you sometimes simply does not feel like enough of a purpose. I feel like a jerk saying that to you. I know it should be enough, more than enough. Please help me to bear this place, I need you so desperately. Sometimes, I feel like you saved me only to have me be lost again, I feel like you did a half-job with my life, leaving me in limbo, half-formed. Come to me father in this place, send me the spiritual guides that I need to navigate this place. Help me to understand that just because it does not feel good here, does not mean I was not led here by you. Help me to know when fear is an appropriate indicator and when it is just a human response. Show me how to discern the difference. Help me to find contentment, patience, graciousness, and humility to be here and while I am here to become more like you. Forgive me for my doubts, mistakes, angst, and frustration with you. Deliver me from my internal toiling and calm my ego, help her to let go of the wheel. Today, I commit my life to you, please walk with me today.

MEDITATIO

Meditatio: Reflect & Connect
Lectio Divina: John 2:1-10

Meditatio begins the first of the two silent movements in the Lectio practice, each with a different emphasis. The emphasis of Meditatio is reflection on our observations and on God. The movement of Meditatio is broken into two parts. First, it involves putting questions to the mental observations, emotional responses, and gut reactions you had from the reading. Second, meditatio involves reflecting on those questions. The part of reflecting happens after all your questions have been exhausted, making room for the pondering. Often, insight, illumination, downloads, are gained and connections are made in this movement.

Meditatio is the movement where I am most challenged by the Sacred Writings; it is the movement where I intentionally quest and engage with my inner journey. During Lectio my interest is piqued through the reading. In Oratio, I get things off my chest, but in Meditatio I go deep into myself and into God, asking tough questions of myself and of God. Now let us begin.

(Prepare) take a few breaths, release all your distractions, bring yourself into this moment (Lectio) read the passage three times, allowing it to flow through your three intelligence centers.

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, 2 and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. 3 When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." 4 "Woman,[a] why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come." 5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." 6 Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.[b] 7 Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. 8 Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so, 9 and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside 10 and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

Note the verse/word/phrase that is calling you. Repeat it or sit with it until you feel connected to it.

(Oratio) express yourself out loud to God. Your expressions can come from any or all of your intelligence centers. Verbally share your observations, confessions, thanksgiving. Express any resistance, hope, confusion, desire. Remember if nothing comes up, you can simply repeat your word/phrase or ask God to give you a prayer.

Now for meditatio. Set your timer for 5 minutes.

A bunch of questions may come flying at you, great! Write them down! Ask questions of yourself. Ask questions of God. Ask questions about the world and the people in it. Meditatio a great movement to journal through.

If you are coming up empty, a HELPFUL first question and one I always use is, " why am I being drawn to this word or phrase?" This question takes us inward, which is the whole point of meditatio. Other great questions are, what does this word or phrase teach me about you God? Why did I observe _____, or what in me is resisting?



Now set your timer for 5 minutes again for part-2 of meditatio.

Ponder your questions. Listen for answers, synchronicities, insights, revelations, connection points. It is quite possible not to receive any illuminations, but to come up with more questions- this is a good thing! Sometimes, questions are the answer, because they keep us questing. Other times, you simply sit and the act of reflecting on the questions turn our hearts into good soil where seeds for the future are planted. Other times the reflection session is simply about letting the questions marinate and sink into the soil of our soul.

My Lectio: "His mother said to the servants, do whatever he tells you/ the kind used for ceremonial washing"

My Meditatio (Deborah): Why don't I feel self-assured as a woman? When was the last time, I felt the kind of confidence Mary had when she involved Jesus, even at his irritation? Why don't I connect with my own worthiness as a female creature? Why do I believe my feelings, desire, thoughts, opinions are less important? Why do I consider them less formed, less intelligent, less mature, and definitely less valid? Why do I project onto myself negative female associations such as naggy, bothersome, emotional, and patronized, but not really valued or necessary? Why did Jesus submit to his mother, even though He knew from God it was not yet his time? Is there something in my past that has created this kind of unhealthy female esteem? Is there something in the cultural ethos I cannot rise above? Does it make you sad that I am not empowered in my role as a female creature as Mary was? Is it in me, can I ever become impervious to rejection, like Mary did when Jesus seemingly displayed irritation toward her? How do I know it is best to latch onto the divine confidence coursing through me despite external rejection, or worse patronization? How do I become a woman like Mary, centered, calm, and strong, self-assured? What does this whole scenario with Mary and Jesus and the huge vessels you commandeered say about you? What is your value in this?

CONTEMPLATIO

Contemplatio—Listen & Be Still

Contemplatio is the second silent movement within Lectio Divina. The point is to shut off our thinking altogether, to do NO THING. In the prior three movements, we are initiating action by reading (lectio), praying (oratio), reflecting (meditatio). However, Contemplatio is distinctly different because it is the only movement where we initiate nothing, we simply sit and make ourselves available to God. We do not seek answers or insights, ideas, or inspiration. In this movement, we abdicate all control and become present for anything or nothing at all. In this movement, we are still, we breathe, we exist, and nothing more. In fact, Contemplatio is the most exciting movement for me because all the pressure is off. I simply wait hoping to sense the God who is already in me.

The ultimate goal of Contemplatio is an experience of union with God. We know we have experienced this when we are lost, when we forget where and when we are, when we are not even aware that something is happening-- when we are instead fully present WITH the Presence.

The challenge of Contemplatio is to suspend distracting thoughts. Fortunately, there are a few hacks to aid us in this effort. Choose one that works for you.

- Focus on your breath, in and out, thinking or saying "Yah" on the inhale and "Weh" on the exhale
- Repeat a refrain such as I am here. "Here I am. I am yours. You are mine."
- Sit in total silence and focus your will and your heart on "yearning" for God.

Remember this is a practice. When your mind engages, gently let the thoughts go. If an insight, answer or idea comes, let it go, preferring God's presence. Come back to your breath, refrain, or yearning. I believe it is God's great pleasure to be WITH us. Truly, God is with us during Contemplatio, but we struggle to perceive Presence, so we often leave this movement feeling as though we experienced nothing.

I encourage you to return again and again to Contemplatio because with each session your cells, your body, your heart your mind learn how to empty. You become practiced as you practice. And with each session trust, that even if you do not experience union, in between each breath, in between each distracting thought, God is there.

(Prepare) take a few deep breaths, release all your distractions, bring yourself into this moment. The space you are entering now is sacred.

(Lectio) Read the below passage (Isaiah 1:16-20) three times, allowing it to pass through your mind, heart and gut. Pause after reading and observe your intellectual, emotional and instinctual responses to the reading.

Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight; stop doing wrong.¹⁷ Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow. ¹⁸ "Come now, let us settle the matter," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."¹⁹ If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good things of the land; ²⁰ but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

(Oratio) express yourself out loud to God. Your expressions can come from any or all of your intelligence centers. And remember if nothing comes up, you can simply repeat your word/phrase or ask God to give you a prayer or just worship God.



(Meditatio) Part 1: Write down your questions. A couple of questions to get you started are: " why am I being drawn to this word or phrase?" "What does this word or phrase teach me about you God?"

(Meditatio) Part 2: Set timer for 5 minutes. Reflect on the questions. Answers, insights, and revelation may come. However, sometimes your reflections conjure more questions instead. The purpose of the reflection movement is simply to offer your questions to the universe, that is your part.

(Contemplatio). Set timer for 6 minutes. Release all your questions, musings, ponderings, reflections. Release your emotions, desires. Release your insights, revelations, and all intentions. Trust that anything you received during your reflection will come back to you when it is meant to. Trust that God will help you remember. Prefer God's presence at this moment. Bring your attention to where your soul. From here either focus on your breathing, invoke your mantra or sit in silence, yearning with all your heart and will for God's presence. Posture yourself in trust that no matter what happens in the next few moments, this practice is worth your time. Open yourself to receive God. Now sit.

My Lectio: "Learn to do Right/Defend/Take up the cause/if you are willing AND obedient"

My Contemplatio (Deborah): Well, it was clunky at best. I started with a refrain, "your presence is all that matters." I repeated that over and over. Then I experienced some anxiety about having to share this experience and what would I say if nothing happened. Pulled myself back to center with my refrain. For a couple of moments, I sensed the area above my head get brighter, almost like someone turned up the dimmer switch in my room, but the whole room did not brighten, only the area above me. Then I thought about how I want to share Lectio with my sister so she can share it with her sons as a group activity in a family devotion setting. Then I imagined my nephews sharing their observations. Realizing I was distracted, I used my refrain again. This time it changed to "I know you are here, I know you are here." I went back to letting my thoughts go and focusing on the light. Then I envisioned myself touching the hem of Jesus' garment, crawling in a crowd of people, and catching just the corner. When I touched it, I felt a sensation through my body. I envisioned this scene a few times and experienced the sensation each time. Then I envisioned myself entering the Tabernacle and walking into the Holy of Holies, here I desired God's all-consuming presence, more than just above my head or a sensation running once through my body. I felt myself yearn to be in God.

Then I got distracted again, wondering how many minutes I had left. I returned to another refrain, "nothing matters more than your Presence" over and over. I put my hands to my heart and yearned with all my might. I stayed in this posture until my alarm went off. For a very small moment, I forget where and when I was, it was fleeting and I only know it happened because my alarm surprised me.

Friday: Putting it all Together- Round 1 Lectio Divina: Proverbs 3: 5-6 & Proverbs 16:9

Congratulations! Yesterday you essentially practiced 11 minutes of meditation between your time in meditatio and contemplatio. We are halfway to our 21-minute goal!

As many of you know, I have been sick this week and had no energy to work on this weekly Quest and Integration. As life has it, today is Saturday and I find myself writing the entire week in one day. For me, that means I have practiced Lectio Divina 5 times in a row, hahaha. Though it has taken several hours, I have learned a very important lesson: being intentional with each movement in the practice matters. In the past, I have rushed through one or more parts of the practice. I have convinced myself that I don't really need to read three times, whatever pops up after the first reading is good enough. Sometimes, I skipped a step or two. Yet today starkly reminded me how important each movement is. So, when you come to your Friday, I encourage you to set aside 20 minutes of your day and fully involve yourself in the practice. Make some tea, grab a journal, turn on a diffuser and get yourself into an ambiance that helps bring you present and promotes calmness. This time is the time of your day best spent.

Okay, let us begin.

(Prepare) take a few deep breaths, release all your distractions, bring yourself into this moment. The space you are entering now is sacred.

(Lectio) Read the below passage three times, allowing it to pass through your mind, heart, and gut. Pause after reading and observe your intellectual, emotional, and instinctual responses to the reading.

5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;
6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight
16: 9 In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps. (Proverbs)

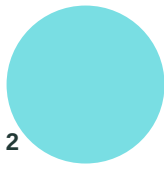
(Oratio) express yourself out loud to God. Your expressions can come from any or all of your intelligence centers. And remember if nothing comes up, you can simply repeat your word/phrase or ask God to give you a prayer or just worship God.

(Meditatio) Part 1: Journal your questions. A couple of question prompts to start are: " why am I being drawn to this word or phrase?" "What does this word or phrase teach me about you, God?"



(Meditatio) Part 2: Set timer for 6 minutes. Reflect on the questions. Answers, insights, and revelation may come. However, sometimes your reflections conjure more questions instead. The purpose of the reflection movement is simply to offer your questions to the universe, that is your part.

(Contemplatio) Set timer for 6 minutes. Intentionally shift your heart away from the questions and toward union with God. Prepare for this experience by releasing all your questions, reflections, emotions, and insights. Bring your attention to your soul. From here either focus on your breathing, invoke your refrain or sit in silence, yearning with all your heart and will for God's presence. Now sit.



Putting it all Together- Round 2 Lectio Divina: Psalm 91:14-16

Today you practice Lectio Divina independently! No prompts, just you and God. As you know we are working towards 21 minutes of silent prayer, so I have outlined time stamps for you below.

“Because he/she loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him/her; I will protect him/her, for he/she acknowledges my name. (15) He/she will call on me, and I will answer him/her; I will be with him/her in trouble, I will deliver him/her and honor him/her. (16) With long life I will satisfy him/her, and show him/her my salvation.”
Psalm 91

Lectio Divina- Read 3 times

Oratio- Pray aloud

Meditatio Part 1: Journal questions

Meditatio Part 2: Reflect for 6 minutes

Contemplatio- Sit in silence for 7 minutes

