



# Lectio Divina

A SACRED PRACTICE OF  
BIBLE READING

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# What is Lectio Divina?

Lectio divina (pronounced "lec-tsee-oh di-vee-nah"), Latin for "sacred reading," "divine reading," or "holy reading," is a spiritual practice that has been in use for over a thousand years, notes Dr. Collins from Taylor University Center for Scripture Engagement. He goes on to explain that it was originally practiced by monks who spent a large portion of their days praying and reading Scripture. While reading they noticed that at times individual words, phrases, or verses seemed to leap off of the page with a special personal importance. Have you had the same experience? These special words or verses can give a sense of encouragement, comfort, thankfulness, or conviction that often applies to present situations and can draw us closer to God.

Lectio divina is an intimate way of communicating with the Lord. All too often in prayer and worship, we talk to God but don't give him a chance to communicate back to us. Lectio divina employs God's own words to have a personal conversation with him.

## **Not Magic**

Lectio divina is NOT a magical practice that guarantees you'll hear God's voice. Magic attempts to manipulate God into doing what we want. There is nothing magical about Scripture engagement. Lectio divina involves ruminating on God's Word

and listening to what he says so that we become more like Christ. This practice has the ability to open us up to daily communication with God as the Holy Spirit illuminates the Bible so that we are supported and sustained in our day-to-day lives.

### **Four Stages**

The four traditional stages of lectio divina are lectio (reading), meditatio (meditation), oratio (prayer), and contemplatio (contemplation). The steps were created simply to provide structure and guidance for people who wish to learn how to perform this practice. Consider how people learn to play a new instrument. A man who is learning piano must go through the steps of reading the notes, putting his hands in the right place, pushing down on the keys, listening to the notes, and then repeating the process. At first, each step seems rigid and awkward, but over time he learns to perform each of these steps as one fluid process leading to the actual art of music.

The four steps of lectio divina have also been compared to “feasting on the Word.” Reading is taking a bite of food. Meditation is chewing food. Prayer is savoring food. Contemplation is digesting food and making it a part of your body. Too often we are fast food eaters, rapidly gulping down the Bread of Life ([John 6:31](#)). The result is that we are unable to properly absorb our “spiritual meal.” Slow down. Savor your time in God’s Word and find joy in meeting God.

Excerpt from the article Lectio Divina on Bible Gateway  
<https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/scripture-engagement/lectio-divina/home>



# Lectio Divina

**Classic descriptions list the  
sequence of this fourfold  
process as:**

**Lectio** (reading)

**Meditatio** (meditating and reflecting)

**Oratio** (responding to God)

**Contemplatio** (receiving and resting in God)

## **Lectio (reading)**

Slowly read a passage of scripture. Usually brief passages are better as this is not for information but for personal transformation. Read the passage several times and in different ways. Read it as though you are hearing it read to you. Read it silently and aloud. Experiment by reading it with different emphases and inflections.

## **Meditatio (reflecting)**

Mull over the text; internalize the words. Listen for the phrases that stand out to you as you read the passage. Turn them over in your mind. Reflect on why these words caught your attention. What do they bring to mind, and what do they mean for you today? Write down the meaningful words, noting associations, reactions, feelings, questions and or challenges. Notice and highlight a word, phrase, or sentence from the text that caught your attention and write it down.

## **Oratio (responding)**

Turn your meditation from dialogue with yourself to dialogue with God, which is prayer. Share with God in all honesty your reflections, questions, or feelings. Offer your thanksgiving, confession, petitions, or intercessions as they arise during your dialogue with God. Listen for God's response and inner nudging. Write down your prayer.

## **Contemplatio (receiving)**

Rest your mental activity and trust yourself completely to God's love and care. Relax in God's presence. Review the phrase from the text that you highlighted in the meditatio step. Allow this phrase to become a prayer that sustains you in the presence of God throughout the day. Invite the Holy Spirit to minister to your heart in a personal way. After a few minutes of "practicing the presence of God" you might close with the Lord's Prayer, your own closing prayer, a song or a moment of grateful silence.