

WISDOM AND GUIDANCE

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is a slow, contemplative reading and praying of the Scriptures.

Place yourself in a comfortable position and allow yourself to become silent. Turn to the text and read it slowly, gently. Savor each portion of the reading, constantly listening for the "still, small voice" of a word or phrase that somehow says, "I am for you today." God is teaching us to listen to Him, to seek Him in silence. He does not reach out and grab us; rather, He gently invites us ever more deeply into His presence.

Spend time with the word or phrase. Slowly repeat it to yourself, allowing it to interact with your inner world of concerns, memories, and ideas. Allow this inner pondering, this rumination, to invite you into dialogue with God.

Speak to God using words, ideas, or images. Interact with God as you would with one who you know loves and accepts you.

Experience God by using the word or phrase He has given you as a means of blessing and of transforming the ideas and memories that your reflection on His word has awakened. Give to God what you have found within your heart.

Rest in God's embrace. When He invites you to return to your contemplation of His word or to your inner dialogue with Him, do so. Rejoice in the knowledge that God is with you in both words and silence.

Sometimes in Lectio Divina, you may return several times to the printed text, either to savor the literary context of the word or phrase that God has given or to seek a new word or phrase to ponder. At other times, only a single word or phrase will fill the whole time set aside for Lectio Divina. It is not necessary to assess anxiously the quality of your Lectio Divina, as if you were "performing" or seeking some goal. Lectio Divina has no goal other than that of being in the presence of God by praying the Scriptures.

Do you want to be counted wise, to build a reputation for wisdom? Here's what you do: Live well, live wisely, live humbly. It's the way you live, not the way you talk, that counts. Mean-spirited ambition isn't wisdom. Boasting that you are wise isn't wisdom. Twisting the truth to make yourselves sound wise isn't wisdom. It's the furthest thing from wisdom—it's animal cunning, devilish conniving. Whenever you're trying to look better than others or get the better of others, things fall apart and everyone ends up at the others' throats.

Real wisdom, God's wisdom, begins with a holy life and is characterized by getting along with others. It is gentle and reasonable, overflowing with mercy and blessings, not hot one day and cold the next, not two-faced. You can develop a healthy, robust community that lives right with God and enjoy its results only if you do the hard work of getting along with each other, treating each other with dignity and honor.

James 3:13-18 (The Message)