


Pray

READ. MEDITATE. PRAY. REST.

By Yaritza Sanchez

Studies show that random acts of kindness can lower anxiety and blood pressure. Smiling at a stranger, giving a hug, or saying a kind word, are simple acts that express gratitude.

Have you ever considered your approach to reading the Bible? A fresh intentional approach can reap new benefits. There's an ancient practice of reflective prayer that opens the door for gratitude. Practices like *Lectio Divina*—meaning “divine reading”—enhance awareness of opportunities for gratitude, are transformative, and help build resilience.

First, reflective prayer deepens our understanding and appreciation of life's moments. It deepens our understanding of the present. By staying present in the “here and now,” we can learn to listen more attentively to God's Word, recognize His ways, and see God's constant love for us—He is always working for our good (Rom 8:27-28). We are not alone!

Second, reflective prayers transform hearts and minds. As we welcome the Holy Spirit to better understand God's will, His healing power speaks to our emotions and pain all within the light of His promises—beauty for ashes, joy for mourning, praise for heaviness (Ps 147:3; Isa 61:3). Active listening nurtures a humility that opens eyes to see more opportunities for gratitude. Jesus' life, death, and resurrection remind us that God's Word is living and breathing in us. We are being transformed!

Lastly, reflective prayers cultivate patience and trust in God, both of which are connected to gratitude. By meditating on Scripture, we are reminded of God's ways. He is compassionate, loving, and faithful—He is perfect in all His ways (Ps 18:30). God can be trusted!

N.T. Wright stresses the importance of finding our place in this larger narrative:

Resist the tendency in Western Christianity to live solely within your personal story. Instead, embrace the full-on, full-blooded heaven-and-earth narrative that Scripture presents. Consider its characters and plots, along with the twists and turns, and reflect on your position in the story. Allow the Bible to tell its own story and invite us to join in (N.T. Wright, 2017).

Today's gratitude challenge is to embrace a fresh approach that highlights the overarching theme and the larger story within Scripture.

Steps - Lectio Divina:

1. Read (lectio) — spend prayerful time with a particular passage, morning or evening, that you wish to pray.
2. Pause for several minutes (five or ten minutes), after each reading.
3. What short thing, word, or phrase struck you?
4. Reflect (meditatio) — read it again, repeat the word or phrase, and allow a time of silence again. Allow it to speak to you in a personal way by pondering the word in your heart, and reflecting on what it means to you.
5. Read it again, if possible in a different translation.
6. Pray (oratio) — engage in conversation with God, expressing your thoughts, feelings, and needs. Thank God for His gifts, ask for forgiveness, and seek guidance. Prayer is your response to God's Word.
7. Rest in God's presence (contemplatio) — think about what you are hearing; simply be present with God and receive His transforming embrace. Sit still with God.

References:

“Steps of Lectio Divina.” Conception Abbey. Last modified November, 2018. Accessed March 20, 2025.

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<https://ntwrightpage.com/2017/01/30/sign-and-means-of-new-creation-public-worship-and-the-creative-reading-of-scripture/>.