

How to Pray with Holy Scripture

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Step One – **Read**

The first step is to read. It is a good idea to have a reading plan that will take you through Scripture so that you will not spend time at prayer trying to decide what to read. Read just a few passages from the Bible, particularly, the Gospels. Read carefully and slowly, perhaps three or more times. Be interiorly attentive. Listen as you read.

Step Two – **Meditate**

The second step is meditation. This is to think about the passages. Don't over analyze, or force anything, but calmly reflect. What does the passage mean? What does it mean to you and your life? If you find that little comes to mind, do not be concerned.

Step Three – **Pray**

The next step is to pray. Speak to the Lord about what you have read, and pause to listen. What is in your heart? Tell the Lord. When you are ready to continue, give the Lord praise and thanksgiving for this time with Him.

Step Four – **Contemplate**

The final step is contemplation. This is a simple lifting of your mind, heart and affections to God. Simply and calmly listen and be as still inside as you can. Present yourself to the Lord. The Lord may pour into your mind and heart His presence in a way that we cannot attain on our own. This is a pure grace, a pure gift that we cannot "produce" by our own efforts.

What we *can* do, however, is simply spend a little while in silence, listening in our hearts. Simply present yourself, your mind and heart to God. This is the disposition we should have to receive His presence (infused contemplation).

Suggestions

- If you find yourself distracted or unable to concentrate on praying, do not be concerned. Everyone has distractions, even the great saints and mystics of our Church. Avoid evaluating your prayer time. Regardless of how your prayer goes on a given day, you gave God your time. This pleases Him very much. If you pray, even in the midst of difficulty, this shows that you love Him.
- Plan your prayer time before you go to prayer. Decide on a regular time and place for prayer, and what Scriptures or prayers you will use. This will avoid spending your prayer time trying to decide what to read or do. If possible, create a special place for prayer, such as a small altar, icons, candle and so on. Pick a time and create a place that is conducive to prayer.

This ancient approach to praying with Scripture is traditionally called, *Lectio Divina* or Divine Reading.

