

# Lectio Divina

From the book with, by Skye Jethani

Lectio divina (divine reading) approaches the Scriptures not as a depository of principles and applications, but as the self-revelation of God to his people. The Bible is the Living Word of God through which he still speaks and communes with us.

The practice originated in the centuries before the printing press when Christians would gather daily at the church or cathedral for the public reading of Scripture. Rather than visually reading the text on the page in silence as we do, they received the word audibly as it was read aloud – a model for engaging God’s Word as ancient as the Scriptures themselves. Having received and meditated on the Word of God, they disbanded as each person engaged their work for the day. But an individual would retain a word, phrase, or sentence from the Bible reading to foster communion with God in prayer throughout the day.

Eventually this practice was taught in five movements:

1. **Reading.** Gently read the passage of Scripture aloud, being mindful of each word and phrase. The goal is not to read large quantities of Scripture, but to engage it reflectively and with an awareness of God’s presence. This may mean reading the text multiple times. Eventually identify a word or short phrase that speaks to you in some manner.
2. **Meditating.** Having read Scripture, in the second moment allow the Scriptures to “read you.” Use the passage or phrase to guide your time of reflection and self-examination. How does this reading apply to you and your circumstances? Invite God to speak and reveal what he desires to impart to you through the text.
3. **Speaking.** After allowing God and his Scripture to have the first word, it is now time for you to respond. Communicate your thoughts to God with words. This may be gratitude, confession, worry, joy, or any number of emotions that result from engaging the Scripture.
4. **Contemplating.** When the speaking ceases, it is time to rest in God’s presence. Use the remainder of the time to be silent and open to what God has to say. Receive his forgiveness, assurance, or whatever he may have for you.
5. **Ruminating.** As you conclude your time, take the word or phrase from the reading with you. Throughout the day return to it as a prompt for prayer and as a reminder of God’s presence with you.