

4 Steps to a Consistently Vibrant Devotional Time

STEP ONE: PRAY before you read anything...

- Let God know that you want to obey what He shows you from the Bible.
- Ask God to show you how to apply what you are about to read to a specific situation in your life.

STEP TWO: MEDITATE think about it over and over.

- If it's a story, imagine yourself as a character in it.
- If it's an instruction, read it over and over emphasizing a different word each time.
- Write down if there is any...
 - ⇒ Sin to confess? Do I need to make any restitution?
 - ⇒ Promise to claim? Is it a universal promise? Have I met the condition(s)?
 - ⇒ Attitude to change? Am I willing to work on a negative attitude and begin building toward a positive one?
 - ⇒ Command to obey? Am I willing to do it no matter how I feel?
 - ⇒ Example to follow? Is it a positive example for me to copy, or a negative one to avoid?
 - ⇒ Prayer to pray? Is there anything I need to pray back to God?
 - ⇒ Error to avoid? Is there any problem that I should be alert to or beware of?
 - ⇒ Truth to believe? What new things can I learn about God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, or other biblical teachings?

STEP TWO: MEDITATE think about it over and over (cont...)

- ⇒ Something to praise God for? Is there something here I can be thankful for?
- ⇒ Pick a specific person in your life (wife, husband, friend, brother, mother, etc...). How does this scripture affect your relationship with them? How does this scripture affect your relationship with God?
- Write out the passage in your own words.
- Write out a prayer based on the passage.

STEP THREE: APPLY take action...

- Personal Application: I, me, my, or mine
 - ⇒ “I need to...”
- Practical Application: specific situations
 - ⇒ “I need to serve my spouse...”
- Possible Application: something you can do
 - ⇒ “I need to serve my spouse by taking out the garbage...”
- Provable Application: measurable so you can follow up
 - ⇒ “I need to serve my spouse by taking out the garbage every day this coming week.”

STEP FOUR: MEMORIZE or WRITE OUT a verse or prayer...

- Choose the verse that will help with the application.
- Write out a short prayer of application.
- Recall the verse or prayer throughout the day as needed.

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DEVOTIONAL EXAMPLES

EXAMPLE 1

Example of imagining yourself as a character in a story.

Scripture Passage: Jeremiah 42:6, 10-12; 43:3

⁶ Whether it is favorable or unfavorable, we will obey the LORD our God, to whom we are sending you, so that it will go well with us, for we will obey the LORD our God.

¹⁰ 'If you stay in this land, I will build you up and not tear you down; I will plant you and not uproot you, for I am grieved over the disaster I have inflicted on you. ¹¹ Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, whom you now fear. Do not be afraid of him, declares the LORD, for I am with you and will save you and deliver you from his hands. ¹² I will show you compassion so that he will have compassion on you and restore you to your land.' (Jeremiah)

³ Azariah son of Hoshai and Johanan son of Kareah and all the arrogant men said to Jeremiah, "You are lying! The LORD our God has not sent you to say, 'You must not go to Egypt to settle there!'"

My Thoughts, Prayer & Application

Like the Israelites, I am often enthusiastic about following God if I think he is going to ask me to do what I want to do. If I had lived my life in captivity in Babylon, I'm sure I would have wanted to leave and gain my freedom at just about any cost. Perhaps I would have been beaten, mistreated and humiliated regularly. Perhaps my friends or loved ones or family members would have been horribly abused or even murdered. I would have wanted to find a safer place. It would have been very difficult for me to imagine compassion from the King of Babylon or that he would restore my land. It would have been very easy to believe Jeremiah's advice was wrong. It certainly would have seemed cowardly to just stay in Babylon.

When I've already made up my mind concerning what I want to do, it's really hard for me to see God's plan as good when it contradicts my plan. Lord help me to put my heart in a place that I am willing to accept whatever direction you give me, even when it takes me in a different direction than what I originally thought to be best.

EXAMPLE 2

Example of reading a passage over and over emphasizing a different word each time.

Scripture Passage: James 1:22-25

²² *But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.* ²³ *For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror.* ²⁴ *You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like.* ²⁵ *But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.*

My Thoughts, Prayer & Application

"**But** if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free"
This is very different from glancing at myself in the mirror and walking away.

"But **if** you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free"
This is conditional; God will do something only if I do something.

"But if **you** look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free"
This is something for which I am responsible.

"But if you **look** carefully into the perfect law that sets you free"
I have to look into God's Word directly.

"But if you look **carefully into** the perfect law that sets you free"
What's the difference between looking "into" and looking "at" God's law?

"But if you look carefully into the **perfect** law that sets you free"
God's Word is completely perfect.

"But if you look carefully into the perfect **law** that sets you free"
God's Word is a law; powerful and unchanging.

"But if you look carefully into the perfect law that **sets** you free"
God's Word will release me from things that bind me.

"But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets **you** free"
This will work for me.

"But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you **free**"
God's Word will empower me to live right and to desire what is right.

Lord, help me to look carefully into Your Word today believing that you will transform my desires and empower me to do right.

EXAMPLE 3

**Example of writing down answers to the questions:
“Is there a sin to confess?” and “Is there a promise to claim?”**

Scripture Passage: James 1:22-25

²² But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. ²³ For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. ²⁴ You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. ²⁵ But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.

My Thoughts, Prayer & Application

SIN: Listening to God's Word but not following through in obedience.

PROMISE: If I look carefully into God's Word and remember and do what it says, God will bless me.

Lord help to take at least 5 minutes each day to meditate and carefully reflect upon what I learn. During that time I will write down (in a place I can see several times during the day) a prayer of how to apply what I am learning from Your Word.

EXAMPLE 4

Example of writing down the answers to questions:

“Is there an attitude to change?” and “Is there a command to obey?”

Scripture Passage: James 1:22-25

²² But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. ²³ For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. ²⁴ You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. ²⁵ But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.

My Thoughts, Prayer & Application

ATTITUDE: Believe God's Word will set me free if I obey it.

COMMAND: Reflect carefully on God's Word - Don't forget what God's Word says -Do what God Word Says.

Lord help to take at least 5 minutes each day to meditate and carefully reflect upon what I learn. During that time I will write down (in a place I can see several times during the day) a prayer of how to apply what I am learning from Your Word.

EXAMPLE 5

Example of writing down the answers to questions:

“Is there an example to follow?”, “Is there a prayer to pray?”, and “Is there an error to avoid?”

Scripture Passage: James 1:22-25

²² But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. ²³ For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. ²⁴ You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. ²⁵ But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.

My Thoughts, Prayer & Application

EXAMPLE: (negative) Don't listen to God's Word and walk away without "fixing what's out of place" and "preparing for my day".

PRAYER: Lord please help me to take time to listen to Your Word and to take time to think and reflect and meditate upon it's' meaning and to do whatever I need to do to remember and obey.

ERROR: I am prone to forget what God has said and do nothing.

Lord help to take at least 5 minutes each day to meditate and carefully reflect upon what I learn. During that time I will write down (in a place I can see several times during the day) a prayer of how to apply what I am learning from Your Word.

EXAMPLE 6

**Example of writing down the answers to questions:
“Is there a truth to believe?” and “Is there something for
which to praise God?”**

Scripture Passage: James 1:22-25

²² But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. ²³ For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. ²⁴ You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. ²⁵ But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.

My Thoughts, Prayer & Application

TRUTH: God speaks to me. God expects me to obey. God desires to bless those who obey.

PRAISE: God I praise you for being a God who is eager to bless me. I praise you for blessing me when I am obedient so that I can learn obedience.

Lord help to take at least 5 minutes each day to meditate and carefully reflect upon what I learn. During that time I will write down (in a place I can see several times during the day) a prayer of how to apply what I am learning from Your Word.

EXAMPLE 7

Example of writing the passage out in my own words

Scripture Passage: James 1:22-25

²² *But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.* ²³ *For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror.* ²⁴ *You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like.* ²⁵ *But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.*

My Thoughts, Prayer & Application

It is not enough for me to read God's word or listen to it spoken. Every time I hear God's word I must act accordingly. If I do not act in response to God's Word I would have been better off not even exposing myself to His word, because when I listen and don't act, I delude myself into believing I'm a better person when I'm really only more puffed up with my own knowledge. If I hear but do not act on God's Word it's like wasting my time by looking in the mirror but forgetting to comb my hair or wash my face. I'm as completely unprepared for my day as if I'd just stayed in bed until I left the house instead of pretending that I was taking the time to get ready. The key to avoiding this delusional behavior is to always to take time carefully reflect on what I've read or heard of God's word and how God wants me to act on His truth. After that I have to find a way to not forget what God has asked me to do. Then I will experience God's blessing.

Father, I believe you want to speak to me every day to prepare me for what I will encounter in that day. Please help me every day to write out what You want me to in a place that I can see it throughout my day and remember what You have said and be prepared to act.

EXAMPLE 8

Example of writing what this scripture says about God or Christ directly or indirectly. Write out any sins to confess. Write out something to be thankful for. Write a short prayer specifically for a friend in need.

Scripture Passage: 2 Corinthians 12:9

⁹ Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.

My Thoughts, Prayer & Application

There is nothing I need other than God’s grace. He is able to use my weakness for His good. His power is what makes me able to complete the tasks and plans He has for me. I do not have to be the strongest, bravest, fastest, smartest, or most talented. God does not expect me to be perfect. He is able to take the skills I have and work through me because of the power of Christ.

Sins to confess: pride in trying to plan, direct and fix things on my own.

Thankful for: God knows me because He created me. He already knows my strengths, weaknesses, talents, and hang-ups. He knows what is best for me and is prepared to provide it.

Lord, thank you for the grace you offer. You are all I need. I am so thankful that you see my weaknesses, fears, doubts, and shortcomings as opportunities to demonstrate the power of Christ to accomplish great things. Please help me this week to be less critical of my “failures” and change my perspective to see them instead as a chance to grow and learn.

Lord, my friend Lora struggles with striving for perfection. She is frequently disappointed with herself and her performance as a mom and a teacher. Father, help me to be an encourager to her and allow the Holy Spirit to work on her heart and change her attitude to one of acceptance of her weaknesses and submission to your will for her life. Amen.

EXAMPLE 9

Example of picking a specific person in your life (wife, husband, friend, brother, mother, etc...). How does this scripture affect your relationship with them? How does this scripture affect your relationship with God?

Scripture Passage: 2 Corinthians 12:9

Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.

My Thoughts, Prayer & Application

How this scripture affects my relationship with my children:

Many times I react to my children in an unloving way because I am insecure. I'm not sure exactly how to respond or I feel they are attacking me in an area that I am weak. If I recognized that God's strength is unleashed in it's greatest way through my weakness as I depend upon Him I could always respond to my children in love instead of react out of my insecurity.

How this scripture affects my relationship with God. If I really believed that God's grace is all that I need, I would worry a great deal less. I would not hesitate because of anxiety and fear of the future. I would live more boldly. I would serve my family and others with no fear of "being taken advantage of" because I would know even if I'm tired or I don't feel adequate, the power of God's grace would work through me.

Father, help me to seize every opportunity to serve others today no matter how tired or inadequate I feel, knowing that your power will work through my weakness so I can show your love to someone else.

Date: Sunday, August 1

⁸ “Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Won’t she light a lamp and sweep the entire house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹And when she finds it, she will call in her friends and neighbors and say, ‘Rejoice with me because I have found my lost coin.’ ¹⁰In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God’s angels when even one sinner repents.” –Luke 15:8-10

Note: If you need more scripture to answer the questions below, read the passage in its context (Luke 15).

Write out any attitudes to change (Are you willing to work on a negative attitude and build toward a positive one?) and any commands to obey. (Are you willing to learn no matter how you feel?)

Note: see example on page 9

Write out a prayer of application

Date: Monday, August 2

⁸ “Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Won’t she light a lamp and sweep the entire house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹And when she finds it, she will call in her friends and neighbors and say, ‘Rejoice with me because I have found my lost coin.’ ¹⁰In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God’s angels when even one sinner repents.” –Luke 15:8-10

Note: If you need more scripture to answer the questions below, read the passage in its context (Luke 15).

Write out any examples to follow (is it a positive example for me to copy, or a negative one to avoid?) and any prayers to pray and any errors to avoid (are there any problems that I should be alert to or beware of?)

Note: see example on page 10

Write out a prayer of application

Date: Tuesday, August 3

⁸ “Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Won’t she light a lamp and sweep the entire house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹And when she finds it, she will call in her friends and neighbors and say, ‘Rejoice with me because I have found my lost coin.’ ¹⁰In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God’s angels when even one sinner repents.” –Luke 15:8-10

Note: If you need more scripture to answer the questions below, read the passage in its context (Luke 15).

Write out any truths to believe. What can I learn about God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit? Write what this scripture says about God or Christ directly or indirectly. Is there anything for which I can praise or thank God?

Note: see example on page 11

Write out a prayer of application

Date: Wednesday, August 4

⁸ “Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Won’t she light a lamp and sweep the entire house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹And when she finds it, she will call in her friends and neighbors and say, ‘Rejoice with me because I have found my lost coin.’ ¹⁰In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God’s angels when even one sinner repents.” –Luke 15:8-10

Note: If you need more scripture to answer the questions below, read the passage in its context (Luke 15).

Write out something to be thankful for. Write a short prayer specifically for a friend in need.

Write out a prayer of application

Date: Tuesday, August 10

¹⁷“When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, ‘At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I will go home to my father and say, “Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, ¹⁹and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant.” –Luke 15:17-19

Note: If you need more scripture to answer the questions below, read the passage in its context (Luke 15:11-32).

Write out any truths to believe. What can I learn about God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit? Write what this scripture says about God or Christ directly or indirectly. Is there anything for which I can praise or thank God?

Note: see example on page 11

Write out a prayer of application

Date: Wednesday, August 11

¹⁷“When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, ‘At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I will go home to my father and say, “Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, ¹⁹and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant.” –Luke 15:17-19

Note: If you need more scripture to answer the questions below, read the passage in its context (Luke 15:11-32).

Write out something to be thankful for. Write a short prayer specifically for a friend in need.

Write out a prayer of application

Date: Friday, August 13

¹⁷“When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, ‘At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I will go home to my father and say, “Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, ¹⁹and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant.” –Luke 15:17-19

Note: If you need more scripture to answer the questions below, read the passage in its context (Luke 15:11-32).

Write out any promises to claim (Are they universal promises? Have you met the conditions?) Write out any sins in your life that you need to confess.

Note: see example on page 8

Write out a prayer of application

Date: Friday, August 20

³ Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. ⁵ You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. -Phillipians 2:3-5

Note: If you need more scripture to answer the questions below, read the passage in its context (Phillipians 2:2-11).

Write out any promises to claim (Are they universal promises? Have you met the conditions?) Write out any sins in your life that you need to confess.

Note: see example on page 8

Write out a prayer of application

Date: Friday, August 27

⁵ The apostles said to the Lord, “Show us how to increase our faith.” ⁶ The Lord answered, “If you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘May you be uprooted and thrown into the sea,’ and it would obey you!

-Luke 17:5-6

Note: If you need more scripture to answer the questions below, read the passage in its context (Luke 17:1-10).

Write out any promises to claim (Are they universal promises? Have you met the conditions?) Write out any sins in your life that you need to confess?

Note: see example on page 8

Write out a prayer of application

Date: Saturday, August 28

⁵ The apostles said to the Lord, "Show us how to increase our faith." ⁶ The Lord answered, "If you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'May you be uprooted and thrown into the sea,' and it would obey you!"
-Luke 17:5-6

Note: If you need more scripture to answer the questions below, read the passage in its context (Luke 17:1-10).

Say the scripture out loud three times then in your own words rewrite the passage.

Note: see example on page 12

Write out a prayer of application

Date: Tuesday, August 31

And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. ⁴⁵They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. ⁴⁶They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity ⁴⁷all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved. —Acts 2:44-47

Note: If you need more scripture to answer the questions below, read the passage in its context (Acts 2:42-47).

Write out any truths to believe. What can I learn about God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit? Write what this scripture says about God or Christ directly or indirectly. Is there anything for which I can praise or thank God?

Note: see example on page 11

Write out a prayer of application

Date: Monday, September 6

¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. ¹⁷ God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.
-2 Timothy 3:16-17

Note: If you need more scripture to answer the questions below, read the passage in its context (2 Timothy 3:10-17).

Write out any examples to follow (is it a positive example for me to copy, or a negative one to avoid?) and any prayers to pray and any errors to avoid (are there any problems that I should be alert to or beware of?)

Note: see example on page 10

Write out a prayer of application

Date: Wednesday, September 8

¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. ¹⁷ God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

-2 Timothy 3:16-17

Note: If you need more scripture to answer the questions below, read the passage in its context (2 Timothy 3:10-17).

Write out something to be thankful for. Write a short prayer specifically for a friend in need.

Write out a prayer of application
