

Developing a Devotional Lifestyle

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Cultivating an Intimacy with God

One of the most remarkable things about the Gospel is that, through the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, an intimate relationship with God is now possible.

Read Philippians 3:10-14

Paul’s defining passion was “to know him.” This is what Paul declared he was “pressing on” to take a hold of. Has this also become your defining passion?

One of the marks of Christian growth is to progress from a “needs-oriented” approach to God to an “intimacy-oriented” approach to him. We tend to live in a world of “contacts” rather than “relationships.” And we often approach God in the same way. He is a “contact” on our list of “to do’s” for the day.

But prayer is so much more than just coming before God with a shopping list of requests. To be sure, God invites us to ask in prayer (**Matthew 7:7**), but just a few verses prior to this, Jesus tells us to “seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (**Matthew 6:33**).

In your devotional time with the Lord this morning, try out a combination of these “intimacy-oriented” activities before you begin praying for specific needs.

- Worship the Lord with one of your favorite songs.
- Talk to the Lord about how much you love him.
- Thank him for what he has done for you.

Now you’re ready to talk to the Lord about specific needs. Remember, in your times with the Lord, prioritize what *he* wants before what *you* want.

Putting it into Practice

In your devotions this morning, read **Psalm 139**. As you read, talk to the Lord about the content of this psalm. Make Paul’s declaration “that I may know him” your own as you read this psalm.

MEMORY VERSE

Surely you desire truth in the
inner parts; you teach me wisdom
in the inmost place

Psalm 51:6

Here are a few suggestions that may help you to memorize your memory verses:

- ➡ Ask the Lord to help you remember his Word (see [John 14:26](#)).
- ➡ Use the version of the Bible you are most familiar with. What you normally read in your Bible is what you need to be memorizing.
- ➡ Don't just memorize the contents of the verse; memorize its "address" (the verse reference) as well. You can do this by following this pattern: Step 1: **reference**; Step 2: **verse content**; Step 3: **reference**. Then repeat steps 1-3. Note that you are quoting the reference twice as many times as you quote the actual verse content. This helps give your memory verse a clear "reference tag."
- ➡ After you have read your memory verse out aloud several times, try going through your memory verse *without* reading your computer screen.
- ➡ Look up your memory verse in your Bible. Look at its immediate context and read the verses that come before and after your memory verse.
- ➡ Print out your memory verse or jot it down on a piece of paper. Take this paper with you when you go to work or do other daily activities. Meditate on the meaning of the verse throughout the day.
- ➡ During your noon appointment with the Lord, take out your memory verse and go over it again. Talk to the Lord about what this verse means to you personally.
- ➡ In the evening (at either your evening study or your evening devotions), see if you can quote your memory verse from memory. Then, without looking at the memory verse itself, see if you can find it in your Bible.
- ➡ The next day, before you begin committing a new verse to memory, rehearse your previous day's memory verse and see if you can remember it (without cheating!).
- ➡ Finally, at the end of the week (possibly on the Sunday), collect all your week's memory verses, rehearse them and see if you can recall them without reading them. Spend a little extra time on any verses you have difficulty recalling.
- ➡ Remember: Don't just memorize a verse. Put it into practice ([James 1:22](#)). It is not being able to quote a verse from memory that counts. It is His Word *abiding* in your heart that counts ([John 15:7](#)). When you actually apply a verse consistently to your daily life, that is when you *truly* know that verse!