

How Pray-Reading the Word Can Revolutionize Your Life

It's not enough to study the Bible. We need to talk to God while we study.

BY MIKE BICKLE

Studying the Bible is critical to our walk with the Lord. But it is not enough to study the Bible—we must talk to God as we study. Bible study is meant to lead us to conversation with God by giving us “conversational material” for our prayer life. It provides the language we use as we talk to Him. Using the Bible and speaking the Word back to God make prayer easy and enjoyable.

Jesus called us to abide in Him. The essence of abiding is talking to Him—communing with Him and having fellowship with Him—and one key element of this is “pray-reading” the Word, simply speaking the truths of the Word back to God as we read it. So as we read and meditate on Scripture, we pray Bible phrases and passages back to God, using the language of the Word as the basis and vocabulary of our prayers. This helps us to give our hearts practically to the Lord and to receive from Him, grounded in the truth of the Word.

Believing and Obeying

We find two broad categories of truth related to pray-reading the Word: believing and obeying. First, we find verses that focus on promises we are to believe—for example, Scriptures that declare that God loves, forgives, leads, protects and provides for us. In the second category, we find verses that exhort us to obey God's Word. Examples include Scriptures that command us to

bridle our tongues, serve others, give time and money to God, live peaceably and so forth.

We dialogue with God by praying promises from His Word that we are to believe. First, we turn these truths into simple declarations of thanksgiving or trust. For example, we might say, “Thank You that You love me, that You forgive me.” We might declare, “I trust that You will lead me and protect me, that You will provide for me.”

Second, we ask God to release particular truths to us, to move them from our minds (just knowing them) to our hearts so that we believe and act on them. Ask God to give you a spirit of revelation (Eph. 1:17). For example, pray, “Father, please reveal to me the certainty of Your provision, how much You love me and forgive me, how I have ravished Your heart” and “Father, release Your promised guidance, provision and protection.” Pray according to Hebrews 12:2: “Give me more insight into how Your heart is made glad by my love for You.”

Making Word-Based Declarations

We also dialog with God by praying truths that exhort us to obey His Word. First, we commit to obey God in the specific way set forth in the passage we are reading. If we are reading about obeying God with our speech, we make declarations of resolve to obey the Word in this specific way. For example, declare, “I set my heart to love You and obey You with my speech, time, money”

and so forth. Tell the Lord, “I set my heart to love You like David, to endure hardship like Paul, to pray like Daniel.” Making sweet resolutions like these to obey the Lord strengthens our hearts.

Second, we ask God to help and empower us to obey the particular truth we see in Scripture. Ask God to give you wisdom, motivation and power to obey in specific areas. For example, pray, “Father, help me to love You, to bridle my speech, to use my time and money in full obedience. Father, strengthen me by Your grace to love You like David.” When reading Matthew 6:13, “And do not lead us into temptation,” we can pray, “Father, lead me away from temptation.” Or if we are meditating on John 17:15, “I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one,” pray, “Deliver me from the works of the evil one.”

As we make pray-reading the Bible a regular part of our lives in God, using the language of Scripture to talk to Him and committing ourselves to believe and obey His Word, we encounter Jesus, the living Word. And prayer becomes easier and more enjoyable. ◀

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