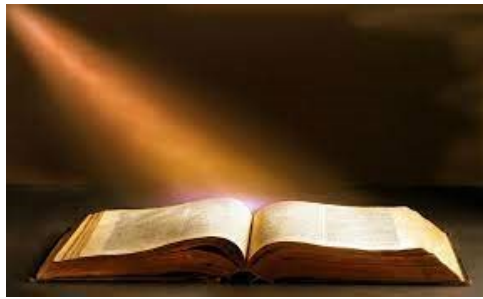


Discipleship Class

LECTIO DIVINA

Week 1: An Overview



We can get bored of the Bible and discouraged in prayer.

- ◆ However, prayer will make the Bible reading come alive.
- ◆ And the Bible will lead you to deeper prayer.

1. God spoke to us through Creation.

- ◆ “¹The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. ²Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. ³Without speech or language, without a sound to be heard, ⁴their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens He has pitched a tent for the sun.” (Psalm 19:1-4)

2. With the fall of creation, God spoke to us through revelation.

- ◆ “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness...” (2 Timothy 3:16)

3. *With disobedience to revelation, God spoke to us through His Son.*

- ◆ “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.” (Hebrews 1:1-2)

4. *All the Scriptures point to Jesus.*

- ◆ “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;” (John 5:39)

5. *Jesus sent the Holy Spirit so we can understand the Scriptures and know Jesus.*

- ◆ “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.” (John 16:13-14)

Isn't the Bible just a history book?

- ◆ “For the word of God is *living and active...*” (Hebrews 4:12)
- ◆ “For whatever was written in former days was written for *our instruction*, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the Scriptures *we may have hope.*” (Romans 15:4)
- ◆ “Now these things happened to them as a warning, but they were written down for *our instruction.*” (1 Corinthians 10:11)

Approach the Word with Humility

"Humility is the understanding of our ignorance when it comes to the knowledge of God among many other things." - Basil Pennington

- ◆ **"10** The disciples came to him and asked, 'Why do you speak to the people in parables?' **11** He replied, 'Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. **12** Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. **13** This is why I speak to them in parables: 'Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. **14** In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: 'You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. **15** For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' **16** But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. **17** For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.'" (Matthew 13:10-17)
 - ◆ Jesus said the reason He teaches in parables was so that those who really want revelation will get it. The proud will be exempt from revelation. He explained all things to His disciples because they were hungry.
- ◆ "At that time Jesus said, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, and have revealed them to infants." (Matthew 11:25)
 - ◆ Those who were wise and intellect in their own eyes.
- ◆ "He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel." (Psalm 103:7)
 - ◆ The children of Israel knew **what** God said. Moses knew **why** God said.

History of Lectio Divina:

1. Origin of Alexandria (185–254 CE)

- ◆ Jews understood that there were dimensions the Scriptures: *Literal and Spiritual interpretations of the Scriptures.*
- ◆ What it actually says vs. What God had in mind when His Spirit inspired the text.
- ◆ Origen further taught that there were three different ways in which passages of scripture could be interpreted: The "flesh" was the literal, historical interpretation of the passage; the "soul" was the moral message behind the passage; and the "spirit" was the eternal, spiritual reality of that passage.

2. Desert Fathers (3rd century)

- ◆ "Yesterday you understood a little, today you understand more; tomorrow you will understand still more: the very light of God becomes stronger in you" - St. Augustine
- ◆ "Do not approach then words of Scripture, full of mystery, without prayer... say to God: 'Lord, make me perceive the strength that is to be found here'" - Isaac of Nineveh

3. Saint Benedict (480 AD - 547 AD)

- ◆ Made praying the Scriptures widespread among western monasticism.
- ◆ "*the brothers should have specified periods for manual labor as well as for prayerful reading...*" - Saint Benedict

4. *Guigo II (12th Century)*

- ◆ A Carthusian monk who served in a monastery in France, from 1174 to 1180.
- ◆ The motto of the Carthusians is *Stat crux dum volvitur orbis*, Latin for "The Cross is steady while the world turns".
- ◆ He died possibly in 1188 or 1193.
- ◆ He wrote a book called the *Ladder of the Monks*.

"One day when I was busy working with my hands I began to think about our spiritual work, and all at once four stages in spiritual exercise came into my mind: **reading**, **meditation**, **prayer**, and **contemplation**. These make a ladder for monks by which they are lifted from earth to heaven. It has a few rungs, yet it's length is immense and wonderful, for its lower ends rests on the earth, but its top pierces the clouds and touches heavenly secrets." - Guigo II

Introducing The Four Steps:

"**Reading** is the careful study of Scriptures, concentrating all one's powers on it. **Meditation** is the busy application of the mind to seek with the help of one's own reason for knowledge of hidden truth. **Prayer** is the heart's devoted turning to God to drive away evil and obtain what is good. **Contemplation** is when the mind is in some sort of lifted up to God and held above itself, so that it tastes the joy of everlasting sweetness." - Guigo II

The Metaphor of a Vineyard:

- ◆ READING: Picking grapes.
- ◆ MEDITATION: Treading on the grapes.
- ◆ PRAYER: Fermenting of the wine while in an oak barrel.
- ◆ CONTEMPLATION: Drinking the wine.

The Metaphor of Eating:

- ◆ READING: Tasting.
- ◆ MEDITATION: Chewing.
- ◆ PRAYER: Digesting.
- ◆ CONTEMPLATION: Energized.

1. READ

- ◆ Read a few times out loud. (The Benedictine Process reads it four times.).
- ◆ We are tuning into God's station.
- ◆ For big chunks of history they actually couldn't read but heard the Word. It's good to read out loud.
- ◆ Be diligent to understand the literal or historical meaning of the text. This is not to be overlooked. Feeding the mind and developing our intellectual understanding of the Word of God is crucial to our spiritual development.

2. REFLECT

- ◆ Look for what stands out or shimmers, trusting that this is the *prompting* or the *highlighting* of the Holy Spirit.
- ◆ Looking for hidden truth, using the brain's God gave us.
- ◆ As we meditate or chew, we are breaking down the food. We will taste multiple *flavors* of the passage.

We are transitioning over to the next two rungs:

"The good and wicked alike can read and meditate." - Guigo II

- ◆ The first two steps we can do. The second two steps we need Him to help us. We can't do it without Him.
- ◆ Many people find prayer difficult and unfulfilling, because they want to jump to the third rung of the ladder. But, every step of the ladder is necessary.
- ◆ *"**Lectio** without **meditation** is sterile, **meditation** without **lectio** is liable to error, **prayer** without **meditate** is lukewarm, **meditation** without **prayer** is unfruitful, prayer when it is fervent wins **contemplation**, but to obtain it without prayer would be rare, even miraculous."* — Guigo II

3. RESPOND

All possible responses: Thanksgiving, praise, petition (intercession, repentance, contrition, and adoration.

- ◆ You may wish to ask questions or even protest what has come to you. If nothing else, you may wish to thank God for speaking to you through Scripture. There may be a crying out to God for our shortcomings.
- ◆ *"**Lectio** can enlighten the mind and motivate the will, however, the goal of **Lectio Divina** is not so much gaining new ideas, concepts, insights, or motivating graces; the goal is God himself. We come seeking the Presence of the living God."*
- Guigo II

4. REST

- ◆ Simply be present with God.
- ◆ The mind lifted up beyond itself to God so that it tastes the joys of everlasting sweetness.
- ◆ Resting in the love of God.
- ◆ Journey into the inner life of the Trinity.
- ◆ **Contemplation: Con** means commune. **Template** means temple.

Mount of Transfiguration

- ◆ **Peter, James and John saw** Moses (law) and Elijah (prophet) talking to Jesus and then they saw *"Jesus only"* (Matthew 17:8).
- ◆ The Scriptures are to lead us to Jesus (the Word made flesh).
- ◆ Seeing Jesus is contemplation.

Jesus is the Gate to Heaven

- ◆ Jacob had a vision at Bethel, saying it was the house of God and the gate to heaven (Genesis 28:11-12). Angels were ascending and descending on it.
- ◆ Jesus said to Nathaniel, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."* (John 1:51)
 - ◆ Jesus was saying He is Bethel.
 - ◆ Jesus is the gate to heaven (John 14:6).
 - ◆ When we come to Jesus in Scripture, He leads us to **contemplation**.
- ◆ "Blessed is the pure in heart for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8)
 - ◆ The purification happens in the earlier stages (the lower rungs of the ladder).

ACTIVATION # 1:



1. READ

"I hope you will put up with me in a little foolishness. Yes, please put up with me! 2 I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. 3 But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ." (2 Corinthians 11:1-3)

2. REFLECT (*Write Down the insights you received*):

3. RESPOND (*Write Down your prayers you prayed*):

4. REST (*Write Down what it was like when you stepped into this state*):

HOMEWORK # 1:



1. Find a quiet place and still your soul.

- ◆ "Be still and know that you are God." (Psalm 46:10)
- ◆ "Go into your inner room." (Matthew 6:6)
- ◆ Make your place feel sacred.

2. Ask the Holy Spirit to open the Word to you.

- ◆ Express your desire for revelation of Jesus Christ.

3. Have realistic goals.

- ◆ 3 times a week is a good start.
- ◆ 10-15 minutes is a great start!

4. Keep passages short.

- ◆ A few verses is fine.
- ◆ Find a short passage.