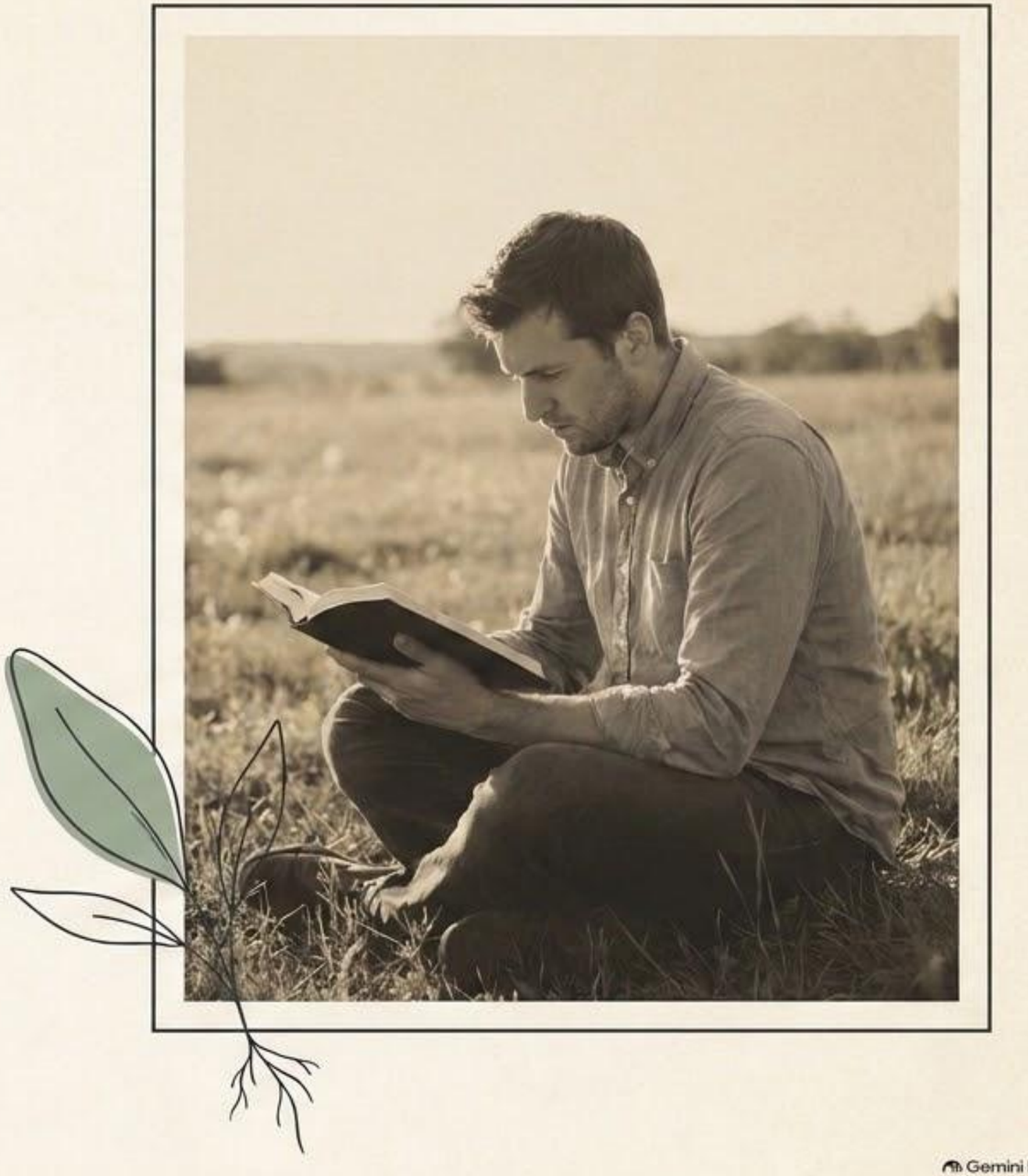
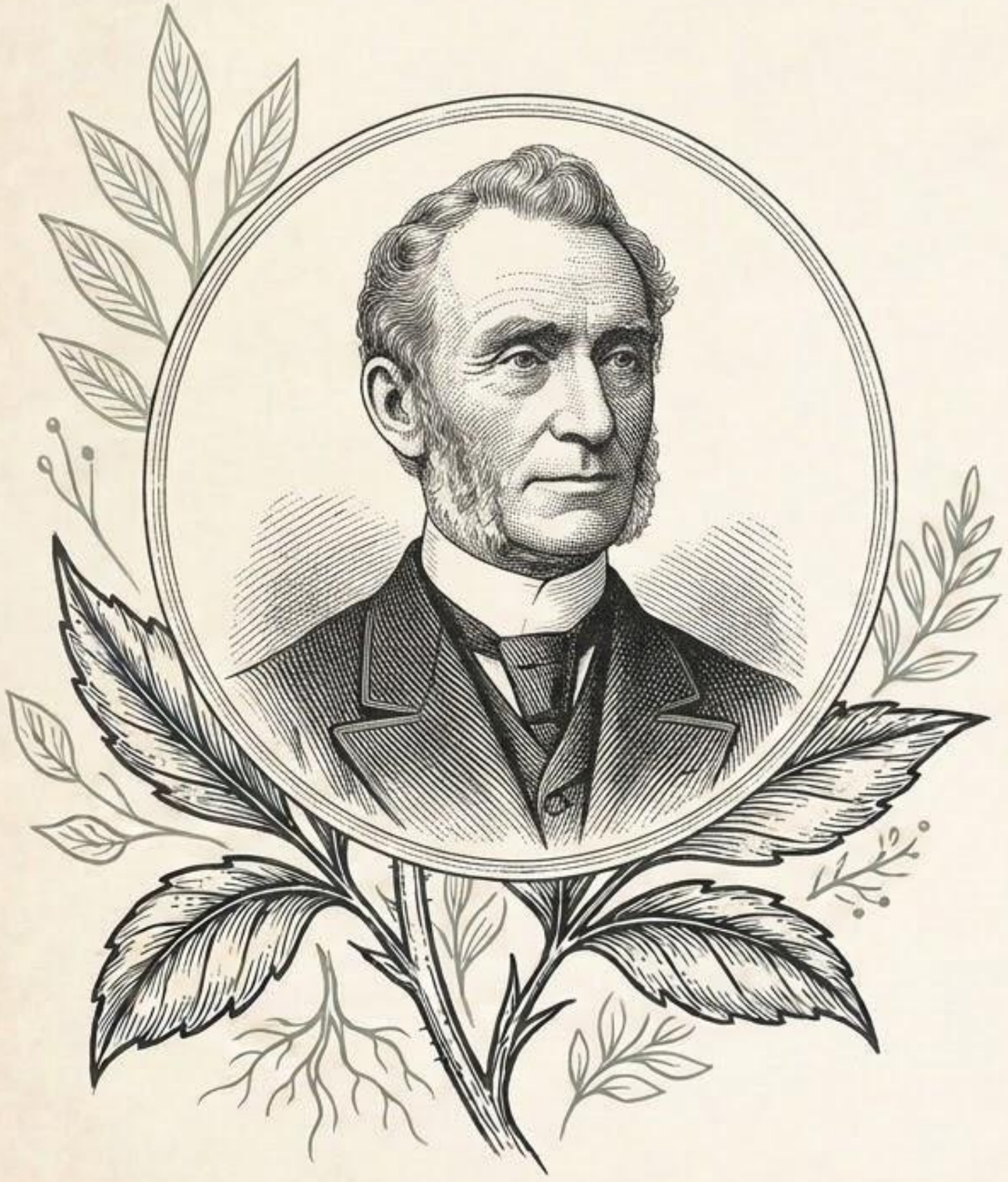
How to Abide

A field guide to cultivating a transformed inner life through the deep reading of Scripture.

FBC Chanute



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George Muller

(1805–1898) was a Prussian-born Christian evangelist, pastor, and director of the Ashley Down orphanages in Bristol, England, who left a profound legacy centered on radical faith, prayer, and systemic orphan care

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Transformation requires lingering, not just reading

The Bible is not meant merely to inform but to transform.

We must approach the text not as hasty readers, but as deliberate cultivators.

> “It is not the mere touching of the flower by the bee that gathers honey, but her abiding for a time on the flower that draws out the sweet. It is not he that reads most but he that meditates most that will prove to be the choicest, sweetest, wisest and strongest Christian.”
>
> — Thomas Brooks, 17th-century leader

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Acts 17:28 for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’

John 15:4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. (NKJV)

John 15:4 Make Your Home in Christ and His Home in You. unless the branch makes it home in the vine, it can not bear fruit. Neither can you, unless you Make Your Home in Christ. (DJT)

The law of first mention (or principle of first mention): is an informal guideline in biblical interpretation that claims the first time a word, concept, or doctrine appears in the Bible, it sets a foundational meaning that carries through the rest of the text.

Genesis 24:63 And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening; and he lifted his eyes and looked, and there, the camels were coming.

hapax legomena: When a word only appears once.

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Meditation (suah): means to think on, to speak.

Psalm 119:97 Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.

Meditation (Siha):
Reflection, prayer, and thoughts towards God.

Joshua 1:8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. (NKJV)

Psalms 1:1-3 Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.

Meditation (haga): to mutter (Holy muttering) in this case in pleasure.

Proverbs 4:23 Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.

Defining the practice of biblical meditation



Root 1: A low-pitch muttering
Quietly vocalizing the text.



Root 2: Total absorption
To be entirely taken up by the subject.

An activity of holy thought, consciously performed in the presence of God, under the eye of God, by the help of God, as a means of communion with God.



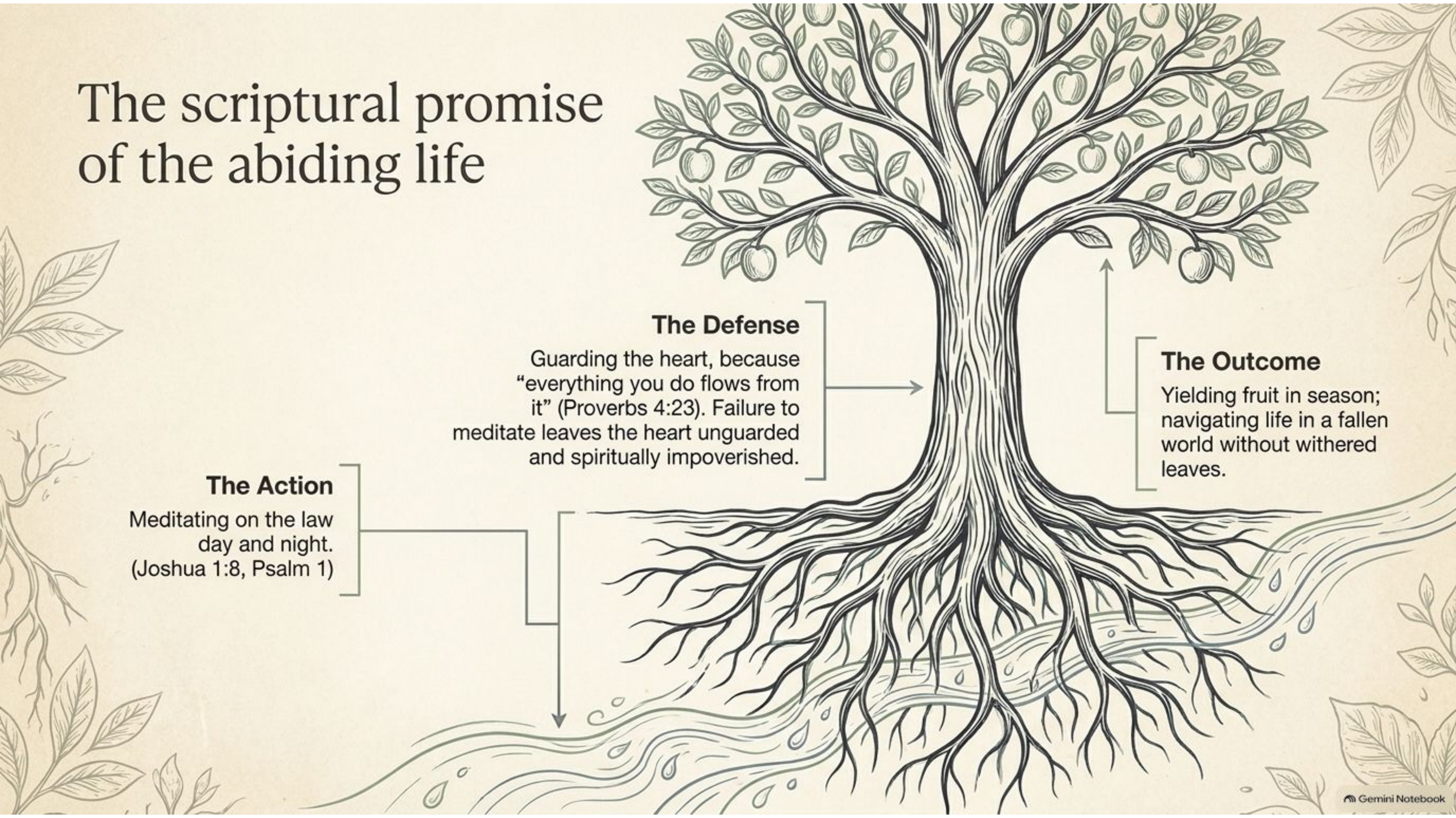
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Distinguishing biblical meditation from Eastern practices

	Eastern Meditation (The Inward Path)	Biblical Meditation (The Kingdom Path)
The Journey	An inner journey to find the center of one's being.	Concentration of the mind and heart upon a Truth found in God's Word.
The Discovery	Reaching the inmost self (viewed as the ultimate Self or Reality).	Encountering God in and through His Holy, revealed Word.
The Method	Emptying the mind and descending inward.	Filling the mind with Scripture to know Him better.

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The scriptural promise of the abiding life



The Defense

Guarding the heart, because "everything you do flows from it" (Proverbs 4:23). Failure to meditate leaves the heart unguarded and spiritually impoverished.

The Outcome

Yielding fruit in season; navigating life in a fallen world without withered leaves.

The Action

Meditating on the law day and night. (Joshua 1:8, Psalm 1)

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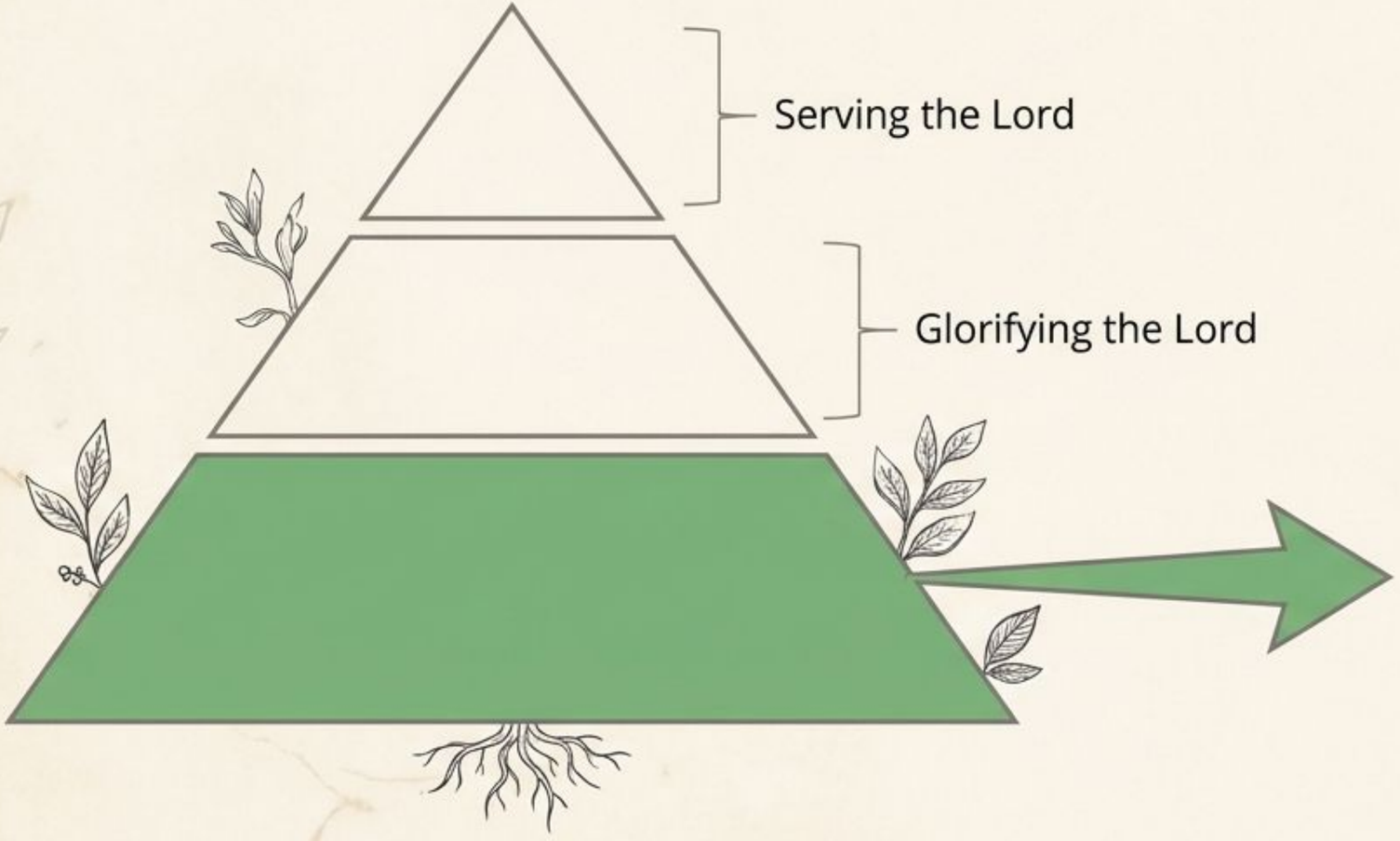
The structured framework of *Lectio Divina*



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Prioritizing the nourishment of the inner man

George Müller spent 10 years struggling in his daily devotion before a sudden realization transformed the next 40 years of his life.



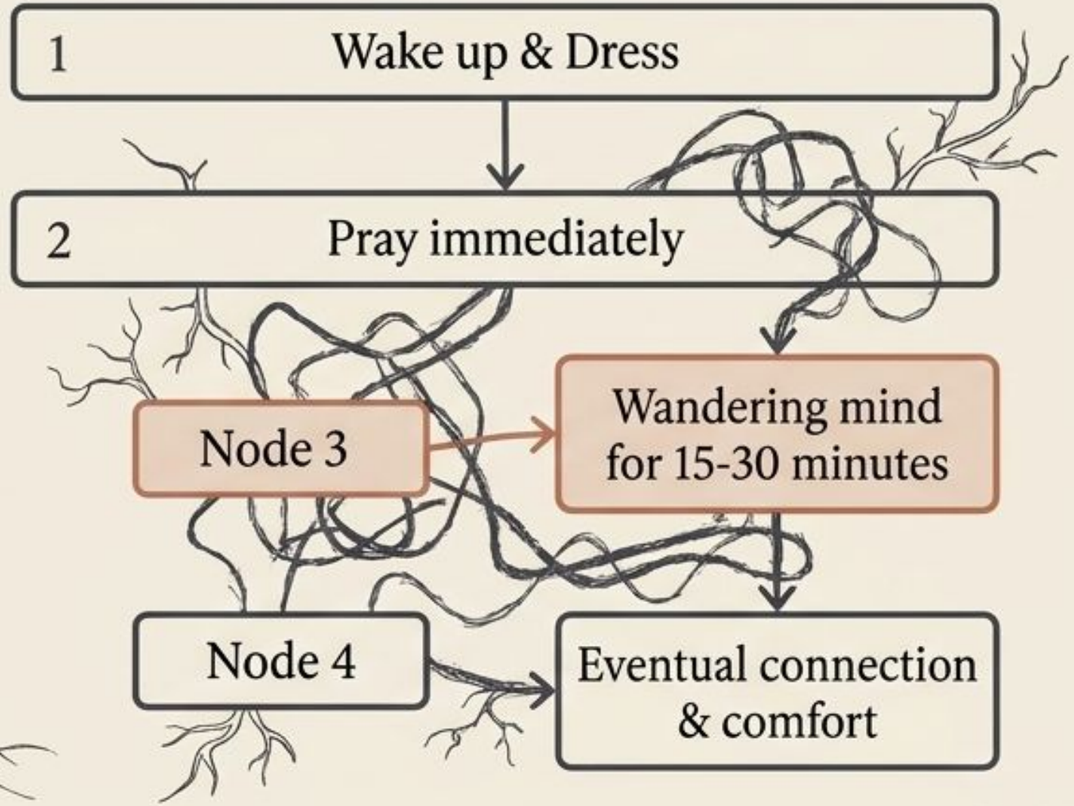
The Primary Business of Every Day

To have my soul happy in the Lord. The first thing to be concerned about was not how much I might serve or glorify the Lord, but how my inner man might be nourished.

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The shift from wandering prayer to nourished communion

The Ten-Year Struggle (Praying First)



The Forty-Year Success (Reading First)



Insight Box

The Word of God is the food for the inner man. Reading turns almost immediately into prayer.

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Designing an environment for sustained focus

The Posture

Sit in an upright chair. Avoid beds, overstuffed chairs, or sofas to prevent drowsiness.

The Duration

Protect 20 to 30 minutes in a quiet place without distraction.



The Tools

Bring only a Bible, a notebook, and a pen.

The Material

Start small—one verse or a brief parable. Live with the text for a whole week.

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Assessing the posture of your heart

Relational Intent

This is not inductive study or sermon preparation. The goal is communion, not just academic mastery.

A Thirst for God

The basic orientation must be like David in Psalm 143: “I stretch out my hands to you, my soul thirsts for you like a parched land.”

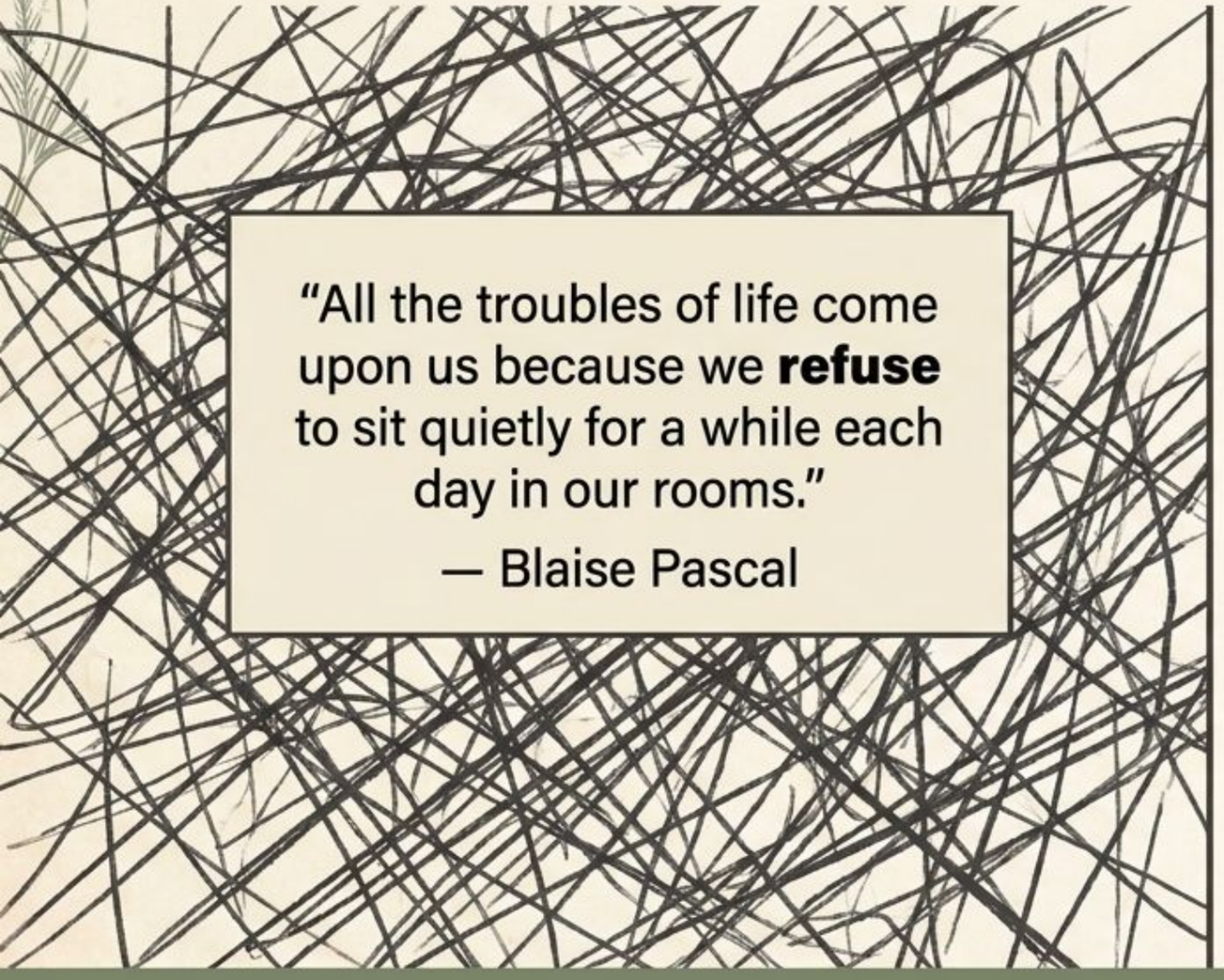
Reliance on the Spirit

Focused thought alone is insufficient. Communion is mediated by the Holy Spirit’s inward illumination, requiring active prayer for help regardless of fluctuating emotions.



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Overcoming the modern enemy of solitude



"All the troubles of life come upon us because we **refuse** to sit quietly for a while each day in our rooms."

— Blaise Pascal

"We Christians must simplify our lives or lose untold treasures… The need for solitude and quietness was never greater than it is today.""

— A.W. Tozer

You must prioritize meditation to provide a foundation for discipline in a high-pressure world.

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Steeping in a divine personality

Our Lord's teaching... demand[s] a response from the whole man. There is no question of learning a subject but of steeping ourselves in a Personality, acquiring a new outlook and temper, breathing a new atmosphere, suffering Him, in His own way, to rebuild in us the defaced image of Himself.

— C.S. Lewis

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Beginning your daily practice

1

Choose Your Path

Will you utilize Packer's structured 6-step Lectio Divina or Müller's organic reading for soul-nourishment?

2

Set Your Scene

When and where will you commit to 20 quiet, uninterrupted minutes this week?

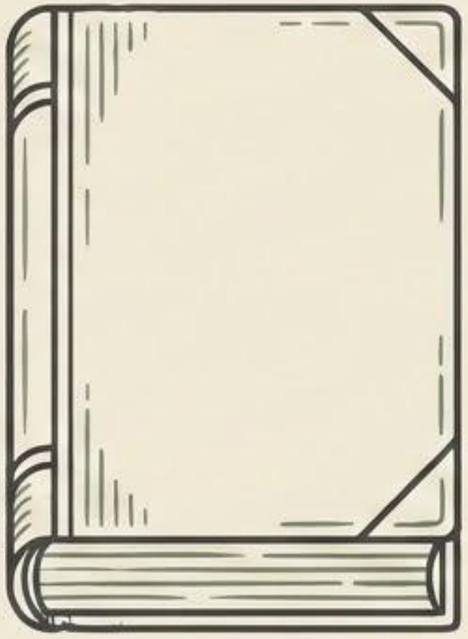
3

Pick Your Text

Select a small passage to begin. (Recommended: Psalm 1, Psalm 119, or a short parable of Jesus).

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Recommended reading for deeper cultivation



Habits of Grace: Enjoying Jesus through the Spiritual Disciplines

by David Mathis (Crossway)

Explores the everyday habits of grace that give us access to God's love and power: listening to God's voice, speaking to Him in prayer, and joining together with His people.

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