

SUMMER DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION GUIDE

SCRIPTURE: LECTIO DIVINA

The writer of Hebrews describes the Bible as “living and active, able to pierce through even joints and marrow” (Heb 4:12). This means the Scriptures are not an artifact to be studied but are intended to be our primary guide for belief and practice. As we approach Scripture, it’s important to note that we do so in several ways. We might read a longer passage to understand the context. Or we might camp out in a phrase or verse to deepen our understanding of a single concept. Another way is to read *reflectively*, that is, to read the Scriptures believing God gave them to us not just for information but for our transformation.

Lectio divina (Latin for “divine reading”) is one way to read the Scriptures that helps us to read reflectively—to read slowly, to personally immerse ourselves in God’s Word. *Lectio divina* is an ancient practice, first introduced by St. Gregory of Nyssa in the 300’s AD and popularized by St. Benedict in the early 500’s. This way of reading has four movements originally called *lectio, meditatio, oratio, and contemplatio*. In English, these movements have commonly been relabeled: read, reflect, respond, and rest. This kind of engagement with Scripture is meant to be reflective and transformative for us.

PRACTICE

Spend a portion of your personal time with God praying and engaging with Scripture through the practice of *lectio divina*. If you’re unsure what to read, you may want to choose one of the Psalms of Ascent (Psalm 120-134), part of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), or a section of Romans.

Read - Lectio

Read the passage slowly and prayerfully. Pay special attention to any words, phrases, or ideas that jump out to you, move you emotionally, or deeply resonate.

Reflect - Meditatio

Reread the passage again, slowly. This time, pause over the word(s) or phrase(s) that stood out to you during your first reading. Meditate on them. Think about why these words might have stood out to you. Don’t focus on analyzing the passage. Reflect on what God might be saying to you through the biblical text.

Respond - Oratio

Pray your impressions back to God. You can use your own words or simply pray the passage directly to God. You might want to record your thoughts in a journal. Consider what God might be leading you to do, believe, or consider through this passage.

Rest - Contemplatio

Take a few minutes in silence to breathe deeply and rest in God’s presence with you and God’s words to you through the Scriptures.

For previous week’s guides, go to redemptionokc.com/summerdevotions.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

PSALM 131 | THE LORD OUR CONFIDENCE

LEARNING THE WORD

1. Each week this summer, our Reflection Guide will include a spiritual practice for you to engage in your personal devotional time. Begin this week by reading page one of the reflection guide. Does this kind of slow, prayerful, reflective reading of God's Word seem new or different to you? Why or why not?
2. Read Psalm 131 aloud. What images or ideas stand out to you?
3. What words or phrases does the writer, David, use to describe various aspects of his person? What can we learn about the complexity of human existence from these words?
4. Verse 1 tells us what we *should not* do. What would your life look like if you ignored the teaching of verse 1? What would be the result?
5. In verse 2, we see the image of a *weaned child*. What is the significance of the emphasis on a child who is weaned versus a child who is not yet weaned? What spiritual point is the writer making with this description for his life?

LIVING THE WORD

6. When it comes to your personal life, how might you correct yourself when you are tempted by overreaching with your ambitions, expectations, and comprehension of the world?
7. When the psalmist writes, "I have calmed and quieted my soul", what does this look like practically? In other words, how do you calm and quiet yourself when you need to?
8. In verse 3, we are given the solution for our pride and our panic with the charge to "hope in the Lord." Read also 1 Peter 1:3-6, where we see that our hope finds its fulfillment in Jesus. How does our hope in the Lord help us both in *this time* and *forevermore*? Why do we need to realize that both of these are true?

Practice this week: During your personal, undistracted time with the Lord this week, give the practice of *lectio divina* a try. Take 20-30 minutes to slowly read, reflect, respond, and rest in a specific truth in God's Word. If you're unsure what to read, you may want to choose one of the Psalms of Ascent (Psalm 120-134), part of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), or a section of Romans. Use the guide on the front of this sheet for direction in this ancient practice.