

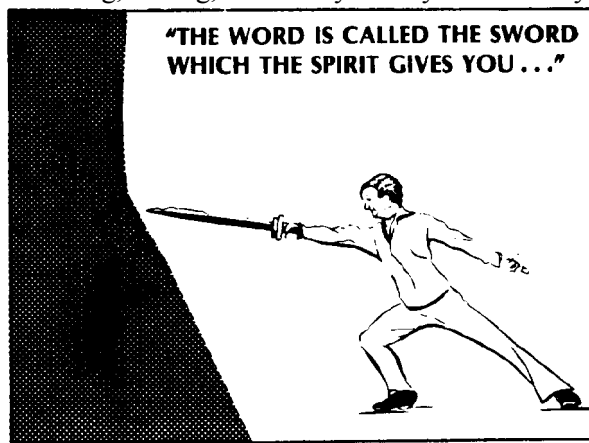
Lesson  
8

# Devotional Study

Devotional study is very personal. Its purpose is to draw you close to God. It brings you into contact with deep spiritual truth. The Holy Spirit is your guide. But, the devil does not like this. He does not want man to be close to God.

As you apply the Word of God to your life, the devil will fight you. He wants to make you discouraged. He wants you to doubt God. He creates spiritual conflict within you.

Jesus showed us how to deal with spiritual conflict. When the devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness (see Matthew 4:1-11), Jesus resisted him. Jesus fought back by using the most powerful weapon in the world. He quoted the Scriptures. The devil had to flee because God's Word is truth and life. In Ephesians 6:17, the Word is called, "the sword which the Spirit gives you." With it you will be able "to stand up against the Devil's evil tricks . . . After fighting to the end, you will still hold your ground" (6:11, 13). The Word of God brings you cleansing, healing, and victory when you hide it in your heart.



### In this lesson you will study...

The Value of Devotional Study  
Guidelines for Devotional Study  
Application of Devotional Study

### This lesson will help you...

- Describe the value of devotional Bible study.
- State the guidelines for devotional study.
- Describe how to apply devotional study to your life.

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## THE VALUE OF DEVOTIONAL STUDY

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**Objective 1.** *Identify true statements concerning the value of devotional study.*

You may learn much from the Bible by using the skills you have studied so far in this book. But to fully understand God's Word, you must study the Bible with devotion. Devotional study is gaining knowledge of the Word for personal spiritual reasons.

The word *devotion* means “strong love” and “attachment.” It also means “an act of prayer in which one asks humbly and earnestly of God.” Devotional study demands the full attention of the student.

To be in Christ and to have Christ in us is our goal as Christians. Jesus said:

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, then you will ask for anything you wish, and you shall have it. My Father’s glory is shown by your bearing much fruit; and in this way you become my disciples. I love you just as the Father loves me; remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete (John 15:7-11).

Devotional study creates unity between Christ and the believer. In devotional study, we read a short passage of Scripture. We read it slowly, probably several times. We prayerfully think about what it means. We ask ourselves, what does this passage say to my heart? Does it speak to my present need? How does it reveal Jesus to me?

This process is called *meditating*. It is “attending to.” We read the same verse or passage until our minds are *occupied* with the meaning and with the presence of the Lord. At this time, the Word gets inside us and feeds us.

The written Word reveals Christ to us. He is the living Word. The more we know the written Word, the better we know the living Word. The better we know Christ, the more we love Him and obey Him.

King David meditated much on God’s Word. He said, “My thoughts will be deep; I will speak words of wisdom” (Psalm 49:3). When we are in Christ and Christ is in us, we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:15-16). Our meditation renews our minds.



### For You To Do

- 1 Circle the letter in front of each TRUE statement about the value of devotional study.
  - a It draws us close to God.
  - b It fulfills our spiritual needs.
  - c It gives us the mind of Christ.
  - d It replaces other types of Bible study.
- 2 Circle the letter in front of the correct sentence completion: The key to devotional study is that which allows us to
  - a) separate ourselves from reality.
  - b) fill our minds with the Word.
  - c) get new ideas of our own.

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### GUIDELINES FOR DEVOTIONAL STUDY

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**Objective 2.** *List the guidelines for devotional study.*

David prayed, “Open my eyes, so that I may see the wonderful truths in your law” (Psalm 119:18). We need to pray this as we study how to make the message of God’s Word plain, personal, and practical.

Every passage of Scripture has a main truth. Often, there are other less obvious truths too. It is your task to find out what the Holy Spirit intends to say. *Follow these five steps to help make the message plain.*

## Five Steps to Follow

*Read.* Bible study begins with reading. In 1 Timothy 4:13, Paul says, “Give your time and effort to the public reading of the Scriptures and to preaching and teaching.” We must feed daily on God’s Word to be spiritually healthy: “They find joy in obeying the Law of the Lord, and they study it day and night” (Psalm 1:2). In Bible days, a group of Christians who lived at Berea were known for their love of Bible study (Acts 17:10-11). They were more than listeners; they searched the Scriptures daily. We need to be faithful in study as they were.



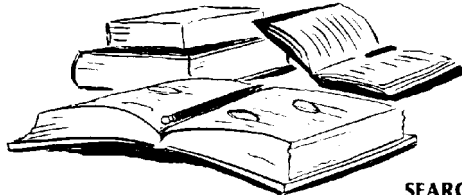
**READ**

*Record.* The attentive Bible student writes notes as he reads and studies the Bible. His pencil is a tool to help his eyes and mind “see” spiritual truth as the Holy Spirit guides his understanding.



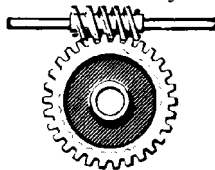
**RECORD**

*Search.* Bible truth is clear and simple, but at the same time it has deep meaning. The deep meanings of the Word are as “silver” and “hidden treasure” for which we must search in our studies (Proverbs 2:4).



**SEARCH**

*Relate.* Before interpreting the meaning of a passage, we need to relate it to its context. We need to read related teachings. This helps us to find the harmony of each passage with the whole Word of God.



**RELATE**

*Meditate.* We must meditate on the Word. “Listen to what is wise and try to understand it” (Proverbs 2:2). The Holy Spirit will always bring some message to our hearts as we take time to think about what we have read: “How I love your law! I think about it all day long” (Psalm 119:97). If we follow the command of Proverbs 4:20-21 in our meditation, we will gain much. By “paying attention to what God says,” we *gain knowledge* of God and His Word as we become more acquainted with Him. When we really “listen to God’s words,” we allow them to control our lives. We *learn obedience*. Meditation opens our hearts to God and makes us want to obey Him and express our love. True meditation affects the way we live.



**MEDITATE**



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**For You To Do**

3 List five steps for devotional study.

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4 Read Psalm 119, verses 27, 48, 78, 95, 99, and 148. What word is mentioned in each of these verses?

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**APPLICATION OF DEVOTIONAL STUDY**

**Objective 3.** *Describe how to apply devotional study to your life.*

**Making the Message Personal**

Devotional study of God’s Word makes the Bible message plain and also personal. A worthwhile part of devotional study is memorizing verses. God commanded in Deuteronomy 6:6-9:

Never forget these commands that I am giving you today. Teach them to your children. Repeat them when you are at home and when you are away, when you are resting and when you are working. Tie them on your arms and wear them on your foreheads as a reminder. Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates.

Keeping God’s Word in our hearts helps us to keep from sinning against the Lord (Psalm 119: 11). It helps us to overcome the devil (Revelation 12:11; Luke 4:4), and live holy lives (Psalm 119: 9; John 15:3). It helps us to succeed (Joshua 1:8), to develop strong faith (Romans 10:17) and to grow spiritually (1 Peter 2:2). It helps us to witness to others (2 Timothy 3:16).

Memorizing Bible verses is just part of making the Word personal. We must apply the Word to ourselves. We must make the word a lamp to guide us and a light for our path (see Psalm 119:105). We must ask ourselves, What does this verse say to me right now? and, What am I going to do about it? The Scripture gives us advice about how to act on God’s Word:

Do not deceive yourself by just listening to his word; instead, put it into practice. Whoever listens to the word but does not put it into practice is like a man who looks in a mirror and sees himself as he is. He takes a good look at himself and then goes away and at once forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks closely into the perfect law that sets people free, who keeps on paying attention to it and does not simply listen and then forget it, but puts it into practice—that person will be blessed by God in what he does (James 1:22-25).

There are various ways we must put God’s Word into practice. We must *obey His commands and prohibitions*. For example, we must love our neighbor (Luke 10:27) and we must not judge our brother in Christ (Romans 14:13). We *must claim the promises God has made*. It is not enough to know that we have been given full life in union with Christ (Colossians 2:10); we must claim that full life and exercise our freedom in Christ (Colossians 2:11, 20). We must *learn from the examples of others*, good and bad, as we studied in Lesson 7. Above all, we must *believe God’s statements of truth and live according to them*. To illustrate, the Bible teaches that we are one in Christ (Ephesians 2:14-18) and that love is the thing that makes us like Christ (Ephesians 3:17-19; 1 Corinthians 13). Our response to these truths will show whether or not we have applied them to our lives.

## Making the Message Practical

God wants us to share the gospel with others. Thus, a main purpose for Bible study is that it helps us to share God's truth with others. It gives us knowledge and the desire to teach others.

Teaching begins in the home. We must teach God's Word to our children (Deuteronomy 6:7). It is a joy to have knowledge and to be able to pass it on to children and young people, especially in our own families.

Then, as Colossians 3:16 states, we are to "teach and instruct one another with all wisdom." Paul told Timothy:

Take the teachings that you heard me proclaim in the presence of many witnesses, and entrust them to reliable people, who will be able to teach others also (2 Timothy 2:2).

Christ gave every Christian this task to do: "Go throughout the whole world and preach the gospel to all mankind" (Mark 16:15). Part of this task is to teach them (Matthew 28:20). Christ wants us to bear fruit. He said, "You did not choose me; I chose you and appointed you to go and bear much fruit, the kind of fruit that endures" (John 15:16).



We must strive to say what Jesus said: "My food is to obey the will of the one who sent me and to finish the work he gave me to do" (John 4:34). You see, God did not save us so that we could just sit down and enjoy our salvation; He expects us to tell others about Him. God wants us to study the Bible as a means of devotion, strength, and joy for ourselves; but He is most pleased when we share it with others. Our love of God's Word makes us want to share it.

May God bless you, as Bible study becomes life to you.



### For You To Do

5 Fill in each blank with the correct word: Two ways to apply devotional study to your life are to make it ..... and .....

6 List five ways to make the Word personal.

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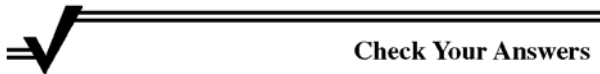
7 State why we need to make the message practical.

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The more we study the Bible, the more beautiful it becomes. The more we search it, the more it grips our hearts. Our belief in it brings unlimited blessing. Our living it adds joy and peace. Our sharing it with others demonstrates again its eternal power.

Now you are ready to fill out the last half of your student report for Lessons 5–8. Review these lessons, then follow the instructions in your student report. When you send your answer sheets to your instructor, ask him about another course of study.



### Check Your Answers

- 1 a True.  
b True.  
c True.  
d False.
- 5 personal, practical.
- 2 b) fill our minds with the Word.
- 6 Obey it, claim it, learn from it, believe it, live according to it.
- 3 Read, record, search, relate, meditate.
- 7 We must share the gospel with others through teaching and preaching. (In order to do this we must be able to explain the message of the Word in a practical way.)
- 4 The word mentioned is meditation or meditating. Verses 11, 15, 23, 55, and 97 refer to meditation also.

### One Final Word

This is a special kind of book because it was written by people who care about you. These are happy people who have found good answers to many of the questions and problems, which trouble almost everyone in the world. These happy people believe that God wants them to share with others the answers they have found. They believe that you need some important information in order to answer your own questions and problems and find the way of life that is best for you.

They have prepared this book in order to give you this information. You will find this book based on these fundamental truths:

1. You need a Savior. Read Romans 3:23, Ezekiel 18:20.
2. You cannot save yourself. Read 1 Timothy 2:5, John 14:6.
3. God desires that the world should be saved. Read John 3:16-17.
4. God sent Jesus who gave his life to save all those who believe in Him. Read Galatians 4:4-5, 1 Peter 3:18.
5. The Bible shows us the way of salvation and teaches how to grow in the Christian life. Read John 15:5, John 10:10, 2 Peter 3:18.
6. You decide your eternal destiny. Read Luke 13:1-5, Matthew 10:32-33, John 3:35-36.

This book tells you how to decide your destiny, and it gives you opportunities to express your decision. Also, the book is different from others because it gives you a chance to contact people who prepared it. If you want to ask questions, or explain your needs and feelings, you may write to them.

In the back of the book you should find a card called *Decision Report and Request Card*. When you have made a decision, fill out the card and mail it as indicated. Then you will receive more help. You may use the card to ask questions, or make requests for prayer or information.

If there is no card in this copy of the book, write to your ICI instructor and you will receive a personal answer.