

Praying Through the Scriptures

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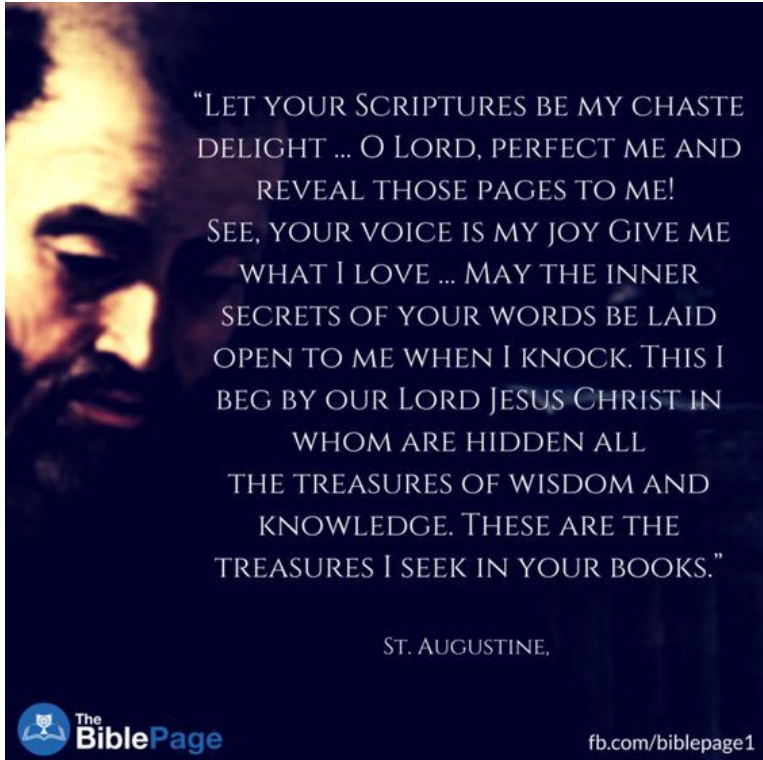




What Praying Through the Scriptures is Not

- Scripture Studies
- A means to prophetic messages
- Homily/Sermon preparation
- Esoteric new age blending with Christianity
- Liberal or Conservative theology

What is Praying through the Scriptures?





What is Praying through the Scriptures?

- Using God's words to give glory to him
- Using the language of the Holy Spirit to speak about divine things
- Encountering God's revelation of himself in contemplative ways
- Dwelling with God, through his word and in his presence
- Proclaiming the gospel to our inner selves to commune with God
- Using God's word to pray when you don't know what to pray



Wycliffe Bible Translations and Praying the Scriptures

“But how can we pray when we don’t know what to pray, or rather, what new things to pray for? When we use God’s own words by praying Scripture, we’re aligning ourselves with his heart and praying according to his will. What better way is there to give our prayer life new meaning?”

- Find a quiet place to connect with God
- Use a passage of scripture to prepare your heart for connecting intimately with God
- Use a verse or a passage to shape your prayer
- Allow imagery from scripture to influence your prayer
- Turn a verse into a first- or third-person prayer
- Declare a truth of scripture for you or for those you are praying for
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help.



John Piper on Praying the Bible

“Praying the scriptures is so important in the Christian life. If we don’t form the habit of praying the scriptures, our prayers will almost certainly degenerate into vain repetitions that eventually revolve entirely around our immediate private concerns, rather than God’s larger purposes.”

- Never forget Christ prayed the scriptures
- The Early Church prayed the scriptures (Acts 4:24)
- Many parts of scripture ARE prayer, make them your own



John Piper on Praying the Bible (Cont.)

John Piper says that all of the bible speaks to one of these four things that should elicit prayer from us:

- Tells us something about God (Elicit praise)
- Tells us something about what he has done (Elicit thanks)
- Tells us something about what he expects from us (Elicits cries for help)
- Tells us something about what we have failed to do (Elicits confession)

“We are praying meaning, not just words” - One must understand the intention and sense of the scripture.



What Disciplines Must I Have to Prayer the Scriptures

- Be disciplined enough to know the intent and context of the scripture
- Be disciplined enough to have studied the text first
- Be disciplined enough to avoid being eisegetical and not exegetical
- Be disciplined enough to read and pray the scriptures from the heart of the greater church (Past and present, East and West, catholic and reformed).



Lexio Divina - A Monastic Approach

St. Cyprian of Carthage (248) wrote this:

“Be constant as well in prayer as in reading; now speak with God, now let God speak with you, let him instruct you in his precepts, let him direct you.”

St Ambrose of Milan wrote:

“We speak to him when we pray; we listen to him when we read the divine oracles.”



Lexio Divina - A Monastic Approach (Cont.)

Early Christians saw praying the scriptures as an oscillating rhythm of reading (hearing God in the text) and praying (Speaking with God who is heard). Later in the monastic tradition, four aspects of praying the scriptures became popular to talk about:

- Lectio - Reading/Listening - Finding the small still voice of God. Often it is helpful to read out loud to ourselves to literally “Hear” God’s word.
- Meditatio - Luke 2:19, Mary pondered these things in her heart. Ruminates on the word of God.
- Oratio - Prayer - Lift up what the Spirit gives you through the verse to God.
- Contemplatio - Contemplation - Rest in God (This is not mystic ecstasy, rather grateful orientation for being in the presence of God).