

# Session 4

Devotional Life – The Word, Prayer, Worship, and Journaling

To have good communication, both parties must be engaged in both speaking and listening. Likewise, our devotional life is developing the daily practice of spending time talking to God and listening to Him.

So, how do we do this? First, we need to commit to a time each day to spend with God. Jesus set the example of spending time with God in the morning: Mark 1:35 says, *“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.”* Not everyone is a morning person. If mornings do not work for you, that is OK. Just find a time that will work for you and stick to it. What starts as a discipline, turns into a habit, and eventually becomes a delight.

Next, we are going to look at four elements of developing an intimate and enjoyable relationship with God. Those elements are:

- ▶ God’s Word – The Bible
- ▶ Prayer
- ▶ Worship
- ▶ Journaling

## God’s Word - The Bible

The Bible is the primary way that God speaks to us. While there are other ways that He speaks, they will always line up perfectly with God’s written Word (the Bible).

In the Bible, God gives us everything we need to know. He tells us how to be saved and how to live out a life of meaning and purpose that He has planned for us.

The Bible is a big book, with many different types of literature. So, how do we get started in hearing God speak through the Bible?

We recommend a ‘slow and steady’ approach to reading the Bible. Instead of trying to read large portions at a time, read smaller portions in a systematic way. You might want to read a paragraph, or just a few verses at a time. This will give you the opportunity to listen with your heart to what God is saying to you personally and then apply it to your life.

A good devotional or a reading plan can be a tremendous help here. The free ‘YouVersion’ Bible app has hundreds of online devotionals and reading plans for you to choose from.

When you read the Bible, read it with the expectation that God will speak to you personally.

How does Hebrews 4:12 describe the Word of God?

In 1 Peter 2:2, what should be our attitude toward the Word of God?

Why do you think Peter compares the Word to milk?

In 2 Timothy 3:15, what are the Scriptures (the Word of God) able to do for us?

## Prayer

Prayer is something that can be easily misunderstood. We might think prayer requires us to use big impressive words that we do not understand. Actually, prayer is quite different. Prayer is simply us speaking to God about anything that is going on in our lives. When we pray, we just speak to God conversationally the way we would speak to anyone else. Prayer does not have to be long or elaborate. Real prayer simply has to be honest, genuine, and heartfelt. Prayer completes the cycle of having a two-way conversation with God.

It can be helpful to have a model or format to help us pray. A model that many Christ Followers use is the ACTS model. The ACTS model is simply this:

- ▶ **A** – Adoration - Telling God what we love and appreciate about Him.
- ▶ **C** – Confession - Acknowledging our sins and shortcomings to God.
- ▶ **T** – Thanksgiving - Thanking God for all He has done for us.
- ▶ **S** – Supplication - Bringing our requests to God.

You will see your prayer life flourish once you start including each area of the ACTS model into your daily prayer time.

When we pray, it is important to remember that we are not bringing new information to God. He already knows our needs. When we pray, we recognize our dependence on God, and we are reminded of His goodness and faithfulness.

**When you pray, expect God to hear and answer you. His answers are Yes, No, or Wait.**

Read the following verses.

Philippians 4:6-7. What is the benefit of presenting our requests to God?

1 John 5:14 says when we pray according to

He

James 4:8. What promise do we have when we draw near to God?

According to 1 Thessalonians 5:17, how should we pray? What does this mean?

## Worship

Simply put, worship is the expression of our love and appreciation for God. When we worship, we acknowledge God's value and worth. Worship is vital to the spiritual life of the Christ Follower.

In worship, Christ Followers celebrate God. We may think this is only done through singing worship songs to God. But there are many other ways to worship; singing is simply a way that the Bible commands, and one that pleases God.

Some may say they do not like to sing, or that they are not really into worship music. We need to remember that worship is for God, not for us. If your favorite sports team won a championship title and a big celebration was held for the team, you would never think: "That celebration didn't do much for me." Instead you think: "I really enjoyed showing the team how much we appreciate them." That is what our attitude should be about worship. We should think: "I enjoy showing God how much I love and appreciate Him."

Worship is done in the church service with other Christ Followers, but it can also be done in private. You can take a song you heard in church, or on Christian radio, and sing it to the Lord anytime you like.

Psalm 95:1-2 says there are four things we should do when we worship:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Read the following verses.

John 4:24. How are true worshippers supposed to worship God? In \_\_\_\_\_ and in \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 12:5. Why should we worship the LORD?

Psalm 150. What strikes you most about how this passage describes worship?

# Journaling

*“This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘Write in a book all the words I have spoken to you.’”*  
Jeremiah 30:2

One of the best things about having a relationship with God is that we are on a journey of establishing a history with God. When we journal, we simply record that personal history with God on paper. Often, we will be encouraged as we look back and review that history. When we go through difficult times, we find comfort and encouragement as we review those previous times when God was faithful to us.

Journaling is simple. All you need to get started is a notebook and a pen.

So, what do you write in your journal? Some things that you can write are:

- ▶ Things God has shown you from His Word
- ▶ Bible promises to claim for your life
- ▶ Prayer requests
- ▶ Answers to prayer
- ▶ A review of the previous day

Make your journal personal. It is just between you and God. Once you get started, you will find a format that works well for you.

A good format to start with is this:

- ▶ Yesterday – Do a quick evaluation of the previous day.
- ▶ The Word – Write down what God shows you as you read His Word.
- ▶ Prayer – Jot down some of the requests you are bringing to God. You will be amazed when you see how God really does answer your prayers.

Feel free to experiment with your journal until you discover what works best for you.

Read the following verses.

Psalm 102:18. Besides us, who else may benefit from the things we write in our journal?

Psalm 119:11. How might journaling help to apply this to our lives?

In Philippians 4:8, list 8 things that we can write in our journals:

1. Whatever is
2. Whatever is
3. Whatever is

4. Whatever is
5. Whatever is
6. Whatever is
7. Whatever is
8. Or

### Summary Points:

- ▶ Our devotional life is the way we pursue a growing and satisfying relationship with God.
- ▶ Communication with God is a two-way conversation. The Bible is the primary way God speaks to us, and prayer is the way we speak to God.
- ▶ Worship is the way we celebrate who God is and express our love and appreciation to Him. Worship is for God.
- ▶ When we keep a journal, we keep a written record of our history with God. This practice will help God's truth go deeper into our lives and encourage us when we go through difficult times.

### Next Steps:

- ▶ Commit to a time each day to spend with God. Make a daily appointment with God and do your best to keep it. Incorporate the four elements of a devotional life into this time.
- ▶ Participate in worship at church this weekend. Celebrate God as you sing to Him. Let Him know how much you love and appreciate Him.
- ▶ Start a journal. Begin to record your personal history with God.

"The Lord is near to all who call on him,  
to all who call on him in truth."  
Psalm 145:18