

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

John 15:5, NIV

  
grow  
deeper  
in Christ

## Praying Scripture...

PRAYING SCRIPTURE is a practice used by the early church and for Christians ever since. The two methods described in this tool provide a means of allowing the Word of God to shape our actions and our lives.

“Praying Scripture allows God to direct the content of prayer. It opens the heart to praying particular prayers, psalms, teachings and hopes found in the Bible. It allows God to shape our prayer life through the words of Scripture.”<sup>1</sup>

### Lectio Divina (Holy Reading)

This Scripture praying method has been used by Christians for many, many years. It is sometimes called “lectio divina” or “holy reading.”

1) *Select a short passage of scripture.* The Psalms are a great place to begin.

2) *Be purposeful.* Sit comfortably, breathe deeply, relax body, acknowledge and release distractions. Invite God’s presence.

3) *Read the passage (1 or 2 times).* Stop when a word or phrase stops you, becomes vibrant or attracts you. Is there a word or image that impresses you? Bring your senses to the text. Allow for 1-2 minutes of silence.

4) *Read the passage again.* Listen to discover how this passage touches your life today. What does it mean? What is God trying to say? Do not try to force a meaning. Stay open. This is a time of reflection, involving thinking, feeling, and/or intuition. Allow for 1-2 minutes of silence, creating openness to the Spirit.

5) *Read the passage once more.* Listen to discover the invitation. What is God calling me to do or be today or this week? Be aware of resistance. Open your heart and will to the action that may be called for. Allow for 2-3 minutes of silence and response to God.

6) *Share and pray.* Take time to express what you have heard from God. If alone, journal impressions, or

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words, or a prayer that expresses your response to God. In a group, share aloud the word, image, or invitation received.

For further practice, see the resource “Dwell in the Word” at [www.churchinnovations.org](http://www.churchinnovations.org).

### Imagination in Prayer

Another way to pray Scripture is to use your imagination to place yourself within the text. This is easiest to do when reading a story or narrative text. For example, as you read the story of Jesus healing two blind men, through your imagination, become one of those men.

1) Read Matthew 20:29-34. As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!” The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!” Jesus stopped and

called them. “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked. “Lord,” they answered, “we want our sight.” Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

2) Enter the story, using your imagination. After you’ve read the story to become familiar with the scene, close your eyes and imagine that you are one of those men who is crying out to Jesus. See Jesus, in your mind’s eye, coming toward you. He asks you...“What do you want me to do for you?”

3) What is your response? Imagine what Jesus does next. What does he say to you?

“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”  
—2 Peter 3:18

### Endnotes

1. Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us* (Intervarsity Press, 2005).



This Growing Deeper practice is part of a series. To learn more about these resources, or to download this and other practices, visit [CovChurch.org](http://CovChurch.org). To order copies of the Growing Deeper Practices, visit [CovBooks.com](http://CovBooks.com).

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