

A vertical sword with a glowing blade rises from an open book at the bottom. The sword has a decorative hilt and a crossguard. The background is a dark blue gradient with a subtle diamond pattern.

# **Jump Start Your Devotional Life**

**WYC 2010**


# Read Your Bible Pray Every Day?

- “I just don’t seem to get much out of my devotional time.”
- “I keep promising to get up earlier, but it doesn’t happen.”
- “I do well for a few days, and then I slip back into a few rushed minutes before I get out the door.”



**Is a devotional life  
important?**



A glowing sword of light rises from an open Bible. The sword has a golden hilt with a circular emblem at the top and a long, bright blade that glows with a white light. The background is a dark blue gradient with some light rays emanating from behind the sword. The Bible is open at the bottom, showing text on the pages.

# Guard Jealously Your Time with God

“Guard jealously your hours for prayer, Bible study, and self-examination. Set aside a portion of each day for a study of the Scriptures and communion with God. Thus you will obtain spiritual strength, and will grow in favor with God.”

--Gospel Workers, page 100.



# The Abiding Life

“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”

John 15:5

This was Jesus' own example!

A glowing sword with a golden hilt and a dark blade, rising from an open book. The sword is surrounded by a bright, ethereal light that fades into the background. The book is open, showing text on its pages. The background is a dark blue gradient.

# Why is our devotional life broken?

- We have the wrong **motivation**
- We use ineffective **methods**

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# The Right Reasons

1. The goal of a devotional life is an unbroken intimacy with God
2. Intimacy is a result of love, not fear or guilt.
3. Intimacy must be protected from the cares of life. Watch for spiritual snickers bars!
4. Intimacy grows when the best time, energy and gifts are invested.

A glowing sword of light rises from an open book. The sword has a golden hilt with a circular emblem at the top and a dark, textured blade that glows with a bright light. The background is a soft, blue, ethereal glow. The book is open, showing text on the pages, and is positioned at the bottom of the frame.

# Why have devotions?

- Many of us see devotions as a duty, rather than what it should be **devotion!**
- You can't force yourself to do devotions!
- Devotion should spring from an attitude of love and desire for worship

A glowing sword of truth rises from an open book. The sword has a golden hilt with a circular emblem at the top and a silver blade that glows with a bright light. The background is a dark blue gradient with a lighter blue glow around the sword. The open book at the bottom is red with white text on the pages.

# How to start right

- Begin with prayer, “Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first business.”
- To consecrate means to set aside for a sacred purpose.
- Music may provide a necessary transition from the rushing thoughts of your life.

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# How to start right

- “You shall seek me and find me when you seek for me with all your heart.” Jer. 29:13
- Heart attitudes:
  - A heart of surrender
  - A heart of praise
  - A heart seeking God

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# How to start right

- What are you hoping to get out of it?
  - A feeling of intimacy
  - New exciting truths
  - A sense of accomplishment
  - An assurance of salvation
  - All of these are selfish
- Our motivation should be God's glory revealed in our lives

# Bereans: Good Bible Students



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“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”  
Acts 17:11



# What we learn from the Bereans:



# What we learn from the Bereans:

- Attitude: Readiness of mind



# What we learn from the Bereans:

- Attitude: Readiness of mind
- Tools: Ability to search the Scriptures



# What we learn from the Bereans:

- Attitude: Readiness of mind
- Tools: Ability to search the Scriptures
- Habit: Daily study



# What we learn from the Bereans:

- Attitude: Readiness of mind
- Tools: Ability to search the Scriptures
- Habit: Daily study
- Purpose: Truth-seeking



# Paradigm Shift

- Current Paradigm: casual, hasty and superficial reading
- New Paradigm: In-depth, spiritual study that becomes ingrained in our daily practice



# Hasty, Superficial Reading

“With the immense tide of printed matter constantly pouring from the press, old and young form the habit of reading hastily and superficially, and the mind loses its power of connected and vigorous thought.” (AH 415)



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# Hasty, Superficial Reading

Even fiction which contains no suggestion of impurity, and which may be intended to teach excellent principles, is harmful. It encourages the habit of hasty and superficial reading, merely for the story. Thus it tends to destroy the power of connected and vigorous thought; it unfits the soul to contemplate the great problems of duty and destiny. (CT 383)

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# True Bible Study

“Some portions of Scripture are indeed too plain to be misunderstood; but there are others whose meaning does not lie on the surface, to be seen at a glance. Scripture must be compared with scripture. There must be careful research and prayerful reflection.” Christian Education, p. 58

A glowing sword of truth emerging from an open Bible. The sword has a golden hilt with a circular emblem at the top and a long, dark blade that glows with a bright light. The hilt is ornate with a cross-shaped guard. The blade is positioned vertically, with its tip resting on the pages of an open Bible at the bottom. The background is a dark blue gradient with a subtle light effect around the sword.

# True Bible Study

“But there is but little benefit derived from a hasty reading of the Scriptures.... One passage studied until its significance is clear to the mind and its relation to the plan of salvation is evident, is of more value than the perusal of many chapters with no definite purpose in view and no positive instruction gained.” Steps to Christ, p. 90

# Do We Know How to Pray?

- Prayer tends to be:
  - Superficial
  - Selfish
  - Ritualistic
  - Rushed
  - A one-way demand list done out of a sense of duty



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# Do we need to pray?

- Prayer is the breath of the soul. It is the **secret of spiritual power.**
  - Gospel Workers, 254.
- Jesus prayed, he taught his disciples to pray and he commanded us to pray

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# Effective Prayer

- Is a communion with God – speaking to Him like a friend
- Know to share deeply from the heart, while listening intently to the Spirit
- Allows God to change us so that we have His heart and obey His Word



**How do we get into a  
regular devotional  
habit?**

# Select A Specific Time

- Morning or Evening?
- Whatever time you set, stick to it!
- Quality is better than quantity



# Choose A Special Place

- One that has meaning for you
- One where you can eliminate distractions



# Follow a Simple Plan

- **Pause**
- **Read**
- **Reflect**
- **Apply**
- **Pray**



A glowing sword of truth, with a golden hilt and a bright, luminous blade, rises from an open book. The background is a dark blue gradient with light rays emanating from behind the sword. The sword's blade is the central focus, extending from the top of the frame down to the pages of the book at the bottom. The hilt is ornate, featuring a circular pommel with a cross-like design. The book is open, showing two pages of text, and is positioned at the base of the sword. The overall scene is set against a dark blue background with light rays emanating from behind the sword, creating a dramatic and spiritual atmosphere.


# Activity

- Pause (Invite the Holy Spirit)
- Read (a passage of your choice)
- Reflect (on what it means)
- Apply (what will you do?)
- Pray (turn your thoughts into a prayer – write it down)

# How to Overcome Problems with Your Quiet Time

- Discipline
- Distractions
- Dryness
- Diligence



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# The Problem of Discipline

- Go to bed **early!**
- Pray for God to **wake you up**
- Have a prayer partner **call you**
- Fall asleep thinking of **your morning devotions**
- Get up **immediately!**

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# Psalm 5:1-3

**“Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation. Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto Thee will I pray. My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up.”**



# The Problem of Distractions

- Get out of bed
- Open your eyes during prayer time
- Keep a prayer diary
- Pray about the very thing that distracts you
- Protect your devotional time
- “If the mind wanders, we must bring it back; by persevering effort, habit will finally make it easy.”

MYP, page 115

# Causes of Dryness

- Your physical condition
- Disobedience to God
- Rushing your quiet time
- Getting in a rut
- Not sharing insights with others



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# Staying Diligent

- Make a covenant or vow to God (and make this realistic)
- Schedule it on your daily calendar
- Be prepared to face Satan's excuses
- Leave your Bible open at night to the passage for the next day!

# The Don'ts

- Don't get discouraged!
- Don't put away your Bible!
- Don't give up!



# Forming A Habit

- It takes two weeks to become familiar with a task
- It takes six weeks before it becomes a comfortable habit





# CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

# Meditation

- Meditation is focusing on God, His Works and His Word.
- Meditation involves both emptying and filling



# Meditation Texts

- Genesis 24:63
- Psalm 119:148
- Psalm 63:6
- Joshua 1:8
- Matthew 14:13



# How Should We Meditate

- Set aside time for meditation.
- Find a quiet place where you won't be interrupted.
- Turn off all communication such as cell phones, computers, etc.
- Focus your mind on Scripture



# Exercise for Meditation

- Focus on God's presence
- What is going on in your heart? Write your thoughts down.
- Is there a verse that God is bringing to your mind?
- Rest in God's promise to deal with your situation
- Write your thoughts down as a prayer



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# ACTIVITY

- Read one Scripture verse repeatedly
- What is it saying?
- What lies “beneath the surface?”
- Turn it into a prayer – say the words until they sink into your soul

# Surrender Meditation

- What stands in the way of my fully following God?
- What must I give up?
- Keep going deeper – repeat your surrender until you feel that it no longer has a hold on you
- Then ask for God's peace

