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How to Study the Bible and Empower Your Devotional Life
IMPACT Denmark 2015



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An Audience with the Infinite One

“The Bible is God’s voice speaking to us, just as surely as though we could hear it with our ears. If we realized this, with what awe would we open God’s Word, and with what earnestness would we search its precepts! The reading and contemplation of the Scriptures would be regarded as an **audience with the Infinite One**”

Testimonies to the Church, vol. 6, p. 393

At the Father's Feet

Luke 2:49 – “about my Father’s business”

“In childhood, youth, and manhood, Jesus studied the Scriptures. As a little child He was daily at His mother’s knee taught from the scrolls of the prophets. In His youth the **early morning and the evening twilight often found Him alone on the mountainside or among the trees of the forest, spending a quiet hour in prayer and the study of God’s word.** During His ministry His intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures testifies to His diligence in their study. And since **He gained knowledge as we may gain it,** His wonderful power, both mental and spiritual, is a testimony to the value of the Bible as a means of education. Education, p. 185

12 Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, *whether* the tender grape appear, *and* the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves.

13 The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates *are* all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, *which* I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.

CHAPTER VIII.

1 *The love of the church to Christ.* 6 *The vehemency of love.* 8 *The calling of the Gentiles.* 14 *The church prayeth for Christ's coming.*

O THAT thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! *when* I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised.

2 I would lead thee, *and* bring thee into my mother's house, *who* would instruct me: I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate.

3 His left hand *should be* under my head, and his right hand should embrace me.

4 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until he please.

5 Who *is* this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth: there she brought thee forth *that* bare thee.

6 ¶ Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love *is* strong as death; jealousy *is* cruel as the grave: the coals thereof *are* coals of fire, *which hath* a most vehement flame.

7 Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.

8 ¶ We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?

9 If she *be* a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver: and if she *be* a door, we will inclose her with boards of cedar.

10 I *am* a wall, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found favour.

11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand *pieces* of silver.

12 My vineyard, which *is* mine, *is* before me: thou, O Solomon, *must have* a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.

13 Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear *it*.

14 ¶ Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

CHAPTER I.

1 *Isaiah complaineth of Judah for her rebellion.* 5 *He lamenteth her judgments.* 10 *He upbraideth their whole service.* 16 *He exhorteth to repentance, with promises and threatenings.* 21 *Bewailing their wickedness, he denounceth God's judgments.* 25 *He promiseth grace, 28 and threateneth destruction to the wicked.*

THE vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: *but* Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

5 ¶ Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head *there is* no soundness in it; *but* wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

7 Your country *is* desolate, your cities *are* burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and *it is* desolate, as overthrown by strangers.

8 And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

9 Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, *and* we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

10 ¶ Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.

11 To what purpose *is* the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and

Photo: Billy Alexander



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Power in the Word!

“In every command and in every promise of the word of God is the power, the very life of God, by which the command may be fulfilled and the promise realized. He who by faith receives the word is receiving the very life and character of God.

{COL 38.1}

We can claim God's Word!

Love to study the Word

“It may be **difficult** for you to love to study the word of God at once, when you have not been in the habit of studying it, but **God will help you. Pray for his forgiveness** for neglecting his holy word so long, and then beg of the Lord to give you love and interest in his word, be in earnest in the matter. When I lose my love for the Bible I am alarmed. **I know that I do not love Jesus if I do not love to search the Book that testifies of him.**”

{YI, June 1, 1856 par. 9}

7 Steps to Empower Your Bible Study

1. Organize and Prioritize

- Choose a time.
- Get focused.
 - Pray (Prayer list).
 - Organize your day.
 - Get some fresh air.
 - Go for a walk.
 - Take a shower.
- Choose a place. (Matthew 6:6)
- Make a plan.

1. Organize and Prioritize

How often should I study?

“They received the word with all readiness, and **searched the Scriptures daily** to find out whether these things were so”

Acts 17:11

“For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet **the inward man is renewed day by day.**”

2 Corinthians 4:16

Exodus 16:21 – When did they gather Manna?

What about Jesus? (Mark 1:35)

“He who runs from God
in the morning will
scarcely find Him
the rest of the day.”

— John Bunyan



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2. Surrender

“**Never** should the Bible be studied **without prayer**.
Before opening its pages we should ask for the
enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and it will be given.”
Steps to Christ p. 91

2 Corinthians 2:13-14 – Understanding spiritual things.

“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.
Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts,
ye double minded.”

James 4:8

2. Surrender

“Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, “Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee.” This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. **Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate.** Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ.”

{SC 70.1}

2. Surrender

Surrender what?

1. Surrender your life.
2. Surrender your plans.
3. Ask God to use you in His service.
4. Ask God to let all your work be done through Him.

How often?

What is the result?

“Your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ”

3. Dig Deep

“In daily study the verse-by-verse method is often most helpful. Let the student take one verse, and concentrate the mind on ascertaining the thought that God has put into that verse for him, and then dwell upon the thought until it becomes his own. **One passage thus studied until its significance is clear is of more value than the perusal of many chapters with no definite purpose in view and no positive instruction gained**”

Education, p. 189

3. Dig Deep

Ask questions as you are studying:
Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

Three phases of studying:

1. Observation

What does the text say?

2. Interpretation

What does it mean?

3. Application

How does this apply to my life?

3. Dig Deep

Two other methods:

- Topical Study
- Word Study



Photo: Marcel Hol

3. Dig Deep

“It is essential for old and young, **not only to read God's word, but to study** it with wholehearted earnestness, **praying and searching for truth as for hidden treasure**. Those who do this will be rewarded, for Christ will quicken the understanding. {COL 111.2}

3. Dig Deep

“Many, even in their seasons of devotion, fail of receiving the blessing of real communion with God. They are in too great haste. With hurried steps they press through the circle of Christ’s loving presence, pausing perhaps a moment within the sacred precincts, but not waiting for counsel. They have no time to remain with the divine Teacher. With their burdens they return to their work. These workers can never attain the highest success until they learn the secret of strength. They must give themselves time to think, to pray, to wait upon God for a renewal of physical, mental, and spiritual power. . . . Not a pause for a moment in His presence, but personal contact with Christ, to sit down in companionship with Him—this is our need”

Education, pp. 260, 261

3. Dig Deep

- Notice every word
- Re-read the content
- Compare with different translations
- Look up the original word.
- Don't expect to understand the Bible all at once.

A treasure in the field – Matthew 13:44

“The field containing the treasure represents the word of God. As the treasure was found in this field, so by earnest searching, treasure is found in the Scriptures. The Bible is God's great lesson book, his great educator. All true science is contained in the Bible. Every branch of knowledge may be found by searching the word of God. But few are true Bible students. Few understand that it contains instruction not only in spiritual matters, but in all branches of knowledge.

{RH, July 3, 1900}

3. Dig Deep

What is the treasure?

“the gospel is the treasure. {COL 104.2}

“As the miner discovers veins of precious metal concealed beneath the surface of the earth, so will he who perseveringly **searches the Word of God as for hid treasure find truths of the greatest value**, which are concealed from the view of the careless seeker”

Steps to Christ, p. 90



3. Dig Deep

- Ask questions as you study!
- Put yourself into the stories
- Notice Bible symbolism
- Memorize the Scripture

Did Jesus memorize God's Word?

“Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin
against thee”

Ps. 119:11

- Pray God's Word





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4. Useful Study Tools

- Dictionary
 - Strongs (Hebrew and Greek)
- Commentaries
 - Spirit of Prophecy
 - Bible References
 - Online Resources
 - www.bibletools.info
 - www.blueletterbible.org
 - Google
 - AmazingFacts.org (Studyguides, booklets, etc.)
 - Softwares
 - Journaling

5. Apply

Ezra's 4 Steps to Empower Your Spiritual Life

“For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.” (Ezra 7:10)

1. Prepare through prayer.
2. Seek God through His Word.
3. Practically apply it.
4. Teach it – Witness.

“Spiritual growth depends upon giving to others the light that God has given to you. - OFC 219

5. Apply

"The more one tries to explain the Word of God to others, with a love for souls, the plainer it becomes to himself" (Reflecting Christ, p. 156)



6. Study Something Relevant

Daniel's example, in Daniel 9.

What is relevant for you?

1. Write a list of things in your life.
2. Key words to what you are dealing with.
3. Prioritize.
4. Organize.
5. Choose the right literature in the Bible.

7. Make it Christ Centered

1 Corinthians 2:2: "For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

"The central theme of the Bible, the theme about which every other in the whole book clusters, is **the redemption plan, the restoration in the human soul of the image of God**. From the first intimation of hope in the sentence pronounced in Eden to that last glorious promise of the Revelation, "They shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads" (Revelation 22:4)... ...the burden of **every book and every passage** of the Bible is the unfolding of this wondrous theme,--man's uplifting,--the power of God, "which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:57. He who grasps this thought has before him an infinite field for study. He has **the key that will unlock to him the whole treasure house of God's word.**"

Education p. 125-126

7. Make it Christ Centered

- The Second Man
 - Adam
 - Abel
 - David

“What can I learn about God?”

“The main thing is to keep the
main thing the main thing”

Empower Your Prayer Life

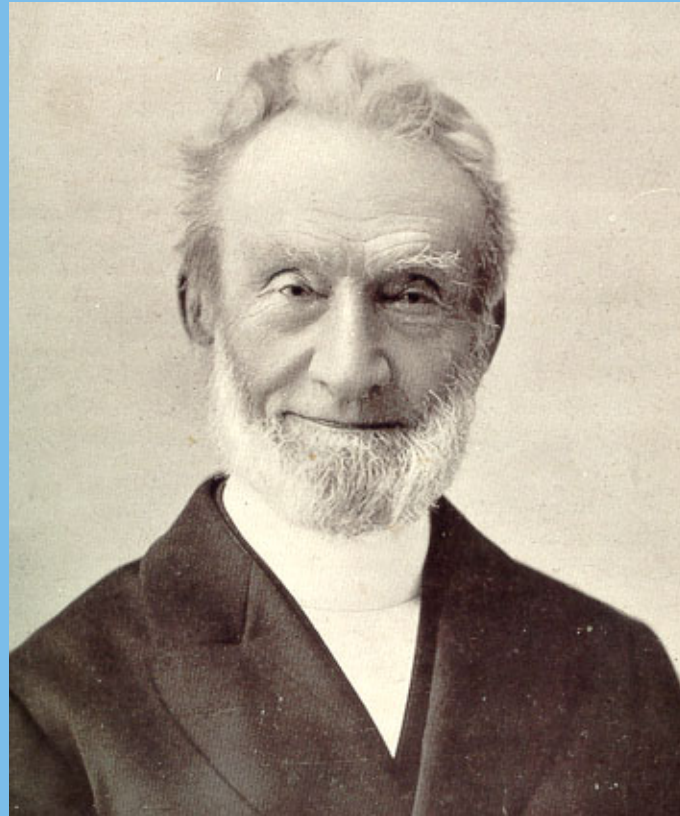
“Prayer is the breath of the soul...”



Empower Your Prayer Life

“Prayer is the breath of the soul. It is the secret of spiritual power. No other means of grace can be substituted and the health of the soul be preserved. Prayer brings the heart into immediate contact with the Wellspring of life, and strengthens the sinew and muscle of the religious experience. Neglect the exercise of prayer, or engage in prayer spasmodically, now and then, as seems convenient, and you lose your hold on God. {MYP 249.3}

Empower Your Prayer Life



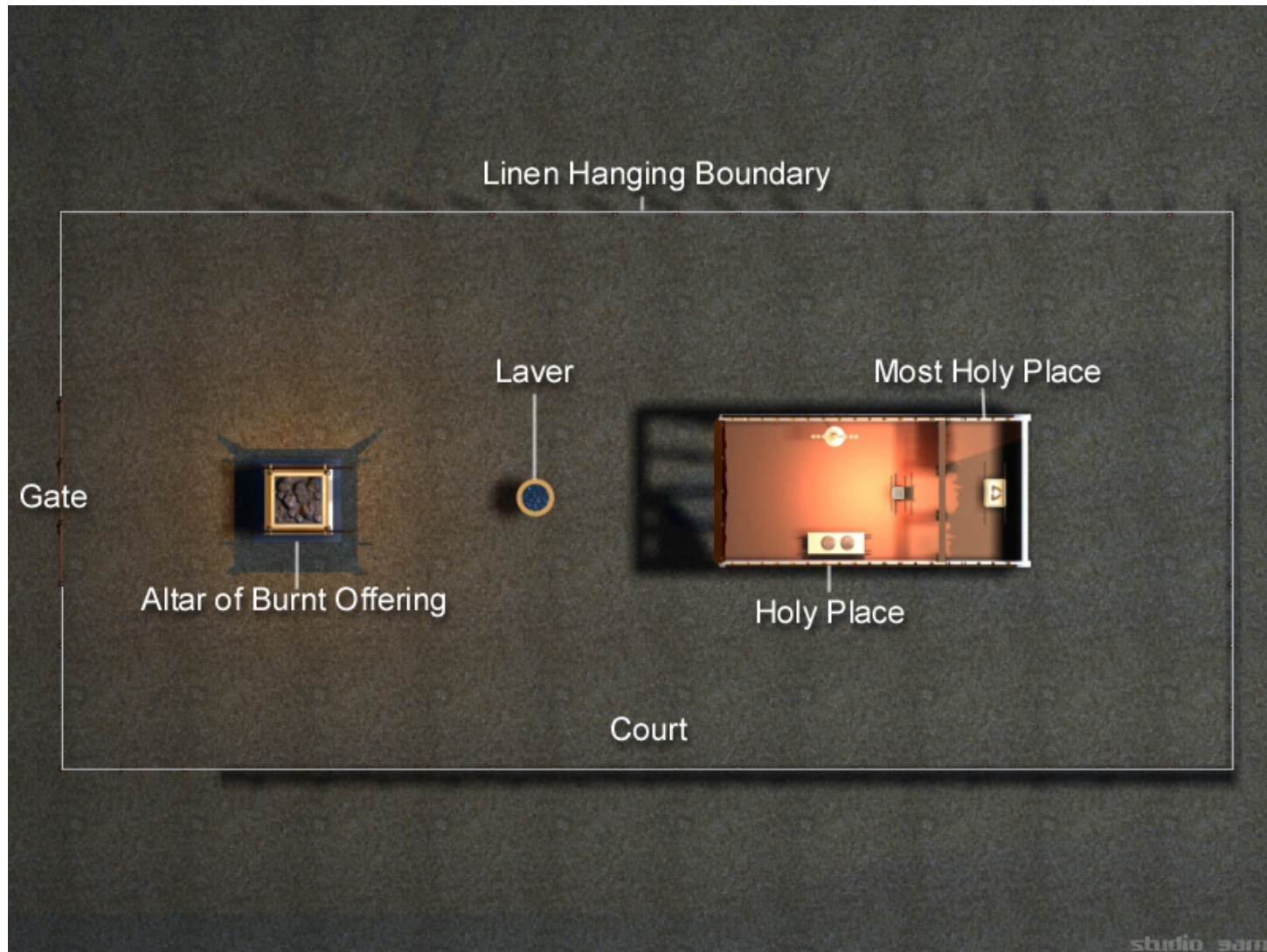
How Shall We Pray?

1. Adoration
2. Confession
3. Thanksgiving
4. Supplication

“The Lord's Prayer was not intended to be repeated merely as a form, but it is **an illustration of what our prayers should be--** simple, earnest, and comprehensive.” {CG 524.2}

Psalms 77:13: “Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary...”

The Sanctuary Model



The Sanctuary Model



How to have more power in your prayers

“We are too sparing of giving thanks. If the loving-kindness of God called forth more thanksgiving and praise, we would have far more power in prayer. We would abound more and more in the love of God and have more bestowed to praise Him for. You who complain that God does not hear your prayers, change your present order and mingle praise with your petitions. When you consider His goodness and mercies you will find that He will consider your wants.” Testimonies to the Church, vol. 5, p. 317

How to have more power in your prayers

Adoration
Confession
Thanksgiving
Supplication

The result of a prayer with these 4 ingredients?

- 1.The Self will cease.
- 2.The Holy Spirit may dwell in us.
- 3.We will be more thankful and praise God more.
- 4.There would be far more power in prayer.
- 5.We will get a love for souls, and lead them to Christ.

How to have more power in your prayers

"Pray till prayer makes you forget your own wishes and leaves or merges them into God's will. The divine wisdom has given us prayer, not as a means to obtain the good things of earth, but as a means whereby we learn to do without them, not as a means to escape evil, but as a means whereby we become strong to meet it."

- A statement found in Ellen White's Bible, in her own handwriting

- Keep a prayer journal
 - Prayer list
 - Praise and thanksgiving
 - Petitions and answers

How long should I pray and study in my devotions?

Devotion Empowers

God's MMS in His Word:

- Messiah
- Me
- Salvation

“From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus”

2 Tim. 3:15

“Search, O search the precious Bible with hungry hearts. Explore God’s Word as the miner explores the earth to find veins of gold. Never give up the search until you have ascertained your relation to God and His will in regard to you”

Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 111



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Devotion Empowers

3 steps to Empowered Living

1. Empowered by Prayer
2. Empowered by God's Word
3. Empowered by Testifying

