



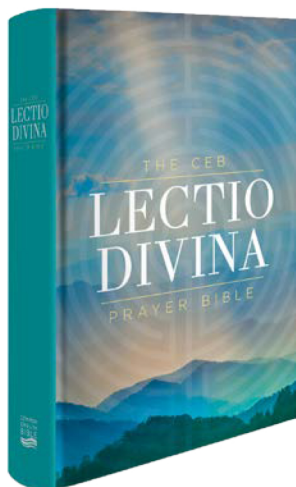
THE CEB

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# LECTIO DIVINA

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PRAYER BIBLE



# Be guided through a lifelong practice of fulfilling prayer with The CEB Lectio Divina Prayer Bible.

Reflective reading of the Scriptures to lead us into prayer has been a practice in the church since the earliest centuries. The method of *Lectio Divina*, or “Divine Reading,” is a systematic reading of each section of a book with pauses for reflection and prayer.

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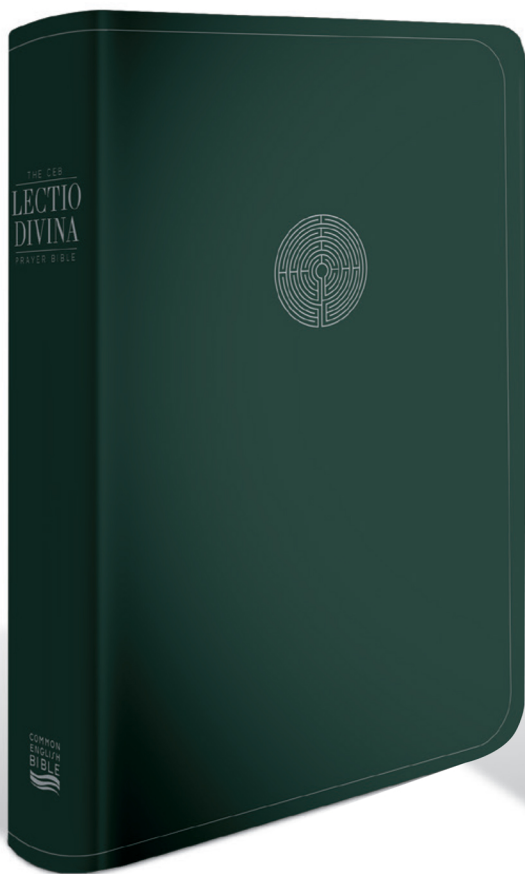
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- Questions for guiding a time of reflection and meaning of the text,
- A prayer,
- Suggestions for putting your new insights into action.

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#### HARDBACK

**Release:** October 16, 2018 **Price:** \$31.99

Hardback **ISBN:** 9781609262174

**Size:** 6.1875 x 9.1875 **Pages:** 1600

**BISAC:** BIBLES / COMMON ENGLISH BIBLE /  
DEVOTIONAL



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Hardcover ISBN 9781609262174

Bonded Leather ISBN 9781609262181

### **Lectio Divina guides and commentary**

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# HOW TO PRACTICE *LECTIO DIVINA*

LAWRENCE BOADT, CSP

Reflective reading of the Bible to lead us into prayer has been a practice in the church from the earliest centuries. It can take many forms, from singing the Psalms as a community, to reciting the Lord's Prayer, to a systematic reading of each section of a book with pauses for reflection and prayer. This last method is often called *lectio divina*, from the Latin for "divine reading." Spiritual writers describe it in a variety of ways, but all agree that it has a definite pattern to it. That pattern is described here briefly as four steps:

1. a slow and thoughtful reading of a passage from the Bible
2. a time of reflection and thinking about the meaning of that text to me as a reader
3. a period of prayer to God to bring its message or wisdom to fruit in myself
4. a decision on what I should do in my own life as a result—that is, an action plan or decision to change or improve

*Lectio divina* is simple to do. It can be done in any place where there is some quiet or peace. It can be done at any time of day when one can find a few minutes. It can be as long or short as you wish to make it. And it has no difficult demands only for the elite; anyone can find pleasure and spiritual enrichment in it. The only real requirement is to concentrate on what you are doing through each of the four steps so that you are not distracted and forget where you are. You could give three minutes to the process or fifteen, but it is important to hold the four steps together so that the reading actually turns to prayer.

The short thoughts provided in this Bible for each step of each meditation are not intended to be the only way you can reflect on that passage. The "Read" step gives a very brief description of what the biblical passage meant when written, but clearly there is more to be found in the text than this very short thought. The one insight invites the reader to seek others. The "Reflect" step draws out some implication from the situation described in the reading, but again there are certainly many more you might see and meditate on. The third step, "Pray," suggests only one or two possible ways to begin a prayer, and the reader hopefully will add many more! The final step, "Act," as with the other steps, is a typical resolve, and each of us will surely have our own that applies to our individual life. The meditations as a whole are intended to stimulate us to discover our own way of praying and speaking with God, especially when the ordinary words of fixed prayers are no longer enough.

This is an introduction to what should hopefully become a lifelong source of fulfilling prayer. After all, what better way to converse with God than sharing together the very words that our divine Friend inspired?



# GENESIS

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## Read Genesis 1:1-19

Note the order of creation. Each day follows carefully upon what happened the day before, according to the divine plan that builds toward the unity and harmony of everything that exists. Creation begins significantly with God's word, and the first thing created is light. By these we can see and know all of creation.

**Reflect:** Do I have a real awe and wonder at God's goodness and beauty? Do I give thanks always for the God who always guides everything in the world?

**Pray:** I ask to find God everywhere in the world around me and pray for deeper reverence for all created things.

**Act:** I will treat each person I meet and each thing I touch as though it were the direct image of the goodness and love of God.

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### *WORLD'S CREATION IN SEVEN DAYS*

**1** When God began to create<sup>a</sup> the heavens and the earth—<sup>2</sup>the earth was without shape or form, it was dark over the deep sea, and God's wind swept over the waters—<sup>3</sup>God said, "Let there be light." And so light appeared. <sup>4</sup>God saw how good the light was. God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God named the light Day and the darkness Night.

There was evening and there was morning: the first day.

<sup>6</sup>God said, "Let there be a dome in the middle of the waters to separate the waters from each other." <sup>7</sup>God made the dome and separated the waters under the dome from the waters above the dome. And it happened in that way. <sup>8</sup>God named the dome Sky.

There was evening and there was morning: the second day.

<sup>9</sup>God said, "Let the waters under the sky come together into one place so that the dry land can appear." And that's what happened. <sup>10</sup>God named the dry land Earth, and he named the gathered waters Seas. God saw how good it was. <sup>11</sup>God said, "Let the earth grow plant life: plants yielding seeds and fruit trees bearing fruit with seeds inside it, each according to its kind throughout the earth." And that's what happened. <sup>12</sup>The earth produced plant life: plants yielding seeds, each according to its kind, and trees bearing fruit with seeds inside it, each according to its kind. God saw how good it was.

<sup>13</sup>There was evening and there was morning: the third day.

<sup>14</sup>God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will mark events, sacred seasons, days, and years. <sup>15</sup>They will be lights in the dome of the sky to shine on the earth." And that's what happened. <sup>16</sup>God made the stars and two great lights: the larger light to rule over the day and the smaller light to rule over the night. <sup>17</sup>God put them in the dome of the sky to shine on the earth, <sup>18</sup>to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. God saw how good it was.

<sup>19</sup>There was evening and there was morning: the fourth day.



<sup>a</sup>Or *In the beginning, God created*

## Read Psalm 104

This magnificent hymn of praise for the creator passes meditatively from one element of creation to another, marveling upon each as a reflection of the goodness and power of the one who made them all. The need for food and breath that all creatures have in common shows their constant dependence on their creator. God continues the work of creation.

**Reflect:** Before my eyes at this very moment are still more things flowing directly from the loving hand of God. Am I attentive like the psalmist in seeing God's work behind them?

**Pray:** The universe itself is the greatest work of art, and its creator is still at work. Bless the Lord, my soul!

**Act:** As the psalmist has focused on creatures one by one, praising God's goodness revealed in them, I will continue the list and renew the praise.

## Psalm 104

- <sup>1</sup> Let my whole being<sup>m</sup> bless the LORD!  
LORD my God, how fantastic you are!  
You are clothed in glory and grandeur!
- <sup>2</sup> You wear light like a robe;  
you open the skies like a curtain.
- <sup>3</sup> You build your lofty house on the waters;  
you make the clouds your chariot,  
going around on the wings of the wind.
- <sup>4</sup> You make the winds your messengers;  
you make fire and flame your ministers.
- <sup>5</sup> You established the earth on its foundations  
so that it will never ever fall.
- <sup>6</sup> You covered it with the watery deep like a piece of clothing;  
the waters were higher than the mountains!
- <sup>7</sup> But at your rebuke they ran away;  
they fled in fear at the sound of your thunder.
- <sup>8</sup> They flowed over the mountains, streaming down the valleys  
to the place you established for them.
- <sup>9</sup> You set a boundary they cannot cross  
so they'll never again cover the earth.
- <sup>10</sup> You put gushing springs into dry riverbeds.  
They flow between the mountains,
- <sup>11</sup> providing water for every wild animal—  
the wild donkeys quench their thirst.
- <sup>12</sup> Overhead, the birds in the sky make their home,  
chirping loudly in the trees.
- <sup>13</sup> From your lofty house, you water the mountains.  
The earth is filled full by the fruit of what you've done.
- <sup>14</sup> You make grass grow for cattle;  
you make plants for human farming  
in order to get food from the ground,
- <sup>15</sup> and wine, which cheers people's hearts,  
along with oil, which makes the face shine,  
and bread, which sustains the human heart.
- <sup>16</sup> The LORD's trees are well watered—  
the cedars of Lebanon, which God planted,



<sup>m</sup>Or *soul*; also in 104:35

- <sup>17</sup> where the birds make their nests,  
where the stork has a home in the cypresses.
- <sup>18</sup> The high mountains belong to the mountain goats;  
the ridges are the refuge of badgers.
- <sup>19</sup> God made the moon for the seasons,  
and the sun too, which knows when to set.
- <sup>20</sup> You bring on the darkness and it is night,  
when every forest animal prowls.
- <sup>21</sup> The young lions roar for their prey,  
seeking their food from God.
- <sup>22</sup> When the sun rises, they gather together  
and lie down in their dens.
- <sup>23</sup> Then people go off to their work,  
to do their work until evening.
- <sup>24</sup> LORD, you have done so many things!  
You made them all so wisely!  
The earth is full of your creations!
- <sup>25</sup> And then there's the sea, wide and deep,  
with its countless creatures—  
living things both small and large.
- <sup>26</sup> There go the ships on it,  
and Leviathan, which you made, plays in it!
- <sup>27</sup> All your creations wait for you  
to give them their food on time.
- <sup>28</sup> When you give it to them, they gather it up;  
when you open your hand, they are filled completely full!
- <sup>29</sup> But when you hide your face, they are terrified;  
when you take away their breath,  
they die and return to dust.
- <sup>30</sup> When you let loose your breath, they are created,  
and you make the surface of the ground brand-new again.
- <sup>31</sup> Let the LORD's glory last forever!  
Let the LORD rejoice in all he has made!
- <sup>32</sup> He has only to look at the earth, and it shakes.  
God just touches the mountains, and they erupt in smoke.
- <sup>33</sup> I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;  
I will sing praises to my God while I'm still alive.
- <sup>34</sup> Let my praise be pleasing to him;  
I'm rejoicing in the LORD!
- <sup>35</sup> Let sinners be wiped clean from the earth;  
let the wicked be no more.  
But let my whole being bless the LORD!  
Praise the LORD!

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## Read Psalm 105

This hymn of praise is structured as a résumé of God's faithful fulfillment of promises to Abraham, extending throughout the time of the sojourn in Egypt and the exodus. We are invited to give thanks and glorify God's name.

**Reflect:** In the story of God's people in the Pentateuch, how many times is their situation far more precarious than mine, even in those moments when I am tempted most strongly to doubt?



- פ<sup>19</sup> I called to my lovers, but they deceived me.  
My priests and my elders have perished in the city;  
they were looking for food to survive.
- ז<sup>20</sup> Pay attention, LORD, for I am in trouble. My stomach is churning;  
my heart is pounding inside me because I am so bitter.  
In the streets the sword kills; in the house it is like death.
- ש<sup>21</sup> People heard that I was groaning, that I had no comforter.  
All my enemies heard about my distress;  
they were thrilled that you had done this.  
Bring the day you have announced so they become like me!
- נ<sup>22</sup> Let all their evil come before you.  
Then injure them like you've injured me because of all my wrong acts;  
my groans are many, my heart is sick.

## Read Lamentations 2

The second lamentation spells out in detail the suffering Jerusalem and the country have endured. Feast and Sabbath are forgotten; altar and sanctuary are disowned; the wall of Zion is marked for destruction. Passersby whistle mockingly and shake their heads. The young and old have fallen in the streets. The cry to the Lord is stark: "LORD, look and see to whom you have done this!"

**Reflect:** Desolation comes today in many forms from many quarters. If destruction comes as punishment for sin, it is hard to see it as a direct and just reaction. The poor, the old, and the newborn suffer just like—and sometimes worse than—the weapons dealers and loan sharks.

**Pray:** May there be a greater sense of civility in our society, a return to respect for human values. May our personal dealings be marked by justice and charity.

**Act:** I will make a personal act to amend for a single unkindness in my life.

## GOD'S ANGER TOWARD JERUSALEM

- 2 Oh, no!  
In anger, my Lord put Daughter Zion under a cloud;<sup>g</sup>
- ס he threw Israel's glory from heaven down to earth.  
On that day of wrath, he didn't consider his own footstool.
- ז<sup>2</sup> Showing no compassion, my Lord devoured each of Jacob's meadows;  
in his wrath he tore down the walled cities of Daughter Judah.  
The kingdom and its officials, he forced to the ground, shamed.
- ז<sup>3</sup> In his burning rage, he cut off each of Israel's horns;  
right in front of the enemy, he withdrew his strong hand;  
he burned against Jacob like a flaming fire that ate up everything nearby.
- ז<sup>4</sup> He bent his bow as an enemy would;  
his strong hand was poised like an adversary.  
He killed every precious thing in sight;  
he poured out his wrath like fire on Daughter Zion's tent.
- נ<sup>5</sup> My Lord has become like an enemy. He devoured Israel;  
he devoured all her palaces; he made ruins of her city walls.  
In Daughter Judah he multiplied mourning along with more mourning!

- 6 He wrecked his own booth like a garden; he destroyed his place for festivals.  
 The LORD made Zion forget both festival and sabbath;  
 in his fierce rage, he scorned both monarch and priest.
- 7 My Lord rejected his altar, he abandoned his sanctuary;  
 he handed Zion's palace walls over to enemies.  
 They shouted in the LORD's own house as if it were a festival day.
- 8 The LORD planned to destroy Daughter Zion's wall.  
 He stretched out a measuring line, didn't stop himself from devouring.  
 He made barricades and walls wither—together they wasted away.
- 9 Zion's gates sank into the ground; he broke and shattered her bars;  
 her king and her officials are now among the nations. There is no Instruction!<sup>h</sup>  
 Even her prophets couldn't find a vision from the LORD.
- 10 Daughter Zion's elders sit on the ground and mourn.  
 They throw dust on their heads; they put on mourning clothes.  
 Jerusalem's young women bow their heads all the way to the ground.
- 11 My eyes are worn out from weeping; my stomach is churning.  
 My insides are poured on the ground because the daughter of my people is shattered,  
 because children and babies are fainting in the city streets.
- 12 They say to their mothers, "Where are grain and wine?"  
 while fainting like the wounded in the city streets,  
 while their lives are draining away at their own mothers' breasts.
- 13 What can I testify about you, Daughter Jerusalem?<sup>i</sup> To what could I compare you?  
 With what could I equate you? How can I comfort you, young woman Daughter Zion?  
 Your hurt is as vast as the sea. Who can heal you?
- 14 Your prophets gave you worthless and empty visions.  
 They didn't reveal your sin so as to prevent your captivity.  
 Instead, they showed you worthless and incorrect prophecies.
- 15 All who pass by on the road clap their hands about you;  
 they whistle, shaking their heads at Daughter Jerusalem:  
 "Could this be the city called Perfect Beauty, the Joy of All the Earth?"
- 16 All your enemies open wide their mouths against you;  
 they whistle, grinding their teeth. They say, "We have devoured!  
 This is definitely the day we've been waiting for. We've seen it come to pass."
- 17 The LORD did what he had planned.  
 He accomplished the word that he had commanded long ago.  
 He ripped down, showing no compassion.  
 He made the enemy rejoice over you; he raised up your adversaries' horn.
- 18 Cry out to my Lord from the heart;<sup>j</sup> you wall of Daughter Zion;  
 make your<sup>k</sup> tears run down like a flood all day and night.  
 Don't relax at all; don't rest your eyes a moment.

<sup>h</sup>Heb Torah <sup>i</sup>Or How can I warn you? or To what could I liken you?; Heb uncertain <sup>j</sup>Correction; or their heart cried out to my Lord

<sup>k</sup>Heb lacks your.



- פ<sup>19</sup> Get up and cry out at nighttime, at the start of the night shift;  
 pour out your heart before my Lord like water.  
 Lift your hands up to him for the life of your children—  
 the ones who are fainting from hunger on every street corner.
- נ<sup>20</sup> LORD, look and see to whom you have done this!  
 Should women eat their own offspring, their own beautiful babies?  
 Should priest and prophet be killed in my Lord's own sanctuary?
- ו<sup>21</sup> Young and old alike lie on the ground in the streets;  
 my young women and young men fall dead by the sword.  
 On the day of your anger, you killed; you slaughtered, showing no compassion.
- ה<sup>22</sup> You invited—as if to a festival!—terrors<sup>1</sup> from every side.  
 On the day of the LORD's anger, no one escaped, not one survived.  
 The children that I nurtured, that I raised myself, my enemy finished them off.

### Read Lamentations 3

The prophet views his own suffering against the background of the suffering of the people. He has been left desolate, like the helpless prey of wild beasts. Yet his pain is compounded when he considers the sad lot of his people. His eyes are an endless flow of tears, so great is their punishment. Still the confidence of the prophet remains. God addresses him: "Do not fear." The enemy will be pursued and destroyed.

**Reflect:** Few of us have seen the real horrors of war. And, in the news of war, we hear far more about the number of our own dead than those of the opposition, military or civilian. Yet we all share a common humanity, and we suffer with those who suffer. Do we see our own suffering as part of that larger picture?

**Pray:** May we overcome the results of war—death, hunger, disease, and homelessness—and may the leaders of this world see the folly of war.

**Act:** Let us raise our voices as citizens to decry war in any form.

### AN INDIVIDUAL'S COMPLAINT

- 3 I am someone<sup>m</sup> who saw the suffering caused by God's<sup>n</sup> angry rod.  
<sup>2</sup> He drove me away, forced me to walk in darkness, not light.
- נ<sup>3</sup> He turned his hand even against me, over and over again, all day long.
- כ<sup>4</sup> He wore out my flesh and my skin; he broke my bones.  
<sup>5</sup> He besieged me, surrounding me with bitterness and weariness.  
<sup>6</sup> He made me live in dark places like those who've been dead a long time.
- ז<sup>7</sup> He walled me in so I couldn't escape; he made my chains heavy.  
<sup>8</sup> Even though I call out and cry for help, he silences my prayer.  
<sup>9</sup> He walled in my paths with stonework; he made my routes crooked.
- ח<sup>10</sup> He is a bear lurking for me, a lion in hiding.  
<sup>11</sup> He took me from my path<sup>o</sup> and tore me apart; he made me desolate.  
<sup>12</sup> He drew back his bow, made me a shooting target for arrows.
- ט<sup>13</sup> He shot the arrows of his quiver into my inside parts.  
<sup>14</sup> I have become a joke to all my people, the object of their song of ridicule all day long.  
<sup>15</sup> He saturated me with grief, made me choke on bitterness.

1Correction; or my attackers <sup>m</sup>Or the man; also in 3:27, 35, 39 <sup>n</sup>Or his <sup>o</sup>Heb uncertain

<sup>32</sup>Jesus said to them, “Go, tell that fox, ‘Look, I’m throwing out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will complete my work.’ <sup>33</sup>However, it’s necessary for me to travel today, tomorrow, and the next day because it’s impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.’

<sup>34</sup>“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those who were sent to you! How often I have wanted to gather your people just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But you didn’t want that. <sup>35</sup>Look, your house is abandoned. I tell you, you won’t see me until the time comes when you say, *Blessings on the one who comes in the Lord’s name.*”<sup>k</sup>

## Read Luke 14:1-24

God profoundly wills the welfare of every man, woman, and child. Every law, custom, or practice must give way before this fact. There are rewards in store for the person who takes the humble approach to things: “Don’t take your seat in the place of honor.” The reward you receive will come from the Lord.

**Reflect:** It is the height of selfishness to do a good deed so as to be rewarded in kind. It makes a mockery of charity.

**Pray:** Lord, help me want to do good.

**Act:** Do an act of charity after taking every precaution that you, the benefactor, will remain anonymous. Do it strictly to honor God’s will.

## HEALING ON THE SABBATH

**14** One Sabbath, when Jesus went to share a meal in the home of one of the leaders of the Pharisees, they were watching him closely. <sup>2</sup>A man suffering from an abnormal swelling of the body was there. <sup>3</sup>Jesus asked the lawyers and Pharisees, “Does the Law allow healing on the Sabbath or not?” <sup>4</sup>But they said nothing. Jesus took hold of the sick man, cured him, and then let him go. <sup>5</sup>He said to them, “Suppose your child or ox fell into a ditch on the Sabbath day. Wouldn’t you immediately pull it out?” <sup>6</sup>But they had no response.

## LESSONS ON HUMILITY AND GENEROSITY

<sup>7</sup>When Jesus noticed how the guests sought out the best seats at the table, he told them a parable. <sup>8</sup>“When someone invites you to a wedding celebration, don’t take your seat in the place of honor. Someone more highly regarded than you could have been invited by your host. <sup>9</sup>The host who invited both of you will come and say to you, ‘Give your seat to this other person.’ Embarrassed, you will take your seat in the least important place. <sup>10</sup>Instead, when you receive an invitation, go and sit in the least important place. When your host approaches you, he will say, ‘Friend, move up here to a better seat.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests. <sup>11</sup>All who lift themselves up will be brought low, and those who make themselves low will be lifted up.”

<sup>12</sup>Then Jesus said to the person who had invited him, “When you host a lunch or dinner, don’t invite your friends, your brothers and sisters, your relatives, or rich neighbors. If you do, they will invite you in return and that will be your reward. <sup>13</sup>Instead, when you give a banquet, invite the poor, crippled, lame, and blind. <sup>14</sup>And you will be blessed because they can’t repay you. Instead, you will be repaid when the just are resurrected.”

<sup>15</sup>When one of the dinner guests heard Jesus’ remarks, he said to Jesus, “Happy are those who will feast in God’s kingdom.”

<sup>16</sup>Jesus replied, “A certain man hosted a large dinner and invited many people. <sup>17</sup>When it was time for the dinner to begin, he sent his servant to tell the invited guests, ‘Come! The dinner is now ready.’ <sup>18</sup>One by one, they all began to make excuses. The first one told him, ‘I bought a farm and must go and see it. Please excuse me.’ <sup>19</sup>Another said, ‘I bought five teams of oxen, and I’m going to check on them. Please excuse me.’ <sup>20</sup>Another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’

<sup>21</sup>When he returned, the servant reported these excuses to his master. The master of the house

became angry and said to his servant, 'Go quickly to the city's streets, the busy ones and the side streets, and bring the poor, crippled, blind, and lame.' <sup>22</sup>The servant said, 'Master, your instructions have been followed and there is still room.' <sup>23</sup>The master said to the servant, 'Go to the highways and back alleys and urge people to come in so that my house will be filled. <sup>24</sup>I tell you, not one of those who were invited will taste my dinner.'"

### Read Luke 14:25-35

Jesus says that we have to hate our parents, our siblings, our children, and even our own lives to be disciples.

**Reflect:** These sayings are hard. What do they mean?

**Pray:** Dear God, ask of me whatever you will, and then give me the grace to respond generously.

**Act:** Let the people you love know that you love them.

### DISCIPLESHIP'S DEMANDS

<sup>25</sup>Large crowds were traveling with Jesus. Turning to them, he said, <sup>26</sup>"Whoever comes to me and doesn't hate father and mother, spouse and children, and brothers and sisters—yes, even one's own life—cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup>Whoever doesn't carry their own cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

<sup>28</sup>"If one of you wanted to build a tower, wouldn't you first sit down and calculate the cost, to determine whether you have enough money to complete it? <sup>29</sup>Otherwise, when you have laid the foundation but couldn't finish the tower, all who see it will begin to belittle you. <sup>30</sup>They will say, 'Here's the person who began construction and couldn't complete it!' <sup>31</sup>Or what king would go to war against another king without first sitting down to consider whether his ten thousand soldiers could go up against the twenty thousand coming against him? <sup>32</sup>And if he didn't think he could win, he would send a representative to discuss terms of peace while his enemy was still a long way off. <sup>33</sup>In the same way, none of you who are unwilling to give up all of your possessions can be my disciple.

<sup>34</sup>"Salt is good. But if salt loses its flavor, how will it become salty again? <sup>35</sup>It has no value, neither for the soil nor for the manure pile. People throw it away. Whoever has ears to hear should pay attention."

### Read Luke 15

Jesus tells the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son.

**Reflect:** The context for all the parables in this chapter is provided by the first two verses.

**Pray:** Help me to overcome my grumbling and resentment.

**Act:** As a practical expression of gratitude to God, celebrate someone else's success or good fortune.

### OCCASIONS FOR CELEBRATION

**15** All the tax collectors and sinners were gathering around Jesus to listen to him. <sup>2</sup>The Pharisees and legal experts were grumbling, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

<sup>3</sup>Jesus told them this parable: "Suppose someone among you had one hundred sheep and lost one of them. Wouldn't he leave the other ninety-nine in the pasture and search for the lost one until he finds it? <sup>5</sup>And when he finds it, he is thrilled and places it on his shoulders. <sup>6</sup>When he arrives home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Celebrate with me because I've found my lost sheep.' <sup>7</sup>In the same way, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who changes both heart and life than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need to change their hearts and lives.





# PHILIPPIANS

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## Read Philippians 1:1-11

Paul writes to his beloved community.

**Reflect:** Paul needed friends, and the Philippians offered him that friendship. Notice his great affection for them.

**Pray:** Paul prayed for his friends. Without them he would have accomplished much less than he did. Pray for your friends who help you in life.

**Act:** Spend some time with a friend.

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### *GREETING*

<sup>1</sup>From Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus.  
To all those in Philippi who are God's people in Christ Jesus, along with your supervisors<sup>a</sup> and servants.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>2</sup>May the grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

### *THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER*

<sup>3</sup>I thank my God every time I mention you in my prayers. <sup>4</sup>I'm thankful for all of you every time I pray, and it's always a prayer full of joy. <sup>5</sup>I'm glad because of the way you have been my partners in the ministry of the gospel from the time you first believed it until now. <sup>6</sup>I'm sure about this: the one who started a good work in you will stay with you to complete the job by the day of Christ Jesus. <sup>7</sup>I have good reason to think this way about all of you because I keep you in my heart. You are all my partners in God's grace, both during my time in prison and in the defense and support of the gospel. <sup>8</sup>God is my witness that I feel affection for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus.

<sup>9</sup>This is my prayer: that your love might become even more and more rich with knowledge and all kinds of insight. <sup>10</sup>I pray this so that you will be able to decide what really matters and so you will be sincere and blameless on the day of Christ. <sup>11</sup>I pray that you will then be filled with the fruit of righteousness, which comes from Jesus Christ, in order to give glory and praise to God.

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## Read Philippians 1:12-30

Paul describes his response to his present situation in a way that celebrates the triumph of the gospel in difficult circumstances and establishes himself as a model for the behavior he later encourages. This section is full of joy, even as Paul describes imprisonment, rivalry, and impending death.

**Reflect:** Remind yourself of the presence of the Holy Spirit who guides you.



## 2 JOHN

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### Read 2 John

This short letter offers advice about love and belief. The image of the “chosen gentlewoman and her children” is probably a metaphor for a leader and members of a Christian congregation.

**Reflect:** The letter concludes with a reference to speaking face to face to evaluate how the readers are doing in walking according to God’s commandments. Envision yourself having this face-to-face evaluation.

**Pray:** Instead of considering the negative aspects of evaluating our lives, offer a prayer of rejoicing for those who live and walk by the commandments of God’s love.

**Act:** Take the time to evaluate how well you are living your faith in terms of love and belief. Where do you need to improve or do better? What steps do you need to take?

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### *GREETING*

<sup>1</sup>From the elder.

To the chosen gentlewoman and her children, whom I truly love (and I am not the only one, but also all who know the truth), <sup>2</sup>because of the truth that remains with us and will be with us forever.

<sup>3</sup>Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, will be ours who live in truth and love.

### *LOVE EACH OTHER*

<sup>4</sup>I was overjoyed to find some of your children living in the truth, just as we had been commanded by the Father. <sup>5</sup>Now, dear friends, I am requesting that we love each other. It’s not as though I’m writing a new command to you, but it’s one we have had from the beginning. <sup>6</sup>This is love: that we live according to his commands. This is the command that you heard from the beginning: live in love.

### *REJECT FALSE TEACHERS*

<sup>7</sup>Many deceivers have gone into the world who do not confess that Jesus Christ came as a human being. This kind of person is the deceiver and the antichrist. <sup>8</sup>Watch yourselves so that you don’t lose what we’ve worked for but instead receive a full reward. <sup>9</sup>Anyone who goes too far and does not continue in the teaching about Christ does not have God. Whoever continues in this teaching has both the Father and the Son. <sup>10</sup>Whoever comes to you who does not affirm this teaching should neither be received nor welcomed into your home, <sup>11</sup>because welcoming people like that is the same thing as sharing in their evil actions.

***PLANS TO VISIT***

<sup>12</sup>I have a lot to tell you. I don't want to use paper and ink, but I hope to visit you and talk with you face-to-face, so that our joy can be complete.

***FINAL GREETING***

<sup>13</sup>Your chosen sister's children greet you.

THE CEB

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# LECTIO DIVINA

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PRAYER BIBLE

## Pray the Scriptures

Since the earliest centuries, the church has read the scriptures as part of a reflective practice that leads to prayer. The method of *lectio divina*, or “divine reading,” is a systematic reading of each section of a book with pauses for reflection and prayer.

***The CEB Lectio Divina Prayer Bible* makes this practice simple. For every chapter of the Bible, there is:**

- A recommended passage for slow and thoughtful reading
- Questions to guide you in reflecting on the meaning of the text
- A prayer
- Suggestions for putting your new insights into action

This Bible also includes a collection of traditional Christian prayers for all occasions—from times of praise to times of pursuing justice.

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