

Lectio Divina: Spiritual Reading

Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation by M. Robert Mulholland

1. Silencio

- a. In this first posture of reading the Scriptures persons approach the Scripture from wanting to control the engagement with the Bible to wanting to receive whatever the Bible has to say. Rather than reading strictly to read it, it is reading to be formed by it. Rather than observing what the Bible says, it is coming to be obedient to what it tells us to be and to do.
- b. A good way to ready one's self to read is to spend time in prayer. In your prayer, ask God to help you come to his Word for the process of being formed and transformed.

2. Lectio (Reading/Receiving)

- a. This is known as a "first reading" of the text. In this step, hold the Bible in your hands. Read the words aloud. Read, "see," and "hear" what God has to say.
- b. The key here is to take in the "big" picture and connect with what is happening on a sensory type level.

3. Meditatio (Meditating)

- a. This is a processing the reading which you have done in Lectio (#2).
- b. In this step, persons move beyond sensing (i.e. seeing and hearing) and they move to thinking skills. What is the Bible saying? What does it mean? What resources (concordances, text notes, dictionaries) can you use to bring more meaning to the passage?
- c. How does the passage fit with other passages?
- d. In this step, persons move beyond hearing and seeing it toward responding or "doing what it says."

4. Oratio (Dialoguing with God)

- a. This is the natural flow from Meditatio (#3) to fully respond in prayer or personal dialogue with God.
- b. If the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12), then in this step, we dialogue with God and share with God what the Scripture is doing to us on a personal level. What about the passage challenges you? What does it say to you about God? About you? How does it make you feel? What does it ask you to be or do? What is difficult/easy about this?
- c. Be open and honest with God about your feelings, thoughts, desires etc., by talking with God.

5. Contemplatio (Contemplation and Waiting on God)

- a. In this stage of spiritual reading, persons wait upon God that God may do whatever God wants to do in us, with us, and through us.
- b. Here we fixate on "abandonment" or "surrender." We must put ourselves in God's hands and allow God to be the potter while we are his clay.
- c. This will take time. Being silent and waiting before God you will most likely have thoughts run through your mind, items on your calendar will present themselves, tasks to do during the day will scream, "Why are you wasting your time!" Be patient, yield these thoughts to God, and tell God that you await for him to speak. Sometimes God will be silent, sometimes you will hear much – try to focus not so much on the outcomes but the process.

6. Incarnatio (Incarnation or Embodiment of the Scripture)

- a. In this final stage we walk from the Scriptures having heard the Word, and now we walk in the newness of life to be doers of the word.