

Engaging God Through Personal Devotions

Message 1 of 6 in the series: "Engage: Participate, Get Involved, Join, Take Part"

A. God wants us to have abundant life.

"I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it **more abundantly**." John 10:10b (NKJV)

"Is anyone thirsty? Come and drink—even if you have no money! Come, take your choice of wine or milk—it's all free! Why spend your money on food that does not give you strength? Why pay for food that does you no good? **Listen to me, and you will eat what is good. You will enjoy the finest food. Come to me with your ears wide open. Listen, and you will find life.** I will make an everlasting covenant with you."

Isaiah 55:1-3a (NLT)

B. We can't find abundant life on our own.

"I said to myself, 'Come on, let's try pleasure. Let's look for the "good things" in life.' But I found that this, too, was meaningless... I also tried to find meaning by building huge homes for myself and by planting beautiful vineyards. I made gardens and parks, filling them with all kinds of fruit trees. I built reservoirs to collect the water to irrigate my many flourishing groves... I also owned large herds and flocks, more than any of the kings who had lived in Jerusalem before me. I collected great sums of silver and gold, the treasure of many kings and provinces. I hired wonderful singers, both men and women, and had many beautiful concubines. I had everything a man could desire! So I became greater than all who had lived in Jerusalem before me, and my wisdom never failed me. Anything I wanted, I would take. I denied myself no pleasure. I even found great pleasure in hard work, a reward for all my labors. **But as I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless—like chasing the wind. There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere.**" Ecclesiastes 2:1, 4-6, & 7b-11 (NLT)

"There is a way that seems right to a man, **but its end is the way of death.**" Proverbs 14:12 (NKJV)

C. Therefore, we need to seek God's direction/help/favor/wisdom every day.

"**If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you.** He will not rebuke you for asking." James 1:5 (NLT)

"For the Lord grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest. He is a shield to those who walk with integrity. He guards the paths of the just and protects those who are faithful to him. **Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair, and you will find the right way to go. For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will fill you with joy.**"

Proverbs 2:6-10 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! God wants what's best for us more than we do. "Then Jesus said, 'Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. **Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls.** For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.'" Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT)

D. God will speak to us through the Bible if we are willing to read it, reflect upon what we've read, and then respond to what God has shown us.

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. **It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.** God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NLT)

"The rain and snow come down from the heavens and stay on the ground to water the earth. They cause the grain to grow, producing seed for the farmer and bread for the hungry. **It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it.**" Isaiah 55:10-11 (NLT)

To be intentional about hearing from God through the Bible:

1. We need to have a reading plan. "So **I run with purpose in every step.** I am not just shadowboxing." 1 Corinthians 9:26 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! Since the authors of the Bible were inspired by God to write orderly accounts, we should read them in an orderly fashion. "...since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, **I too decided to write an orderly account for you...** so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught." Luke 1:3-4 (NIV)

2. We need to meet with God in a place that is free from distractions. “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and **went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.**”
Mark 1:35 (NIV)
3. We need to apply what we read to our current situation. “**But don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says.** Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don’t obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and **if you do what it says and don’t forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.**” James 1:22-25 (NLT)
4. We need to write down what God reveals to us so we won’t forget. “And the one sitting on the throne said, ‘Look, I am making everything new!’ And then he said to me, ‘**Write this down**, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true.’” Revelation 21:5 (NLT)
“Let all that I am praise the Lord; may I never forget the good things he does for me.” Psalm 103:2 (NLT)
5. We need to ask a friend to join us so we can encourage each other and hold each other accountable. “So encourage each other and **build each other up...**” 1 Thessalonians 5:11a (NLT)
“And let us consider how we may **spur one another on** toward love and good deeds...”
Hebrews 10:24 (NIV)

E. God will listen to us if we are willing to pray.

1. We need to respond in prayer to what God revealed to us through our Bible reading. “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. **Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.**” Psalm 139:23-24 (NLT)
“**You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it**, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!” John 14:13-14 (NLT)
“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that **if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us**. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.” 1 John 5:14-15 (NIV)
2. We need to bring all our problems/cares/concerns to God. “Don’t worry about anything; instead, **pray about everything**. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7 (NLT)
“I lift my hands to you in prayer. I thirst for you as parched land thirsts for rain. Come quickly, Lord, and answer me, for my depression deepens. **Don’t turn away from me, or I will die.** Let me hear of your unfailing love each morning, for I am trusting you. **Show me where to walk, for I give myself to you.** Rescue me from my enemies, Lord; I run to you to hide me. Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. **May your gracious Spirit lead me forward on a firm footing.**” Psalm 143:6-10 (NLT)
IMPORTANT! God is always more ready to listen than we are to pray. “**My heart has heard you say, ‘Come and talk with me.’** And my heart responds, ‘Lord, I am coming.’” Psalm 27:8 (NLT)
“Look! **I stand at the door and knock.** If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.” Revelation 3:20 (NLT)

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Connect Group Questions:

1. Do you have a Bible reading plan picked out for 2026? If so, what is it? Why’d you choose it? If not, what would help you get started? If you need a helpful guide visit centeringlives.com.
2. Read John 10:10 and Isaiah 55:1-3. What does the abundant Christian life look like? How do we get it? Why can’t we obtain abundant life by our own wisdom or strength? (Ecclesiastes 2:1-11, Proverbs 14:12)
3. How does it make you feel to know that God wants what’s best for us more than we do? (Proverbs 2:6-10, Matthew 11:28-30, James 1:5)
4. Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 & Isaiah 55:10-11. What can we expect to hear from God when we meet with Him in daily devotions this year? Share one thing God revealed to you in 2025.

5. How does it make you feel to know that God is always more ready to listen than we are to pray? (Psalm 27:8, Revelation 3:20)
6. Why is it important to respond in prayer to what God has revealed to us in our Bible reading? (Psalm 139:23-24)
7. Why is it important to pray about everything? (Philippians 4:6-7, Psalm 143:6-10)
8. How do the following Scripture verses relate to engaging God through daily devotions? (Isaiah 55:6, John 8:31-32)