

Praying with Scripture

Encountering God in the Bible

God touches our hearts through Scripture.

As we spend time with Jesus in daily prayer, we talk with him as a friend, and we allow him to quietly speak to us. Prayerfully reading Scripture is a great way to deepen our time with the Lord. As we read the Bible, we encounter the living God, and he speaks to us through his Word.

The Gospels are a great place to start.

Rather than starting with Genesis, it is often best to start with one of the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. The Gospels are unique because they contain what God did and said when he walked on earth among us. In the Gospels, we encounter Jesus as a person, and his words and actions touch our hearts.

Start with one small part or story.

When praying with Scripture, quality is often more important than quantity. For example, instead of reading all of chapter 10 of the Gospel of Mark, you might focus on the story of Jesus healing the blind man, Bartimaeus, in verses 46-52. You can read the passage slowly, perhaps several times, allowing its meaning to sink in rather than rushing to another passage.

Put yourself into the scene.

It helps to imagine yourself in the scene, seeing and hearing what is happening. You might picture yourself as part of the crowd walking past Bartimaeus. You see him as he sits begging on the side of the road. You hear his voice ring out over the noise of the crowd, "Jesus, have mercy on me!" You feel the excited trembling in his body as you guide him to meet Jesus. You share the crowd's astonishment as you see that he has been healed; he can now see!

Reflect on what touches your heart.

As we read, there will often be something that touches us personally. When this happens, we can consider quietly what Jesus is trying to say to us and how it connects to our lives. For example, you might have been greatly moved by the heartfelt urgency with which Bartimaeus cried out for mercy. As you quietly reflect upon why that may have moved you, God helps you realize that there is an aspect of your life where you are struggling with brokenness, and you desperately need the mercy and healing of Jesus, too.

Talk to Jesus about the insights he has given you.

As we find the Lord touching our heart and mind in Scripture, we can talk to him about it. Continuing the previous example, you could begin to ask Jesus for forgiveness. With new insight, you might talk to him about your own need for healing. The plea of Bartimaeus might become a heartfelt prayer of your own: "Teacher, I wish to see!" In simple ways like this, even a small passage of Scripture can help you have a beautiful prayer experience with the Lord.

