

The Five Ps of Praying the Scriptures

PLACE

Find a place where you can be alone and uninterrupted. Jesus said, “When you pray, go into your room and shut the door” (Mathew 6:6, ESV). Set aside a time to go to this listening post regularly.

PREPARE

Begin your prayer by taking time to settle down in the silence. Do whatever helps you become quieter within yourself. Maybe you will take a few deep breaths, or repeat your favorite verse of Scripture, or look at a burning candle as a symbol of the light of Christ.

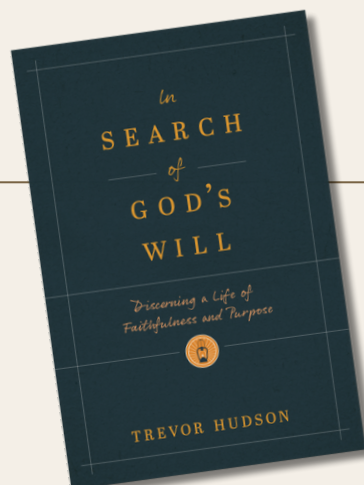
Consciously acknowledge God’s presence around you and within you.

Ask for the help of the Holy Spirit to hear whatever God may want to say to you.

Look at God looking at you through the divine gaze of unconditional love. Do not rush this time of preparation.

PASSAGE

Read your chosen passage of Scripture aloud slowly, as the psalmist often encourages us to do. You may want to imagine the risen Jesus with you, reading the words to you. Hear the words first with your ears and then with your mind. Listen carefully for a word, phrase, or sentence that seems to speak to you or connect with your experience. If nothing seems to resonate, choose a word, phrase, or sentence that you would like to dwell on. Above all, do not be in a hurry with this reading. If we want to develop a listening approach to Scripture, we must not speed-read!



The Five Ps of Praying the Scriptures, Continued

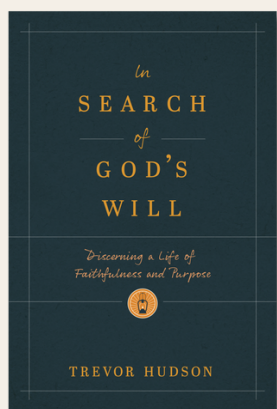
PONDER

When you have your word, phrase, or sentence, stop reading and begin meditating on Scripture. Open your mind and heart to receive the word, phrase, or sentence, and let it sink into your inner depths. Personalize the word as if it is spoken directly to you, internalize it, reflect on its meaning for your life, and absorb it inwardly, letting the Spirit bring it alive within you. All the time seek to listen to God with “the ears of your heart” to tune in to what God may be saying to you.

PRAY

When this session’s absorbing of God’s word seems complete, talk with the Lord about your response to what he has said to you. Share from your heart, freely and simply, how his word has touched you. Tell the Lord what his word means for you and how it affects your personal circumstances. Usually this phase of talking with the Lord will eventually bring you into a quieter space in which you can sit in silence and surrender yourself again to the Lord. Or it may lead you into a time of praise and worship in which you commit yourself to a specific act of obedience. Over the next few days, you may like to try praying the Scriptures with these three passages: Isaiah 43:1-4; Matthew 11:29-30; and John 7:37-39.

(In appendix 2 of *In Search of God's Will*, you will find a one-year outline of biblical passages that will take you through the four Gospels and the book of Acts.)



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