

DIY 1: Meeting with God – The Monk Method

Often we can read a passage from the Bible and struggle to take anything in, even if we read the same passage 2 or 3 times it can be hard to retain anything for more than a short while afterwards.

Copying out a passage word for word slows us down and gives us time to think and process what the passage is about. I often find that God speaks to me more clearly and memorably when I do this.

Steps to follow:

1. Start by praying that God will speak and reveal things to you through His Word.
2. Choose a short passage to look at e.g. John 15, Philippians 3, Colossians 3, Romans 12, Romans 8.
3. Copy the passage out word for word on one page of your notebook
4. As you are doing this highlight any words or phrases which grab your attention or are repeated several times.
5. On the other page of your notebook jot down any thoughts or questions that come to you as you are copying the passage out.
6. Finish by summarising one main idea or thought from the passage in your own words.
7. Spend 5 minutes praying about what God has shown you or brought to your attention.
8. Think about memorising one of the verses from the passage that captures the main thing God has shown you.

It can be a good idea to work your way through a whole book a short section at a time using this method e.g. Philippians.

DIY 2: Quiet Reflection – Using Your Senses

Reading a passage from the Bible and focusing on God is one of the most rewarding activities you can do as a Christian. Sometimes though it can be hard to get into a passage, to understand what it going on and have the right perspective.

This method of using your senses as you read and meditate through a passage is one used for many centuries, and to great effect. The meditation involves becoming part of the account in the passage by imaging what your senses would pick up as if you were really there.

For example:

Sight – What would you be looking at? What are your surroundings like, what are people doing and what are their facial expressions?

Sound – What do you think the voices would sound like? Are there any expressive tones used? What sounds might there be in the background?

Smell – What smells are there, where do they come from and what do they remind you of?
Taste – Is there anything around to taste? Salty water perhaps or some food.

Touch – What is there around to touch? What does the ground feel like under foot? What is the temperature and humidity like or is there any human contact?

Example

Matthew 3 tells of John the Baptist and his preaching to the people, urging them to repent of their sins because God's kingdom was near. As John is doing this Jesus appears to him requesting that he baptise him, which John complies with.

This passage is particularly rich in activity and has plenty of scope to excite the senses! To help you in this method here is an opening question.

In the beginning verses (1-4) how do you perceive John the Baptist, what does he look and sound like? Verse 4 says that his clothes were made of camels hair and he ate locusts (remember to taste!), what impression does this give you of the life John led?