



Living the Christian Life Bible Study

Lesson 3 (NIV)

Developing a Devotional Life

Student's Name _____ **Unit** _____

Instructor _____

Comments _____

1.0 Introduction

Perhaps the greatest joy of the Christian life is that as children of God, we get to spend time with our heavenly Father. Paul uses the term *abba Father*. Abba is an Aramaic term of endearment and intimacy, much like “daddy” in our culture. In a healthy family setting, one thing small children love to do is be with their father, to follow him as he does his chores, to copy his activities, and best of all, to sit on his lap and have him read a story. While this may not be our personal experience, it is the picture that God uses to teach us about our relationship with Him. We enjoy this kind of relationship with God as we read about His actions in history, seek to imitate His character, and listen to Him speak to us through the Bible. When we truly love someone, we desire to spend time with them.

While it is true that God is never far from us all and should be the foundation of all we think and do throughout the day, we should also spend some part of each day quietly and consciously in His presence. We call this time “devotions” or “quiet time.” Billy Graham once said that he never knew a Christian who amounted to anything for God who did not have a consistent quiet time.

When we really want to get to know someone, there is no substitute for spending quality time together. So it is with our relationship with God, we desire to spend time with Him, as He does with us. Like any other communication, this must be a two way conversation. We speak to Him in prayer and He speaks to us through His Word and His Holy Spirit. In future lessons, we will consider the subjects of prayer and Bible study in greater depth, but for today, let us look at them devotionally.

We will study the Devotional Life by looking at the examples of three men in scripture: Moses, David, and Jesus Christ.

2.0 Moses

2.1 Background

Moses was the man God chose to lead the Children of Israel out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. Moses also spent more time in the immediate presence of God than any other person in the Bible, except for the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. God prepared him by arranging for him to spend the first 40 years of his life in the court of Pharaoh (the ruler of Egypt) learning about government, military operations, and the customs of Egypt (Exodus 2:1-10). Because of a rash act on his part, Moses then spent the next 40 years in the desert as a fugitive from justice, caring for his father-in-law’s sheep (Exodus 2:11-22). His later life gives evidence of a close devotional life developed during that time. At the end of that period in his life, God spoke to him from a burning bush, calling him to lead His people out of Egypt (Exodus 3:1 - 4:17).

4.0 Jesus Christ (cont’d)

1. What do we learn about Jesus’ prayer life from these verses?

2. Read Mark 6:30-32 What did Jesus tell the disciples was necessary after a hard time of ministry?

3. Read Luke 6:12-16 What do you think Jesus was praying about?

4. Read Luke 22:39-46 What was the purpose of Jesus’ prayer?

5. What lessons can we learn from Jesus devotional life?

3.0 David (cont'd)

3.2 Devotional Life (cont'd)

4. (34:11-14) How did David say that intimacy with God should affect our conduct? _____

5. (34:15-20) What words does David use to show God's closeness to the righteous? _____

4.0 Jesus Christ

Although Jesus Christ was indeed God Himself come in human form, He was also fully a man, and subject to the same temptations, concerns, and feelings that we are. As we look at His life, we find Him often spending time alone with His Father.

Mark 1:35 *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.*

Matthew 14:22 *Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. 23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray.*

Luke 9:18 *Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him,*

2.0 Moses (cont'd)

2.1 Background (cont'd)

After a remarkable series of miracles performed by God through Moses, Pharaoh allowed the Children of Israel to leave Egypt (Exodus 4:18 - 12:51). Shortly after they left, however, he changed his mind and sent his army after them. In one of the best known stories of the Bible, the Children of Israel crossed the sea on dry land as God pushed the waters to each side to create a dry path through the sea for them. He then brought the waters back to their place, drowning Pharaoh's pursuing army in the process (Exodus 13:14 - 14:31). Moses then led them through the desert to Mt. Sinai, where God gave them the law (Exodus 15 - 31).

While Moses was on the mountain receiving the Law, the people sinned by making a golden calf and worshipping it. When Moses returned from the mountain, he was angry with the people, broke the tablets on which the law was written, and destroyed the idol calf (Exodus 32). It is at this point that we will look at his relationship with God, and the conversation in His presence.

2.2 Devotional Life

Read Exodus 33:7-11

1. (33:7) Where did Moses meet with God?

2. (33:7) Who else could meet with God?

Read Exodus 33:12-17

3. (33:13) What did Moses want God to teach him?

4. (33:14-15) What did Moses want with him?

5. How would you describe the relationship between Moses and God?

Would you like to have this kind of relationship with God?

2.0 Moses (cont'd)

2.2 Devotional Life (cont'd)

Read Exodus 34:8-11

6. (34:8) What was Moses' attitude in the presence of God?

7. (34:9) What did Moses ask of God?

8. (34:10) What did God agree to do?

9. (34:11) What did God require of the people?

Read Exodus 34:27-29

10. (34:28) What did God give Moses on the mountain?

11. (34:29) What was different about Moses after speaking with the Lord?

Covenant - A formal contract between two parties, in which each party agrees to fulfill certain conditions and is promised certain advantages. In a covenant with God, He promises blessings in return for man's obedience. Some of God's covenants are unconditional; they have no requirements on man's part.

3.0 David

3.1 Background

About 500 years after entering and conquering the Promised Land under Joshua, the people demanded from God that they have a king like the other nations around them (1 Samuel 8). God gave them Saul, who utterly failed to carry out the role of king by disobeying God (1 Samuel 9 - 15). God then chose David to be the first king who would reign with God's blessing (1 Samuel 16:1-13). David is credited in scripture as "a man after God's own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14), a phrase that would indicate a devotional life in tune with God. David wrote about half of the 150 psalms that constitute the book of Psalms. These psalms are David pouring out his heart to God, expressing a range of emotions from fear and anger to love and devotion.

As a teenager, David was a shepherd (1 Samuel 16:11; 17:20). Four of his psalms are generally considered to be written during that time. Perhaps the best known of all the psalms, the 23rd, is one of these. We can imagine young David being sent to care for the sheep; a lonely and sometimes dangerous job (1 Samuel 17:34-37). We can almost hear him saying, "Yeah, its fine for me to take care of these sheep in the wilderness by myself, but who is going to take care of little old David? Well, maybe *The Lord is my shepherd*, and if that is true, then *I shall lack nothing*," and so on. In this we hear David developing the habit of a devotional life that stayed with him through his 40 years as king, uniting Israel's twelve independent tribes into a unified and powerful monarchy.

3.1 Devotional Life

Today we will read Psalm 34, one that expresses something of David's devotion to God and his love for Him. Look for things David said about his relationship with God.

1. (34:1-3) What words did David use to express his praise of God?

2. (34:4-7) What words did David use to express God's care for him?

3. (34:8-10) How does God care for those who seek Him?
