

114. Adore God

By Arland Steen

Special thanks to Pastor Jack Hayford for his insights on starting your day with Christ from his book Daybreak. I've adopted his framework for devotions since the mid-1990's and have found them to be very beneficial.

Supreme Scripture

Matthew 22:37-38 (NKJ): ³⁷Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. ³⁸This is the first and great commandment.

Adoring God is one of the five purposes I believe God has for us as a foundation for our lives.

He gave this to me several years ago when there was emphasis on purpose statements for churches. I was prayerfully considering how I could phrase the mission of the church in an easy-to-remember way. He said to use the alphabet:

- Adore God
- Befriend People
- Cultivate Disciples
- Develop Ministers
- Exert Influence

So, I phrased it like this:

Our purpose is to BEFRIEND people
and point them to Jesus,
CULTIVATING them as His disciples,
while DEVELOPING their unique abilities,
thereby EXERTING Godly influence in the world,
bringing ADORATION to His name.
This is our Purpose Statement.

Adoring God has both a personal and a corporate application. I'm going to discuss the personal application today which I call Walking With Jesus Every Day Devotions.

Adore God

When you adore someone, you desire to be with them as much as possible. The very meaning of the word *adore* as a verb - with an object - means "to love and respect someone deeply: *he adored his mother*. It also means to worship or venerate: *he adored the Lord*.

We walk with God in daily devotional fellowship because we adore Him in response to His love for us.

God has been in a love affair with humanity since the beginning of the creation of Adam and formation of Eve. In fact, everything that was created – earth and everything on it – was created for us! God would come in the cool of the day and fellowship with them.

Genesis 3:8: *And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.*
This continued until the serpent deceived Eve, then Adam joined her and rebelled against God.

We encourage walking with God every day in a devotional habit that is personal, openhearted, interactive and genuine. We call it *Walking With Jesus Every Day* in a nod to what He did with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

When you adore someone, you want to spend time with them regularly.

Psalm 90:12 (NKJ): *So teach us to number our **days** that we may gain a heart of **wisdom**.*

The Bible is very pointed about the value of an individual day and directs me to use these pieces of time wisely and profitably.

This “wisdom” knows the right thing to do at the right time. Living a wise, fulfilling and rewarding life is the practical goal of this daily time with God; growing to maturity to be like Him is the spiritual goal.

In speaking of a daily habit of time with God, there are two things we must not confuse it to be. A daily habit of time with God is not meant to be either ritualistic or mystical. It is not intended to be so rigidly disciplined in its performance that the habit becomes coldly executed. Nor is it intended to be mysteriously romantic, as though “intimacy” in a spiritual relationship with Christ means being carried away into some misty, trance-like experience. But a daily habit of time with God is very personal. It refers to coming to Jesus Himself in a direct, openhearted way – bowing yourself humbly before the throne of God the Father in worship, singing and presenting your whole being to Him.

You speaking to Him but more importantly, Him speaking to you.

John 10:27 (NKJ): *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.*

As such, the *pursuit* of a daily habit of time with God requires your readiness to open to the Holy Spirit’s searching’s, stirrings and surging in and through your whole being – spirit, soul and body. With this gift, you are going to *interact with Him* not just read the Word, not just pray and not just worship as worthy and beneficial as each of these are in and of themselves.

It is imperative I say that to you because what I’m going to do is *emphasize one important purpose* of a daily walk with God and then give you an outline of how you can walk with Jesus every day. The one important purpose is hearing God’s voice speak to you.

I want to emphasize this because whatever testimony any of us has regarding our coming to Christ began in some way with God speaking to us. It may have been through:

- Circumstances
- An overwhelming sense of our need of Him
- Dismal failure or discouragement
- The witness of a friend
- A television, radio or internet broadcast
- Written material
- Reading the Bible

But in every situation, Someone, spoke to us and we began to turn toward Him.

I am impressed with the frequency of hearing people share how they remember hearing an inner voice in childhood or during a crisis long past, and that voice made them aware of their need of God.

If it was God’s voice that caused your walk to begin with Him – even if in simply beginning to search for Him – it makes sense that our walk with Him should continue with His voice in our ears every day.

Hearing God’s voice has been unapologetically acknowledged throughout the history of the Church, so much so that it has found a home in the hymns sung for years.

In The Garden, lyrics by Charles Austin Miles, 1913

Verse 1: "I come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses, and the voice I hear falling on my ear, the Son of God discloses. Chorus: And He walks with me and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own, and the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known.

He Lives, lyrics by Alfred H. Ackley, 1933

He lives, He lives! Christ Jesus lives today! He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way. He lives! He lives, salvation to impart! You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart!

Until recent years, there was no segment of the Church that even questioned the matter of people hearing God's voice – except for rare and isolated segments. But in recent years, a handful of evangelical leaders have minimized or even attacked the idea that God speaks directly to people.

The answer to "Why?" they do this seems to be summed up in the word "fear."

If they allow Christians to expect God to speak to them, they may begin to hear voices and accept them as a substitute for, or as an addition to, the Bible.

But you can't reach this conclusion based on a balanced understanding of the Word and the Holy Spirit. The Word of God is central to our life but the more you read it, the more you will be able to hear the Holy Spirit speak to you!

But He always speaks in line with the revelation contained in the 66 books of the Bible. And, each of us should be aware of and reject any "*continuing revelation*" based on the fallacious idea that the Bible isn't the final authority concerning God's revealed will and purpose.

Once the truth regarding the absolute and final authority of God's Word is established, why would anyone resist the idea that God still speaks to people today? God has always spoken either directly or indirectly, since the beginning of time. Here are a few ways:

- Creation – Psalm 19:1 (NKJ): *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork.*
- Conscience – Romans 2:14-15 (NLT): *Even Gentiles, who do not have God's written law, show that they know his law when they instinctively obey it, even without having heard it. ¹⁵ They demonstrate that God's law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right.*
- Signs – Acts 13:12 (NKJ): *Then the proconsul believed when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.*
- Voice – Isaiah 30:21 (NLT): *Your own ears will hear him. Right behind you a voice will say, "This is the way you should go," whether to the right or to the left.*
- Word – 2 Peter 1:18-19 (NLT): ¹⁸ *We ourselves heard that Voice from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹ Because of that experience, we have even greater confidence in the message proclaimed by the prophets. You must pay close attention to what they wrote, for their words are like a lamp shining in a dark place ...*

These ways only remind us that:

1. We only know these are valid ways God speaks to us *because the Bible says so.*
2. We are to measure what we perceive God speaks *only by the Bible's full teaching and authority.*

The outline on the next page is what I use in my personal devotions. The steps are not listed in numerical order because they are grouped under the themes that identify what your personal devotions consist of.

These themes are:

Thanksgiving and Praise, Reflection and Confession, and Wisdom and Prayer.

Yet you would do the steps in numerical order.

We also have this same outline printed on a 5x7 two-sided card. This card only shows the numerical order from 1 – 13.

WALKING WITH JESUS EVERY DAY

An Interactive Framework Of How To Spend Time With Jesus In A Personal & Openhearted Way

IN THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE

Mark 12:30 reads, *and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. So my total personality is summoned to worship God: my spirit, my soul, my mind and my body. It is not only a matter of observing His command, but obedience to it is greatly fulfilling. In actual exercise, though, I too frequently end up merely repeating words that wear thin with overuse. Point 3 offers me a way of offering thanks, which keeps my worship alive and current. So:*

3. I Think Of A New Reason To Give Thanks

Psalms 100:4 from the New International Version reads, *Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.* I enter this day with thanksgiving for some specific way in which God has shown He has been faithful to me the day before. With fresh thanksgiving for what has just taken place, I have a new motivation to praise Him for what is just ahead.

4. I Present My Body In Worship

Romans 12:1 reads, *Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.* It is both scriptural and practical to involve my body in worship. Numerous scriptures instruct me to lift my hands, sing, shout, rejoice or prostrate myself before the Lord. Each one expresses a stance of my soul. This practice also keeps me alert on mornings when sleepiness could hinder me.

5. I Sing A New Song

Psalms 96:1-2 reads, *Oh, sing to the Lord a new song! Sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, bless His name.* To begin, I sing old hymns and new choruses. This keeps me from becoming stale in my soul. The practice of having my own hymnal helps in learning and singing the enriching content of hymn lyrics. I may also use the Bible for singing, especially selections from the book of Psalms.

6. I Allow Holy Spirit-Assisted Praise

1 Corinthians 14:15 from the New Living Translation reads, *I will sing in the spirit, and I will sing in words I understand.*

IN REFLECTION AND CONFESSION

Matthew 22:37 reads, *Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your soul, and with all your mind."* A pure soul is one uncluttered by accumulated attitudes, which are inconsistent with Your heart and purposes. It is one that is undiluted by a confusing mixture of motives or secret reservations. So:

2. I Confess Who I Am In Christ

Being conscious that I am the righteousness of God is so very important because it is transformative, so I confess that "I am the righteousness of God in Christ" each day to jump-start my devotional walk.

7. I Search My Soul

Psalms 139:23-24 from the New Living Translation reads, *Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.* The purpose of searching my soul is to discover sin; and, to confess as sin everything my inner man points out as being that. Openheartedness of this kind allows him free entry to examine and correct me. Many believers are caught up in unworthy practices or sinful habits that they do not even recognize as such. I desire to be different. When I make confession, I know that through the blood of Christ, I have instant and complete forgiveness.

8. I Recognize The Danger Of Deception

Jeremiah 17:9 from The Message Bible reads, *The heart is hopelessly dark and deceitful, a puzzle that no one can figure out. But I, God, search the heart and examine the mind... I get to the root of things. I treat them as they really are, not as they pretend to be.* Deception believes something is right when it is wrong. My soul must be brought under review daily because there is such a tendency to trust myself. "Father, I am too quick to suppose I'm right in my analysis of situations, my viewpoints of people and I am too inclined to walk through apparent opportunities without consulting You. My sincerity does not guarantee protection from deception because I am fallible, but because I open my soul to You and acknowledge my tendency to be deceived, then You're able to help me past deception's blind spots. So

Father, I recognize I am not always right in my analysis of situations or my viewpoints of people - because even people who hurt me aren't always wrong; and, I ask for your guidance and protection for this day because opportunities aren't always God-ordained. Thank You."

9. I Set A Monitor On My Mouth And Heart

Psalm 19:14 reads, *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight.* Whatever is in my heart will proceed out of my mouth. Because words have the ability to hurt or heal, curse or bless, it is clear why the psalmist prayed: *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight.* The best way I know to apply this wisdom is to:

→ Test the day behind me by reviewing my comments and conversations

"Was there any slip of the tongue or an attitude that needs to be confessed as wrong?"

→ Offer the day ahead of me and ask my spirit to be a sentinel of my mouth

"Father, I place before you the encounters of this day. I post my inner man as a sentinel, standing guard at the doorway of my mouth. I ask that he caution me or signal me to stop whenever my thoughts aren't right, or when wrong, cutting or unwise words might be about to be spoken."

10. I Keep Your Purposes And Goal In View

Philippians 3:13-14 from the Living Bible reads and I agree that ¹³*I am still not all I should be, but I am bringing all my energies to bear on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead,* ¹⁴*I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God is calling [me] up to heaven because of what Christ Jesus did for [me].* This verse expresses my long-range goal – to reach my life's purpose to be like Jesus. However, long-range goals are reached by completing a series of daily goals, and beginning each day with Jesus is the most practical goal I can set. As that daily goal is realized, the long-range goal is easily attainable.

IN WISDOM AND PRAYER

Psalm 90:12 reads, *So teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom.* This "wisdom" knows the right thing to do at the right time. Living a wise, fulfilling and rewarding life is the practical goal of my daily time with God; growing to maturity to be like Him is the spiritual goal. The Bible is very pointed about the value of an individual day and directs me to use these pieces of time wisely and profitably. So:

1. I Surrender My Day To You

Psalm 37:5-6 from the New International Version reads, ⁵*Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this:* ⁶*He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.* The first few seconds of my day can be turned into a powerful start. Instead of rising from bed by sitting up and standing, I slide my feet and legs over the edge and kneel at my bedside. This is not a prayer time so much as it is a time of commitment: "Dear Jesus, for this day I again say, You are my Lord. I submit this day and all it contains to You." That's it. Now I'm into my day. "Like the dawn" and "like the noonday sun," signal a promise that just as the sun rises and proceeds to master the darkness, so the Lord will cause His purpose to rise in my life for this day.

11. I Request Specific Direction For My Day

Proverbs 3:5-6 reads, ⁵*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding;* ⁶*In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.* Father, I outline the major events and responsibilities this day holds for me, thus acknowledging them before You. As I do, I trust You will bring order to my day. I know whatever I put into Your hand always returns with Your blessing.

12. I Feed My Spirit Your Word

Matthew 4:4 reads, *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.* Ben Campbell Johnson puts it this way: *A human being cannot exist on the physical necessities alone, but must be sustained by spiritual resources.* After I was born again, the spiritual sustenance I needed was the Word of God. So I read and meditate the Word each day. "Holy Spirit, feed my heart, enlighten my mind and show me things to come as I read and consider Your holy Word." I anticipate the quickening of a verse or phrase and I will meditate on that and journal it – so as to remember to act upon whatever was spoken to my heart. I periodically review these instructions from the Lord to ensure I am acting upon them.

13. I Partner With You In Prayer

“The target of fellowship with You goes beyond me. You desire me to partner with You in prayer. It is there I can join You in progressively realizing Your purposes fulfilled in me, in those I love, in the community I live and in the world for which Christ died.” A good place to begin is to pray the very same prayers Paul did for those he worked with, ministered to and loved. A good practice is to personalize these prayers by placing the names of the people I will be praying for in his prayers. Then I end by praying a few minutes in my prayer language.

The confession on the following page is what I say every day and it is Step 2 of *Walking With Jesus Every Day Devotions*.

CONFESSION OF WHO I AM IN CHRIST

Philemon 1:6 says, *that the sharing of my faith may become effective by the acknowledgement of every good thing which is in me in Christ Jesus. So...*

I acknowledge that I am the righteousness of God in Christ and that this is the greatest day of my life. I have been washed clean of all sin by the blood of Jesus Christ. I have boldness to enter the presence of God by His blood. I can draw near to the Father in full assurance of faith. His blood cleanses my conscience from my past so that I can now serve the living God.

I acknowledge that He has recreated me. Old things have passed away and all things have become new. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me. I died with Christ and my life is hidden with Christ in God. I was buried with Him and made alive with Him. Thanks be to God who gives me the victory through my Lord Jesus Christ. Because I have been raised and seated with Christ, I seek those things, which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

I acknowledge that God has done a wonderful work in me. I reckon myself to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus my Lord. I do not let sin reign in my mortal body and I do not obey it in its lusts. I do not present the members of my body as instruments of unrighteousness to sin. Instead, I present myself to God as being alive from the dead. And I present the members of my body as instruments of righteousness to God. Sin does not have dominion over me.

I acknowledge that I have the fruit of the spirit. My heart is full of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. There is no law of the flesh that is able to override the law of my spirit. My every attitude and action is guided by the Spirit of God who dwells within me. I stand fast in the liberty by which Christ has made me free, and I refuse to be entangled again with any yoke of bondage.

I acknowledge that I am God's property because I have been bought with the blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore, I am free from the curse of the law. Sin, sickness, poverty, fear, doubt, worry and confusion shall not have dominion over me. I am prospering in my spirit, soul and body. Jesus said the truth would make me free. I know the truth because I interact with Jesus every day. I worship Him and allow Him to search my soul every day. I meditate and read His Word and pray every day. I not only confess His Word and what He is doing in me but I act upon His Word. I do this because I am full of faith. His Word produces faith in me. And I expect God to do exceedingly abundantly above all that I ask or think. The Lord makes me the head and not the tail. I shall be above only and not be beneath. I shall lend unto many but I shall not borrow.

I acknowledge that I am full of God's forgiveness and love. So, I forgive as God has forgiven me. I love as God has loved me. Therefore, faith is working mightily in me. I speak directly to every mountain of adversity in my life and command them to go in the name of Jesus. I am a joint heir with Christ and as He is, so am I in this world. I have acknowledged every good thing in me in Christ Jesus and now I lift my voice and hands in praise and adoration to Your glorious name for You have made me worthy to praise you.

Daily schedules fluctuate and keep in mind there is no condemnation if your schedule requires you to amend or shorten personal devotions. So, I've included a shorter confession here. Use as needed.

CONFESSION OF WHO I AM IN CHRIST

Philemon 1:6 says, that the sharing of my faith may become effective by the acknowledgement of every good thing which is in me in Christ Jesus. So...

I acknowledge that I am the righteousness of God in Christ and that this is the greatest day of my life. I have been washed clean of all sin by the blood of Jesus Christ. I have boldness to enter the presence of God by His blood. I can draw near to the Father in full assurance of faith. His blood cleanses my conscience from my past so that I can now serve the living God.

Another useful thing I discovered after doing personal devotions for a number of years was to segue between most of the steps by singing a phrase or two of the Scripture or a song that complimented a step. These are tunes I use for each little song. Most of them are the scripture that the step is based on. They were popular choruses in years past but if you don't know them or the tune, just make up your own.

Walking With Jesus Every Day Transitional Songs

1. **I Surrender My Day To You**
Commit your way to the Lord; commit your way to the Lord; and trust in Him and He'll do this; He'll make your righteousness shine.
2. **I Confess Who I Am In Christ** (no song)
3. **I Think Of A New Reason To Give Thanks** (no song)
4. **I Present My Body In Worship**
I will enter His gates with thanksgiving in my heart; I will enter His courts with praise.
I will say this is the day that the Lord has made. I will rejoice for He has made me glad.
5. **I Sing A New Song** (no song)
6. **I Allow Holy Spirit-Assisted Praise** (no song)
7. **I Search My Soul**
Search me, O God, and know my heart today. Test me and know, and know my heart today.
And point out anything in me that offends you; along the path of everlasting life lead me.
8. **I Recognize The Danger Of Deception**
If we walk in the light as He; if we walk in the light as He; we have fellowship and the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin.
9. **I Set A Monitor On My Mouth And Heart**
Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart; be acceptable in your sight, O Lord.
10. **I Keep Your Purposes And Goal In View**
I am still not all that I should be, I am still not all that I should be,
but forgetting the past, I strain to reach, the end of my race!
11. **I Request Specific Direction For My Day**
Trust in the Lord, with all your heart, and lean not on your own; in all your ways acknowledge Him – He shall direct your paths.
12. **I Feed My Spirit Your Word**
Man shall not live by bread alone; man shall not live by bread alone;
But by every word that proceeds from God.
Man shall not live by bread alone.
13. **I Partner With You In Prayer**
Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, that calls me from a world of care,
and bids me at my Father's throne, make all my wants and wishes known.