

MEETING  
G O D  
IN SCRIPTURE

A HANDS-ON GUIDE TO  
LECTIO DIVINA

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# Relying on the Kingdom of God

*Matthew 6:10, 25-34*

## RELAX AND REFOCUS (*SILENCIO*)

Center yourself by breathing in and out. Relax your neck and take time to let your muscles relax.

*Optional*—To settle in a little more, think about this idea: *I have everything I need*. What color does that idea bring to mind? Why?

## READ (*LECTIO*)

Read the passage to yourself silently. Then read the notes below it about the key words and phrases. Consider how these details help your understanding of the passage. Then read the passage aloud slowly. Take time to let the words “fall on your ear.”

## REFLECT (*MEDITATIO*)

*Questions and cues to help you reflect on the passage.*

1. Consider these paraphrases of “seek first his kingdom” (verse 33). Which versions do you find most engaging?
  - Strive to be a part of what God is actually doing on earth now and the goodness with which God is doing it.<sup>1</sup>

## Matthew 6:10, 25-34

<sup>10</sup>Your **kingdom** come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.

<sup>25</sup>"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? <sup>26</sup>Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? <sup>27</sup>Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

<sup>28</sup>"And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. <sup>29</sup>Yet I tell you that not even **Solomon in all his splendor** was dressed like one of these. <sup>30</sup>If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? <sup>31</sup>So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' <sup>32</sup>For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. <sup>33</sup>But seek first his kingdom and his **righteousness**, and all these things will be given to you as well. <sup>34</sup>Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

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**kingdom** "The kingdom of God is the range of [God's] effective will: that is, it is the domain where what he prefers is actually what happens."<sup>2</sup> God's kingdom is in power wherever God's will is done.

**Solomon in all his splendor** This refers to the vast wealth and glamour of Solomon's court. To get the meaning we might substitute the name of a very rich person or a model.

**righteousness** The Greek word, *dikaïosynē* (Strong's 1343), means deep, attractive inner goodness. "The best translation of *dikaïosynē* would be a paraphrase: something like 'what that is about a person that makes him or her really right or good.' For short, we might say 'true inner goodness.'"<sup>3</sup>

- “Place top priority on identifying and involving [our]selves in what God is doing and in the kind of righteousness [*dikaiosynē*] he has. All else needed is provided.”<sup>4</sup>
- “Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don’t worry about missing out. You’ll find all your everyday human concerns will be met. Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don’t get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes” (*The Message*).

2. What do you think God is actually doing right now in the world? In people you know? In groups you are part of? In you?

3. Imagine that Jesus is speaking the words in this passage directly to you. Remember that he knows what matters most to you. How might he complete this line (from verse 25): *Is not life more than \_\_\_\_\_?* Mark as many as you find appropriate.

- the food you crave
- owning the latest styles of clothing
- advancing in your career
- having a classy car, house or apartment
- being a perfect parent, spouse or coworker
- having a body that others admire
- achieving more than anyone else in your family has achieved
- crossing off every item on today’s to-do list
- other people’s good opinion of you
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

4. *Fly on the wall cue: Picture Jesus teaching.* This passage is part of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7), so you might imagine Jesus

saying these things as he sits or stands on a hillside. Envision people laughing as Jesus talks about someone who worries very hard because he thinks that will help him live a few days longer, or someone who is so enchanted by wild flowers that she doesn't notice her favorite film star walking by. What might Jesus' facial expressions and tone of voice have been as he talked about how everything is provided in the kingdom of God? Base this on what you know of him (he was friendly to children, he could speak passionately).

***Reflect on the invitation.*** Perhaps God is offering you an invitation in this passage to enlarge your understanding about something. What might that be? Read the passage again and then sit quietly for a few minutes, pondering these questions:

- What word or phrase stands out to you?
- If you pictured Jesus saying these words, what do you notice?
- Why do you think that is?

***Reflect a little further.*** You may wish to read the passage again. Then consider:

- How does this passage connect with your life?
- Is there some idea, feeling or intention you need to embrace from it? If so, what?
- What might God be inviting you to be, know, understand, feel or even do?

Be open to the quiet and don't feel pressured to come up with an answer.

### **RESPOND (*ORATIO*)**

Take a few minutes to respond to God about this. What do you most want to say to God about this experience in Scripture? About the idea that everything we need is provided to us in the kingdom of God?

You may wish to ask God questions (the answers to which may come to you later). You may wish to write out your prayer. Sometimes that helps to keep our mind from wandering.

**REST (CONTEMPLATIO)**

Soak in this idea: *In the kingdom, you have everything you need.* What would your life be like if you trusted that this was true?

Spend a few more minutes noticing the thoughts that have come to you.

**TRYING IT ON (INCARNATIO)**

Try to notice actions and attitudes around you that reflect people doing what God wants done. Thank God for these glimpses.