



Reading Relationally

Revelations from the Holy Spirit often come from “Reading Relationally.” This means talking to God about what you are reading while you are reading His Word. For example: Interact with Him as you read, as you would in a conversation with a friend. Ask him questions to explain and clarify what you are reading. Give Him encouraging words of thanks, praise, amazement, and exclamation. “*My sheep (that’s you) hear My voice, I know them, and they follow Me.*” **John 10:27**

As you begin reading, pray through **Luke 24:45**, “Lord, open my mind to *understand the Scriptures.*” Ask Him, “Lord, what do YOU want to say?” And then when He speaks, respond back to Him. He just loves to interact with you!

Imagine you have just invited a friend over for coffee. They have come to hear about the wonderful trip you just took. Your friend kindly lets you know that they have an hour to visit and then they have to pick up their son. At your friend’s invitation, you begin sharing in great detail about your trip, the amazing things you saw and did, and the awesome things God taught you. It is obvious that your friend is listening with great interest, but they never comment on anything that you are sharing. Yes, there is eye contact, and they are paying attention, but they never ask any questions, express excitement, or interact with you over your story. Well, the time is up, and they politely let you know that they must go pick up their son. You express how glad you are that they stopped by, and you say goodbye. You think to yourself, “Hmmm...? I am so glad my friend was here, but I feel empty. My friend never commented or asked questions. I know they were here for an hour, but the lack of interaction leaves me feeling disconnected and wondering if they really care. Were they really listening?” I think this is how God feels when we are reading His Word. When we don’t interact and dialogue with Him, I think He misses the interaction too.

Interestingly enough, as your friend is leaving, a mutual friend pulls into the driveway. Out your kitchen window, you hear your friend expressing to this new person in great detail how wonderful it was to hear about your trip, the incredible things you did and saw, and God’s amazing handiwork in all your travels. At that moment, you wonder, “Gee, why didn’t they share that with me?” Let me suggest this: I believe that this is often what we do to God. Like the friend who was visiting and talking later to your mutual friend, we go talk ABOUT God after being with Him, but we don’t talk TO God in response to what we are reading in His Word as we are reading. We spend perhaps an hour with Him. We listen and maybe even take notes. But we never really interact with the Author of the Bible that we are reading. I spent too many years reading as an observer rather than meeting with my Savior personally for the relationship for which I was created. Miraculously, He desires to have an interactive conversation with us, literally talking with us out of the pages of His Word (**Hebrews 4:12**). We must remember to interact with Him at that moment while we are in His Word:

1. Ask questions as we read.
2. Respond in amazement to a particular character’s actions.
3. Say “Thank You!”
4. Express emotions in response to what we just read.
5. Confess right then that we aren’t doing what we are reading about but would love God to give us a “want to.”

These are just a few suggested examples of how we might interact with God as we are reading. There are assuredly many more!

The point is, it is not just THAT you are reading the Bible but HOW you are interacting with the Author while you are reading it. He doesn’t want us to just read and gather information and go perform it, He wants us to realize that He wants to be involved in the process with us as we are reading. He wants us to talk with Him while He is talking to us through His Word. We know how to do this because we naturally do it all the time with friends. He wants us to do that with Him, our Companion and Friend. God doesn’t complicate something so important to Him. He wants us to realize that on our own we cannot do one thing written in His Word because “*apart from Him, we can do nothing.*” **John 15:5** He wants us to realize that “*we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.*” **Philippians 4:13** He is just waiting for us to ask and to ask as we are reading, not just when we are finished reading. Interact with Him as you would a friend over coffee. He doesn’t want to be treated like a business interaction or a mere acquaintance. Let’s face it, there is no other book in the whole world that you can interact with the author WHILE you are reading. We call this *Reading Relationally*. You can do that with the Bible because it is the Living Word! I believe that God is merciful, but I believe He





feels just like the person in my story who poured their heart out to their friend and then received no response or interaction during the course of their hour together. Let's delight and bring abundant pleasure to the Lover of our souls and talk with Him throughout the pages of His Word as we journey with Him each morning in His love letter to us! Let's not just talk about God, but let's talk to Him as we are reading. Hang on for the ride of your life because He has treasures He wants to share from His heart to yours when you interact with Him! Try it and you will see! My Bible is full of my writing down God's responses to my questions and amazing insights that only He can give. As you experience relationship with God, nobody will have to tell you to talk about God and His Word. You will be looking for an audience automatically out of the overflow of your relationship with God. Not only are you blessed, but so will be many others. Your genuine enthusiasm is contagious and makes people hungry to go and hear from God like that themselves!

So here is an example of Reading Relationally from Psalm 84. Keep in mind that when you are in a conversation with someone, you don't comment on every sentence they utter. In the same way, as you are reading God's Word relationally, you don't comment on every line you read, but you respond when you have a question, comment, etc. Here is an example of one of my conversations with God while I was Reading Relationally:

Psalm 84:1 "How lovely is Your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty."

Me: Lord, what is Your dwelling place like anyway?

God: My child, you are My dwelling place. Keep it clean and keep it lovely.

Psalm 84:2 "I long, yes, I faint with longing to enter the courts of the LORD. With my whole being, body and soul, I will shout joyfully to the living God."

Me: Lord, I so want to worship You constantly this way. I notice that when I am in a crisis I am much quicker to cling to You and pour out to You with my whole being, body and soul. And as much as I don't want to admit it, I really do thank You for allowing difficulties in my life and caring enough to train me by allowing challenging things. Please help me to remember there is purpose to my pain as a part of the work of Your kingdom.

God: My child, as I teach this truth to others through you, listen, for it is a reminder to you, too.

Psalm 84:3-6 "Even the sparrow finds a home there, and the swallow builds her nest and raises her young— at a place near Your altar, O Lord Almighty, my King and my God! How happy are those who can live in Your house, always singing Your praises. Happy are those who are strong in the LORD, who set their minds on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. When they walk through the Valley of Weeping, it will become a place of refreshing springs, where pools of blessing collect after the rains!"

Me: Oh Lord, only You can turn weeping into refreshing springs! And if that weren't enough, You bless us, not with puddles, but with pools of blessings! Wow, Lord, thanks for that amazing insight You just gave me! What a wonderful picture! You are awesome! What kind of God are You that can love like this?! I thank You for the privilege of knowing You and being trained by You.

God: My child, may you sense My pleasure over your love for Me. It's important to Me that you know that.

Psalm 84:7-10a "They will continue to grow stronger, and each of them will appear before God in Jerusalem. O LORD God Almighty, hear my prayer. Listen, O God of Israel. O God, look with favor upon the king, our protector! Have mercy on the one You have anointed. A single day in Your courts is better than a thousand anywhere else!"

Me: Oh Lord, may I learn to become more and more intimate with You; that this is the continual cry of my heart. Lord, what are Your courts really like?

God: My child, I love that you are asking. Keep reading the Psalms, and I will reveal the answer to your question.

Psalm 84:10b-12 "I would rather be a gatekeeper in the house of my God than live the good life in the homes of the wicked. For the LORD God is our light and protector. He gives us grace and glory. No good thing will the LORD withhold from those who do what is right. O LORD Almighty, happy are those who trust in You."

Me: Father, I know that I am not trusting in You right now over the decisions that I have to make, which is why I am not content and happy. But right now I am asking You to give me a want to, to trust You in every aspect of this decision. I am choosing right now to trust You and to stop trying to figure things out myself. I so desire to keep Your dwelling place clean, surrendered and lovely! I love You and thank You for being so real and speaking to me today!

God: And My child, I love that you are real with Me.

