

Daily Devotions

Agape Teaching Ministry

98 Aldgate Rd.
Winnipeg, MB
Canada, R2N 2Z5

www.atmc.ca
aldwin@mts.net

Ph. 204-253-6826
Fax. 204-256-0988

Rev. Dr. Aldwin Ragoonath, Th.D

God speaks—is always speaking. We need to do all in our power to stay connected with Him, to hear His words through daily devotions. There can be no relationship with God, and no personal growth, unless we establish the discipline of daily Bible study and prayer. And for those who already have a strong devotional life, you need to continue so that you may know the mind of Christ and obey Him.

- **the possibility of a moral and righteous family** - How will children know what is right or wrong if there is no teaching about sex before marriage, drugs, cheating in school or other matters about right living.
- **the possibility of sending your family to the next generation as people who know the Bible's teaching and the tradition of passing on daily devotions to the next generation** - one of the most satisfying things that can happen to us as Christians is to see our children following the Lord and living the values we taught them.

Be easy on yourself. If you miss a day of daily devotions, you will not go to hell! If you love the Lord, you will go back to having daily devotions as soon as possible.

Commit to Daily Devotions

You may need to change your **attitude** so as to become a person who desires to have daily devotions. If you have a bad attitude toward devotions, tell God about it and ask Him to help you change it. Put first things first and the rest will take care of itself.

- if we take time to deal only with the stresses of life, our children will worry when they grow up;
- if they see you too busy to spend time with them, they may have no time for you when they grow up;
- if you put God first in everything children will do the same as adults because they will have experienced the benefits of it.

Develop a new habit. It takes about six weeks to form a new habit. After that it will become easier to keep your devotions as a daily practice. Make devotions an important part of your lifestyle.

Daily Devotions

I believe in having daily devotions.

My wife, Rubena, and I are experiencing a time of spiritual growth as we spend time in Bible study and prayer. It is one of the better times of each day. I don't know of anyone who is living a vibrant Christian life, and doing a work for God, who does not spend time studying God's word and praying every day—these seem to go hand in hand. My desire and prayer is to motivate Christians to study God's word and pray every day.

Christians Who Don't Have Daily Devotions Are Failing

Christians who don't take time for daily devotions are missing out on a **daily infusion of the presence of God**, a sense of the strength and power of God in their lives every day. They are missing out on the daily guidance of the power of the Holy Spirit. We live in a very negative and hostile world. To counteract its influence we need God's presence, an infusion of His power, more than ever. You can come before the throne of grace, talk to the Lord, tell Him that you love Him, lay your problems at His feet and receive His help and strength.

During my years as a pastor, I observed people who had daily devotions and saw how their lives were positively affected. Christians who don't take time for daily Bible study and prayer lack spiritual growth. A consistently faithful devotional life leads to vibrant Christian living. Daily devotions lead to involvement in Christian service; a lack of devotions leads to a lack of Christian service.

Attending church is very important but doing so does not help us to be Bible-literate. You could attend church for 30 years but remain illiterate about what the Bible teaches. You need to read the Bible every day so that you can grow. Daily reading of the Bible keeps us alert to who God is, what He does and what He is going to do. Relationship with the living God can be a daily event that continues throughout life.

We Are Privileged To Have the Bible in Our Language

In Bible times, only a few people had a copy or portion of scripture because it was still being written. Much human labour was needed to reproduce copies which made them very expensive. Only a few people could afford it and, furthermore, only 5 to 10 percent of the people were literate.

Some people still do not have the privilege of holding God's Word in their hands so as to read it in their own language. In countries where Christians are persecuted, the scriptures are still not available to all the people. They may have only a few copies, or portions of the scriptures. (To fill some of that void a church in Edmonton is translating and printing 13 million Bibles for Chinese Moslems).

By contrast, during the Monastic period, (circa 300–1200 AD) men would lock themselves in a room, or sit for long stretches of time at the top of a 25 foot pole, to devote themselves to meditation. This shows that it is possible to go too far to gain spirituality. Spending all our time reading the scriptures, praying

Devotional guides are excellent. They send you to the Bible and usually give you a short illustration. Go to browse and buy devotional guides in a Christian book store or find some at one or two of the many sources on the Internet.

Reading and meditating on the Bible for 30 minutes is not bad; retired people can take 30-60 minutes. Study one book at a time and make notes. If you read three chapters a day, you will get through the Bible in one year.

It is important to **study** the Word of God. Based on your education, you may want to get a study Bible and **write down what you have learned**. If that still doesn't stimulate you enough, you may want to learn Hebrew and/or Greek so as to study the Bible in the original languages.

The time spent on **family devotions** depends on the age of the children and the schedule of the parents. If you are too busy, focus on taking time once a week for devotions. But read and pray with your family daily. Even a few minutes after supper will be beneficial.

Consider the history of the great hymns of the church or pray the prayers of the church fathers and great Christians (the Apostles' Creed). Use a notebook and write down what you have learned.

Results of Daily Devotions

These include:

- **a closer family** - a family that has devotions together, stays together.
- **a Biblically literate family** - It is amazing how illiterate people are about the Bible. Having so many versions may have robbed us of the habit of memorizing scripture. Memorizing Bible verses will help us to find solace in times of trouble thereby giving the family a basic tool to solve the problems of life.

Children learn from what they see us do:

- if we watch too much television, our children will do the same;
- if we steal from the tax man, they will do the same thing;
- if we rip off the insurance company, they will do the same thing;
- if they see us trusting God with our problems, they too will trust God with their problems;
- if we have devotions with them, they will continue to have devotions as adults.

There Are Different Types of Daily Devotions

Personal Devotions: This is where you, alone, read the Bible and pray every day, meditating, thinking on what you have read.

Couples Devotions: This is time that couples spend together, reading, meditating and praying. A devotional guide book can be a good tool for this.

Family Devotions: This is time spent reading and praying with your children, often at bedtime. You can use a Bible story once a week; you can reflect on the story and pray together.

Principles for Daily Devotions

Choose a **time** for daily devotions. For most people, after supper works well as a family. Spend 15–20 minutes together in prayer, praise and worship. Thank God for yesterday's blessings and for the prayers that He has answered. Ask God for your personal needs and for those of family, friends, pastors, church, your group and the world.

Choose a **place** for your personal devotions: kitchen, living room, bedroom—whatever works best for you.

and meditating can lead to mysticism. We need balance. Luke 7:33-34 says

“For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say ‘he has a demon.’ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say ‘here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’”

Jesus lived a balanced life. He spent time praying and fasting, meditating, studying and preaching. He also attended weddings at which he ate, drank, made friends with and encouraged people. He spent significant time in prayer with His Heavenly Father yet lived with the people around Him.

It was only after 1611 that the Bible became widely available in English (people of the Roman Catholic faith had to wait longer for permission from the Pope to read and study the Bible).

In Joshua 1:8) Moses reminded,

“Do not let the Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”

At this time, they had only the first five books of the Bible. In 2 Timothy 2:15 we read,

“do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”

This was addressed to a young preacher who had access only to Old Testament scriptures but the same instruction can be applied to us today.

The Purposes of Daily Devotions

The purpose of daily devotions is **to grow spiritually**. That can only be accomplished by reading God's word and praying every day. There is a place for Christian television programs

and books but these should not be a substitute for daily devotions. Bible literacy should lead to **obedience** to the Word of God and **surrender to the Lordship of Christ**. It should also lead to a commitment to evangelism, and less emphasis on materialism. The western church might be **intellectually literate**, but it is very poor at obedience. People in the so-called third world (two-thirds world) may not be Biblically literate but they are big on **obedience**. For example, if they learn that they need to evangelize they will make the gospel of Jesus Christ known to other people often at great cost and personal sacrifice.

Another purpose of daily devotions is to **take our problems to God**—there is no place to take our problems but to the Lord. You can come before the throne of grace, tell the Lord all of your problems, and receive His help and strength.

By spending time with Him each day, we can know God's will for our lives. Through **the illumination of God's Word**, guided by the Holy Spirit, we can know the specific will of God for any situation we face such as for a specific ministry, a trip, a move to another home or sharing the gospel with someone.

Daily devotions are also a time to **search the Scriptures for testing doctrine**. In Acts 17:10–12 we read,

“As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.”

The Bereans, a literate group of people, searched the Word of God. We would learn much more if we were to discuss the pastor's sermon each week with a group of people.

Spending time daily in Bible study and prayer will also help us **bear fruit that remains**. John 15:5 says,

*“I am the vine, you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he **will bear much fruit**; apart from me you can do nothing.”*

Jesus speaks about abiding in the vine and bearing fruit. I can't think of any better way to “abide in Jesus” than to spend time with Him in daily devotions.

Daily devotions help **keep the family together**. At a time when so many families are falling apart, the family that learns what the Bible teaches and prays together has a greater possibility of staying together. We become **intimate with one another** at a higher level in prayer and the study of God's Word. We move beyond the intellectual and emotional to a new, higher quality of intimacy.

Finally, the daily devotion time is a **great opportunity to teach the Word of God in the home**. It is not the school's responsibility—the Bible has been removed from our schools. It is not the responsibility of our friends because they have limited influence on our children. It is not the church's responsibility because it has approximately 30 minutes per week to teach our children in Sunday School. It is not the media, such as TV or radio or the Internet. **It is still the home that is the greatest institution**. The world has stolen the power of God that the home should have. We need to take back the power from the world, power that God meant for families to have and enjoy.

We influence our children more by what we do than by what we say. Parents must realize that they have the most influence in their children's lives; they should use that influence in a Godly manner. You greatly influence and determine the future of your child.