

# Devotions and Devotion

by Nancy Leigh DeMoss

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*Nancy Leigh DeMoss emphasizes the importance of daily devotions as a vital practice for nurturing an intimate relationship with God amidst life's distractions.*

**Topics:** "Daily Devotions", "Personal Sanctification"

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## Description

Nancy Leigh DeMoss shares a personal reflection on the impact of her father's daily devotional practice and how it influenced her own walk with God. She emphasizes the importance of prioritizing intimate time with the Lord through daily devotions, drawing from her father's commitment and her own struggles to maintain this discipline. She highlights the transformation that occurs when we choose to nurture our relationship with God through consistent prayer and Bible study, despite the challenges and distractions we may face. Nancy encourages believers to view daily devotions not as a duty, but as a precious opportunity to draw near to the God of the universe and experience His love and presence in a deeper way.

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## Transcript

When I was a little girl, I was first exposed to one of the most essential ingredients in nurturing an intimate relationship with God, as I became aware that my father began each day with a practice that he called "devotions."

A businessman with many demands on his time, and active in ministry of many kinds, my father was not one to spend time frivolously. Yet somehow, in the midst of an extremely active and busy household, and with incessant demands of travel and meetings, there was one constant in his life--he never got started into the business of the day, without first having spent an hour or more alone with the Lord.

I don't recall ever actually being with him during those times--though I did frequently see him reading his Bible--but somehow we all knew that this time in the Word and prayer was more important to him than any other activity of his day. As I got older, I learned something of how this had come to be such an indispensable part of his day.

During his teenage and young adult years, in search of thrills, my father became addicted to gambling, adopting a freewheeling life-style that kept him moving from one gambling "hot spot" to another, destroyed any sense of values he may have had, and caused no little heartache to his parents. One night, while in his mid-twenties, having made a mess of his life, he came under the preaching of the gospel. He was

converted and never looked back.

Early in his Christian life, he was challenged to give the first part of every day to the Lord in the Word and in prayer. From that day, until the day he went to heaven twenty-eight years later, he never missed one single day of this devotional practice. Nothing was more important to him than cultivating his relationship with the Lord, and he believed strongly that nothing was more essential to maintaining that relationship than a daily time alone with the Lord in the Word and prayer.

"Daily devotions" was not something my parents forced on us, but the influence of my dad's example and training in this area was profound. Although he has been with the Lord since 1979, the image of a dad on his knees before the Lord (I don't know how many kneeling pads he wore out over the years), is indelibly etched on my mind and in my heart.

I want to be quick to say that my own "record" in this matter is far from my dad's. Although I have made a practice since earliest childhood of beginning my day with the Lord, I have to acknowledge that this is a discipline that has never come easily for me. As much as I cherish and value and need this time with the Lord, to this day, I find myself having to fight to make it a consistent reality.

I battle my flesh, which loves to sleep, is easily distracted, and does not like to sit still and be quiet. I battle my schedule with its never-ending "to do" list. I battle interruptions--many of my own making.

There are many mornings when I have allowed the pillow, the phone, or piles of office work to win out, and have ended up spending only a few hurried moments with Him. On occasion, I have even missed out altogether on spending any time alone with Him.

But over the years I have come to believe with all my heart that this is something worth fighting for. I have come to understand that one of the reasons it is such a battle is that the enemy of my soul knows if he can defeat me here, he will ultimately be able to defeat me in every other area of my spiritual life.

Over the years, I have come to see that "devotions" is not so much an obligation of the Christian life, as it is an incredible opportunity to know the God of the universe. He has issued to you and me an invitation to draw near to Him, to walk right in to the "Holy of Holies," to enter into an intimate love relationship with Him.

"Devotions" has become for me, not so much a duty (although there are still days when it is just that), as a delight--an awesome privilege to share sweet union and communion with the Bridegroom of my soul. But it hasn't always been that way.

One "Happy Meal" to go, please!

From the time I was twenty, for nearly twelve years, I traveled full-time, year-round in ministry. During that period, I became a fast food junkie. More times than I care to remember, I picked up my tacos or burger and fries at the drive-through window, and then would sit in the parking lot for the 21/2 minutes it took me to inhale my meal. Frequently, I didn't even bother to stop, but would just keep right on going, eating my meal while driving to the next appointment.

I actually didn't mind living that way--until I reached the age of thirty. About that time, my body started to feel the effects of years of junk food. I found that my body was craving a more nutritious, balanced diet, and that I couldn't keep eating the way I had for over a decade. I had to make some fairly drastic changes

in my lifestyle, to accommodate my body's needs. A number of years ago, after going through an 18-month period in which my schedule had been unusually grueling, I woke up one day and realized that I had become a spiritual "fast-food junkie." I had allowed deadlines, projects, and demands to take priority over my relationship with the Lord. Oh, I still had a "quiet time"--of sorts. I usually managed to get in some sort of spiritual meal. But all too frequently, that "meal" had come to consist of hurriedly reading a short passage of Scripture, just before running out the door to accomplish one more thing for God.

Spiritually, I was living in "fast-food drive-throughs." I was "having my devotions." But I wasn't having "devotion." I wasn't meeting with God. I wasn't nurturing our relationship.

Like the Shulamite bride in the Song of Songs, I had tended the vineyards of others--I had been busy tending to everyone else's spiritual well-being; but I had failed to tend the garden of my own heart (Song of Songs 1:6).

As God used circumstances to reveal my malnourished spiritual condition, I realized the price I had paid for those months of neglect.

But how I thank my merciful, longsuffering Father that He never stops pursuing a love relationship with those who belong to Him. Graciously, kindly, He wooed my heart that had become so distracted and desensitized to Him. His goodness brought me to repent of having wandered so far from His side, to renew my vows to Him, and to re-establish my relationship with Him as the number one priority of my day. As I responded to His initiative, the Good Shepherd began the process of restoring my soul, leading me to the still waters and green pastures that I so desperately needed.

In the Song of Songs, we are told of an instance when the bride, through failure to respond to the initiative of her Bridegroom, experienced a loss of intimacy. Troubled by the breach in the relationship, she set out on an intense search for her Beloved. In recounting that thrilling moment when He was restored to her, she says, "I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go" (Song of Songs 3:4).

With that grateful bride, I would say, "I have found Him whom my soul loves." Now the earnest desire of my heart is to hold fast to Him, and never again to let Him go. I know of no way to experience unbroken union and communion with our Beloved apart from a conscious, deliberate choice to spend time alone with Him each morning.

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