

Devotional Time or Bible Study? or Both?



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Do you see the need for a separate devotional time each day or do you focus solely on your Bible study and lesson preparation?

It is a question that has been discussed for years by Precept Bible study leaders. Sometimes the discussion becomes one of right versus wrong. You know how we can be sometimes, as serious students of the Word, we also tend to have serious opinions. So, which is it?

First, all of us are wired by our Creator to be a little bit different from the Christian sitting next to us. We are not cookie-cutter Christians. And since we are all different, maybe we don't all need to do the same thing in the same way.

I have a friend, who loves the Lord and is an excellent student of the Word, who reads 40 chapters of Scripture each day, and I mean every day. If he is the standard, then I am perhaps the worst Christian ever. Some days I do not even read one whole chapter of Scripture.

In a recent conversation about discipleship he asked which was more important when making disciples, teaching them to read volumes of Scripture (40 chapters a day!) or serious study of only a few chapters? As we discussed the options it became obvious the answer was "Well, it depends". All of us are different. Yes, we should all be reading chapters and books of Scripture to get the big picture of what God is doing, and yes we should all be studying chapters in depth to understand the details of the book. It is not an "either or" question.

It is the same with devotionals. For some people spending time engaging in an emotional response to the Word revealed character of God is vital. They need the emotional release of telling God how much they love Him, and reading about His love for us. For others, the emotional side, while still present, is less important.

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For example, in 1 Chronicles 17:1-15 David wants to build a temple for God. David inquires of Nathan the prophet. Prophets tend to be obedience oriented, yes or no, no nonsense sort of people. Nathan says “yes”, go ahead, and then comes back the next morning and says “no”. Bible study is full of prophets saying do this and don’t do that. Nathan appeals to a lot of us – Be diligent to show yourself approved unto God as workman...” (2 Timothy 2:15). This sort of yes or no answer appeals to those of us who don’t need warm devotionals. We study the Word and are very content with Bible study and lesson preparations. But not everyone is like that.

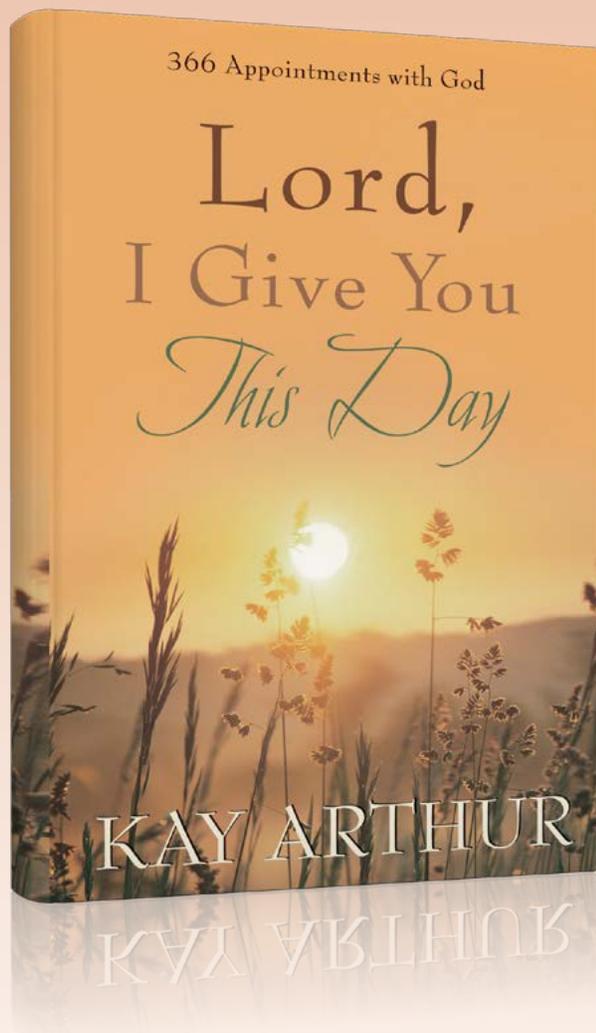
Many of us are like David, the author of so many Psalms. We need a warm, emotional, meditative time with God. Read David’s response to the prophet in 1 Chronicles 17:16-27, it is an emotional praise and worship session. I suspect that David was a student of Scripture, but I am certain that David was wired to need meditative devotions.

My point is that the answer to the question is not Bible study or devotions, but Bible study and devotions. I hope you can use some of this to encourage other believers.

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by Kay Arthur



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