



EXCERPT

IVP Connect

Study & Meditation

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The way we approach the Bible affects our interaction with God. Learning to immerse ourselves in God's thoughts through study and meditation allows us to go deeper into God's Word and live in a more Christlike way. This six-session LifeGuide from Jan Johnson helps us do just that.

New LifeGuide Bible Study: *Study & Meditation*

Have you ever wondered how God changes people? Maybe it seems as if old habits never change no matter how hard you try. Maybe you've become discouraged with your lack of growth into Christlikeness. You know that you are forgiven through Jesus' suffering on the cross, and you realize that you are totally accepted by God on that basis. This is wonderful. And yet your desire to live in a way that pleases God somehow constantly falls short of the mark.

God desires to transform our souls. This transformation occurs as we recognize that God created us to live in an interactive relationship with the Trinity. Our task is not to transform ourselves but to stay connected with God in as much of life as possible. As we pay attention to the nudges of the Holy Spirit, we become disciples of Christ. Our task is to do the connecting, while God does the perfecting.

As we connect with God, we gradually begin acting more like Christ. We become more likely to weep over our enemies instead of discrediting them. We're more likely to give up power instead of taking control. We're more likely to point out another's successes rather than grab the credit. Connecting with God changes us on the inside, and we slowly become the tenderhearted, conscientious people our families always wished we'd become. This transformation of our souls through the work of the Holy Spirit results in "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

God does in us what we cannot do by trying to be good. Trying to be good generally makes us obnoxious because it's so obvious that we're only trying. The goodness doesn't come from within ourselves. When we do succeed at being good, we subtly look down on those who don't do as well. Either way, we remain focused on self instead of on setting our hearts on things above.

Connecting with God, then, is important. But what does connecting with God look like? Through the work of the Holy Spirit, we copy Jesus in behind-the-scenes everyday activities he did to connect with God. As we let these activities become habits, we slowly become trained to have the heart of Christ and behave as he did. These activities are spiritual disciplines, also called spiritual exercises or strategies.

—Taken from *Getting the Most out of Study & Meditation*

For over three decades LifeGuide Bible Studies have provided solid biblical content and raised thought-provoking questions—making for a one-of-a-kind Bible study experience for individuals and groups. This series has more than one hundred thirty titles on Old and New Testament books, character studies, and topical studies.



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