

How to Keep Daily Devotions Fresh

I really should have my devotions before I do anything else, I reminded myself as I laid aside my magazine and reached for my Bible.

Leafing through the pages, I wondered, What should I read today? I like the epistles, but maybe I should read in the Old Testament for a change. I don't feel like tackling a long book. Proverbs is my favorite. No, I read Proverbs last month. Psalms? The minor prophets? Maybe the New Testament would be better. Let's see, I could read through the gospels. But, I haven't looked at Revelation for a long time.

Finally, I settled on an epistle. It seems as if I read the epistles more than anything else, I thought. Is it because they're practical, or is it just because they're short?

Glancing at the clock, I realized that I had been sitting there for over half an hour. I couldn't have been reading more than five or ten minutes when I decided, this is getting to be a drag.

The next day I leafed through my Bible again, but I couldn't decide what to read. Then the phone rang, and I forgot about devotions that day. After a few days, I thought of it again. What to read – finally I read a random chapter. I wished I could find a way to make Bible reading more exciting – and to keep it going!

Through years of experimentation with Bible reading and devotions, at last I have discovered the answers to my own questions. First, I have realized that I am able to maintain a daily habit of Bible reading and prayer only when I am resolutely determined to do so. If I have devotions only when I feel like it, I usually find myself neglecting to have a consistent devotional time. Satan seems to have other suggestions for my time whenever I give him that option.

I read that a man once asked Abraham Lincoln's advice on how to become a lawyer. "If you are resolutely determined," Lincoln replied, "the thing is half done already." A resolute determination to have a daily devotional time is a prime requisite for success, I have found.

Then, I have noticed that sometimes when I intended to have devotions, the affairs of everyday life so pressed me that I found no time in my busy day for Bible reading. Only when I have set aside a definite time, scheduled my day around it, and guarded it jealously have I found the time I needed. A help in understanding and applying all that I have read.

"Not devotions again!" has been my attitude at times, I am sorry to confess. But certain steps have helped me maintain a more successful devotional time. I have resolutely determined to have devotions. I have set aside a special time and guarded it jealously. I always have a special project to keep my interest high. As I read, I add to my list of projects for future study. I summarize in writing the main idea that God impresses upon

me each day. And I pray before, after, and sometimes through my reading. I challenge you to try these steps. I believe that they will lead others to success, too. When following these steps, it's very hard to say, "Not devotions again!"