

# Devotions and the Delta Model

## Personal Scripture Journaling using the Delta Model

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What do you actually *do* in your "quiet time"?

Do you read a large chunk of scripture as your mind wanders to and fro? How much scripture do you have to read for you to reach your "quota" of scripture reading and move on for the day?

Or perhaps you read a smaller portion of scripture and meditate on it. So how do you stimulate your meditation so it becomes real, vital, relevant to where you are, and taking you deeper into relationship with God? What brings you to repentance during those moments of meditation? Or is there repentance at all? Perhaps your deepest meditation consists of no more than, "Hmmm....that was a good verse. I'm glad I read that."

How *do* you get more out of your personal time in the scripture? Does going deeper mean gathering more information? Like reading commentaries on the scripture? Or does it by going deeper into God, exploring who He is, and allowing him to probe more deeply into your heart, going more deeply into relationship with Him? How would you do that?

The Delta Model is helpful not only for as a method for facilitating a group discussion, but also for personal devotions.

### ***The Delta Model in a Nutshell***

For a full treatment of the Delta Model, see the document entitled *The Delta Model*. A brief overview is included here for convenience.

The Delta Model is a template based approach to guiding bible application personally or group discussions. Any given biblical text or topic can be "poured" into the template of questions to produce rich, meaningful, relational, biblical dialogue that results in greater understanding of God and personal transformation.

The following is the standard template of Delta Model questions. Each question builds upon the previous question. Each of the questions aims to stimulate a specific kind of thought—noted in parentheses--which you can read about in *The Delta Model*.

1. What is the **will of God**? (*Understanding*)
2. In light of God's will, **what is He like**? (*Understanding*)
3. What are practical ways that we can **put the will of God into practice**? (*Application*)
4. In light of God's will, what are **practical ways that we blow it**? (*Application*)
5. What **thoughts** are revealed by these actions? (*Analysis*)
6. What **beliefs about God** are revealed by these actions? (*Analysis*)
7. **How are you doing** in this area? (*Evaluation*)

### ***Real Life Example***

Here's an example of how I've used the Delta Model in my own devotional time. Most days, I work through only one or two verses a day. The best days are when I take the time to work through these Delta questions, forcing my mind and heart through the answers, closer to God. When I'm honest, I usually find it painfully revealing, as I found this one to be. But even though this stuff is inside me some where, lurking in the deep, it usually doesn't come out into the light unless I go through a process like this to dredge it up and bring it into the light.

So here we go...a real life example.

*Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. (1 John 4:15, ESV)*

- Purpose: What does God want me to do? Or be?
  - God wants me to confess Jesus openly, shamelessly.
- Character: What does God's purpose reveal about his character--his nature?
  - God is loving, and has chosen me, he wants to abide in me and me in him. He also glorifies the Son, and does so, in part, through me living as a testimony to Jesus, and confessing him openly.
- Positive Applications: How do I do this practically?
  - When I preach, preach Jesus with conviction
  - When asked about my faith by a non-Christian, to communicate my faith in Jesus, specifically, by name, especially in Seattle where there are many "Gods"
  - If I tell my story, and tell of the junk that I've been redeemed from, to clearly credit Jesus for the redemption.
- How do I blow it?
  - I may avoid using specific language when speaking with a non-Christian, saying something less offensive about "God" instead of speaking specifically about Jesus as God.
  - I may play it safe by talking about "the church," the institution, rather than the person, Jesus.
  - If I tell my story, I may not clearly and adequately credit the work of Jesus in my life to redeem me from sin. This could leave the wrong impression that I think I'm saved by morality or self-discipline or religion.
- What thoughts are in my head when I'm blowing it?
  - I don't want to seem weird to someone who doesn't believe this stuff.
  - Even if I'm not perfectly clear about Jesus, they'll still basically know what I mean if I talk about God, since they probably have some familiarity with Christianity. (which, upon considering this belief, I know it's untrue)
  - Now is not the right time to get into this with this person, but there will come a good time some day.
- What beliefs about God, self, or others are revealed by these thoughts?
  - Down deep some where, I must still believe that preserving my image as self-sufficient is more important to me than pointing to Jesus. (This is clearly a false belief that requires confession and repentance.)
  - There is some other purpose, other than testifying about Jesus, that I'm saving myself for. (Again, another false belief. I have no higher purpose than worshipping God and testifying of Jesus.)
  - Obeying God is not worth losing social favor or credibility. (False again. Better to lose my life for his sake...)
- Evaluation: where do I stand?
  - God, I realize that even in my best moments, I fall short of your standard. I thank you that despite the times when I act cowardly, like Peter, you restore me and put me back on the mission of testifying about you. I want to live as if it were really true that to live is Christ and to die is gain. So that even while I live, my living is about testifying of Jesus, not gaining some other life of my own. I ask that you would help me live by your Spirit knowing how you are moving in each conversation I have with a non-Christian. I know that when I was younger, my zeal to confess you was often, paradoxically, out of self-righteousness and judgment of others. So please move me to instead share about you in a way that draws others to you through Jesus, a compelling invitation. Give me ever increasing boldness to open my life to others so they can see the work that you're doing there and be more curious about you.