

# STARTER GUIDE FOR MORNING DEVOTIONS

Written by Jonathan Lee



# THE TRUE MEANING OF DEVOTIONS

---

The definition of “devotion” is: **Religious worship**. Profound dedication. Love, loyalty, or enthusiasm for a person, activity, or cause.

There are many different ways to demonstrate our devotion to God. Taking in the Word of God through morning devotions is one of those spiritual practices.

But arguably the biggest detriment to a consistent feeding of the soul is a haphazard or hurried daily devotion (or, devotion time, a.k.a. “DT”). Practically, this often starts with not making time for devotions in the morning, at the beginning of your day.

You try to squeeze in a DT during work while eating lunch at your desk. Or right after work before a meeting with a student. That may be able to hold you over for a bit, but it’s not optimal.

Many of you might relate with the sentiment, “I believe, but help my body’s unbelief!”

Note: There isn’t a right or wrong to the time of day you have your devotion time – but mornings are usually the best times because that’s usually when we are the least often interrupted and the mind is fresh.

Here are some practical TIPS that worked for me. I testify that I’m NOT a morning person, but now I’m able to make it to morning DT’s almost all the time. It’s NOT because I was born with it or it came just suddenly, but rather, it’s the accumulative effect of these small habits. Maybe some of these can help you; no guarantees but give it a try!

Imagine an old-fashioned balance scale. You’ve got one side with a brick – all the things that work against you and make it hard to get blessed by DT (e.g., laziness, fatigue, distractions, etc.). Now, with the following tips, imagine that you’re adding small pebbles to the other side of the balance so that collectively, it can “tip” the scale so that you may be blessed by your DT!

---

## TIPS: SIMPLE AND PRACTICAL TIPS FOR MORNING DEVOTIONS

### The 5 S's to "Get There → Prepare!"

#### #1: Setup the night before

My morning DT starts the night before. If I'm going to maximize my chances of getting up in the morning for 7 AM DT, I need to "Shape the Path" by getting things ready in advance of the morning rush.

#### #2: Sleep before midnight

Sleep at a decent hour - for e.g., start your evening wind down routine around 11 pm and aim to get to bed before midnight.



#### #3: Set a true (not false...) alarm

Set your alarm to the actual time you need to roll out of bed - not 30 minutes before, thinking that you can snooze a few times before waking up. I've fallen into that "snooze until kingdom come" quicksand before.

#### #4: Somehow just get out of your bed!

Once you're able to get out of bed, it's easier to go on autopilot for your morning routine. For me, once I turn off my alarm, I just throw my blanket off and roll out of bed.

#### #5: Share a ride

Another practical motivator for me is knowing that someone is depending on me!



What are some other things that work for you in this "before-getting-to-DT category"?  
Jot some here.

Getting up is half the battle!

## The 6 P's to "Once There - All There!"

### #1: Place 📍

In cognitive behavioral therapy, the body can learn to associate a physical space or room with specific behaviors. With insomnia, it's important to allocate the bedroom and bed just for sleeping in order to help associate your bed with sleeping. Reading in the bedroom, or reading while lying in bed would work against associating sleeping with that space.

Similarly, I think where you have your DT should be, in a way, a sacred place, set apart, just for your time with God's word. Of course, not everyone has this luxury, but at the least it should NOT be where your field of view is filled with the upcoming day's work, emails, and other distractions.

### #2: Posture 🪑

I sit up as straight as I can and never slouch over or take any other posture that is conducive to falling back asleep. I try to sit where I will be least distracted.

### #3: Post-it for Post-DT 📌

How many of you get stray thoughts that come into your mind while you're doing your DT? Maybe it's something you just realized you need to do and don't want to forget? Just jot it down on something like a Post-It to get it out of your mind, and go back to it after you're done. Post-DT-it! It may help to have a few blank Post-Its in your notebook ready to go.

### #4: Playlist 🎵

I have my all-time favorite DT playlist (music by Fernando Ortega), and that's been my go-to playlist for decades! I've trained my mind to get into that right mode/mood, where my heart and mind calms down when I hear those songs. **Use something that gets you in that proper mode/mood.**

### #5: Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you! 🙏

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand and illuminate God's word for you. A simple prayer before you start reading can be: "Lord, thank you for giving me this sacred hour to hear your words. Holy Spirit, please illuminate these words so that I can understand and respond in obedience. In Jesus' name, Amen."

---

This all might sound a bit tedious, and you might be wondering – Where’s the “spiritual” stuff? But it’s this kind of setup and preparation that will help you to wait upon the Lord and is an integral part of our worship.

In conclusion, I want to challenge you to begin your devotion before you open your Bible. How much do you desire to hear from Him? It’s not passively waiting upon God and letting Him speak. It’s actively preparing our hearts and minds because our relationship with God is the most important thing.