

2PROAPT: An Overview

P Pray: Make a habit of always beginning your time in God’s word by talking with its Author. Ask God to calm you down, help you bring your problems to him and clearly understand and hear his voice as you read the text. This is not the time for long petitions, but rather to turn yourself over to God and say “I’m here. Let’s spend some time together. What do you want to say to me?”

P Preview: Preview the entire passage (or a bit more) by quickly reading all of it from beginning to end. Don’t worry right now about the details, just get an overall “road map” for what the passage looks like and where it sits in relationship to the verses before and after it. (e.g. for Habakkuk 1:12-2:1— Habakkuk has just learned that God is going to raise up the Babylonians to conquer Judah as judgment on their rebellion and is now questioning how God can do this because he is a holy God. God is then going to respond to this complaint in chapter 2.)

R Read: Now go back through the passage reading it much more slowly. Try to capture the exact essence of each thought and write it down as clearly as you can. The key question here is: What does the text say?

O Observe: Looking over your “Read” section and the text, highlight those 1 or 2 sections which really catch you at the moment. It may be helpful to try and outline parts of the passage, or focus on particular challenges or questions, or note words or phrases that don’t seem to make sense so that you can look at a commentary. Where do you sense God nudging, drawing your attention, or comforting you. The key question here is: What does the text mean?

A Apply: Now that you have spent some time digging in the text, plant your feet in the application section for a while—do not rush. One of Satan’s greatest ploys is to convince us that we are too busy or have something more important to do than sitting at the table with God. Focus on how God wants you to respond to this passage in very specific ways. As a result of God’s word to you in this passage:

- What are you going to do
 - How could you change the way you think about God or relate to him
 - What aspects of your life do you need to bring to him for guidance or healing
- Now, and this is the most important thing, as a result of hearing God speak to you, you need to answer in a concrete, specific manner:
- **How will this affect my schedule over the next 2 days?**
 - **How will this affect my relationships over the next 2 days?**

If you fail to make concrete plans regarding these two questions you will quickly find your time with God turning very inwardly focused, without much impact in your day-to-day lifestyle. When that happens, it becomes easy to start seeing God’s word as a burden instead of a joy.

P Pray: Once you have heard what God wants you to do, you need to ask for his help, power and wisdom to be able to carry out this application. Just because we know what God wants for us does not mean that we will automatically be obedient or able. In fact, most of what God calls us to do are things which we cannot do on our own, although we often try.

T Tell: Now that you have carefully placed yourself in a place where God can speak, listened intently for his voice through his word, discussed what it is he wants you to do/think/say as a result of your time with him and asked him to help you carry this out, it is vital that you tell someone else about this. The purpose of doing this is so that they can encourage you, pray for you and help you see how things are going. Most often we fail to realize that true community, biblical community, requires this sort of vulnerable, intentional, entanglement in each other’s lives. It is a purely secular point of view which says that my relationship with God is a private affair with no connection to other believers. God always relates to us in the context of a community.