

Begin with a prayer that the Holy Spirit would guide this time of meditation and prayer. In your journal, start by writing out verse 1, addressing it yourself by name, hearing it as spoken to you in a very personal way by God ...

*But now, this is what I the Lord say to you,
I who created you, <put your own name>,
I who formed you, <your name>:
"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name,
you are mine."*

Now pause here, and let these words sink in deeply. What is it that God is saying to you here? Listen, listen as deeply as you can, to what he is saying. How do you find yourself thinking and feeling as you hear those words? Write your response to God, as honestly as you can - whether it be positive, negative, appreciative, cynical, etc. God only wants us to be real and honest, no censorship or polishing!

Come back now to God's next words, again writing them personally to you ... and so it goes on. God's words, your honest replies.

When you come to the end of verse 4, allow the conversation flow on if that seems appropriate, depending on God's Spirit to guide you.

Feel free to reproduce these guidelines for your own use or to give to others

Praying with Scripture



"Conversation with God"

Praying with Scripture:

Dialogue with God

There are many ways of combining the reading of Scripture with prayer. Which approach you take depends somewhat on the kind of Scripture you are reading.

The approach suggested here is helpful as a way of *personalising* Scripture and allowing it to lead you into prayerful *conversation* with God.

Teresa of Avila suggested that prayer is "nothing but an intimate conversation between friends; it means conversing frequently and alone with him who we know loves us."

God has opened a conversation with us in his Word - in prayer, we can take up the conversation and continue it ...

- This is best suited to a passage where God/Jesus is speaking to Israel or an individual, or perhaps where one of the Epistles is expounding on God's purposes for us in Christ. Check that it is appropriate to apply this passage to your situation.
- Prayerfully take the first line or phrase of the reading and write it out as if it were addressed to you in a very personal way - include your own name to help make it even more personal.
- Pause and let these words sink in. Meditate on what they mean as words spoken to *you* . . . how do you find yourself responding? What are your feelings? What are your

questions? Now write these out simply and honestly, as your reply to God/Jesus. Take your time. This is not an exercise that can be rushed.

- Now return to the text, and take the next line or phrase as spoken to you. Follow the same process as above in making your response.
- At some point, this conversation with God/Jesus may take on its own direction, building on what has begun with Scripture. You may have come to the end of the passage, but have a sense of how the Lord may be speaking to you. Allow the conversation to flow naturally.

(Some people will feel concerned that in moving beyond the Scriptures, they are putting words in God's mouth, or adding to the words of the Bible. We're not suggesting that you do either here, simply that you allow the Spirit to bring what you know of God through his Word to your mind and heart as you pray).

An example to try ...

Isaiah 43:1-4 is a suitable passage to use as a basis for conversation with God.

The words of this passage were spoken to God's people when they were at a low point. They were preserved in Israel's Scriptures because they continued to speak to later generations, and still God speaks through them to his people today.

Continued over ...