

Twenty-two ways to

Experience God

1. **Write out and personalize** Scripture by inserting your name into promises relevant to your life or current struggles. For example, I would personalize Ps. 84:11 in this way: No good thing does God withhold from Pam when she walks uprightly. Many of the Bible's promises come to life and seem more powerful and relevant when personalized in this way. Spend some time meditating and praying over verses that you personalize. I once copied a set of verses and strung them together as a personalized love letter from God's heart to my own. I have it framed and hanging in my room. Those personalized verses help me keep a big view of God.
2. **Write a letter to God** about your life. Give it to a friend to mail back to you in three months. In the letter, talk to God about the areas of your life that are bothering you. Write about how you'd like to grow and what attribute of His you'd like to see more clearly.
3. **Go on a praise walk or play in the garden.** Thank God for everything you see. Take the opportunity to look closely at God's creation, praising Him for His creativity and the beauty of the world He's crafted. After hiking for a while, find a quiet spot to read one of the many psalms that describe His creation. Isaiah 40 and Genesis 1 are two other chapters that will help you focus your heart and mind on God's creative character.
4. **Read through the Bible,** mark your favorite verses, and give it as a gift to a child. If you begin early, you can plan to give the Bible as a gift to your child before an important transition, such as when he or she enters high school, leaves home, enters college, or gets married. Try to picture God through his or her eyes. With that season of life in mind, mark verses you think will help your child see and trust God in the transition to come. You might also make notes in the margin to help guide the child's thinking about a passage or explain how the passage is relevant to this stage in life.

5. **Spend your entire time with God singing** and praising Him. Dim the lights, light a candle, and grab a Church hymnal, a music book, or a CD. You might even try creating a song of your own!

6. **Write down every sin** that continues to haunt you. Then write 1 Jn. 1:9 over each sin. Destroy the list--God has. This is a strong visual reminder of how God blots out your sin

7. **Dance before the Lord** like David, who danced with all his might (2 Sam. 6:14). David's dancing was a heartfelt and spontaneous expression of rejoicing. So put on your favorite hymn or praise song, and dance away. Interpretive dance is a wonderful way to express your heart and soul in praise before God. If you enjoy Jewish folk dancing, ballet, or some other kind of dance, dedicate your talent to God.

8. **Write out** a Phil. 4:8 list. What is lovely to you, worthy of praise, excellent, etc.? Hang the list in a place where you tend to be grumpy such as above the washer and dryer or on the dashboard of your car for that frustrating commute!

9. **Pray in a posture** you do not normally use. Try praying on your knees, prostrate (face down), or standing with your face to the heavens and your hands raised in worship. It's amazing how simply changing your posture before God can change your attitude and help you experience Him in new ways.

10. **Read a different translation** of the Bible. You might consider purchasing a Bible that has several translations. Reading a new translation or comparing different ones can stimulate new insights into Scripture. If you've used and marked up one particular Bible for many years, reading a different Bible will enable you to see the Word with new vision. Because your eyes will not be drawn to notes and highlighted passages from previous study or devotional reading, the Scriptures will feel as beautiful and inviting as a fresh snowfall on a crisp winter morn.

11. **Praise Jesus from A to Z.** For example, "Jesus, You are all-powerful...Jesus, You are beautiful..." This activity will challenge you to think deeply about who Jesus is and why you love and serve Him. As you praise Jesus using each letter of the alphabet, spend some time meditating on each word you use to describe Him. Thinking deeply about Him is more important than racing through each letter of the

alphabet as fast as you can.

12. **Write out your prayers to Jesus.** You might write them in a journal, or purchase special stationery for these precious letters, as you might do if you were sending a letter to someone you have fallen deeply in love with. At the end of the letter, sign your name, just as you would a normal letter. Something powerful and deeply intimate happens when you record your thoughts and prayers in a letter to Jesus.

13. **Make a list** of the hurts and needs in your life. As you come to a verse that shows how God can meet that need, write it down next to that need. Like the letters mentioned above, you can do this in your journal, or separately. You might even create a journal that records only your needs and relevant Scriptures. As you do this, you create your own book of God's promises and don't forget to record the way He answers!

14. **Reread the notes of the sermon** from the previous week. If your pastor is doing a series and you know what Scriptures he'll be addressing next, read ahead in the passage to be covered next Saturday. This will prepare you to think more deeply and listen better during the next sermon, as well as helping you remember and apply truth. Find a verse in the text that has helped you grow, and write a note to your pastor thanking him for his sermon and insight on the passage.

15. **Read your favorite hymn.** Spend some time meditating about each of the hymn's verses and its overall message. Find the passage in the Bible that the hymn was based upon, and think about how the hymn describes and reflects that truth. Spend some time researching how and why the hymn was composed. There's a book in the Church Office called the The Companion to the Hymnal with many of these stories. Your Christian bookstore carries books that detail the history of certain hymns. If you are able to locate such information, think about how the hymn reflects the author's response to God during his or her circumstances.

16. **Spend a period of time fasting** from food, TV, or a hobby to spend more time with God. If you are able, combine your fast with a day at a quiet retreat center, the beach, the mountains, or even tucked away in a library to reflect upon God's Word and His hand in your life. Dream with Him about where He wants to lead you in the next year or the next ten years. Contemplate the gifts He's given You and what His calling is for you.

17. **Have a quiet time with one of your children** or grandchildren. This would probably include reading a passage from the Bible out loud. As you ask the questions about what they see in the passage, you will teach them to think more deeply about God's Word. Their responses and observations may surprise you, stretch you, and enrich your own perspective.

18. **Buy the Bible on C.D. or audio tape**, and drive to a beautiful park and just listen to God's Word and let it sink in. Rewind and play the sections that hit home. This Audio Bible can be great to listen to also when you're sitting in traffic, feeding your baby at home, or taking a jog.

19. **Memorize one of the prayers** of the Bible, such as Mary's prayer in Lk. 1:46-55. Then act the prayer out as a soliloquy.

20. **Write out a list** of theological questions you would like answered. Choose one and begin researching it. "God, what is Your heart toward women?" was a question I had that led me on an exhaustive study of all the women in the Bible, and all the verses with the word *woman* in them.

21. **Read through the Desire of Ages** (by Ellen White) slowly, reading the Scriptures that are listed at the beginning of each chapter first.

22. **Buy a spiritual autobiography** or biography. I recently read NFL Quarterback Kurt Warner's faith story.



Abiding Daily

Remember, the purpose of all these ideas is to enhance your relationship with God and your intimacy with Him during your quiet time. The goal is to abide ever more in Him. As Fern Nichols, the founder of Moms in Touch, says, "If you seek to abide in the vine daily, you never know what day He might choose to change your life forever. Enjoy the adventure!"

This article was adapted from Woman of Influence: Ten Traits of Those Who Want to Make a Difference by Pam Farrel, 1996, InterVarsity Press.