

Quiet Time: 7 Minutes With God

QUIET TIME

Quiet Time ("QT"): Aka "Daily Devotions", "Personal Devotions," "The Morning Watch" - This term describes the practice of having a daily appointment with the Lord, a regular period of communion with God through Bible study, meditation and prayer (e.g., see [Seven Minutes with God](#)). The primary objective of Quiet Time should be intimate fellowship with God. It is the vital ingredient which seems to be missing in the lives of many followers of Christ. For many saints, their Quiet Time is more "*drudgery*" than "*delight!*" (Ps 37:4) Or they fall into the subtle trap of reading someone else's devotional thoughts, to the neglect of focusing on the pure milk of God's Word. There is nothing wrong with devotionals per se, but there is if they are used as a substitute for personal time in God's Word.

Webster defines **necessity** as that which is *indispensable* or that which is *unavoidable*. While Quiet Time is an *indispensable* discipline for every believer, unfortunately it is not one which is *unavoidable*. In fact we can easily *avoid* a daily meeting with God for a variety of reasons, but we *dispense* with this discipline to the detriment of our walk of faith.

Someone has described the morning quiet time as "**turning the dial until we tune in to God's wavelength—then we get the message.**" (S. Hughes)

Henry Blackaby encourages us to "Try not to think of the time you spend with God as a *duty*. The purpose of a quiet time is for you to get to know God. And as you come to know Him, you can walk out of your special times with God enjoying a living relationship with Him that you can cultivate all day long — throughout all your life."

Jerry Bridges and **Bob Bevington** suggest that "the **quiet time**...might better be called daily **communion** with God. For many, the elements of this are a Bible reading plan and a prayer list. Both are important, but they're effective only to the extent that they facilitate the experience of fellowship with God. Instead of simply reading a chapter or two of the Bible, we need to reflect on and pray over what we read, asking Him to reveal what He has for us in the Scriptures before us. Our reading becomes a conversation, a process of talking to God and listening to Him. We may ask Him questions as we seek a deeper meaning or a specific application of a given passage. We interact with a living Person. And in so doing, we experience communion with God. The psalmists longed to encounter God (Ps 27:4; 42:1–2; 63:1–3; 73:25–26), and that should be our goal as we practice this spiritual discipline (See Don Whitney's discussion of "[Spiritual Disciplines](#)"). ([Bookends of the Christian Life](#) - a must read to understand the first bookend Righteousness and the second the power of the Holy Spirit - many saints do not fully comprehend these two bookends, especially the need for dependence upon the Holy Spirit to live a holy life of faith. [Read a few of the reviews](#))

Be still and know that I am God.

(Ps 46:10)

IS YOUR QUIET TIME TOO QUIET?

A common excuse for not practicing (under grace) the discipline of a Quiet Time, is "I don't have enough time." If you are too busy to have a quiet time, then you are too busy! A daily time of communion with the King of kings is not just a nice suggestion but it is a holy privilege which is absolutely essential for every believer's spiritual growth and maturity! In fact, you know you are in serious need of a Quiet Time when you don't have time! **Jesus** speaking to His disciples said "Come ye yourselves apart to a desert place, and rest a little." (Mk 6:31KJV) The Quiet Time is a place to "come apart" from the world and rest in Jesus. "Jesus knows we must **come apart** and rest awhile or else we may just plain**come apart!**" ([Vance Havner](#)) When the Bible becomes a part of you (in your Quiet Time), you'll be less likely to come apart! To be much like Christ, we must be much with Christ. Attachment to Christ is the secret of detachment from the world. And so although we must live in the world, we must draw our strength from outside the world. As Charles Hummel wisely said "Adequate time for daily waiting on God... is the only way I can escape the tyranny of the urgent."

Only to sit and think of God,
Oh what a joy it is!
To think the thought, to breathe the Name
Earth has no higher bliss.
Frederick W. Faber

Is God calling out to you in the morning watch **"Where are you?"** In God's original plan, we see He sought to have a personal relationship with Adam, but sin entered the scene...

And (Adam and Eve) heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, **"Where are you?"** (Ge 3:8-9)

Patrick Morley writes that "Whenever a man tells me that he doesn't feel very close to God, the first question I ask is, "Tell me about your devotional life." Often the problem is just there."

The Secret Chamber - [Isaac Watts](#) was a lifelong bachelor (he once proposed to a girl, was turned down). He lived in borrowed (but elegant) quarters. He spent much of his time writing great hymns and, later, influential textbooks. And he somehow balanced the tasks of pastoring a church (he died in the pastorate) and producing a massive volume of published works. He once made this statement that explained the secret of his lifelong vitality — and ours: Abandon the secret chamber, and the spiritual life will decay. In other words, don't miss your daily devotions! (Robert Morgan)

Consider the man who had the motto "No Bible, no breakfast." Now I don't have a problem with taking in some physical nourishment before you take in spiritual nourishment. But I do have a problem (I am confessing now) reading the email from men before we "open" God's "email" to me! As an aside, morning may not be the best time for you to meet with God. Just make sure you make time during the day for the One Who created the day and sustains you all through the day!

If you think you are too busy for a **Quiet Time**, consider **Charles and John Wesley's** mother [Susanna Wesley](#), who had nineteen children. And yet in the middle of her busy day, she would sit down in a chair and pull her apron up over her head and have her **Quiet Time!** When the apron went up, the children knew mom was praying and reading her Bible and they left her alone. While some question the veracity of this story, if true, it is certainly convicting.

RELATIONSHIP NOT RITUAL

Remember that a daily **Quiet Time** does not mark the *end* but the *beginning* of the day. Don't fall into the fleshly trap of measuring your spirituality by the number of times you've met with God during the week! Quiet time is to be a matter of our heart, not our appointment calendar! Our time with God in the morning (although *any time* can be your quiet time) sets our stage for our time with men during the day. Our time in the morning with God is not meant to be a ritual or a routine but a **relationship**. We meet Christ at the Cross, and call that **conversion**. We meet with Him "in the closet," and we call that **conversation**. At the Cross we come to know Christ, and in the closet we come to know Him more and learn to walk in the power of His Spirit.

*To include the Lord in our
daily routine often results in
seeing His divine activity at work.*

Adrian Rogers adds that "Christianity is not a legal relationship; it is a love relationship. And people who are legalists, never have victory. Ten thousand "don'ts" will never make you one iota more like the Lord Jesus Christ. Now there are some "don'ts" in the Christian life and there are some "dos." But friend, it is Jesus himself, who makes you like Him. You need to spend time with Jesus Christ. Christianity is a love relationship." (Read his entire sermon on [How to Have a Meaningful Quiet Time](#))

Let me ask you... Does your spiritual life lack power? C H Spurgeon once said that "If we are weak in communion with God we are weak everywhere." **Do you find yourself seemingly unable to resist temptations from your besetting sin? Indeed, our sensitivity to sin and ability to resist it is directly proportional to the nearness of our communion with Christ.** Our "power to live a new life depends upon daily communion with the living Lord." ([John Eadie](#)) Have you noticed how quickly your **iPhone** loses its charge during routine daily use? What about your spiritual life? **Beloved, Quiet Times are not optional if we are to have our "spiritual batteries regularly recharged", ready for the day's activities! Simply put, we must seek to spend quality time with God, for** "Our ability to stay with God in our closet measures our ability to stay with God out of the closet." [E M Bounds](#) "If our lives and ministry are to count for anything **today**, we must solemnly resolve to make time for God (**today**)." ([Vance Havner](#))

Moses demonstrates the pattern of meeting with God...

Thus Jehovah used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent. (Ex 33:11, cp Nu 12:8, Dt 34:10)

Comment: In everyday life, friends speak with each other face to face, clearly and openly. "Face to face" speaks of intimacy, not that Moses actually saw the face of God (cp Ex 33:18-23 with Jn 1:18). "**Friend**" in the

Bible is a covenant term (see note #1) and note #2). Even the pagan Aristotle understood this truth writing that a friend is "One soul in two bodies." J Oswald Sanders once said "Every one of us is as close to God as he has chosen to be."

Who was Jehovah? This Jehovah Who spoke to Moses from the Cloud (Ex 33:9-10) is most likely identified as the pre-incarnate Christ, the "**Angel of God (Jehovah)**" (see note) Who moved in the cloud (cp Ex 13:21 and Ex 14:19, Ge 16:7; see related discussion: **Jehovah = Jesus**) (Related Article [The Pillar of the Cloud by Ronald B. Allen - Bib Sac 153:612, 1996](#))

Why was David a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22)? Surely the opening words of this psalm give us a clue...

**My soul waits in silence for God only;
From Him is my salvation.**

Ps 62:1-[note](#)

**There is a QUIET PLACE
([Play this hymn](#))**

Far from the rapid pace,
Where God can soothe my troubled mind.
Sheltered by tree and flow'r,
There in my **quiet hour**,
With Him, my cares are left behind.
Whether a garden small
Or on a mountain tall
New strength and courage there I find;
Then from this **quiet place**,
I go prepared to face
A new day with love for all mankind
-Ralph Carmichael

RIGHT TIME FOR QUIET TIME

The right time is when you find the time. The point is like the Nike commercial says "Just Do It!" That said, there are a number of reasons to consider the early morning for one's quiet time.

We are encouraged (actually commanded) to imitate Jesus in 1Cor 11:1, so the question is did Jesus have a time alone with His Father? While the following passage emphasizes prayer, it clearly speaks of Jesus' communion with His Father which should also be the primary objective of our daily quiet time. Beloved, if Jesus felt the need for time with His Father, how much more should we! (See Jesus' declaration that He could do nothing "unless it is something He sees His Father doing." Jn 5:17, 19, Jn 5:30, Jn 8:28 - all emphasize Jesus' dependence on His Father and thus His **necessity** to meet with and hear from His Father! And as our Elder Brother demonstrates, we have no less of a **need** to hear from our Father in heaven. See related post on how to discern **THE WILL OF GOD**)

And in the **early morning**, while it was still dark, He arose and went out and departed to a lonely place, and was praying there. (Mark 1:35, cp Mt 14:13, Lk6:12)

Compare this OT passage which speaks prophetically of Messiah:

The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of disciples, that I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens Me morning by morning. He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple. (Isa 50:4)

"THE POWER ROOM"

J D Jones comments on Mark 1:35: I was once taken through the engineering shops in the Devonport dockyard. I saw innumerable machines busy at various kinds of work, most of them making considerable noise in the process. Then my conductor took me to a room which by contrast was almost silent, where a great engine was working smoothly and quietly. "This," said he, "is the power-room." In that quiet room I found the secret of the multifarious activities of the machines in the various shops. In Mk 1:32-34, Mark has been showing us our Lord's various activities. In Mk 1:35 he takes us to the "power-room." Back of all the activities

of the synagogue and the street lay a life of secret prayer. In communion with His Father, Jesus refreshed and renewed Himself for further labour and toil amongst men. "A great while before day"—Jesus made time for prayer! He snatched it from His sleep. What an object-lesson as to the indispensable necessity of prayer! We realize the obligation of service in these days, and consequently we have become very "busy." But are we neglecting the "power-room"? We must keep the balance true. We must never become too busy to pray...

Our Lord had, according to Mk 1:35, "risen up a great while before day," and had departed into a desert place to pray. He had stolen out while His disciples were asleep. It was only when, with the dawning of the day, those who had sick folk in the city, and who had not received Christ's healing grace on the previous evening, began to knock at the door and inquire for Him, that the disciples discovered He was not there. And then they pursued—that is the Greek word—in hot haste after Jesus. Incidentally let us notice what a tribute there is here to the character of Jesus. These four disciples knew exactly where to look for Him. They had already become acquainted with His prayer habits. They knew His love for quiet and solitary communion. And so when He was missing, they went straight to the place of prayer to look for Him. **"They pursued after Him."**

**What an illustration this is
of the difficulties of communion!**

"Scarcely can we turn aside," our hymn says, "for one brief hour of prayer." Jesus could "scarcely turn aside." It was with difficulty He found His "quiet time." Something or other—the clamor of the multitude, the cares of the world—was always following Him even into the desert place. We know this difficulty too. What between the claims of business and family, social and church duties, we have no leisure for the "quiet time." Every hour we are "pursued" by something or other, nevertheless, we must make time for prayer. Meal times and prayer times, as the old saying puts it, are not lost times. (Mark Commentary-Devotional)

**Around us rolls the ceaseless tide
Of business, toil, and care;
And scarcely can we turn aside
For one brief hour of prayer.
[Behold Us, Lord, a Little Space](#)**

We see **Isaiah** speaking prophetically of Messiah's "**Quiet Time**" - The Lord GOD has given Me (Messiah) the tongue of disciples, that I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He (the Lord God) awakens Me (Messiah) **morning by morning**. He awakens My ear to listen as a **disciple** (Hebrew - limmud = one taught, a learner- cf Lk 2:40, 47, 52, Heb 5:8). (Isaiah 50:4)

So even Jesus had a Quiet Time which shows us our great need for the same! While He was clearly fully God, He lived His life in dependence on His Father and the Holy Spirit (John 5:19, 30, 8:28 Lk 4:1, 14, Mt 4:1, Acts 10:38, etc) in order to show us how to live our new life in Christ. If Jesus found it necessary (priority, important) to meet privately with His Father, surely **His example** is sufficient reason for us to imitate His pattern (1Cor 11:1, 1Jn 2:6, 1Pe 2:21-note).

Take time to be holy
Speak oft with Thy Lord
Abide with Him always
And feed on His Word

Take time to be holy
The world rushes on
Spend much time in secret
With Jesus alone

[Play Hymn](#)

Daniel a man greatly used by God had the lifelong OT equivalent of a "**Quiet Time**" - Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees **three times a day**, praying and giving thanks before his God, **as he had been doing previously**. (Da 6:10-note; cp David's mention of three times a day in Ps 55:17)

Elijah had a "quiet time" to hear the quiet voice of God - "after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice." (1Ki 19:12KJV) **As Adrian Rogers** says "If God speaks with a quiet voice, you need to have a quiet time and (a quiet) place to hear Him. If you're around a lot of furor and hubbub and noise, and somebody is whispering, you're not going to hear Him. That's the reason why you need to have a quiet time, so that you can pray, "Lord, what is it You really want me to do?" (What Every Christian Ought to Know Day by Day)

Southern Baptist preacher [Robert G Lee](#) used to say "If you wake up in the morning and don't meet the devil face on, it just means you're headed in the same direction! (**Ed**: It follows that we might be better prepared for the attacks from our Adversary and his minions if we first have a [Coram Deo \[R C Sproul\]](#) encounter!)"

Claude King - In any relationship you must spend time with the other person in order for the relationship to grow. The same holds true for your relationship with Christ. The most important thing you can do each day is to spend quality time with your Lord. Many people call this a quiet time. (Growing Disciples Series)

COULD YOU SPARE GOD FIVE MINUTES TOMORROW MORNING?

"**Oswald Chambers** has wisely commented on the transforming power of even 5 minutes in the presence of the Lord. Indeed, even a short time spent in intercession and the Word still has great value: "It is not the thing on which we spend the most time that moulds us, but the thing that exerts the greatest power. Five minutes with God and His Word is worth more than all the rest of the day." Now, it may sound like Chambers has made an overstatement. Yet powerful results can come from even a short time of prayer, because God is powerful." ([Dennis Fisher](#))

[J. Hudson Taylor Missionary to China](#) referring to the value of quiet time in the morning once quipped "You don't tune up the instruments after the concert is over. That's stupid. It's logical to tune them up before you start!"

THOUGHT: This quote begs the question do I "tune my heart" before I begin each day?

PRACTICE "H.W.L.W."

[Dawson Trotman](#), founder of the Navigators Ministry, actually had two quiet times, morning and evening. He had a code for his nightly quiet time: **H.W.L.W.** Whenever he was with a group of people at night or home with his wife and the conversation seemed to be ending, he would say, "All right, **H. W. L. W.**," after which a passage of Scripture would be quoted without comment and all would go to sleep. **H.W.L.W.** stood for "His Word the Last Word." This was his reminder for the men to go to sleep thinking about and meditating on some verse God had given them that day. Trotman practiced **H.W.L.W.** throughout his life as a way of ending a day with one's thoughts fixed on the Lord and His Word.

THOUGHT - Are you memorizing His Word (see also Memory Verses by Topic) during the day, so that you might be able to meditate on it before you fall asleep?

Rob Morgan comments: Dawson knew that the last dominant conscious thought in the human mind at the end of the day would inevitably simmer in the subconscious during sleep and help shape the attitude and personality of the heart. And he was right. If you want to hide God's word in your heart (Ps 119:11), go to sleep while meditating on a verse of Scripture (**Read** Joshua 1:8, Ps 1:2, Ps 63:6, Ps 77:6, Ps 119:97). It seeps into your subconscious mind and helps shape your soul. You'll sleep better, and wake up the next morning more refreshed. Charles Spurgeon used to say that **Bible verses make good pillows.** ([The Best Seat Is On The Floor](#))

[Stephen F. Olford](#) once said "I want to hear the voice of God before I hear anyone else's in the morning, and his is the last voice I want to hear at night."

"Blessed is the day whose morning is sanctified!"

Joseph Parker on **Exodus 34:2** - "So be ready by morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself there to Me on the top of the mountain." Parker writes - My Father, I am coming. Nothing on the mean plain shall keep me away from the holy heights. Help me to climb fast, and keep Thou my foot, lest it fall upon the hard rock! At Thy bidding I come, so Thou wilt not mock my heart. Bring with Thee honey from Heaven, yea, milk and wine, and oil for my soul's good, and stay the sun in his course, or the time will be too short in which to look upon Thy face, and to hear Thy gentle voice. Morning on the mount! It will make me strong and glad all the rest of the day so well begun... **The morning is the time fixed for my meeting the Lord** This very word morning is as a cluster of rich grapes. Let me crush them, and drink the sacred wine. In the morning! Then God means me to be at my best in strength and hope. I have not to climb in my weakness. In the night I have buried yesterday's fatigue, and in the morning I take a new lease of energy. Sweet morning! There is hope in its music. **Blessed** is the day whose morning is sanctified! **Successful** is the day whose first victory was won in prayer! **Holy** is the day whose dawn finds thee on the top of the mount! **Health** is established in the morning. **Wealth** is won in the morning. The **light** is brightest in the morning. "Wake, psaltery and harp; I myself

will awake early.” (Comment: May these precious benefits associated with arising in the morning hour, prompt us to sing out Charles Wesley’s song and then to rise and meet our King - [Arise, My Soul, Arise](#))

F B Meyer on "My presence shall go with thee" (Exodus 33:14) - We should never leave our prayer closets in the morning without having concentrated our thoughts deeply and intensely on the fact of the actual presence of God there with us, encompassing us, and filling the room as literally as it fills Heaven itself. It may not lead to any distinct results at first, but, as we make repeated efforts to realize the presence of God, it will become increasingly real to us. And, as the habit grows upon us, when alone in a room, or when treading the sward of some natural woodland temple, or when pacing the stony street—in the silence of night, or amid the teeming crowds of daylight—we shall often find ourselves whispering the words, "Thou art near; thou art here, O Lord."

In fact the Bible frequently mentions other godly men and women rising **early in the morning** to meet with the Lord:

- **Jesus:** Mark 1:32-39 "And when evening had come, after the sun had set, they began bringing to Him all who were ill and those who were demon-possessed. 33 And the whole city had gathered at the door. 34 And He healed many who were ill with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He was not permitting the demons to speak, because they knew who He was. 35 And in the **early morning**, while it was still dark, He arose and went out and departed to a lonely place, and was praying there. 36 And Simon and his companions hunted for Him; 37 and they found Him, and *said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You." 38 And He *said to them, "Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, in order that I may preach there also; for that is what I came out for." 39 And He went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out the demons." -

And so it appears that Jesus used His time alone with His Father (and remember Jesus is showing how a perfect man can and should live, even through we will always fall short of His perfect example) for meaningful fellowship as well as a time to revive His strength and give Him direction in His mission. We need to see that time alone with our Father is our spiritual lifeline. Even in the Garden God sought fellowship with Adam and desired to walk with him. That pattern has not changed, for He still desires to walk with His children in every part of their life journey.

- **Abraham:** Gen 19:27 Now Abraham arose **early in the morning** and went to the place where he had stood before the LORD; (Spurgeon's sermon - [The Smoke of their Torments](#))
- **Job:** Job 1:5 And it came about, when the days of feasting had completed their cycle, that Job would send and consecrate them, rising up **early in the morning** and offering burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, "Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job did continually.
- **Jacob:** Ge 28:18 So Jacob rose **early in the morning**, and took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on its top.
- **Moses:** Ex 34:4 So he cut out two stone tablets like the former ones, and Moses rose **early in the morning** and went up to Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and he took two stone tablets in his hand.

Comment: Notice that in this passage "morning time" was commanded.

- **Hannah and Elkanah:** 1Sam 1:19 Then they arose **early in the morning** and worshiped before the LORD, and returned again to their house in Ramah. And Elkanah had relations with Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her.

Comment: Notice that a major component of this "morning time" was worship, which should likewise be our practice. Devotional study is fine but may it always drive us to desire deeper worship of the Worthy One! This probably will not be your experience the first time you try the "morning time" but over time, it will become your reflexive response to our Master's majestic manifestations.

- **David:** Ps 5:3-[note](#) In the morning, O LORD, Thou wilt hear my voice; **In the morning** I will order my prayer to Thee and eagerly watch. Ps 57:7 My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises!8 Awake, my glory; Awake, harp and lyre, **I will awaken the dawn!**

Spurgeon's Comment: "In the morning" is the fittest time for intercourse with God. An hour in the morning is worth two in the evening. While the dew is on the grass, let grace drop upon the soul. Let us give to God the mornings of our days and the morning of our lives. Prayer should be the key of the day and the lock of the night. Devotion should be both the morning star and the evening star.

- Ps 90:14-[note](#) O satisfy us **in the morning** with Thy lovingkindness, That we may sing for joy and be glad all

our days. ([See also Spurgeon's sermon - The Young Man's Prayer](#))

Spurgeon's Comment: Since they must die, and die so soon (**Ed:** And won't we all, when comparing this little speck of time to eternity!), the psalmist pleads for speedy mercy upon himself and his brethren. Good men know how to turn the darkest trials into arguments at the throne of grace. He who has but the heart to pray need never be without pleas in prayer. The only satisfying food for the Lord's people is the favor of God; this Moses earnestly seeks for, and **as the manna fell in the morning** he beseeches the Lord to send at once his satisfying favor, that all through the little day of life they might be filled therewith. Are we so soon to die? Then, Lord, do not starve us while we live. Satisfy us at once, we pray thee. Our day is short and the night hastens on, O give us in the early morning of our days to be satisfied with thy favor, that all through our little day we may be happy. That we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Being filled with divine love, their brief life on earth would become a joyful festival, and would continue so as long as it lasted. When the Lord refreshes us with his presence, our joy is such that no man can take it from us. Apprehensions of speedy death are not able to distress those who enjoy the present favor of God; though they know that the night cometh they see nothing to fear in it, but continue to live while they live, triumphing in the present favour of God and leaving the future in his loving hands. Since the whole generation which came out of Egypt had been doomed to die in the wilderness, they would naturally feel despondent, and therefore their great leader seeks for them that blessing which,

- Ps 119:147 **I rise before dawn** and cry for help; I wait for Thy words.

Spurgeon's comment: He was up before the sun, and began his pleadings before the dew began to leave the grass. Whatever is worth doing is worth doing speedily.

- Ps 143:8-[note](#) Let me hear Thy lovingkindness **in the morning**; For I trust in Thee; Teach me the way in which I should walk; For to Thee I lift up my soul.

Spurgeon's Comment: Lord, my sorrow makes me deaf,—cause me to hear: there is but one voice that can cheer me—cause me to hear thy lovingkindness; that music I would fain enjoy at once—cause me to hear it in the morning, at the first dawning hour. A sense of divine love is to the soul both dawn and dew; the end of the night of weeping, the beginning of the morning of joy. Only God can take away from our weary ears the din of our care, and charm them with the sweet notes of his love. Our plea with the Lord is our faith: if we are relying upon him, he cannot disappoint us: "in thee do I trust" is a sound and solid argument with God. He who made the ear will cause us to hear: he who is love itself will have the kindness to bring his lovingkindness before our minds.

- Isa 26:9-[Spurgeon's sermon \(The Desire of the Soul in Spiritual Darkness\)](#) **At night my soul longs for Thee**, Indeed, my spirit within me **seeks Thee diligently**; For when the earth experiences Thy judgments The inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

Spurgeon's Comment: NIGHT appears to be a time peculiarly favorable to devotion. Its solemn stillness helps to free the mind from that perpetual din which the cares of the world will bring around it. And the stars looking down from Heaven upon us shine as if they would attract us up to God. I know not how you may be affected by the solemnities of midnight, but when I have sat alone musing on the great God and the mighty universe, I have felt that, indeed, I could worship Him, for night seemed to be spread abroad as a very temple for adoration, while the moon walked as high priest amid the stars! The worshippers and I, myself, joined in that silent song which they sang unto God—"Great are You, O God! Great in Your works. When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars which You have ordained, what is man, that You are mindful of him? And the son of man, that You visit him?"

- Ezek 12:8 And **in the morning** the word of the LORD came to me, saying,
- Hab 2:1-note I will stand on my guard post and station myself on the rampart; and **I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me**, and how I may reply when I am reproved.

William MacDonald comments: Habakkuk retired to his watchtower to see how the Lord would answer him. He wanted to get alone in order to gain God's perspective. This is a most important principle for believers today as well. Whether we call it our "quiet time," "devotions," or by some other term, daily communion with God is crucial for every Christian. (See also Spurgeon's sermon [Watching to See](#))

In 1882 seven students ([see note below](#)) at Cambridge University became famous for their "Quiet Time" slogan...

"REMEMBER THE MORNING WATCH"

In the beginning of his **Confessions**, **Augustine** writes...

You stimulate [us] to take pleasure in praising You, because You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they can find peace in You.

You are my Strength when I am weak
You are the Treasure that I seek
You are my All in All
Seeking You as a precious Jewel
Lord, to give up I'd be a fool.
You are my All in All...
Jesus Lamb of God
Worthy is Your Name.
You Are My All in All

We need to beware of a subtle trap regarding Quiet Times. We can begin to think of our spirituality as proportionate to the number of times we have met with God during the week. If devotions become a chore we chalk up, then we are in danger of becoming legalists rather than lovers. Not only is this legalistic approach prideful, it is the antithesis of the desired effect of a rightly motivated Quiet Time for as John writes...

**He must increase but
I must decrease.**

John 3:30-note

As **Robert Murray M'Cheyne** put it - Live near to God and all things will appear little to you in comparison with eternal realities.

Or as **James Philip** said "In the light of God, human vision clears."

The **psalmist** extols the evening in the following passage...

Ps 119:148 My eyes anticipate the night watches, That I may meditate on Thy word.

Spurgeon: Before the watchman cried the hour, he was crying to God. He did not need to be informed as to how the hours were flying, for every hour his heart was flying towards heaven. He began the day with prayer, and he continued in prayer through the watches of the day, and the watches of the night. The soldiers changed guard, but David did not change his holy occupation. Specially, however, at night did he keep his eyes open, and drive away sleep, that he might maintain communion with his God. He worshipped on from watch to watch as travellers journey from stage to stage. "That I might meditate in thy word." This had become meat and drink to him. Meditation was the food of his hope, and the solace of his sorrow: the one theme upon which his thoughts ran was that blessed "word" which he continually mentions, and in which his heart rejoices. He preferred study to slumber; and he learned to forego his necessary sleep for much more necessary devotion. It is instructive to find meditation so constantly connected with fervent prayer: it is the fuel which sustains the flame. How rare an article is it in these days.

KEEPING IT SIMPLE: HOW TO DO A QUIET TIME

There is no specific "formula" for Quiet Time in Scripture and for that matter the phrase "Quiet Time" is not even found in the Bible. The principle of meeting with God however is found (as discussed throughout these notes) and is foundational to growing in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2Pe 3:16). Modern smart phones have a feature called "Face Time" to make the phone encounter more personal and realistic. As Christ followers we **need** "face time" with our Master and quiet time is simply one way of accomplishing that end. In the notes below there are a variety of suggestions as well as caveats regarding quiet time, but simply put, we should keep our "face time" with God simple so that we are neither encumbered by even "good things" (Heb 12:1) nor distracted by details. Obviously if we aim at nothing, we are certain to miss. So our aim should be to seek God's face keeping it simple. I suggest the following as a minimum:

(1) A Bible you are willing to mark in. God speaks most clearly in His Word and we can record notes, thoughts in the margins. It is preferable to select a Bible without notes (lest you be tempted to read men's words rather than God's Word - remember your desire should be a face to face encounter with the Living God through His Living Word - cf **Coram Deo [R C Sproul]**. Sometimes I keep two versions open (NAS or ESV for more literal translation and NLT or Amplified), using the second version to provide insights not readily apparent in the more literal translations.

(2) Prayer - confessing anything unholy that might hinder communication with the Holy One (pray Ps 139:23-24, 1Jn 1:9), asking for His Spirit's guidance and illumination (Ps 119:18, Jn 16:13), and including a time of intercession for others (Gal 6:2, Jas 5:16).

(3) A notebook - Record passages (eg, one's you want to memorize - write them out on a small card to carry with you the rest of the day) and insights on passages especially those that convict you and call for Spirit of grace enabled obedience. Your goal is not the complete the quiet time (that's legalism), but to become more intimate with God, more like His Son, more ready to yield quickly to His Spirit. If you've never practiced the discipline of delight (not duty) of a quiet time see Robert Foster's [Seven Minutes with God](#) posted below for his suggestion.

RIGHT MOTIVE FOR QUIET TIME

A couple who is passionately in love can't be kept apart. If we love someone, we want to spend time with them. We say we love Jesus, but does our time alone with Him (our deeds) support what we say? "The more any man loves Christ, the more he delights to be with Christ alone. Lovers love to be alone." (Thomas Brooks) Making time often requires us to be intentional and deliberate. It is easy for the "tyranny of the urgent" to overwhelm our good intentions of time with the "Lover of our souls" and before we realize it we've postponed our appointment until the next day or the day after, etc. You've never done that have you?

As **Spurgeon** said "Have your heart right with Christ, and he will visit you often, and so turn weekdays into Sundays, meals into sacraments, homes into temples, and earth into heaven... In forty years I have not spent fifteen waking minutes without thinking of Jesus."

Robert Boyd Munger in his the little booklet, [My Heart Christ's Home](#) compares his heart to a home where Christ has been invited to dwell as the heavenly guest. He goes room by room, showing how the Lord cleaned the dirty books off the shelves of the study, took down the filthy pictures, how He cleaned the dining room of unhealthy appetites and desires, etc. The living room was a comfortable room with a quiet atmosphere.

The Lord said, "This is indeed a delightful room. Let us come here often. It is secluded and quiet, and we can fellowship together." Well, naturally as a young Christian I was thrilled. I couldn't think of anything I would rather do than have a few minutes with Christ in intimate companionship.

He promised, "I will be here early every morning. Meet me here, and we will start the day together." So morning after morning, I would come downstairs to the living room and He would take a book of the Bible from the bookcase. He would open it and then we would read together. He would tell me of its riches and unfold to me its truths. He would make my heart warm as He revealed His love and His grace He had toward me. These were wonderful hours together. In fact, we called the living room the "withdrawing room." It was a period when we had our quiet time together.

But, little by little, under the pressure of many responsibilities, this time began to be shortened. Why, I'm don't know, but I thought I was just too busy to spend time with Christ. This was not intentional, you understand; it just happened that way. Finally, not only was the time shortened, but I began to miss a day now and then. It was examination time at the university. Then it was some other urgent emergency. I would miss it two days in a row and often more.

I remember one morning when I was in a hurry, rushing downstairs, eager to be on my way. As I passed the living room, the door was open. Looking in, I saw a fire in the fireplace and Jesus was sitting there. Suddenly in dismay I thought to myself, "He was my guest. I invited Him into my heart! He has come as Lord of my home. And yet here I am neglecting Him." I turned and went in. With downcast glance, I said, "Blessed Master, forgive me. Have You been here all these mornings?"

"Yes," He said, "I told you I would be here every morning to meet with you." Then I was even more ashamed. He had been faithful in spite of my faithfulness. I asked His forgiveness and He readily forgave me as He does when we are truly repentant. "The trouble with you is this: you have been thinking of the quiet time, of the Bible study and prayer time, as a factor in your own spiritual progress, but you have forgotten that this hour means something to me also. Remember, I love you. I have redeemed you at great cost. I value your fellowship. Now," He said, "do not neglect this hour if only for my sake. Whatever else may be your desire, remember I want your fellowship!"

You know, the truth that Christ desires my companionship, that He loves me, wants me to be with Him, wants to be with me and waits for me, has done more to transform my quiet time with God than any

other single fact. Don't let Christ wait alone in the living room of your heart, but every day find some time when, with your Bible and in prayer, you may be together with Him. ([My Heart Christ's Home](#))

**May we be ever mindful of Christ's love for us,
So that our Quiet Time is motivated
By a sense of anticipation and delight,
Not a sense of drudgery and duty.**

Tim Schoap notes that many believers are "**functional legalists**" explaining that...

As *functional legalists* we recognize and condemn legalism when it comes to salvation, the idea that we can be saved by our works. However, we embrace it and live as legalists for sanctification. Although it is God's grace that justifies and sanctifies, many of us live day by day relying on our works for our sanctification. When our works don't measure up, we either question our salvation or our worthiness. We saw this "nobody/somebody" model of behavior in an earlier lesson.

This nobody/somebody "model" works in three ways - first, by causing us to judge according to what we do. Ask yourself these questions: **How do you feel about yourself when you miss your quiet time**, when you don't pray, when you pass on a witnessing opportunity, or fall into a "big" sin? When you are less than pleasant with your family, friends? When you just don't feel spiritual? Now, how do you feel when you have a great quiet time, share Christ with a friend, turn your back on temptation, are kind and generous to all those around you, and you have a plain sense of God's presence in your life? If you are like most, you fall easily into the trap of feeling like on a "good" day, God is blessing and you are walking in sanctification, and on a "bad" day, God is not only not blessing, but you are the lowest of Christian pond scum! (**Ed**: Quiet time is to be a *blessing*, not a *burden*!) ([The Spiritual Life - 46 page monograph](#))

Steven Cole speaks of another potential stumbling block of quiet times...

There's a serious danger which both individuals and churches must guard against—*institutional religion*. It's so easy to fall into routine Christianity, where you run through your programs and activities, but you don't live in close touch with the living God.

**You even can have a personal quiet time,
but not meet with God.**

You can go to church and go through the worship service, but you haven't made contact with the living God. One day several years ago the phone rang in the rector's office of the church in Washington, D.C., where the President sometimes attended. An eager voice said, "Do you expect the President to be there Sunday?" The rector replied, "That I cannot promise. But we do expect God, and we fancy it will be incentive enough for a reasonably large attendance." (In "Our Daily Bread," Fall, 1986.) ([Sermon on 1 Timothy 3:14-16](#))

In another place **Steven Cole** reminds us that...

Our hearts are so prone to fall into a legalistic spirit, where we congratulate ourselves for keeping our vows, but our hearts are far from the Lord. The main thing is to walk closely with the Lord, judging all known sin and gladly obeying His Word out of a heart of love. If you miss your morning quiet time, your day is not under a curse. Walk with God that day and make it your priority to meet alone with Him as soon as you can. The biblical balance is: Don't put yourself under manmade laws or rules that have the appearance of wisdom, "but are of no value against fleshly indulgence" (Col 2:20-23-note). On the other hand, do discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness (1Ti 4:7-note). ([Nehemiah 10:1-39 Putting God's Truth into Practice](#))

David writes...

For the choir director; for flute accompaniment.

A Psalm of David.

Give ear to my words, O LORD,

Consider my groaning.

Heed the sound of my cry for help, my King and my God,

For to Thee do I pray.

In the morning, O LORD, Thou wilt hear my voice;

In the morning I will order my prayer to Thee and eagerly watch.

Psalm 5:1-3-Spurgeon's Note

As we alluded to earlier, we do well to cultivate the attitude and pattern of David, a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22, 1Sa 16:7) who alluded to meeting with the Lord...

One thing I have asked (desired as in Eccl 2:10) from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to **meditate** in His temple. (Ps 27:4)

Comment: If your quiet times are too quiet consider making this your prayer to God, that He might cultivate this desire in your heart ("One thing I have asked... ")

**Devotions are a matter of our heart
more than a discipline of our day timer.**

Keil and Delitzsch: There is only one thing, that he desires,... an ardent longing which extends out of the past into the future, and therefore runs through his whole life. The one thing sought is unfolded... a lifelong dwelling in the house of Yahweh, that is to say intimate spiritual intercourse... is the one desire of David's heart, in order that he might behold and feast upon (of a clinging, lingering, chained gaze) the pleasantness (or gracefulness) of the Lord.

Joseph Carroll adds: There you have it in one verse of Scripture. There is only one thing he desired; but because he desired this one thing, all things became possible. This is the mainspring. This is that which sets everything else in motion and enables all else to function as it was intended and to fulfill its appropriate role. If the one thing that is needful is desired and sought, everything else will fall into its proper place and will perform its proper function... David's desire is an ardent longing that runs out of the past into the future. It is not a momentary thing. Intimate, spiritual intercourse is the one consuming desire of his heart, and it was this that dominated David all his days... At the end of the day ask yourself what you have done with your time. How much time did you set aside to worship Jesus Christ? You might be surprised.

Of course, to worship Him in your quiet time is not the end. It is only the beginning. You are merely tuning your instrument to face the day. We seem to have the strange idea that if only we can have a quiet time, everything is going to be fine for the rest of the day; and if we do not have a quiet time, everything is going to turn out miserably. This is not so. The quiet time should be set aside early in the morning, but it is only the tuning of the instrument. You cannot say, "I have had my quiet time. Now I'm fine." This is just the beginning, getting in first gear, so to speak. We must walk in fellowship with the Lord throughout the day. C. H. Spurgeon said he was never out of vital contact with God for more than ten minutes! Little wonder that God used this great lover of Jesus Christ so mightily. Like King David before him, C. H. Spurgeon purposed in his heart to seek to be a true worshiper of his Lord, for no man will ever experience true worship in a consistent manner unless he sets his will to do so. (How to Worship Jesus Christ)

Spurgeon: Divided aims tend to distraction, weakness, disappointment. The man of one book is eminent, the man of one pursuit is successful. Let all our affections be bound up in one affection, and that affection set upon heavenly things. What we cannot at once attain, it is well to desire. God judges us very much by the desire of our hearts. He who rides a lame horse is not blamed by his master for want of speed, if he makes all the haste he can, and would make more if he could; God takes the will for the deed with his children. This is the right target for desires, this is the well into which to dip our buckets, this is the door to knock at, the bank to draw upon; desire of men, and lie upon the dunghill with Lazarus: desire of the Lord, and to be carried of angels into Abraham's bosom. Our desires of the Lord should be sanctified, humble, constant, submissive, fervent, and it is well if, as with the psalmist, they are all molten into one mass. Under David's painful circumstances we might have expected him to desire repose, safety, and a thousand other good things, but no, he has set his heart on the pearl, and leaves the rest. That will I seek after. Holy desires must lead to resolute action. The old proverb says, "Wishers and woulders are never good housekeepers, "and "wishing never fills a sack." Desires are seed which must be sown in the good soil of activity, or they will yield no harvest. We shall find our desires to be like clouds without rain, unless followed up by practical endeavors...

We shall not need to make enquiries in (meditate on) heaven, for there we shall know even as we are known; but meanwhile we should sit at Jesus' feet, and awaken all our faculties to learn of him.

**SPIRITUAL GROWTH
AND QUIET TIME**

A major factor regarding our spiritual growth is our time in the Word. Peter makes clear the relationship of intake and growth...

Therefore (because you are "born again" 1Pe 1:23), putting aside (enabled by the Spirit, discarding the following unholy attitudes and actions must precede intake of the holy Word) all (just try to do this in your own strength! Surrender to the Spirit's searching of your heart and enabling power to put off all) malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, 2 like newborn babies, long for (yearn for, pant for) the pure (no additives, undiluted) milk of the Word, so that (**term of conclusion** - don't miss it!) by it (**What?**) you may grow (not *know* but grow - intake without growth was characteristic of the Pharisees of Jesus' day!) in respect to salvation (In context this refers to sanctification, growth in holiness, growth in Christ-likeness, progressive conformation to the image of God's Son).

Comment: Notice that the very thing that caused Peter's readers to be "born again" ("seed which is... imperishable... the living and enduring Word of God." 1Pe 1:23-25-note), enables them to "grow in respect to salvation." Simply stated, if you have no regular intake of the Word, you can be assured that you will exhibit no significant spiritual growth. It's easy to focus on verse two and miss the vital relationship with 1Pe 2:1. If we have **unconfessed sin** (like those in verse 1), we are not "spiritually healthy" (so to speak) and our spiritual appetite for holy things will be blunted at best and totally absent at worst. **D. L. Moody** had an excellent practice of keeping "short accounts" with God -- Every evening before retiring he would review the day with his Lord, trusting His Spirit to reveal anything that had displeased Him (cp Ps 139:23-24-note). Such a man is prepared for the morning hour of worship (recall that "worship" speaks of the worthiness of someone. He is worthy - Rev 5:12-note). See parallel passage Hebrews 5:14-note. Stephen Olford observes that "It is impossible to subsist as a Christian without one's daily Quiet Time, because God has put into our spiritual life and nature a hunger for the Word."

Guy King tells about the time he "lived in a certain vicarage for fifteen years which had a pear tree in the garden; but never a respectable pear did it yield me all that time. I am no gardener; but my successor was - and, strange to relate, he had a bumper crop his very first year! Why? He went at the roots, which I was too ignorant to do. That's it! take care of the roots, the secret connection with the Soil - the Quiet Time with GOD, and the use of His appointed means of grace - the Word; the Footstool; the Table; the Worship; the Work, "that ye may grow thereby," 1Peter 2:2, and become "Oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He might be glorified" (Isa 61:3-[Spurgeon's sermon](#)): **Not we, but He. May we not be stunted trees.**" ([Colossians Commentary](#))

Ivor Powell - Trees which stand on top of a cliff need to send their roots deep!

A B Simpson - Dwell deep in the hidden life of God. The cedar grows more beneath the ground than above it.

C H Spurgeon - The nearer we come to God, the more graciously will he reveal himself to us.

Stephen Olford - God's best for you is closely linked with this daily meeting with Him. The barometer of one's Christian life is the Quiet Time. Do you have a Quiet Time, or have you let it slip? Be the man of God who takes time to be holy, speaks oft with his Lord, abides in Him only, and feeds on His Word. God grant that this may be true of you. You cannot tell me you have surrendered to God, that Jesus Christ is Lord of your life, or that you know the fullness of the Holy Spirit unless you have your manna in the morning. May your prayer be:

Help me, O Lord, Thy Word to read,
Upon the living Bread to feed,
Seeking Thy Spirit's quickening lead
That I may please Thee in all things.

Stephen F. Olford

[George Sweeting](#) - While still in his childhood, John Wesley resolved to dedicate an hour each morning and evening to Bible study and prayer.

Warren Wiersbe - I suggest you discipline yourself to spend time daily in a systematic reading of God's Word. Make this "quiet time" a priority that nobody can change.

Doctors say the most important meal of the day is breakfast. Jesus understood the importance of a spiritual "breakfast of champions" and how it even prepared one for the spiritual war each day is certain to bring...

But He answered (addressing the Devil's temptation in Mt 4:3) and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'" (Matt 4:4-note; quoting Dt 8:3, cp Eph 6:17-note)

Comment: How did Jesus resist the Devil's intense temptation? Filled with, led by the Holy Spirit (Lk 4:1, cp Lk 4:14, Mt 4:1) and filled with the Holy Word (from Deuteronomy)! God's "template for victory" has not changed.

Quiet time can strengthen us for the inevitable daily battles with temptation!

Spurgeon: Living is sustained by feeding. We must support the spiritual life by spiritual food, and that spiritual food is the Lord Jesus ("The Word of God," Jn 1:1, Rev 19:13).

R W De Haan comments: If we have been feeding daily on God's Word, it's natural to feel "hungry" when we skip our quiet time. But if we continue to neglect it, we may lose all desire to study the Scriptures. In fact, we may be starving ourselves. How much time do you spend reading the Bible and meditating on its truths? Do you miss the Word when you neglect it? Thomas Guthrie wrote,

"If you find yourself loving any pleasure better than your prayers, any book better than the Bible, any persons better than Christ, or any indulgence better than the hope of heaven-- take alarm."

If you've lost your taste for the "bread of life," confess your negligence and ask God to revive your appetite for His Word. Avoid spiritual starvation!

**Break Thou the bread of life, dear Lord, to me,
As Thou didst break the loaves beside the sea.
Beyond the sacred page I seek Thee, Lord;
My spirit pants for Thee, O Living Word.**

-Lathbury

Elmer Towns - The secret of our future spiritual maturity lies in our daily routine of Bible study.

E M Bounds - To be little with God is to be little for God.

Jonathan Edwards - True grace delights in secret converse with God.

Jim Faucett - It is misguided to think that God will revive a people who find no time to commune with him from the heart.

Dennis Fisher asks

How do we know if we're making progress in our personal time with the Lord? One major characteristic will be an increase in appreciation for who and what God is. Our personal quiet time should cause us to praise Him (**Ed:** Cp "A [garment of praise \[Spurgeon sermon\]](#)" - Isa 61:3KJV)...

(**Ed:** In addition we will begin to...)

- Learn how to pray while "on the go." (1Th 5:17-note)
- Let God into your daily problem-solving activities.
- Acknowledge to others your need of divine help. (Jas 4:6bnote)
- Expect God to act outside your own limited perspective.
- Keep reflecting on a biblical theme for the day. (Job 23:12-note)

(**Ed Comment:** In Job 23:12, he is saying that given a choice between breakfast and a quiet time with the Lord, he would opt for the latter. Little wonder that the incredible introductory description in Job 1:1 is affirmed not once but twice by God Himself in Job 1:8 and Job 2:3).

- Be encouraged by the fact that Jesus has promised to stay with us in all of life's circumstances (Mt 28:20). (Booklet related to quiet time - [Keeping Our Appointments With God](#))

PRAYING WITHOUT CEASING

Stephen Olford speaks of a "carry over" benefit of his **Quiet Time** - :My prayer list is a very interesting one. Monday-Missions. Tuesdays-Thanksgiving. Wednesday-Workers, staff, etc. Thursday-Tasks. Friday-Family. Saturday-Saints (so much of Paul's praying was for the saints). And Sunday-Sinners. On the list of sinners for this present period of my life... Now, it isn't the length of time I spend in my quiet time, though I usually take an hour, but there is a carry-over of the activity of prayer, the attitude of prayer, that marks the rest of the day. I never pick up a telephone without a prayer. I never dictate a letter to my secretary without a prayer. I never let anybody into my study or out of my study without a prayer, and as my beloved workers know, any time we get together we say, 'Let's pray.' And so, prayer is literally **praying without ceasing** (1Th 5:17-note). At the drop of a hat...and so I feel I live in that

attitude of **perpetual prayer**."

In Joshua 6:10 we see that a **'quiet time'** preceded a **"shouting time"** and victory over Jericho. - "But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "You shall not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I tell you, 'Shout!' Then you shall shout!"

David writes...

Thou wilt make known to me the path of life;
In Thy presence is fulness of joy;
In Thy right hand there are pleasures forever.

Ps 16:11-[note](#)

If we believe David's words
we too will seek the presence of David's God!

Henry Blackaby challenges us - If you are not keeping a spiritual journal or diary, you need to. If the God of the universe tells you something, you should write it down. When God speaks to you in your quiet time, immediately write down what He said before you have time to forget. Then record your prayer response. I write down the verse of Scripture He uses and what God has said to me about Himself from that verse. I write down the prayer response I am making; so I have in place the encounter with God, what God said, and how I responded to Him. I also write out what I need to do to adjust my life to God so I can begin to experience Him relating to me in this way. ([Experiencing God](#))

George Sweeting the respected former president of Moody Bible Institute once said that "If we don't maintain **quiet time** each day, it's not really because we are too busy; it's because we do not feel it is important enough... There's an old navy rule: when ships readjust their compass, they drop anchor in a **quiet spot**... Late nights kill the **quiet time**... **Quiet time** is not just a helpful idea, it is absolutely necessary to spiritual growth." (Great Quotes and Illustrations)

A W Tozer - God has not bowed to our nervous haste nor embraced the methods of our machine (**Ed**: Or technologically crazed) age. The man who would know God must give time to Him.

Robert Murray M'Cheyne - I ought to spend the best hours of the day in communion with God. It is my noblest and most fruitful employment, and is not to be thrust into any corner.

Martin Luther once said "I have so much to do today that I must spend at least three hours in prayer."

Steven Cole - If you're bored with worship or with serving the Lord, you've lost sight of the glory and majesty of God. Rituals and routines can be pretty boring, but the living God is definitely not boring! Whenever in the Bible someone got a glimpse of God, I assure you, they were not glancing at their watch to find out how much longer the service would last! I realize that not every worship service will give you a glimpse of God! Not every **quiet time** will be glorious. But if you're consistently bored with worship, you probably need a fresh glimpse of the greatness of God. ([Serving God the Leftovers: Malachi 1:6-14](#))

The **psalmist** writes...

Whom have I in heaven but Thee?
And besides Thee, I desire nothing on earth.
My flesh and my heart may fail, "
But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.
For, behold, those who are far from Thee will perish;
Thou hast destroyed all those who are unfaithful to Thee.
But as for me, the nearness of God is my good;
I have made the Lord GOD my refuge,
That I may tell of all Thy works.

Ps 73:25-28-[Spurgeon's Note](#)

Joseph Carroll writes...

The best time to worship is, of course, in the morning, in that time that we call **quiet time**. But what is a **quiet time** to you? To me as a young Christian, in the early years, it was anything but a relaxed, meditative time. In fact, it was a time when I had to get through a certain study of the Word of God and certain prayers that I had to pray from my prayer list. Thus, my quiet time was not really a quiet time. It was a study time, a time for intercession, a time for petition. Then I was introduced to a small volume on prayer by A. T. Pierson

that led to an intensive study of the teaching of our Lord on prayer... Our Lord's first lesson on prayer is found in Matthew 6:6-note. He is saying, "The first thing you must do is get somewhere alone with Me," for a closet is a closed place. A room can become a closet. It means aloneness. A forest can become a closet. The important thing is aloneness, in secrecy, being alone with your Father...

We enter into the holiest, into the very presence of God, by the blood of Jesus to commune with Him on the basis of a blood-sprinkled Mercy Seat (Heb 10:19-23-note). That Mercy Seat is Christ Himself (1Jn 2:2 where "propitiation" pictured in the "mercy seat" as in Heb 9:5-note), whose blood gives us access (1Ti 2:5). What did this do for my **quiet time**? It absolutely revolutionized it. Instead of looking at my watch and saying, "I have ten minutes to get through my prayer list," I simply knelt down and quietly meditated upon the fact that I was in the presence of the Lamb of God and worshiped Him. My **quiet time** then became **something for Him, not something for me** and with the worship of my heart—the pouring out of my heart to Him in worship—came the overpowering awareness of His presence. (How to Worship Jesus Christ)

Comment: Were you as convicted as I was when I read Carroll's description of his quiet time as "something for Him, not something for me?" I confess that too often my times have been inward rather than outward and upward focused. The flesh is very clever, even (especially) when it comes to "religious" activity. We need to approach the Quiet Time with a Ro 12:1 (note) attitude of surrender to the Majesty and Glory of our Great God. Such an approach will surely change our inward to an outward, upward focus and we will walk away less conformed to the world and more transformed by His Spirit, our minds renewed and ready to test and approve the many options of the day as to whether they are the will of God. (Ro 12:2-note). We need the attitude of **Richard Fuller** who said "Count not that thou hast lived that day in which thou hast not lived with God!"

The renowned Bible teacher **Howard Hendricks** had this to say about time in the Word...

Dusty Bibles always lead to dirty lives.

You are either in the Word and the Word is conforming you to the image of Jesus Christ or you are in the world and the world is squeezing you into its mold.

The greatest tragedy in evangelicalism today is the many who are "under" the Word of God but they are not "in" the Word for themselves! Being "under" the Word of God ought to be a STIMULUS not a SUBSTITUTE for getting into the Word for one's self.

The Bible still remains the most sold book in the world and also the most neglected one!

Hendricks went on to answer the question of why people don't get into the Bible more often for themselves:

- 1). Not a priority
- 2). Not considered relevant to our "modern" generation. It's archaic, out of date.
- 3). Don't understand how to begin. People say "get into" the Word of God but don't tell you "how" to go about "getting into" it for yourself.
- 4). I'm just a layman, not a professional... you can't expect me to be able to study the Bible for myself. [Living By The Book Howard Hendricks, William Hendricks](#)) - **Highly Recommended**; [Living by the Book Video Series Workbook 7-part condensed version](#))

Related Resources: See inductive Bible study

RIGHT PRIORITY: REGULAR QUIET TIME

When **Rob Morgan** asked respected expositor Stephen Olford if he had any advice for someone entering ministry (by the way we are ALL in ministry of some type - 1Pe 4:10-11), he responded "Yes," he said with the same dramatic delivery I had heard in the pulpit. "Yes," he said, "I do. **Never, never, never miss your Quiet Time.**"

Rob Morgan goes on to say that "It was shortly after that when another influence came into my life. Through a mutual friend, I had the opportunity of spending several seasons of extended time with Ruth Bell Graham, and she described to us how important the Quiet Time was to her. One day, when I was asking her about it, she said, "Robert, do you have the notebook habit?" I didn't know what the notebook habit was, so I said no, I didn't think I did. So she told me about her little loose-leaf notebook made of leather. She said that she kept wearing it out, but she knew a leather crafter who kept repairing it for her. There she would record the thoughts God gave her each day as she studied her Bible. That very day I drove down to Ashville near her home and found a

stationary shop and bought a notebook, and it's been a lifesaver to me ever since. All these years, I've used a journal as part of my Quiet Time, and I owe it to that conversation in North Carolina." ([I Need Help With My Quiet Time](#))

Theodore Epp - SPIRIT-CONTROLLED OR CARNAL? BY THEODORE EPP (Devotional on Genesis 13:5-13) In considering the lives of Abraham and Lot, we see that Abraham's life was symbolic of the Spirit-controlled Christian, whereas Lot's life was symbolic of the carnal Christian. Unconsecrated Christians who are living according to the flesh are referred to as "carnal" in the Scriptures (see 1 Cor. 3:1,3). **It is never recorded that Lot built an altar. He was not known for his communion with God. As a result, he got into trouble, just as any believer gets into trouble when he does not take time for daily fellowship with God.** I am not referring to a time when the entire family reads the Bible and prays together. This, too, is extremely important, but I am referring particularly to your personal time alone with God. Perhaps you say you do not have enough time because you are too busy with life's activities. Anything that takes you away from this time of fellowship with God is sin. Regardless of how much work you have to do, you can find some time to spend with God alone. As a believer, this is your number one prerogative. The Devil will always see to it that we have little or no time to fellowship with God. But we can--and we must--make time for such fellowship. We must put first things first. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16). ([Back to the Bible](#))

[Andrew Bonar](#) a great man of prayer, had three rules related to our discussion of Quiet Time...

1. Not to speak to any man before speaking to Jesus;
2. Not to do anything with his hands until he had been on his knees;
3. Not to read the papers until he had read his Bible.

A QUIET PLACE WITH A QUIET HEART FOR A QUIET TIME

Jon Courson writes that...

When I get up before the beginning of the day to find a **quiet place** with a **quiet heart** for a **quiet time**, I find the Lord instructs me about what I should do with my discretionary time. We waste so much time trying to figure out what we should do next. And when we don't get to it, we feel condemned about it. In reality, the decision ought to have been made early in the day. I'm not saying there's no room for flexibility, but for the most part, I have discovered that the real key is to say early in the day, "Lord, what do You want me to do? By Your grace and with Your help, that's what I'll do."

And as I do those things, as I come to the end of the day, I realize the sun has indeed stood still. Therefore, like Jesus, I'm able to say, "Father, I've finished the work You gave me to do." The tensions disappear; the burdens dissipate; and I find myself living a life of serenity and tranquility to a much greater degree.

What God gives us to do is doable. Do what our Greater than Joshua did day by day. Before the day begins, find a **quiet place** and have a **quiet time** with a **quiet heart**. Let God direct your day. You will have less decision to make and you'll be victorious in a whole new way...

It was in the wilderness that God gave manna to His people. And it is in our wilderness here on earth that He daily provides the Bread of His Word, the Bread of Himself. If I don't feast on the Scriptures daily, I become disillusioned, disoriented, confused. I get mixed up on the days I don't get away with the Lord in a **quiet spot** at a **quiet time** and enjoy the truths and promises of His Word. I think about fleshpots and the bread of Egypt; I become restless and troubled. But when I take in the Word, I find what Jeremiah said to be oh, so true. I find it to indeed be the very joy and rejoicing of my heart (Jeremiah 15:16). (Jon Courson's Application Commentary)

Max Lucado - Some of us have tried to have **adaily quiet time** and have not been successful. Others of us have a hard time concentrating. And all of us are busy. So rather than spend time with God, listening for his voice, we'll let others spend time with him and then benefit from their experience. Let them tell us what God is saying. After all, isn't that why we pay preachers? ...If that is your approach, if your spiritual experiences are secondhand and not firsthand, I'd like to challenge you with this thought: Do you do that with others parts of your life? ...You don't do that with vacations... You don't do that with romance...You don't let someone eat on your behalf, do you? [There are] certain things no one can do for you. And one of those is spending time with God. (Grace for the moment: inspirational thoughts for each day of the year)

Finding Rest - He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. —Psalm 23:3

According to a survey conducted by an insurance company, one of every six workers in the US feels too busy to take all the vacation

days he or she has earned. Even though studies show that a week's holiday each year can dramatically reduce stress and the risk of heart attack, many people just keep working.

A vacation can be good for body and soul. But many people don't have the luxury of time away from work and daily responsibilities. What can we do when we must remain in demanding circumstances?

Psalm 23 paints a beautiful word picture of a caring shepherd, secure sheep, and a tranquil scene of quiet meadows and still waters. But it is the Lord, our shepherd, who gives rest, not the green grass or the flowing stream. "He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake" (v.3).

Rest is a place of peace that our spirits find in God. Neither the presence of those who oppose us nor the dark valley of death can keep us from what hymnwriter Cleland McAfee called "a place of quiet rest, near to the heart of God." Through prayer and meditation on His Word, we can commune with Him. In the Lord's presence we can experience the rest and renewal we so desperately need.

There is a place of comfort sweet,
Near to the heart of God,
A place where we our Savior meet,
Near to the heart of God. —McAfee

Spending quiet time with God will bring quiet rest from God. [David McCasland](#)

Quiet Times - Be still, and know that I am God. —Psalm 46:10

My friend Mary told me that she had always valued the time she spent fishing with her dad. Not being a fishing aficionado myself, I was curious about what she found so enjoyable. "I just like being with my dad," she said. "So you just fish and talk?" I asked her. "Oh, no, we don't really talk," she said. "We just fish."

It wasn't the conversation—it was the company.

Did you ever think about how much time we spend talking? In what we like to call our "quiet time" with God, we usually fill in any silence with our prayers. But do we ever practice just being "still"?

God said, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Ps. 46:10). When Jesus noticed that the disciples were so busy that they didn't even have time to eat, He told them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while" (Mark 6:31). When we leave the distractions of life behind, we can more easily rest and refocus on God.

Are you allowing quiet moments alone with God to be a part of your life? Do you desire for Him to restore your soul? (Ps. 23:1-3). Let Him teach you how to "be still." And listen when Jesus invites you: "Come aside with Me and rest a while."

The quiet times we spend with God In solitude and prayer Will strengthen and restore our souls And help us sense His care. —Sper

Quiet times with God store up power for future emergencies. [Cindy Hess Kasper](#)

Quiet Time With God - He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. —Psalm 23:2

The word connected captures our contemporary experience of life. Many people rarely go anywhere without a cell phone, iPod, laptop, or pager. We have become accessible 24 hours a day. Some psychologists see this craving to stay connected as an addiction. Yet a growing number of people are deliberately limiting their use of technology. Being a "tech-no" is their way of preserving times of quiet, while limiting the flow of information into their lives.

Many followers of Christ find that a daily time of Bible reading and prayer is essential in their walk of faith. This "quiet time" is a disconnection from external distractions in order to connect with God. The "green pastures" and "still waters" of Psalm 23:2 are more than an idyllic country scene. They speak of our communion with God whereby He restores our souls and leads us in His paths (v.3).

All of us can make time to meet with God, but do we? In Robert Foster's booklet "7 Minutes With God," he suggests a way to begin: Start with a brief prayer for guidance, then read the Bible for a few minutes, and close with a short time of prayer that includes adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication for others. It's vital to take time today to connect with the Lord, who is our life.

We need to set aside the time To read God's Word and pray, And listen for the Spirit's voice To guide us in His way. —Sper

Time spent with God is time well spent. [David McCasland](#)

If you are too busy for God, you are too busy.

One day I was in trouble and oppressed about many things. It was one of those days when everything seems to go wrong. I was trying to get my Quiet time but was constantly interrupted. Suddenly these words came—I could hardly believe they were in the Bible, they seemed so new to my needy heart—“Grace to help in time of need.” I found them and read them and marked them with joy, and in that moment, the moment of their coming, I was renewed in strength. —Amy Carmichael

Selah - Is it a Musical Rest Note? That is the opinion of many. And this suggestion fits in splendidly with many Psalms, such as Psalm 7:5, and others. There is need in our lives for frequent rest pauses. The daily quiet time is such an one. The blessed Lord's Day is another. Whilst there is no music in a rest, the making of music is in them, and without them there could not be much harmony. Is that why there seems discord in so many lives?

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit...” (Gal. 5:16)

Exactly what is involved in walking in the Spirit? Actually it is not as complicated and impractical as some tend to think. Here is what a day's walk in the Spirit would be like!

First, you start the day in prayer. You confess all known sin in your life; this makes you a clean vessel and therefore usable by God. You spend time in praise and worship; this gets your soul in tune. You turn over control of your life to Him; this makes you available for the Lord to live His life through you. In this act of rededication, you “cease from needless scheming and leave the ruling of your life to Him.”

Next, you spend time feeding on the Word of God. Here you get a general outline of God's will for your life. And you may also receive some specific indication of His will for you in your present circumstances.

After your quiet time, you do the things that your hands find to do. Ordinarily they will be the prosaic, routine, mundane duties of life. This is where a lot of people have wrong ideas. They think that walking in the Spirit is foreign to the world of aprons and overalls. Actually it is mostly composed of faithfulness and diligence in one's daily work.

Throughout the day you confess and forsake sin as soon as you are aware of it. You praise the Lord as His blessings come to mind. You obey every impulse to do good, and refuse every temptation to evil.

Then you take what comes to you during the day as being His will for you. Interruptions become opportunities to minister. Disappointments become His appointments. Phone calls, letters, visitors are seen as part of His plan.

Harold Wildish quoted the following summary in one of his books:

“As you leave the whole burden of your sin, and rest upon the finished work of Christ, so leave the whole burden of your life and service, and rest upon the present inworking of the Holy Spirit.”

“Give yourself up, morning by morning, to be led by the Holy Spirit and go forth praising and at rest, leaving Him to manage you and your day. Cultivate the habit all through the day, of joyfully depending upon and obeying Him, expecting Him to guide, to enlighten, to reprove, to teach, to use, and to do in and with you what He wills. Count upon His working as a fact, altogether apart from sight or feeling. Only let us believe in and obey the Holy Spirit as the Ruler of our lives, and cease from the burden of trying to manage ourselves; then shall the fruit of the Spirit appear in us, as He wills, to the glory of God.” - William MacDonald - Truths to Live By (Devotional)

And then there is the quiet hour. At Wellesley College, in Massachusetts--a young ladies' college--there are twenty minutes reserved in every day for a quiet hour. During that twenty minutes every young lady is expected to be in her room; there is to be no passing through the halls; there is to be no life of conversation, no laughter. What the young lady does in her room is between herself, her own conscience, and her God. She may read, she may study, she may pray, she may think, she may do what she likes; only she must not disturb other pupils in other rooms. For twenty minutes a quiet time. We ought to have our quiet hour; at least, we will say, our quiet quarter of an hour. (Lyman Abbott, D. D.)

Our ability to trounce temptation is in direct proportion to our fellowship with Christ. **If we're walking with the Lord each day, having our daily quiet time, memorizing His Word, praying without ceasing, and enjoying unbroken fellowship with Christ**—if we are abiding in Him—temptation will lose much of its power. There's no temptation to which we're immune; but there's no temptation over which Jesus isn't victorious. So when the devil knocks, let Christ open the door. - Robert Morgan

James Smith - COMMUNE. "Commune with your heart upon your bed, and be still." Have a quiet time with your own heart. Examine yourself. "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (1 Cor. 11:31). The heart is deceitful. Commune with it, find out its motives, search into its desires, and cross-question its purposes. In the solitude of the bed-chamber, and in the stillness of the night, there is a favourable opportunity of finding out the true character of our own hearts. "Prove your own selves" (2 Cor. 13:5). The bed and the heart are fields in which many startling discoveries have been made, many great battles fought, and many victories lost and won—bloodless battles, whose issues reach away into the depths of eternity.

Without - One of the castaways on the TV phenomenon "Survivor" was a 24-year-old youth ministries major from Seattle Pacific University. With 15 others marooned on a deserted island in Malaysia, Dirk Been wanted to be the lone survivor and winner of one million dollars. The "lone" part was the problem. When advised that each contestant could bring one "luxury" item to the remote island in the South China Sea, Dirk took his Bible. **"I couldn't imagine not having my quiet time with the Lord for a single day, let alone 39," he said.** Being forced to eat beetle larvae was not the most difficult ordeal Dirk faced. The hardest aspect of being stranded was having no one around who shared his beliefs. "The other members of the Tagi and Pagong tribes couldn't understand where I was coming from." Confronted by the rising tensions of tribal politics, and insufficient food and sleep, he said, "I didn't have someone I could really open up to and pray with. The spiritual isolation was tortuous." But Dirk remembered the support of family and friends at home praying for him each day. The day before he left for the island, about 70 members of his church in Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin, gathered around him to pray for his health and safety. "It was awesome!" Dirk recalls. "And it didn't end there. Even though I was alone and lonely as the sole Christian on the island, I felt the presence of the Lord in incredible ways."

Sip and Savor - I reached into the cupboard for a mug, filled it with water, then popped it into the microwave. After the water was piping hot, I mixed in a packet of hot chocolate and carried it up to the room where I have my quiet time. I sat on the couch with my Bible and sipped the hot liquid, savoring each swallow. Then it dawned on me that what I was doing with my morning hot chocolate was exactly what I should do with the Word of God. As I drank my hot chocolate, it becomes a part of me. So should I be with God's word. I should sip and savor, be warmed and fed. —Carole Mayhall,

Postmodern Faith - What we have left is a Christianity of tips and techniques: three steps for a good quiet time; four habits for effective marriage communication. It does not take your breath away, and if Christianity does not take your breath away, something else will.... When you live in a Christianity of tips and techniques, you trivialize sin. Sin is something external. It's running stop signs. It's drinking too much. It's smoking. But God calls sin adultery of the heart. It is what you give your heart away to other than the heart of God.

I have found if I don't have my quiet time each morning, I tend to lose my temper over insignificant things. Recently, my son, Andrew, reminded me of the need for daily prayer. He had accidentally spilled his drink and I went into a tirade. Andrew ended my harsh words when he quietly asked, "Mom, did you forget to ask Jesus to help you be nice today?" —Cathy Fussell,

Robert Morgan - During some seasons of the year, our sheep drank little or nothing from their trough. We learned that if the climate is right, sheep can go for a long time without actually drinking water because of the heavy dews. When the grass is sopping wet, the sheep take in their needed moisture with their nutrition. It's a wonderful picture of the Spirit-drenched Scriptures. In the early morning we graze in the sweet pasturage of the Word of God covered with the watery dew of the Holy Spirit. **What an apt image of the Christian's daily quiet time.**

Something I Should Know? - He went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Matthew 14:23

During a concert, singer-songwriter David Wilcox responded to a question from the audience about how he composes songs. He said there are three aspects to his process: a quiet room, an empty page, and the question, "Is there something I should know?" It struck me as a wonderful approach for followers of Jesus as we seek the Lord's plan for our lives each day.

Throughout Jesus's public ministry, He took time to be alone in prayer. After feeding 5,000 people with five loaves of bread and two fish, He sent His disciples to cross the Sea of Galilee by boat while He dismissed the crowd (Matt. 14:22). "After [Jesus] had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone" (v. 23).

Lord, speak to me by Your Spirit and Your written Word

If the Lord Jesus saw the need to be alone with His Father, how much more do we need a daily time of solitude to pour out our hearts to God, ponder His Word, and prepare to follow His directions. A quiet room—anywhere we can focus on the Lord without distractions. An empty page—a receptive mind, a blank sheet of paper, a willingness to listen. Is there something I should know?

“Lord, speak to me by Your Spirit, Your written Word, and the assurance of Your direction.”

From that quiet hillside, Jesus descended into a violent storm, knowing exactly what His Father wanted Him to do (vv. 24–27).

Taking time to be with God is the best place to find strength. -[David MacCasland](#)

The alarm clock goes off. Too early, it seems. But you have a long day ahead. You have work to do, appointments to keep, people to care for, or all this and more. Well, you are not alone. Each day, many of us rush from one matter to another. As someone has wittily suggested, “That’s why we are called the human race.”

The Source Of Impact - When they saw the boldness of Peter and John . . . they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. —Acts 4:13

The Nobel Prize is awarded annually to people in a variety of fields who have made an extraordinary impact. Leaders in economics, physics, literature, medicine, and peace are recognized for their contributions. When a person is acknowledged with a Nobel Prize, it is the ultimate affirmation of years of training, effort, education, and sacrifice in pursuit of excellence—investments that are the source of their impact.

We might wish to make a significant impact spiritually in our world, but we wonder, What is the source of spiritual and ministry influence? If we want to make an extraordinary impact for Jesus Christ, what must we invest in?

Christ’s first followers were impacted from spending time with Jesus. Israel’s religious leaders recognized this. Acts 4:13 tells us, “When [the leaders] saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.”

Training and education are valuable in the service of the Savior, but nothing can replace time spent in His presence. He is the source of whatever spiritual impact we might have on our world. How much time have you been spending with Jesus—your source of impact?

In the secret of His presence How my soul delights to hide! Oh, how precious are the lessons Which I learn at Jesus’ side! —Goreh

To master this life, spend time with the Master. [Bill Crowder](#)

Defragment - Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you. —Psalm 55:22

Every so often, my computer becomes sluggish. Frequent use of certain programs and documents causes pieces of information to become scattered, requiring my computer to search for the pieces before I can use them. To fix it, I need to run a program that retrieves the pieces and groups them together where they are easily accessible. This process is called “defragmentation.”

Like my computer, my life gets fragmented. One situation tugs on my emotions while I’m trying to concentrate on something else. Demands from every direction bombard me. I want to accomplish everything that needs to be done, but my mind won’t stop and my body won’t start. Soon I begin to feel weary and useless.

Recently I attended a retreat where one of the handouts included a prayer with words that expressed how I felt: “Lord, I am scattered, restless, and only half here.”

King David also went through such times (Ps. 55:2). In prayer, David presented his needs to God morning, noon, and evening, confident that he would be heard (v.17).

Prayer can help to defragment our lives. When we cast our cares on the Lord, He will show us what we need to do and what only He can do.

O Lord, we bring our restless hearts To You in fervent prayer; Now help us wait expectantly While resting in Your care. —Sper

We need prayer the most when we have the least time to pray. y[Julie Ackerman Link](#)

Awake With His Word - I rise before the dawning of the morning, and cry for help; I hope in Your Word. —Psalm 119:147

My eyes fluttered open, but the room was still dark. It was too early to get up. I sighed, adjusted my pillow, and hoped for sleep. Unfortunately, a lengthy to-do list bombarded my brain. I needed to buy groceries, deliver a meal to a friend, answer e-mail, schedule a doctor’s appointment

If you’ve ever been overwhelmed and worried, you know how it feels to stare at the ceiling when you should be sleeping. The writer

of Psalm 119 was no stranger to this experience. He wrote, "I rise before the dawning of the morning, and cry for help; I hope in Your Word" (v.147).

God's Word delivered special comfort during the psalmist's sleepless nights. Although he couldn't make his problems disappear, he said, "My eyes are awake through the night watches, that I may meditate on Your Word" (v.148). At night he reviewed God's Word over and over in his mind. He concentrated on Scripture rather than his concerns. This practice allowed him to proclaim, "Oh, how I love Your law!" (v.97).

When worry wakes you up, remember, "The Word of God is living and powerful" (Heb. 4:12). Select a passage and mull it over. Our cares cannot compete with God's Word! [Jennifer Benson Schuldt](#)

If your soul is parched and thirsty
And you feel weighed down by care,
Go to God's Word for refreshment—
You'll find strength and comfort there. —Sper

Only God can still our hearts and quiet our minds.

Slack Tide - He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." —Mark 6:31

I find it fascinating to consider the pull of the moon on our great oceans, which creates high and low tides. At the changing of the tide, there is a brief period of time called "slack tide" when the water is neither high nor low. According to scientists, this is when the water is "unstressed." It is a quiet pause before the surging of tidal flow begins again.

Sometimes in our busy schedules we may feel pulled in different directions by competing responsibilities. In Jesus' ministry, we see how He understood the demands made on His followers and the need for rest. Returning from a traveling ministry in teams of two, the Twelve reported the wonderful things that God had done through them (Mark 6:7-13,30). But Jesus responded: "'Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.' For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves" (vv.31-32).

What responsibilities are pulling on you today? It is certainly acceptable to plan some rest and relaxation time to rejuvenate your body and soul for more fruitful service to others. Jesus advised it, and we all need it. He will meet you there. [Dennis Fisher](#)

My Shepherd is the Lord
Who knows my needs, and I am blest;
By quiet streams, in pastures green,
He leads and makes me rest. —Psalter

Spending quiet time with God can bring quiet rest from God.

Time For A Change - There he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord. —Genesis 12:8

Many believers long to spend daily time with God, praying and reading His Word. Ironically, they are often distracted by a busy schedule. Frustrations mount as busyness seems to crowd out an opening in their schedule.

Oswald Chambers has wisely commented on the transforming power of even 5 minutes in the presence of the Lord. Indeed, even a short time spent in intercession and the Word still has great value: "It is not the thing on which we spend the most time that moulds us, but the thing that exerts the greatest power. Five minutes with God and His Word is worth more than all the rest of the day." Now, it may sound like Chambers has made an overstatement. Yet powerful results can come from even a short time of prayer, because God is powerful.

Sometimes our days are filled with busy demands that crowd out time spent in listening to and responding to God. But no matter where we are, any time taken to build our own spiritual "altar" to the Lord as Abram did (Gen. 12:8) opens the door to His transforming power. If you are having trouble establishing a time with God, you could start with just 5 minutes and see where it leads. Our God longs to meet with us and show His power in our lives. - [Dennis Fisher](#)

Lord, it's amazing to me that You, Almighty God,
would want to spend time with me! Thank You.
I stumble with my words at times but am in awe of
You. Thank You that You want to hear from me.

Talk with God—He wants to hear your heart.

Check The Oil - My voice You shall hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning I will direct it to You, and I will look up. —Psalm 5:3

When I helped our daughters learn to drive, I included a little instruction on basic auto maintenance. We visited a local service station where they learned to check the oil every time they put fuel in the car. Today, years later, they often remind me of my six-word slogan, “Oil is cheap; engines are expensive.” Adding a quart of oil is nothing compared to replacing an engine.

Maintenance is also important in our spiritual lives. Taking time each day to read the Bible, pray, and listen to God is a key element in avoiding a breakdown. In Psalm 5, David wrote, “My voice You shall hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning I will direct it to You” (v.3). In the following verses he poured out his heart in praise, thanksgiving, and requests to God.

Many people find it essential to begin every day with the Lord. Before checking email, catching the news, or eating breakfast, they find some quiet moments alone to read a portion of God’s Word, praise Him for His greatness, thank Him for His love, and seek His guidance. Others spend time reading and praying at different times of the day.

It’s not magic—it’s maintenance, as we ask the Lord each day to fill our hearts with His presence on the road of life. [-David McClasland](#)

Give me a strong desire, O Lord, to look into Your
Word each day. Help me hide it in my heart so that
I might not stray from Your truth. Feed me and
teach me about Yourself and Your will for me.

The roots of stability come from being grounded in God’s Word and prayer.

World’s Fastest Walkers - According to a study measuring the pace of life of cities in 32 countries, people in the biggest hurry live here in Singapore. We walk 60 feet in 10:55 seconds, compared to 12:00 seconds for New Yorkers and 31:60 seconds for those living in the African city of Blantyre, Malawi. But regardless of where you live, the study shows that walking speeds have increased by an average of 10 percent in the past 20 years. And if walking speed is any indicator for the pace of life, we are certainly much busier than before. Are you caught up in the frenzy of a busy life? Pause and consider Jesus’ words to Martha: “You are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:41-42). Notice Jesus’ gentle words. He didn’t rebuke Martha for wanting to be a good host but rather reminded her about her priorities. Martha had allowed the necessary to get out of proportion. And, in the process, she was so busy doing good that she didn’t take time to sit at Jesus’ feet. In our drive to be productive for the Lord, let’s remember the one thing worth being concerned about—**enjoying time with our Savior**. Jesus longs for our fellowship even more than we long for His.

Crumbs of Time - A friend was coming to town. He is a very busy man and his schedule was tight, but after a difficult day in important meetings, he managed to see my family for half an hour for a quick and late dinner. We enjoyed his visit, but I remember looking at my plate and thinking, “We only got the crumbs of his time.” Then I remembered how many times God gets the crumbs of my time—sometimes just the last minutes before I fall asleep. Daniel was a busy man. He held a high government position in the ancient kingdom of Babylon, and I’m sure he had a full schedule. However, he had developed the habit of spending time with God—praying three times a day, praising God, and thanking Him. This routine helped him develop a strong faith that did not waver when he faced persecution (Dan. 6). God desires a relationship with us. In the morning we can invite Him into our day, and then we can praise Him and ask Him for His help throughout the day. At other times we can treasure some time alone with Him and reflect on His faithfulness. As we spend time with God in prayer and in His Word, we grow in our relationship with Him and learn to become more and more like Him. As time with God becomes a priority, we enjoy His company more and more. [Keila Ochoa](#)

In The Morning

In the morning . . . He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. —Mark 1:35

Are you so rushed during the day that you find it hard to take even a few minutes to spend with God? Many people set aside time in the early morning before they get caught up in the hectic pace of the day.

I read about a very busy man who somehow manages to find time for giving the day a spiritual jump-start. He’s Dr. Ben Carson, chief of pediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Children’s Center, a position he assumed in 1984 when he was only 33 years old.

Here’s Carson’s testimony about the value of putting spiritual things first: “I’ve found that having a morning ritual—meditation or some quiet reading time—can set the tone for the whole day. Every morning, I spend a half-hour reading the Bible, especially the

book of Proverbs. There's so much wisdom there. During the day, if I encounter a frustrating situation, I think back to one of the verses that I read that morning."

Jesus faced busy days filled with demanding crowds of people. In Mark's gospel we read, "In the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed" (1:35).

Do you take time to read God's Word and pray? Try it in the morning. It can transform your day. [Vernon C. Grounds](#)

In the stillness of the morning,
Before a busy day of care,
How sweet to be alone with God
Through His holy Word and prayer. —Anderson

Let Christ be first in your thoughts in the morning, and last in your thoughts at night.

Oswald Chambers - Morning Appointments with God - Unless you learn to open the door of your life completely and let God in from your first waking moment of each new day, you will be working on the wrong level throughout the day. But if you will swing the door of your life fully open and "pray to your Father who is in the secret place," every public thing in your life will be marked with the lasting imprint of the presence of God. – Oswald Chambers in My Utmost for His Highest, entry for August 23.

Ray Pritchard - Twenty-five years ago I spent a summer at Word of Life Island in Schroon Lake, New York. While I was there as a counselor I was exposed for the first time to a concept called "**the quiet time.**" A quiet time means that you set aside a few minutes each day to read the Bible and pray. The people at Word of Life were so committed to it that they actually set aside 30 minutes every day when the whole camp stopped and we all went off and had a quiet time. We even had a little diary that we filled in with our thoughts and prayers. Some people would call it devotions, others the morning watch. It makes no difference. In the years since then I have been to Christian college, four years of Dallas Seminary, further study at three other seminaries, and completed 18 years as a pastor. I have studied and read hundreds of books on the spiritual life. When all is said and done, I know of nothing more important for maintaining a warm relationship with Jesus Christ than this—a consistent, regular, quality quiet time. I also testify that it has not gotten easier over the years. In many ways it has gotten harder. It almost always does because we tend to substitute our knowledge and Christian activity for this simple discipline of a daily time with God and his Word. I commend to all of you the practice of a daily quiet time. How can we say we believe the Bible and accept its authority if we do not daily spend time in the Word? If you are an elder or a deacon or a deaconess, if you attend a Christian college or if you work for a Christian organization, if you have been a Christian for many years, if you teach Sunday School or serve the Lord in some way, I exhort you not to rationalize that your knowledge makes a quiet time unnecessary. New Christians rarely have to be convinced about this. It's experienced Christians who tend to drift away. ([What Does It Mean to Believe the Bible - Keep Believing Ministries](#))

Stephen Olford on the quiet time - Daily communion with God is more than a commendable practice; it is absolutely vital to a life of sustained spirituality and maturity. It is the barometer of the Christian life. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). Read that without the negative comparison, and you will see what man is to live on. "Man shall live by every spoken word that comes from God." That is not the Bible memorized, nor the Bible on your bookshelf, nor in your study. It is the word that God speaks to your soul in the quiet place of prayer and meditation. That is how man lives. You can be doctrinally correct and yet be spiritually dead. The thing that maintains life is the living Word of God spoken to your soul every day. The quiet time is vital to spiritual health, whether you are newly converted or a mature Christian (see 1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:14).

The quiet time is vital for spiritual cleansing. You are initially cleansed by the precious blood, and again and again you have to return to the cross for restoration. But the day-to-day cleansing is from the laver of the Word (see Ps. 119:9; John 15:3; 17:17).

The quiet time is also vital to spiritual counsel. You can never know the true principles that determine a life of holiness and righteousness without letting "the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (see Col. 3:16; Ps. 73:24).

The quiet time is likewise vital in equipping you for spiritual conflict. The supreme example is our Lord Jesus Christ when He encountered Satan in the wilderness. For forty days and nights He had fed His soul on the book of Deuteronomy, and He could therefore make His sword thrusts from a personal experience of the written Word. Paul later exhorted the Ephesian believers to "take... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17). Important as these things are, the greatest incentive to having a daily quiet time is not your need—great as that is—but the fact that God wants to meet with you. Therefore, it is not merely a duty; it is a privilege and an honor. God in Christ has a definite time and place for meeting with you. His heart is saddened when you fail to keep the appointment. He longs, as He did with the woman of Samaria, to drink afresh of your love, devotion, and worship (see John 4:23, 24).

Establishing your quiet time is never easy. I confess quite frankly that it is harder for me to have my quiet time now than it was when I was first converted. The reason for this is that what counts costs.

You will find that the most vicious attacks of the adversary will be directed toward robbing you of that daily time with your Lord. And you will have to guard it fearlessly if you are to keep it. Whatever your sphere of service—as a pastor, Sunday school teacher, missionary, or Christian in the office or home—I give you little hope of living victoriously unless you are successful in maintaining your quiet time.

With the reasons for the daily quiet time, there are some practical and specific requirements. First, you will need a definite place and time. Consider the example of the Lord Jesus (see Mark 1:35). Next, have a good-sized Bible, one with print you do not have to strain to read. Don't get in the habit of waking up in the morning, rolling over in bed, and with sleepy eyes trying to read a Bible with small print. Don't stay in bed at all! Get up and wash your face or take a shower so that you are fully alert.

Another essential is a prayer list or prayer cycle—something to keep reminding you to emphasize a different request for each day. My wife and I use one that works this way:

Monday: M is for missionaries.

Tuesday: T is for thanksgiving for wonderful answers to prayer.

Wednesday: W is for workers.

Thursday: T is for tasks—our job at the church or the ministry God has given us.

Friday: F is for our families.

Saturday: S is for the saints—especially young Christians, that Christ might be formed in them.

Sunday: S is for sinners—in particular, the gospel services for which we are responsible.

Then you should have a quiet-time notebook or journal. I believe that the thoughts of every quiet time should be written down, even if only in brief sentence form. God gives you something there you'll never find in a commentary or anywhere else, and the thoughts are worth keeping.

Along with these tangible items of equipment, be sure to come to your quiet time with a spirit of expectancy. I believe such expectancy has at least three contributing factors. First of all, there is the physical factor. You cannot go to bed at all hours of the night and expect to get up fresh in the morning. Going to bed when you ought takes discipline, and some of these social occasions that you enjoy may be great, but they are not as precious or vital as your quiet time.

There's a moral factor, too, in this matter of expectancy. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear" (Ps. 66:18). When there is something in your life that is out of adjustment with the will of God, don't expect to have fellowship with Him. If you have something against another person, leave your gift at the altar and first be reconciled to that individual (Matt. 5:23-24).

Then there is a spiritual factor involved in this matter of expectancy. John 7:17 states, "If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine"; that is, he shall know the teaching. Revelation and obedience are like parallel lines: as you obey, so He reveals; when you cease to obey, He ceases to reveal. My experience has been this: when I find it impossible to "get through" to God, when the Bible has become a dead book to me, usually it is because there was an issue of obedience on which I had not followed through. Therefore, before proceeding with my quiet time, I have to get right with God. (Not I But Christ)

Selwyn Hughes - Organizing a Quiet Time - I wait and put my hope in His word. I wait for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning.—Psalm 130:5-6 - Someone has described the morning quiet time as **"turning the dial until we tune in to God's wavelength—then we get the message."** But how do we gain the best results from our quiet time? First, decide on the amount of time you want to invest in waiting before God. Next, take your Bible and read a portion slowly. Let it soak in. If some words or verses strike you, focus on them in meditation. They will yield up new meanings to you. Write these down. After the reading, let go, relax, and say to Him: "Father, have You anything to say to me?" Learn to listen. All those who hear God's voice on a regular basis say that it is something they have had to develop over time and by experience. They pause, they wait, and they learn after a while to disentangle their own thoughts from what God is saying. Then speak to God in prayer. And finally, thank Him for the answer. He always answers—whether it is "yes," "no," or "wait." His "no" is just as much an answer as His "yes"—sometimes even a better answer. (ILLUSTRATION) Not far from my home is the River Thames. Sometimes I walk along the riverbank and watch small boats entering the locks from the adjoining rivers. To get into the Thames, these boats must enter the lock and wait there to be lifted up to a higher level. Our quiet time does that. It shuts us in with God. But then infinite resources begin to bubble up from below, and we are lifted silently and without strain onto a higher level. The lifting is the result of being shut in with God. Prayer - O Father, help me

resolve to spend a quiet time with You every day. May my quiet time at this moment be the open door through which I glide out onto a higher level of life. In Jesus' name. Amen. (Every Day with Jesus)

Henry Blackaby writes...

God created the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, for a love relationship with Himself. After Adam and Eve had sinned, they heard God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. They hid from Him because of their fear and shame. Try to sense the heart of a loving Father when He asked that wonderful love question, "Where are you?" (Ge 3:9). God knew that something had happened to the love relationship.

When your relationship is as it ought to be, you will always be in fellowship with the Father. You will be there in His presence expecting and anticipating the relationship of love. When Adam and Eve were not there, something had gone wrong.

Early each day, I have an appointment with God. I often wonder what happens when the God who loves me comes to meet me there. How does He feel when He asks, "Henry, where are you?" and I am just not there. I have found this to be true in my own walk with the Lord: I keep that time alone with God, not in order to have a relationship, but because I have a relationship. Because I have that love relationship with the Lord, I want to meet with Him in my quiet time. I want to spend the time there. Time with Him enriches and deepens the relationship I have with Him.

I hear many persons say, "I really struggle trying to have that time alone with God." If that is a problem you face, let me suggest something to you. Make the priority in your life to come to love Him with all your heart. That will solve most of your problem with your quiet time. Your quiet time is because you know Him and, therefore, love Him, not only in order to learn about Him. The apostle Paul said it was "the love of Christ" that compelled or constrained him (2Cor 5:14).

Suppose you were dating a person you loved and intended to marry. What is the primary reason you date (spend time with) that person? Is it because you want to find out about his likes and dislikes or family background? Is it because you want to find out about her knowledge and education? Or is it because you love him and enjoy being with him?

When two people love each other and plan to marry, they are concerned about finding out information about each other. That is not, however, the primary reason why they date. They spend time together because they love each other and enjoy being together.

Similarly, you will learn much about God, His Word, His purposes, and His ways as you spend time with Him. You will come to know Him during the day as you experience Him working in and through your life. Learning about Him is not, however, why you should want to have a quiet time with Him. The more you know Him and experience His love, the more you will love Him. Then you will want that time alone with Him because you do love Him and enjoy His fellowship. ([Experiencing God Knowing and Doing the Will of God, Revised and Expanded Henry Blackaby, Richard Blackaby, Claude King](#))

Wayne Barber speaks of the value of a quiet time in our ongoing battle with the lusts of our fallen flesh...

You had better learn this: don't focus on the sin! Focus on the Savior who has conquered the sin! And learn! Train your senses to line up under Him. Accommodate yourself to Him. Put yourself where you can be influenced by the Spirit and not influenced by the flesh. This is why it's so important to have a quiet time. Quiet times have been used and abused over the years.

A quiet time is not to make you spiritual.

It just helps you start your day by putting yourself in the right place. Then all day long you begin to fellowship with Him. That's all it is! It's just a discipline. It's not going to make you more spiritual at all. What prayer is and what Scriptures are and what praise is all about is the atmosphere we put ourselves in so that we can be drawn closer and so that the Spirit now can be accommodated instead of accommodating my flesh! I've learned now to accommodate my spirit. That's what we are trying to say. I'm learning, too. (**Romans 6:12-14**)

Steven Cole asks...

Do you often make time to spend with the Lord? It's sure easy for that first love to cool off, and time between you and the Lord gets squeezed out with other things. Or, it becomes your **duty** to have a quiet time, so you

get out your Bible, grimace, and swallow a *chapter a day to keep the devil away*. But there wasn't any love in it (cf Rev 2:4, 1Jn 4:10, Ge 3:8-9). You weren't seeking to know Christ in a more intimate way. You weren't opening your heart to Him, so that He could confront you and cleanse you and make you more like Himself. There's no closeness, no intimacy. ([Knowing Christ and Being Like Him](#))

Talk with us, Lord, Thyself reveal,
While here on earth we rove;
Speak to our hearts, and let us feel
The kindling of Thy love.

Charles Wesley

Ron Mattoon tells a story that relates to having a **quiet heart** during our **Quiet Time**...

In the book "Directions," James Hamilton writes: Before refrigerators, people used icehouses to preserve their food. Icehouses had thick walls, no windows, and a tightly fitted door. In winter, when streams and lakes were frozen into silver-gray pathways, large blocks of ice were cut, hauled to the icehouses, and covered with golden sawdust. Often the ice would last well into the summer. One man lost a valuable watch in this sawdust while working in an icehouse. He searched diligently for it carefully raking through the sawdust, but didn't find it. His fellow workers also looked, but their efforts, too, proved futile.

A small boy who heard about the fruitless search slipped into the icehouse during the noon hour and soon emerged with the watch. Amazed, the men asked him how he found it. The boy replied, "I closed the door, laid down in the sawdust, and kept very still. Soon I heard the watch ticking."

Beloved, often the question is not whether God is speaking but whether we are being still enough, and quiet enough, to hear what He has to say to us. Be still and get God's direction for your life! (Ps 4:4, Ps 63:6) (Luke Commentary)

**The knowledge of the book is not as important...
as knowing the Author of the book.**

Skip Heitzig - Devotional Bible study is the process of reflecting on a few verses or a passage of Scripture and making a personal application. Many Christians refer to this worshipful way of reflecting on the Scriptures as "**having a quiet time**" or "**having devotions**." Although devotional study is not primarily an academic approach to the Bible, it doesn't mean that we bypass observation or interpretation on our way to application. Instead, we are simply endeavoring to encounter God on the holy ground of His word by "stepping through the veil" into His presence to commune with Him. Devotional study is a peaceful and reassuring way to begin or end your day. Rather than examining the Bible as simply a textbook, as we might in school, devotional study focuses on seeking the Lord and desiring to know His will as it applies to us. The **knowledge of the book** is not as important in this method as **knowing the Author of the book**. Time spent in devotional Bible study becomes a joyful rendezvous with God. (How to Study the Bible and Enjoy It)

Mark 1:35 Early in the Morning ([My All in All - Robert J Morgan](#)) In college I discovered the habit of rising early to hear His voice. My school required students to rise at 6:15, and, after showering and dressing, to devote a half hour to personal devotions before breakfast. I resisted at first, but it gradually became an ingrained habit. British army chaplain Bishop Taylor Smith testified, "As soon as I awake each morning, I rise from bed at once. I dress promptly. I wash myself, shave, and comb my hair. Then fully attired, wide-awake and properly groomed, I go quietly to my study. There, before God Almighty and Christ my King, I humbly present myself as a loyal subject to my Sovereign, ready and eager to be of service to Him for the day."

- Early in the morning Abraham went to the place where he had stood before the Lord. Genesis 19:27
- Early in the morning Jacob took the stone that was near his head and set it up as a marker. He poured oil on top of it and named the place Bethel. Genesis 28:18-19
- Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, He got up, went out, and made His way to a deserted place. And He was praying there. Mark 1:35
- Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they went to the tomb at sunrise. Mark 16:2
- [Early in the morning my song shall rise to Thee](#).—Reginald Heber (Pause and sing this hymn to Him in spirit and in truth!)

Greg Ogden in his excellent book on Biblical [Discipleship](#) has the following guidelines...

A daily quiet time is a private meeting each day between a disciple and the Lord Jesus Christ. It should not be

impromptu. We can commune with the Lord on a spur-of-the-moment basis many times each day, but a quiet time is a period of time we set aside in advance for the sole purpose of a personal meeting with our Savior and Lord.

A daily quiet time consists of at least three components.

- **Reading** the Bible with the intent not just to study but to meet Christ through the written Word.

(**Ed: One caution** - while you might occasionally use devotional books to augment your Quiet Time, you want to keep these resources to a bare minimum. **Why?** Because even excellent, inspirational as devotionals like "Our Daily Bread" [Radio Bible Class] or "My Utmost for His Highest" [Oswald Chamber's devotional] are not the **pure milk of God's Word**, but are the words others have gleaned from the pure Word. **Your goal is communion with God Himself and this is achieved primarily by going directly to the Word He has spoken to you in the Holy Scriptures. God has promised to bless His word, not the words about His Word!**)

- **Meditating** on what we have read so that biblical truth begins to saturate our minds, emotions and wills. "Meditate on [the Book of the Law] day and night" (Joshua 1:8).
- **Praying** to (communing with) God: praising, thanking and adoring him as well as confessing our sins, asking him to supply our needs and interceding for others.

Why Is It Important? - Why should we have a daily quiet time? There are at least three reasons.

It pleases the Lord. Even if there were no other consequences, this would be sufficient reason for private daily communion with God.

Of all the Old Testament sacrifices there was only one that was daily—the continual burnt offering. What was its purpose? Not to atone for sin but to provide pleasure (a sweet-smelling aroma) to the Lord. The New Testament directs us to continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, "the fruit of lips that confess his name" (Hebrews 13:15). It may astonish us to realize that God is seeking people who will do just that: "They are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks" (John 4:23). One indicator of the depth of our relationship with the Lord is our willingness to spend time alone with him not primarily for what we get out of it but for what it means to him as well.

We receive benefits. The psalmist had this in mind when he wrote, "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God" (Psalm 42:1-2). We benefit from a quiet time in several ways.

- **Information.** We learn about Christ and his truths when we spend time with him and his Word. Before we can obey him we need to know what he commands. Before we can understand what life is all about we need to know what he has taught.
- **Encouragement.** At times we get discouraged. There is no better source for inspiration than the Lord Jesus Christ.
- **Power.** Even when we know what we should be and do we lack the strength to be that kind of person and do those kinds of works. Christ is the source of power, and meeting with him is essential to our receiving it.
- **Pleasure.** Being alone with the person we love is enjoyable, and as we spend time with Christ we experience a joy unavailable anywhere else.

Jesus had a quiet time. "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed" (Mark 1:35). If our Lord found it necessary to meet privately with his Father, surely his example gives us a good reason to do likewise. The question is whether we will be mediocre Christians or growing Christians. A major factor in determining the answer is whether or not we develop the discipline of a daily quiet time.

How to Begin - Once you desire to begin a daily quiet time, what can you do to start?

First, remember the principle of self-discipline: do what you should do when you should, the way you should, where you should and for the correct reasons. In other words, self-discipline is the wise use of your personal resources (such as time and energy).

(**Ed:** Fisher writes: I knew a student a number of years ago who was an excellent writer.

The problem was that he always turned in his papers late. Why? "If I can't do it right, I won't do it!" was his response. His commitment to perfectionism led him down a path of inconsistency. This is a common problem in maintaining a quiet time. It is a "throwing the baby out with the bath water" mentality. It is the "all or nothing" approach to a devotional life. But in a realistic sense, daily devotions are about progress more than perfection. It's better for us to have a shorter and even less meaningful devotional time on a given day than it is to skip it in the name of high standards.)

Second, set aside time in advance for your quiet time. A daily quiet time should take place each day at the time when you are most alert. For some this will be in the morning, perhaps before breakfast; for others it will be another time of the day or evening. Though it is not a hard and fast rule, the morning is a preferable time since it begins before the rush of thoughts and activities of the day. An orchestra does not tune its instruments after the concert.

How much time should you spend? This will vary from person to person, but a good plan to follow is to start with ten minutes a day and build up to approximately thirty minutes. This regularly scheduled chunk of time can be a major factor in strengthening self-discipline. Here's a suggestion: pause while reading this and make a decision—now—about when and for how long, beginning tomorrow, you will meet the Lord Jesus Christ for a daily quiet time.

(**Ed:** Fisher writes "When I was taking classical guitar lessons, the instructor told me, "It's better to practice 15 minutes a day every day, and then to practice for several hours on only a few days." He was right, especially when it comes to establishing new habits.")

Third, plan ahead. Go to bed early enough so that you can awaken in a refreshed condition to meet Christ. The battle for the daily quiet time is often lost the night before. Staying up too late hampers our alertness, making us bleary-eyed and numb as we meet the Lord, or else we oversleep and skip the quiet time altogether.

Fourth, make your quiet time truly a quiet time. Psalm 46:10 speaks to this: "Be still, and know that I am God." Turn off your radio or television. Find as quiet a place as possible and make sure your location and position are conducive to alertness. Get out of bed. Sit erect. If you are stretched out in bed or reclining in a chair that is too comfortable you might be lulled into drowsiness.

(**Ed:** We all concentrate or are distracted in different ways. C. S. Lewis brings up a surprising suggestion in his book *Letters To Malcolm*. His admonition on the "quiet time" is to make sure we have "just the right amount of distraction" to help us concentrate. Lewis tells the story of a man who would have his devotional time in a railway compartment because complete silence left him open to inner distractions. Ironically, his focus was enhanced when it was challenged just slightly.)

Fifth, pray as you start your time with God. Ask the Holy Spirit to control your investment of time and to guide your praising, confessing, thanking, adoring, interceding, petitioning and meditating, as well as to help you get into the Bible. Open your mind and heart to Scripture.

Sixth, keep a notebook handy. Write down ideas you want to remember and questions you can't answer. Expression deepens impression—and writing is a good mode of expression.

(**Ed:** **W G T Shedd** once said "It is not sufficient to commune with the truth, for truth is impersonal. We must commune with the God of truth." Although our Quiet Time is not to be a study time per se, our reading and understanding of what God is saying in His Scripture and hence our communion with Him can be greatly enhanced by practicing simple **inductive Bible study techniques** and you don't have to be a seasoned inductive student to accomplish this end. Take time to make simple observations [See discussion of the basics of **observation**], learning especially to ask **the 5W/H questions of the terms of conclusion, terms of explanation, terms of contrast, and terms of comparison**] which will slow you down and facilitate **meditation** on the text, allowing your Teacher the Spirit to lead you into the truth. As you engage in "active" rather than "passive" reading, you will be amazed at what God is able to say as you invest the time to slow down and "listen. Take time to chew the cud of God's Word - cp Jer 15:16)

Last, share your plans and goals with a friend. Tell him or her you are trying to develop the discipline of a daily

quiet time. Request his or her prayer that God will enable you to succeed with your objectives.

(Ed: **Most importantly, when you leave your "Quiet Time," don't let your "Quiet Time" leave you ! In other words, as you enter the busyness of your day, remember to mentally take with you the truths God has spoken to your soul during your time of blessed communion with Him! Consciously recall specifics of your time of communion with God [passages, insights, prayers, etc] at various intervals during the day. As you begin to practice the conscious choice to reflect on your earlier time of meeting with God, you are more likely to find that the rest of your day becomes an ongoing experience of the presence of the Living God.** As Frank Gaebelein said "A test of Christian devotion is the extent to which, in happiness as well as in sorrow, we think of Jesus." [Vance Havner](#) said it this way "It is tragic to go through our days making Christ the subject of our study but not the sustenance of our souls.")

When Problems Arise (Ed: Expect them to arise!). Below are some common problems you might encounter.

I know I ought to have a daily quiet time, but I don't want to Solution: Ask the Holy Spirit to plant within you the desire to have a daily quiet time. Nobody else can do this for you. You cannot generate the desire, and no other person can produce it for you. (Ed: See Php 2:13NLT-note)

I don't feel like having a daily quiet time today. Solution: Have your quiet time anyway and honestly admit to Christ that you don't feel like meeting him but that you know he nevertheless is worth the investment of your time. Ask him to improve your feelings and try to figure out why you feel this way. Then work on the factors that produce such failings.

My mind wanders. Solution: Ask the Holy Spirit to give you strength to set your mind on Christ and his Word. Use your self-discipline to direct your mind so that it wanders less and less. If you are in a quiet place, singing, praying and reading out loud will give a sense of dialogue. Your mind will wander less when you write things down, like making an outline for prayer or study notes while reading the Bible.

I miss too many quiet times. Solution: Ask the Lord to strengthen your desire and to give you power to discipline your use of time. Share with another Christian friend your desire to have a daily quiet time and allow your friend to hold you accountable for it. Don't let an overactive conscience or the accusations of the devil play on your guilt. Confess that you have failed to keep your appointment with Jesus, ask his forgiveness and renew your relationship.

My daily quiet time is a drag. Solution: Pray that the joy of the Lord would be restored to your private meeting with Christ (Psalm 51:12). Put some variety into your approach. Sing a hymn for a change, or try a different form of Bible study.

There are two major reasons it is so difficult to develop the discipline of a daily quiet time.

First is the influence of the flesh. Keep in mind that your old nature is opposed to daily quiet time (and to every other discipline that would please Christ; see Galatians 5:16-17). Pray that the Holy Spirit will enable your new nature to overcome your old nature in this battle.

The **second** reason is resistance by Satan. The devil opposes your every effort to please Christ. His strategy is to rob you of daily quiet time joy, to complicate your time schedule by keeping you up late at night and making it hard for you to get up in the morning, to make you drowsy during your time with the Lord, to make your mind wander, and otherwise to disrupt your meeting with Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to restrain the devil.

Do It Now! - Plan now for your daily quiet time tomorrow—and every tomorrow. If you miss a morning, do not quit. Deny the devil the pleasure of defeating you. Ask the Lord to forgive you for missing the meeting and to help you make it next time. You will doubtless miss several times, and it will take repeated beginnings before you succeed in developing this discipline. Indeed, it takes some people months to mature to the point where they develop the habit of a daily quiet time. For some it is a lifelong battle. In any case, don't quit when you miss. With God's help determine that you will grow to be a committed disciple who meets Christ regularly in meaningful daily quiet times. ([Discipleship Essentials A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ by Greg Ogden](#) - **Highly Recommended read!**)

Robert Coleman in his classic [Master Plan of Evangelism](#), ... offers these thoughts on how to institute a Quiet Time...

Here are some suggestions as to "How to have a quiet time." Share them with those with whom you have

been working.

a. **Have a definite time.** Choose the most appropriate time for you.

b. **Have a definite place.** A place secluded from noise or interruptions is best. Be alone with God.

c. **Have a definite plan in mind.** First, make a list of requests for which to pray. Then, spend some of the time studying the Bible.

In an article entitled Teaching Your Children About Quiet Time in Discipleship Journal, **Rebecca Livermore** has this advice...

Early one morning, I heard my daughter ask my son, "Is Dad up?" My son replied, "Yes, but he's having quiet time, so you'd better watch out!" How do you respond when your kids get up before you have a chance to finish your quiet time? You can view the children waking up early as an interruption or an opportunity. Here are some ways to use these opportunities to teach your children how to walk with God.

- Have a special "quiet time corner" for the kids. This could include a table and chairs, Bible coloring books, crayons and other art supplies, Bible story books, tapes, puzzles, etc. They can have their own quiet time while you finish yours.

- If your children are older, they can read the Bible or a devotional book and then either draw a picture or write something about what they read.

- Memorize scripture with them.

- Pray about concerns with them.

- Sing hymns or choruses together.

Occasionally, share with them what you learned from your quiet time. This can create a spirit of expectation in your children—they will go to the Word expecting to hear from God. Just don't demand that they "get something" from every quiet time. This can create stress and make quiet time mechanical. (Discipleship Journal, Issue 88 July/August 1995)

Anne Ortlund's testimony on the value of a **Quiet Time**...

Ten months after Ray and I were married we had baby Sherry. Eleven and a half months later we had Margie. Seventeen months later we had Buddy. And immediately after that, Ray had a shrew for a wife. My problem wasn't Ray or the babies; all four were adorable! My problem was no **quiet time**, no focus. My eyes weren't fixed on Jesus, they were fixed on what I had to do. A work-centered life gets complex, and it leads to burnout. A Christ-centered life -- even in the midst of work -- stays basically simple, nourished and rested...

Fix your eyes on Jesus! Like Mary, focus; that's what I had to learn. Become a "one-thing" person (Luke 10:42). How do you do this? First, begin to develop the habit of continual fellowship with Him (see chapter 18) in the midst of it all. Second, determine to give Him the sacrifice of a regular "**quiet time**". Yes, it will be a true sacrifice. ("You will never find time for anything," says Charles Bixton. "If you want time you must make it.")

Cartoon seen recently: A fellow is listening uncertainly as a recorded voice says out of his telephone receiver, "Your number cannot be completed as dialed. Please check the number you are calling and dial again. Or ask yourself if talking to another person is what you really need at this moment!" Sometimes your need is just to be quiet. At least once a day, you need to back off from all the other voices and hear only His. It needs to be a long enough time to be meaningful -- to express your love, confess your sins, receive guidance, delight in Him, listen. I have an electric toothbrush, and I don't take it with me to conferences because it needs frequent plugging into the socket to get re-juiced. And you and I can't go anywhere for very long without the sacrifice of times of quiet with God to get restored again. I said sacrifice. A thirty-ish woman said to me at a conference two days ago, "There's no way I can have a daily quiet time. I have five small children who take everything I've got, and then I work every day from four to midnight." As I questioned her, I discovered she has a working husband and almost no debts. She stood there, weepy, overweight, defeated. It would mean true sacrifice for her to add time with the Lord to her exhausting days. But until she does, she may not hear His solutions and so she'll spiral ever farther downward. Whatever your circumstances -- if you'd lived in Old Testament times you would have regularly given God a male animal or bird -- whatever you could afford -- that had no defects: something you'd humanly want or even "need" for yourself. If you're stressed out from a tight schedule, offer God the sacrifice of your time. If you love to be with people, give Him the sacrifice of your solitude. If you're not

very excited yet about Bible reading and prayer, lift up to Him the sacrifice of your surrendered will. And when you sit down or kneel to be with Him, what do you do? No two people will have quiet times just alike, but first decide on a time, a place, and a plan -- and stick to it. Since the children were in school, except when I'm conference speaking, I've chosen mid-mornings -- my high-energy time. I have with me my Bible, my notebook, and a pen ([To continue reading click the following link](#)) ([Fix Your Eyes On Jesus — Anne Ortlund](#))

Rick Blackwood on how he prepares his sermons - Let It Overflow From Your Quiet Time - For me, everything I teach is the overflow of my quiet time before God. In the early hours of the morning before my family awakens, I get alone before God, and it is there that he impresses in my heart about what I should teach. Even though I generally teach through books of the Bible, it is in my quiet time that God gives me insight into the Big Idea of the sermon series that I extract from his Word. When I teach courses on preaching and teaching, I always talk first about the need for quiet time. People often ask me, "Where do you get your ideas and illustrations?" Sometimes, there is no rhyme or reason to it. I can only say that in my time alone with God, incredible thoughts pass from his heart into my heart, and I write them down. I always have a pad and pen in my quiet time, because I don't want to miss what God gives me. It works for me; it will work for you (The Power of Multi-Sensory Preaching and Teaching)

Disciple Study Bible - How to Have a Quiet Time - As a disciple, you realize that Christ must be the center of the Christian life. Spending time with Christ will help keep Him at the center of your life. This time is known as "the quiet time" or "personal devotions." Many Christians testify that nothing else has been as important to them as the daily quiet time. Set aside at least fifteen minutes each morning for a quiet time. The quiet time is an appointment to begin the day with Jesus Christ, the center of your life. Follow the suggestions below to develop a consistent quiet time.

1. Make a personal quiet time the first priority of your day. Select a time to spend with God that fits your schedule. The morning hours are usually preferable, but you may want to set aside your quiet time with the Lord at some other time of the day.
2. Make preparation the night before. Set the alarm earlier to allow the time you will devote to your quiet time. If it is difficult for you to wake up in the morning, you may plan to exercise, bathe, or dress before beginning your quiet time. Select a place where you can be alone the entire time without interruption. The night before, gather needed materials—Bible, notebook, prayer list, and pen or pencil.
3. Develop a balanced plan of Bible reading and prayer. The quiet time helps you practice spiritual disciplines noted on the vertical bar of the disciple's cross (p. 1749). You may begin your quiet time by examining the nature of prayer. Choose one subhead under PRAYER (p. 1866). Read one or more passages under the subhead each day along with the notes on the subject. As other disciplines and ministries become important in your life, choose those subjects for your quiet time study. Studying passages on God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit are good ways to help you abide in Christ during your quiet time.

The following suggestions are designed to help you abide in Christ by living in the Word and praying in faith. The suggestions should help you participate in the disciplines of discipleship.

a. Prepare to Communicate with the Master.

- Praise God for being your Lord.
- Deny yourself by confessing your sins and surrendering your will, mind, and emotions to the Master.
- Take up your cross by committing yourself to serve the Master today and asking Him to show you how.
- In your notebook, list questions for which you need answers, matters for which you need guidance, weaknesses for which you need strength, and any other life concerns about which you wish to communicate with God.
- Expect God to speak to you about matters on which He places priority and about which He is ready to reveal His will.

b. Listen to God Speak to You as You Read His Word.

- Read the introductory summary on REVELATION (p. 1678).
- Read the Bible systematically. Choose a doctrine or teaching you want to know more

about. Look in the doctrinal index. Find a subhead under the doctrine. Each day read a passage(s) listed in the index. Read the notes at the bottom of the page of Scripture text to help you understand and apply the teaching to your life. Realize that the Scripture text is God's inspired Word speaking to you. The notes are human interpretations best used to help you apply God's Word to your life.

- This approach will help balance your study of the Word. Be sure to read different doctrines. Notice the different types of writing in the Bible—devotional material (Psalms), wisdom teaching (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes), historical writing (Joshua), biographical writing (1 Samuel, the Gospels), narrative material (Ruth, Jonah, Acts), doctrinal writing (Romans), personal letters (Philemon), and apocalyptic writing (Daniel, Revelation).
- Listen to God speak in one of the four areas for which the Bible states it is to be used (2 Ti 3:16-17): (a) teaching—teaching the faith; (b) rebuking—correcting error; (c) correcting—resetting the direction of a person's life; (d) training—training a person in right living. As you read the Bible, review these four areas until it becomes automatic to look for teaching you have not learned, rebuking of an error in your life, correction of a direction in your life, and instruction leading to positive righteousness.
- Mark words, phrases, and verses that speak to you. In the margin place an M beside verses you want to memorize; a T beside verses with significant teachings for your life; a C for correction of life's course, an R for training in right living, and a W beside a verse to use in witnessing. Some days you may want to go back and review verses you have marked in a particular category.
- Summarize what you believe God has said to you today through the Scripture. Review what you have marked. See if any pattern emerges. Has a particular word or verse spoken to you? Write what God has said to you. What specific response do you need to make to be a better disciple?

c. Pray about what God has said to you.

- Add a heading in your notebook "What God said to me." Write your prayer on the basis of what He said.
- If it is a teaching, repeat that teaching to God as you pray. Thank Him for it. Ask Him to help you apply it to your life. Ask what else He has to say to you. Praise Him.
- If it is a rebuke, confess your sin or failure. Repent of it. Thank God for forgiving you. Commit yourself to learn from His rebuke and not repeat your error.
- If it is a correction, tell God you recognize and accept His guidance. Ask His help in changing your behavior or attitude. Thank Him for His new direction.
- If it is training, promise God you will do as instructed with His help. Describe one new action you will take today because of the instruction.
- Write in your notebook what you have said to God. Check each day to see if you have maintained your previous commitment to Him. This will help you check your growth in discipleship.

Use this plan for a few weeks. It will then become second nature to you as you begin talking with God on the same channel. Often Christians talk to God but do not listen to His response. It is as if you were talking on one channel and God on another. This study method creates interactive communication with God so you are both talking about the same things. It also will give you a basis for sharing with others what God has been saying to you. Later, in reviewing your notes, you will see patterns of what God has been communicating to you over a period of time as well as things that you have been concerned about.

Another plan would be to read through a book of the Bible each week or month.

d. Be persistent until you are consistent. Aim for consistency rather than for length of time spent.

Consider having a quiet time for a few minutes every day rather than having long

devotional time periods every other day. You are laying a foundation for a lifelong habit. Expect interruptions. More than any other one thing, Satan will try to prevent your spending time with God. He fears the weakest Christian on his or her knees. Do not get frustrated at the persons or events that interrupt your quiet time. Have your quiet time when you will not be interrupted, and plan around interruptions to your quiet time rather than becoming frustrated by them.

e. Focus on the Person you are meeting rather than on the habit of the quiet time.

If you were meeting your country's leader at that time, you would not let anything stand in your way. What about meeting God? Your fellowship with God is important to Him as well as to you. He created you with a capacity for fellowship with Him; and He saved you to restore that fellowship. Read the introductory summary on GOD (p. 1664).

f. Keep your notebook daily. ([Disciple's Study Bible-NIV](#))

[J. Wilbur Chapman American evangelist](#) wrote this about the core components of his quiet time:

- Study it through: Never begin a day without mastering a Bible verse. Ask God to help you focus on a specific verse within the passage you are reading.
- Pray it in: Never lay aside your Bible until the verse or passage you have studied has become a part of your being. Meditate.
- Put it down: Record any thoughts that God gives you in the margin of your Bible or in your notebook or journal. Writing is key!
- Work it out: Live out the truth you receive in the morning through each hour of the day. Don't let your day end without applying Scripture. (Learn to Study the Bible: Forty Different Step-by-Step Methods to Help You Discover, Apply, and Enjoy God's Word)

Related Resource: [J. Wilbur Chapman's Book The Secret of a Happy Day - Christian Biography Resources](#)

A PRACTICAL PLAN

Pastor Rob Morgan offers us a practical plan for our Quiet Time "How do we do it?"...

(1) First, remember the purpose of the Quiet Time

It is essentially a conversation, a time of fellowship, a daily meeting or appointment with the Lord. It isn't a complicated thing, and the simpler we can keep it the better. It isn't even always necessary to have a Bible. Sometimes it's nice just to go for a walk and spend some time meditating on some verse of Scripture and thinking it through, and then talking to the Lord about it and praying over the things that concern you. Usually, however, it's very helpful to have a Bible, preferably a new translation. And remember that you aren't reading your Bible to get through a certain amount of Scripture or to prepare a sermon or to develop a Sunday School or Bible Study lesson. You're going to the Bible in order to find nourishment for your soul. Psalm 37:3-4 puts it very well when it says: **"Feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the Lord."** **That's a good definition of the Quiet Time.**

(2) Second, have a procedure for your Quiet Time.

I like to follow a two-step plan. First, I open God's Word and, after a brief prayer asking for His blessing, I start reading where I left off the day before. I don't try to read a certain number of verses or chapters; I just read until I find a verse that speaks to me. Right now I'm reading through the Gospel of John. It may take me a couple of weeks or a couple of months, but I'm in no hurry. I just begin reading today where I left off yesterday, and I look for that verse to underline as my verse for the day. Then I begin praying at the point of that verse, and move into a time of prayer. For example, my verse this morning was John 1:43: "Follow Me." I began praying at that point and I said, "Lord, help me follow You more closely," and then I prayed for my loved ones that they would follow the Lord, and from there I went into a time of prayer. So that's the essence of it—a time

of Bible reading and meditation followed by a time of prayer. It's a conversation. The Lord speaks to me through His Word, then I speak to Him in prayer. And it's through this sort of daily conversation that we get to know Him better.

(3) Third, use a pen.

As I said earlier, I like to keep a little notebook. It's divided into two parts. The first part is my journal. Every morning I come to my desk fairly early. I have a cup of coffee and my Bible, and I open my journal and put down the date. Then I might or might not write something about my day or how I'm feeling. Usually I make a little entry of some kind. But then I just put down the Scripture reference that I'm reading, and as I read through the passage I make notes. I find this an enormous help.

For example, one day this week I came to the passage in John 1 in which John the Baptist introduced Jesus to the crowds at the River Jordan. I read the paragraph several times, but it just didn't seem to register with me. I felt I was brain-dead. I just didn't get much out of it. So I decided to make a little list of everything that John said on that occasion about Jesus, and, putting pen to paper, I developed a list of five things about Jesus that John articulated in introducing the Messiah to the world. I thought, "Wow, this is pretty neat!" One day I might convert that into a little five-point sermon (for I often find that my messages are best when they're the overflow of my own devotions).

The last half of my notebook is for my prayer lists. I have a daily list, for there are some things I want to pray about every day. Then I have a list for every day of the week. For example, if I want to pray for a particular missionary family on a weekly basis, I just take their prayer card, punch holes in it, and insert it under the Monday tab, or the Tuesday, or whatever.

(**Ed:** The godly pastor **Charles Simeon** said that "It is scarcely ever that we can intercede with fervor unless we enjoy habitual nearness to God.")

So I find a little notebook to be an incredible aid. However, a notebook isn't necessary, and I'd like to give you a simpler alternative. Try using the margin of your Bible. Suppose, for example, you are reading through the Gospel of John. Beside John 1:1, put today's day—11/7/04, for example. Then start there and read through the passage, marking anything that is of interest until you find just the verse that speaks to your soul for that day. Let's say that it is Jn 1:16: "From the fullness of His grace we have all received one blessing after another" (NIV). Circle that verse and end your reading there. The next day, put the new date—11/08/04—beside John 1:17 and read on until you find that day's verse, then circle it. And so forth.

For a prayer list, you can use the flyleaf of your Bible or a slip of paper in the back cover. Or you can just use a mental list. I'm not sure that our Lord took a paper list with Him when He rose early on that morning in Capernaum and retreated to the nearby mountains. Perhaps it would work better for you just to say, "Lord, guide me today to those things You want me to pray about."

Again, simplicity is the rule. The Word of God and prayer. Going into the closet and meeting with the Father in secret. A notebook works for me, but don't feel like you have to do it the way I do. Find the method that works best for you.

(4) Fourth, have a place and a regular time.

As I read through the Gospels, it seems to me that Jesus had two places that He used for His closet. When He was in the north of Israel, He would retreat into the mountains to be alone. We saw that in Mark 1, and we also see it later when He sent His disciples by boat to the other side of the lake while He Himself went up into the mountains to pray. But where would He go when He was in Jerusalem? It was much more difficult to be alone there. John 18:2 says that He would often go out of the city, across the Kidron Valley, and into an olive orchard which was apparently owned by a friend who gave Him access to it. I suppose the friend said, "Jesus, here's the key to the gate. Feel free to relax there whenever you'd like. The place was called Gethsemane and Judas led the soldiers there to arrest Jesus, for He knew that Christ often went there late at night or perhaps early in the morning for His Quiet Time.

For you it might be the kitchen table, or the front seat of your car, or your bedside at night. And that brings up another question. Does it have to be in the morning? No. If the evening is better for you, or the midnight hour, or the noon hour during your lunch break, that's fine. We each need to find the routine that works for us. My suggestion is just that you have a regular time or place in order to make it habitual and regular and a part of the normal routine of your day.

Some people say, “Can I have my Quiet Time at night?” Absolutely. In fact, in the Hebrew culture, the day began the night before. Here in our society, we think of the day beginning with sunrise; but the Jewish people thought of the day beginning at sunset. The Jewish Sabbath, for example, begins at sunset on Saturday night and extends into the next day. Genesis chapter 1 says, “The evening and the morning were the first day,” etc.

They understood the fact that whatever you are thinking about when you go to sleep is what will reside on your subconscious mind all through the night hours and will determine our mental mood and makeup for the next day. So if it works for you to have your devotions at night, that’s perfectly all right.

Now, whenever I speak on this subject, the question comes up—what about those times in life when our schedules are out of our control. Sometimes, despite our very best efforts, we go through periods of life in which we have a difficult time maintaining a habit such as I’ve described. This is especially true of mothers of preschoolers.

In my reading, I was intrigued with the testimony of Rosalind Goforth, who was a mother and a busy missionary in China. She was very eager to maintain her Quiet Time habit, but she was greatly frustrated by the fact that no matter how early she got up and how quiet she tried to be, one or more of her children woke up, and the daily circus just started that much earlier. So she finally just kept a small Bible or testament with her all the time, and she learned to take those odd moments all through the day to memorize Scripture. That way, she had it available for meditation all day long, and she just turned each day into one long 24-hour Quiet Time.

I’ve read several magazine articles by mothers who have done that very thing. One had five children between the ages of ten months and ten years, and finally she went out and bought a handful of small Bibles which she kept open at various places in the house. One was by the ironing board, one was by the bathroom vanity. One was by the kitchen sink. And all day she would catch a snitch of Scripture here and there. And when she bathed the baby, she would pray for that child. When she folded clothes, she prayed for the one to whom they belonged. She kept the radio on a Christian station so that day was filled with Christian music and Bible teaching. She just turned each day into an extended Quiet Time.

My wife, Katrina, however, has a different idea about it. She was a stay-at-home mother with three small children; but she sat them down one day and had a talk with them and said something to this effect: “Now, girls, I want to be a good mother, and to be a good mother who is kind and patient, I need to spend time with the Lord each day. So every afternoon I’m going to have my quiet time, and that’s going to be your alone time in your rooms. You can sleep or nap or read or play quietly by yourselves, but you are not to come and interrupt me—and if you do I’ll break your necks.” I’m really not sure she said that last part, but whatever she said worked, and she was able to maintain her quiet time even during that phase of her life.

So there’s more than one way to skin a cat, and there’s more than one way to have your Quiet Time; but all things being equal, I still think a few minutes early in the morning with a Bible, notebook, and a cup of strong, hot coffee is the best way to start the day.

(5) Finally, exercise perseverance. [Paderewski](#), one of the world’s greatest pianists, said:

When I miss a day of practice, I can always tell it. If I miss two days, the critics will pick it up. If I miss three days, the audience will notice it.

I feel the same way about my Quiet Time. [Harriet Beecher Stowe](#), the famous 19th century novelist and author of Uncle Tom’s Cabin, was a dedicated Christian and a hymnist. She regularly rose early in the morning for her time with the Lord. One of her most famous poems speaks to this when she writes:

Still, still with Thee, when purple morning breaketh,
When the bird waketh, and the shadows flee;
Fairer than morning, lovelier than daylight,
Dawns the sweet consciousness, I am with Thee.

EXAMPLES OF QUIET TIME OF SOME WELL KNOWN SAINTS

(1) Missionary and author Isobel Kuhn, in her book *In the Arena*, wrote about a time when she was a student at Moody Bible Institute and found herself so busy with school and work demands that she was in danger of quenching her devotional life. Other students were facing similar problems. So they met together and Isobel suggested they sign a covenant—not a vow, but a statement of intention—to this effect:

“I suggested our making a covenant with the Lord to spend an hour a day (for about a year) in the Lord's presence, in prayer or reading the Word. The purpose was to form the habit of putting God in the centre of our day and fitting the work of life around Him, rather than letting the day's business occupy the central place and trying to fix a quiet time with the Lord somewhere shoved into the odd corner or leisure moment.”

Only about nine people signed the covenant to begin with, but the news spread and others began to join. For Isobel, the major problem became finding a quiet place. She wrote,

“The only place I could find where I would disturb no one was the cleaning closet! So each morning I stole down the hall, entered the closet, turned the scrubbing pail upside down, sat on it, and with mops and dust rags hanging around my head, I spent a precious half-hour with the Master. The other half-hour had to be found at the end of the day.”[Isobel Kuhn, *In the Arena* (Singapore: OMF Books, 1995), pp. 30-32]

(2) Another missionary to China, Bertha Smith, wrote an absolutely fascinating story of her life. It was bitterly cold in her part of China. During the day she wore thirty pounds of clothing, and at night she slept under heavy bedding and with a hot water bottle. But her challenge came in the early morning hour when she wanted to rise before others so she could have her quiet time before the scores of interruptions that each day brought. She would struggle in the darkness to put on her thirty pounds of clothing, then break the ice to wash her face in the cold water, and then she would slip out to a particular haystack where she should rake aside the frosted part of the hay, kneel down, and spend time with the Lord before the sun came up. [Bertha Smith, *Go Home and Tell* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), p. 76]

(3) the great Puritan, Thomas Watson, wrote:

“The best time to converse with God is before worldly occasions stand knocking at the door to be let in: The morning is, as it were, the cream of the day, let the cream be taken off, and let God have it. Wind up thy heart towards heaven at the beginning of the day, and it will go the better all the day after. He that loseth his heart in the morning in the world will hardly find it again all the day. O! Christians, let God have your morning meditations.”[Thomas Watson, *Gleanings from Thomas Watson* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1995, first published in London in 1915), p. 107]

(4) Here is what one of his biographers said about William Carey, the “Father of Modern Missions” who served many years in the land of Burma:

“On Carey, as the director of the whole enterprise, the heaviest burden of responsibility fell. He was still a gardener at heart. He found God specially near among the flowers and shrubs of a garden. In the walled garden of the mission house at Serampore, he built an arbor which he called his ‘bower.’ There at sunrise, before tea, and at the time of full moon when there was the least danger from snakes, he meditated and prayed, and the Book which he ceaselessly translated for others was his own source of strength and refreshment.” [Iris Clinton, *Young Man in a Hurry: The Story of William Carey* (Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1961, pp. 55-56)]

(5) A well-known British statesman, the late Earl Cairns, Lord Chancellor of England, was an extremely busy man, but no matter what time he reached home in the evening, he always arose at the same hour to have his quiet time the next morning. His wife said,

“We would sometimes get home from Parliament at two o'clock in the morning, but Lord Cairns would always arise at the same hour to pray and study the Bible.” He later attributed his success in life to this practice. [R. A. Torrey, *How to Succeed in the Christian Life* (Chicago: Moody Press, u.d.), p. 50]

(6) This is what a biographer wrote about evangelist D. L. Moody:

“He was an early riser. He generally rose about daybreak in summer, devoting the early hours to Bible study and communion with God. He used to say that one who followed this plan could not get more than twenty-four hours away from God.” [A. P. Fitt, *The Life of D. L. Moody* (Chicago: Moody Press, u.d.), p. 114]

(7) This is what I read in the biography of the well-known 19th century Bible teacher, G. Campbell Morgan

“Here was a man who coveted for himself a constant withdrawal from the pressing demands of his busy life, and kept inviolate the sanctity of the early morning vigil of prayer and meditation. Here he breathed the atmosphere of heaven, and daily recharged his spirit with the power that in turn poured out in extravagant measure in the preaching and proclamation of the Word.”[Jill Morgan, *A Man of the Word: Life of G. Campbell Morgan* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972), p. 342]

(8) In the biography of missionary physician, L. Nelson Bell, John Pollock writes

“Most important of all was Nelson Bell’s discipline of devotional life. Early every morning he had a cup of coffee and went to his desk for about an hour of Bible study and prayer. He set himself to master the content and meaning of the Bible, devising such study schemes as looking up every Old Testament reference which occurs in the New Testament and typing it out. Then he turned to prayer, for friends, colleagues, and patients, praying especially for every patient listed for operation that day... This cycle of reading and prayer did not strike Nelson as formidable but vital.” [John C. Pollock, *A Foreign Devil in China* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: World Wide Publications, 1971), p. 52]

(9) In the biography of the famous Christian philanthropist, George Muller of Bristol, there’s a very interesting story.

Muller was having health problems, and the doctors advised more sleep. So he began sleeping later each day, and he grew worse and worse. He finally determined that his late rising was interrupting his Quiet Time, and that was affecting him spiritually. His spiritual decline was simply worsening his physical health. So he resumed his habit of rising early for prayer and Bible study. His biographer wrote,

“This resumption of early rising secured long seasons of uninterrupted interviews with God, in prayer and meditation on the Scriptures, before breakfast and the various inevitable interruptions that followed. He found himself not worse but better, physically, and became convinced that to have lain longer in bed as before would have kept his nerves weak; and, as to spiritual life, such new vitality and vigor accrued from thus waiting upon God while others slept, that it continued to be the habit of his (later years).” [A. T. Pierson, *George Muller of Bristol* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., u.d.), pp. 163-164.] **(Robert Morgan's sermon - [I Need Help With My Quiet Time](#))**

Rick Warren - THE PROBLEM OF DISCIPLINE Perhaps one of the greatest and most common problems you will face is the discipline of getting out of bed in the morning to have the quiet time. It is the “Battle of the Blankets,” which faces you the moment you wake up, and it has to do with the question, “Am I going to get out of bed to have a quiet time?” The devil will exaggerate to you about how tired you are, and when he and the flesh team up, it really takes work to get out of bed. Here are some tips on overcoming this problem.

1. Go to bed on time. In order to get up early, it helps to go to bed early (see Ps. 127:2). It’s not good to burn the candle at both ends. Many Christians like to stay up late, often watching TV, and therefore have a hard time getting up in the morning. Dawson Trotman knew this and had a set bedtime. Even if he had company in his home, he would excuse himself and go to bed, because his top priority was meeting with Christ early in the morning.
2. Get up immediately upon waking. The battle is usually won or lost in the first few seconds. If you wait to think about it, you’ve already lost. One famous Christian was asked, “Do you pray about getting up to have your quiet time?”
“No,” he answered. “I just get up!”
When you wake up in the morning, it is not the time to pray about deciding to get up. If you do pray about it, do so the night before, and pray that you will have the willpower to get up.
3. Be aware of quiet-time “robbers.” Be alert for things that will keep you from having a quiet time. Of these robbers, 90 percent will be found the night before, and of these, TV is the number one culprit. Another robber is the attitude that the quiet time is “nice but not necessary.” You must make it a priority in order to thwart the thieves.
4. Go to bed with thoughts of Scripture. Go to sleep with the attitude of “see you in the morning, Lord.” Ask God to wake you up with your first thoughts on him. The best way to do that is to go to sleep with a verse of Scripture on your mind. Jim Downing, in his book *Meditation: The Bible Tells You How* (NavPress), has some excellent suggestions on how that can be done to enable you to “meditate day and night” (see Josh. 1:8; Ps. 1:2).

THE PROBLEM OF DRY SPELLS - Another common problem of those who have just started having quiet times is that they don’t seem to get much out of them. It has become the “Battle of the Blahs.” This difficulty may be overcome by realizing that you can never judge your quiet time by your emotions. Emotions may lie; feelings may come and go. So you shouldn’t depend on your feelings. If you only have a quiet time when you “feel” like it, the devil will make sure you never feel like it. Yes, some days will seem rather bland. On other days you will think that heaven has opened up and you’re part of the innumerable angelic host, singing praises to God. So don’t expect to have a great and glorious “experience” every morning. As Billie Hanks says, “It’s hard to get spiritual goose bumps in the morning.”

Long periods of dryness in your quiet time, however, could be caused by one of the following problems:

1. Disobedience. This is unconfessed sin in your life. God won’t show you anything new until you do what he has already shown you. If God showed you something in his Word three months ago and you are still fighting

it, he won't show you the next step until you've dealt with the first one.

2. Your physical condition. Perhaps you haven't been getting enough rest. If you come to your quiet time tired and half asleep, you won't get much out of it. In fact, there is a direct relationship between the physical and the spiritual. Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is go to bed earlier each night.

3. Trying to do too much in a hurry. The great English Methodist preacher Samuel Chadwick once said, "Hurry is the death of prayer." The same is true with your quiet time. Rushing through it with your eye on the clock will ruin your time with the Lord. Go for quality and content, not for mileage!

4. Being in a rut. When your quiet time becomes a ritual instead of a relationship, it's dead. When it is a legalistic exercise instead of a genuine anticipation of meeting the living God, it's in grave danger. This is when you start meeting a habit, not a Person. So be flexible; change your plans and routine, perhaps even your location. But have variety and keep it interesting—to you and to the Lord.

5. Not sharing your insights with others. It is a fact of nature that a pond that only receives water but has no outlet will stagnate. The same is true of Christians who are always receiving and never giving. Indeed, it is a divine paradox that when we give out, we get more in return. Start sharing your quiet-time insights with others and see what happens.

If after examining your life and procedures, you are still not getting anything out of your quiet time, tell God about it. Just be honest and admit it to him. Remember that it takes time to develop a relationship with God just as it does with the people around us. You must see him in all kinds of circumstances and get to know him well. Whatever you do, don't give up. Listen to Paul's advice instead: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (Gal. 6:9).

THE PROBLEM OF CONCENTRATION - Once you have won the two previous battles, the devil will attack you by sending many distractions along the way. You will now have to fight the "Battle of the Brain," for your mind will try to wander in all directions during the quiet time. You will be bothered by noises, lack of sleep, poor lighting, tensions with others, worry, and a million other things that you "just can't forget." Here are some suggestions for conquering this problem:

- Be sure you are thoroughly awake. Take a shower, splash cold water on your face, or do some exercises.
- Read and pray aloud.
- Walk while praying. You will not fall asleep standing up, so move around.
- Keep a notebook handy. When you are reminded of something else, write it down and come back to it after your quiet time. Then you won't have to worry about forgetting it.

THE PROBLEM OF DISCOURAGEMENT - By far your greatest problem will be your struggle to stick with your morning quiet time. Nothing is more difficult to maintain regularly, because the world, the flesh, and the devil will work together to keep you from it. When pressures mount and you find that you have too many things to do, what are you usually tempted to drop first? The most important thing—your quiet time. Satan's most vicious attacks will come in connection with being diligent in your quiet time. He knows that if he can keep you out of the Word, he has defeated you. If he can keep you from spending quality time with the Lord at the start of a day, then he's won the battle, because he knows that he will have no opposition from you. **Dropping your quiet time is usually the first step in spiritual backsliding.** Many lukewarm Christians have said, "It all started when I began neglecting my quiet time." That's why Christ stands at their door and knocks, asking for time together (see Rev. 3:20). In ministering to others, you can never take another person farther spiritually than you have gone yourself. If you have no input from the Lord each day, you will have nothing to share with others and will not be able to help others grow.

How may this serious problem be overcome? Here are some practical suggestions:

1. Consider making a covenant with God. **(ED: BUT BE CAREFUL HERE AND DON'T FALL INTO THE TRAP OF A LEGALISTIC SPIRIT - YOU ARE UNDER GRACE NOT LAW SO LET THE SPIRIT OF GRACE LEAD YOU - Heb 10:29, Ro 8:14, Gal 5:18, Ro 6:14)** Make a serious pact with God to spend some time with him during the day. First, however, consider the seriousness of making such a vow. Review Solomon's warning: "When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it" (Eccl. 5:4–5). Covenant to have a quiet time, not because others are doing it and not as a duty, but because you know that Jesus Christ wants to meet with you.
2. Put it into your weekly schedule. In advance, block out a set time to meet each day with God in the same way you would plan for a doctor's appointment or a business lunch.
3. Expect and be prepared for the devil's excuses and attacks. To be forewarned is to be armed. Realize that the devil will try to derail you from your time with the Lord and will attack you on all fronts. So follow the Boy Scout motto and "Be Prepared!" Southern Baptist preacher Robert G. Lee used to say, "If you wake up in the morning and don't meet the devil face on, it just means you're headed in the same direction!"

4. Leave your Bible open the night before at the passage you intend to read in the morning. When you go to bed, open your Bible to the Scriptures you intend to read in your morning quiet time. Then when you wake up in the morning, the opened Bible will serve as a reminder to you to have your quiet time.

CONCLUSION - What if you miss a day? Don't worry about it if it happens occasionally. Don't go on a guilt trip. "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1). Don't get legalistic, because missing one day does not make it a flop. Don't give up. If you miss a meal, it does not mean that you should give up eating because you're inconsistent. You simply eat a little more at the next meal and go on from there. The same principle holds true for your quiet time.

Psychologists tell us that it usually takes us three weeks to get familiar with some new task or habit; it takes another three weeks before it becomes a habit. The reason why many people are not successful in their quiet times is that they have never made it past that six-week barrier. For your quiet time to become a habit, you must have had one daily for at least six weeks.

William James had a famous formula for developing a habit (Selected Papers on Philosophy, E. P. Dutton, pp. 60–62).

1. Make a strong resolution (vow). You must always start with a strong, decided initiative. If you begin halfheartedly, you'll never make it. Make a public declaration by telling others about your decision.
2. Never allow an exception to occur until the new habit is securely rooted in your life. A habit is like a ball of twine: every time you drop it, many strands unwind. So never allow the "just this once" to occur. The act of yielding weakens the will and strengthens the lack of self-control.
3. Seize every opportunity and inclination to practice your new habit. Whenever you get the slightest urge to practice your new habit, do it right then. Don't wait, but use every opportunity to reinforce your habit. It does not hurt to overdo a new habit when you are first starting.

To these suggestions I would add one more:

4. Rely on the power of God. When it is all said and done, you must realize that you are in a spiritual battle and you can only succeed by the power of the Holy Spirit. So pray that God will strengthen you and depend on him to help you develop this habit for his glory. (Rick Warren's Bible Study Methods)

Illustration of Quiet Time - One of Rabbi Ben Jochai's pupils once asked him, "Why did not the Lord furnish enough manna to Israel for a year, all at one time?"

The teacher said, "I will answer you with a parable. Once there was a king who had a son to whom he gave a yearly allowance, paying him the entire sum on the fixed date. It soon happened that the day on which the allowance was due was the only day of the year when the father ever saw his son. So the king changed his plan and gave his son day by day that which was sufficient for the day; and then the son visited his father every morning. How he needed his father's unbroken love, companionship, wisdom, and giving!"

Thus God dealt with Israel and deals with us in our daily walk. (Illustrations for Biblical Preaching - Green, Michael P)

Illustration of Need for Quiet Time - It is said that a piano can go out of tune by hard use. The constant striking of the strings may loosen them, and they need to be adjusted if they are to continue producing harmonious sounds. Someone has written, "In like manner all common experiences have an exhausting effect upon us, even when we serve the Lord ... As we minister to others, as we strive and struggle, duty drains our life-fountain. We then need to come into God's presence for spiritual renewal ... In the quietness of that fellowship He tunes our lives and strengthens us for further service. - H. G. Bosch, Our Daily Bread

Quiet Time With God - He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. —Psalm 23:2

The word connected captures our contemporary experience of life. Many people rarely go anywhere without a cell phone, iPod, laptop, or pager. We have become accessible 24 hours a day. Some psychologists see this craving to stay connected as an addiction. Yet a growing number of people are deliberately limiting their use of technology. Being a "tech-no" is their way of preserving times of quiet, while limiting the flow of information into their lives.

Many followers of Christ find that a daily time of Bible reading and prayer is essential in their walk of faith. This "quiet time" is a disconnection from external distractions in order to connect with God. The "green pastures" and "still waters" of Psalm 23:2 are more than an idyllic country scene. They speak of our communion with God whereby He restores our souls and leads us in His paths (v.3).

All of us can make time to meet with God, but do we? In Robert Foster's booklet "7 Minutes With God," he suggests a way to begin: Start with a brief prayer for guidance, then read the Bible for a few minutes, and close with a short time of prayer that includes adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication for others. It's vital to take time today to connect with the Lord, who is our life.

We need to set aside the time
To read God's Word and pray,
And listen for the Spirit's voice
To guide us in His way. —Sper

Time spent with God is time well spent.

Time Together Hard to Schedule - A recently married man loved his young bride intensely. He wanted to provide her with the best home, nicest clothes, and everything else she might want. Though he had to hold down two jobs to do so, he did not mind, because they enabled him to provide for her many good things. Time together was hard to schedule, but he figured that later on, once they were set financially, there would be plenty. Yet, as so often happens, within a few years his wife left him, not for more money or material things, but for a man who would spend time with her. We often serve God and obey Him, expending much time and energy in doing things that we believe will please Him. But this is not enough. God wants us to know Him intimately, to develop a relationship through the time we spend with Him. (Illustrations for Biblical Preaching - Green, Michael P)

Stephen Eyre has some interesting observations on Quiet Time - Quiet times go through phases. Sometimes they are rich and sweet, other times dry and boring. This diversity of experience no longer surprises me. My quiet times vary widely because the work of God's Spirit in my life varies widely. I used to feel guilty about these ebbs and flows. I don't anymore. Knowing God is an ever-changing experience....I have discerned five different phases in my quiet times: occasional quiet time, determined quiet time, study quiet time, desert quiet time and devotional quiet time. Each phase has its own characteristics, its own strengths and weaknesses, its own dangers and delights. The first two, occasional and determined quiet times, deal with frequency— how often we have a quiet time. The study quiet time focuses on what we do in a quiet time. The last two phases, desert and devotional quiet times, are distinguished by how we feel during a quiet time. We should not expect to move through the phases in a particular order. I will discuss each phase in terms of Scripture, prayer, our emotions, frequency, our sense of the Lord's presence and our reasons for practicing quiet time as a spiritual discipline. (Drawing Close to God)

Quiet Time Basics How to help a young believer spend time alone with God - Mike Hildebrand

Bob Magnuson was one of my first spiritual mentors. He and his wife, Judy, had discovered the secret to a powerful, effective ministry to young college men: food. Every Thursday evening I joined them for the best spaghetti and cinnamon rolls on the planet. But it was the feast after dinner that filled my real hunger. Each week, Bob and I would read and discuss the Bible. Bob's favorite quote from Jesus was from Jn. 6:63: "The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life." The Scriptures always came alive when Bob talked about them. Bob helped me begin to develop my own relationship with God. He understood that the substance of Jesus' ministry to His disciples was to pass on to them His relationship with His heavenly Father. In the same way, Bob brought me into God's presence. He let me in on the intimacy he had with his Savior, and I began to learn what it meant to know and love God. Bob modeled what it looked like to relate closely to God and taught me how to sustain that relationship through a daily quiet time. Helping another person become more intimate with God is an essential goal of discipleship. Teaching that person how to have a quiet time on his own is one practical way to accomplish this goal. What follows is a simple guide to that process.

Showing Them Why

The purpose of spending time alone with God daily is to develop intimacy with Him and to learn how He wants us to live. When I begin to teach someone about a personal quiet time, I believe it's important to help him see the biblical basis for this practice. To accomplish that, I ask him to consider what the following passages say about the value of spending time with God regularly.

Exodus 33:11 Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

Psalms 73:25-28 Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. 26 My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. 27 For, behold, those who are far from You will perish; You have destroyed all those who are unfaithful to You. 28 But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, That I may tell of all Your works.

Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Psalms 5:1-3 For the choir director; for flute accompaniment. A Psalm of David. Give ear to my words, O LORD, Consider my groaning. 2 Heed the sound of my cry for help, my King and my God, For to You I pray. 3 In the morning, O LORD, You will hear my voice; In the morning I will order my prayer to You and eagerly watch.

Ps 143:8 Let me hear Your lovingkindness in the morning; For I trust in You; Teach me the way in which I should walk; For to You I lift up my soul.

Mark 1:35 In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.

Ps 16:11 You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

Jeremiah 2:32 "Can a virgin forget her ornaments, Or a bride her attire? Yet My people have forgotten Me Days without number.

Luke 10:38-42 Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. 39She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word. 40But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me." 41But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; 42but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

Ps 27:4 One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD And to meditate in His temple.

Matthew 4:4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'"

Hebrews 4:14-15 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

After he's had a week or two to take a look at these scriptures, we discuss the following questions:

- What is a quiet time?
- How often would it be good for me to spend time alone with God?
- When during the day did people spend time with God?
- What might be my purpose when I have a quiet time?
- What is God's desire when I meet with Him?
- What might I hope to gain by having quiet times regularly?

This exercise helps establish the conviction that having a quiet time daily is a practice God's Word describes and endorses.

Showing Them How

After we've established the biblical basis for quiet time, I like to show him how to do it. So we have a quiet time together. Psalms is an excellent book to help a young believer begin to relate intimately and personally to God. I usually select a psalm that corresponds to the day of the month or one that is related to an issue the person is facing. We read the entire psalm together and then go back and alternate reading one or two verses at a time. As we do so, we respond to God by praying those verses back to Him. The intent is to interact with what God is saying in the verse in a way that connects it to our lives. For example, if I read "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want" (Ps. 23:1), I might pray, "Lord, thank You for taking care of my needs." Because I am almost always anxious about something, I mention that specific concern in my prayer and state my trust in God to take care of it. Make sure to pray about the things that are important and personal to you, just as you would if you were having a quiet time alone with God. Then let your friend have a turn, and pay attention to what he prays. Using Psalms in this way creates plenty of opportunities for vulnerability before God about the issues of day-to-day life. I have to be prepared to confess sin, to acknowledge my weaknesses, and to throw myself on God's grace and mercy.

Engaging the Scriptures

In addition to helping people relate intimately with God, we want to teach them some basic questions to ask about the scriptures they read. I use a simple acronym called PEA to introduce a three-step process of mining truth from God's Word: Principle, Example, Application. In most of the scriptures they read, people should be able to identify each of these three elements. Let's look at how this process functions by using a familiar story: Mary's and Martha's interaction with Jesus as recorded in Lk. 10:38-42.

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Principle. I ask the person I'm helping to consider this question: What principle(s) do I see in this passage? He might respond, "The main thing I need to do as a follower of Jesus is to sit at His feet and listen to His Word."

Example. The next question I ask him to think about is, What examples in the lives of people in this passage should I imitate or avoid? He might answer, "I need to imitate Mary's willingness to listen to Jesus instead of being distracted by urgent but less important tasks."

Application. Finally I ask him to consider, How can I apply to my life what I've seen in this passage? He might conclude, "I need to pay more attention to the things that stress me out and keep me from spending time alone with God."

Getting Them Started

Sometimes, even after I teach someone how to have a quiet time on his own, he may struggle to integrate this habit into his life. A few years ago, I met every Friday to have quiet times with a friend. Once I asked him how his quiet times were going during the rest of the week. I was jolted to learn that he'd never had one except when we met. I had shown him how, but I'd never gotten him started on his own.

The next week I came to his house on Wednesday morning. We selected a passage and sat at opposite ends of the patio, where he had his quiet time alone and I had mine. That step may seem simple, but it was something my friend needed to help him discover he could spend time with God without me directing each step.

Pressing On Together

One thing I like best about teaching others how to be intimate with God is that it helps me keep that focus myself. I love to pray that prayer of Jesus: "I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them" (Jn. 17:26). (Discipleship Journal, March/April 2000)

Adrian Rogers has some surprising cautions about Quiet Time - Let me tell you some ways that you can get yourself into some sort of an unprofitable exercise just by becoming a fanatic... For example, in the matter of your quiet time. Everybody ought to have a quiet time. I believe that. But you can become legalistic over your quiet time and somehow feel that you've grieved the Spirit of God if you fail to have this exact, precise, special time. Did you know that sometimes what you need more than a quiet time is a nap? Seriously. Jesus went to sleep in the back of a boat during a storm because He was just worn out. Was He sinning by doing that? Of course not! He never sinned. When I was a young preacher, I used to think I had to have a big S painted on my chest: "Super Preacher." And people sometimes would call in the middle of the night or early in the morning. I'd say, "Hello"—be sound asleep—"Hello," like I'd been up all night reading the book of Lamentations. Listen. Sometimes the most spiritual thing we can do is to rest. The Bible never lays down any rules for quiet time. You ought to have a quiet time. But I'm telling you, there are people who'll get you under bondage about these things....Dr. Vance Havner said, "We don't need to freeze in formalism or fry in fanaticism."

(from Dr Rogers' sermon [Godly Zeal and Ungodly Extremism](#) or see [outline](#))

A quiet time—you ought to have a quiet time. I try to have a quiet time. But you know, you can be a slave to a quiet time. Thinking that, if you don't have your quiet time, somehow you're under a burden—guilt. "I missed my quiet time. The day is going to cave in on me." Well, the truth of the matter is, if you read the Bible, it doesn't give you any instruction about a quiet time—when to have it, or how to have it. There are some general principles, but there are no laws about a quiet time.

You know, when I was a younger preacher, I used be under such a burden about even needing to sleep. I mean, I didn't want anybody to know I slept. You know, Jesus slept in the back of a ship during a storm, but I had to be a little more holy than that. Somebody would call me at five in the morning, pick up the phone—"Hello?" I wanted them to think I had been up all night reading Lamentations, you know? We get under a burden about these things.

One great Christian said, "I have so much to do today I simply must go to bed." Jesus said to his disciples, "Come ye ... apart ... and rest a while" (Mark 6:31). If you think I'm talking against a quiet time, you're not hearing what I'm saying. I am talking against getting under some legalistic burden. You can do the same about Bible study. You ought to read the Bible. You ought to love the Bible, but you can get under such a burden about studying the Bible that you make a fetish out of Bible study. It becomes a legalistic thing. You think, if you can read so many chapters, you have somehow done your duty. And a chapter a day keeps the devil away. And you don't read anything else.

The Apostle Paul read other things. You'd better believe he did. You read what he wrote, and you'll find out that he read other things. And when he was in prison, he said, "Bring me the parchments, bring me the scroll, bring me the books; I want to read, I want to study" (2 Timothy 4:13), because he wanted to be a well-rounded individual. Read the Bible, study the Bible; but don't become a fanatic, in the wrong sense of the word. (from his sermon [The Dangers of Extremism](#))

Planned neglect - Devotional on Daniel 6:10 - In her book *A Practical Guide to Prayer*, Dorothy Haskins tells about a noted concert violinist who was asked the secret of her mastery of the instrument. The woman answered the question with two words: "Planned neglect." Then she explained,

"There were many things that used to demand my time. When I went to my room after breakfast, I made my bed, straightened the room, dusted, and did whatever seemed necessary. When I finished my work, I turned to my violin practice. That system prevented me from accomplishing what I should on the violin. So I reversed things. I deliberately planned to neglect everything else until my practice period was complete. And that program of planned neglect is the secret of my success."

This same principle can be helpful as we plan a **daily quiet time** with the Lord. Unless we discipline ourselves and make a deliberate effort, trivial things will keep us from establishing a consistent devotional life. Let's give our time with the Lord top priority by "planned neglect" of things of lesser value. He deserves first place in our lives. —R. W. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**To walk with God,
We must make it a practice
To talk with God.**

Devotional on Ps 143:10 - For the last three years an architectural firm in Denver Colorado, has had a "quiet time" for its employees. Sixty minutes of silence are set aside each day at mid-morning for thinking and planning. It has proven to be an essential feature for the staff of twenty-five who work together in one large open room. One employee said that at first the idea didn't sound very good to them. **But now, having discovered its benefits, they have become very protective of their quiet time.** They have found it to be an important aid in realizing one of the firm's goals, which is to have an atmosphere of "integrity and calmness."

What about us? Do we have enough of the right kind of quiet time? Let's not use the excuse that we really can't afford the time to get alone with God and be quiet. The truth is, we really can't afford to be without it. —M. R. De Haan. II

**If you want strength to meet the day,
Take time alone to pray.**

Quiet Time: A group of British miners in Australia heard the sweet song of a thrush one evening as they worked. The lovely sound hushed these hardened men into absolute silence. In the stillness their hearts became tender as memories of their boyhood days in their beloved England swept over them. Similarly, when we are quiet, God speaks to us most clearly and effectively.

Stepping into the stillness of a cold winter morning and gazing upon fields and buildings coated with dazzling frost or covered with sparkling snow have been unforgettable experiences. During the night, the silvery frost had come silently, its unseen fingers deftly touching the landscape. Or feathery snowflakes had descended with-out awakening a single soul. The silence of such a moment brings to mind the words of Psalm 46:10:

Be still, and know that I am God.

I would also think of Habakkuk 2:20,

**The LORD is in His holy temple.
Let all the earth keep silence before Him.**

God speaks to us during other times of silence as well. Sooner or later we lie sleepless as a result of illness, grief, or anxiety. These can be precious moments of quiet solitude when we tell the Lord we love Him and want Him to speak to us. In the stillness we can learn lessons we'd learn in no other way. We experience a new peace—a fresh sense of His presence. But we need not wait for a sleepless night! —H. V. Lugo

**The quiet hour
is the power hour.**

**SEVEN MINUTES WITH GOD
Robert D. Foster**

REMEMBER THE MORNING WATCH and [THE CAMBRIDGE SEVEN](#)

It was in 1882 on the campus of Cambridge University that the world was first given the slogan: *Remember the morning watch*.

Students like Hooper and Thornton found their days "loaded" with studies, lectures, games and bull sessions. Enthusiasm and activity were the order of the day. These dedicated men soon discovered a flaw in their spiritual armor -- a small crack which if not soon closed, would bring disaster.

They sought an answer and came up with a scheme they called the **morning watch** -- a plan to spend the first minutes of a new day alone with God, praying and reading the Bible. The **morning watch** sealed the crack. It enshrined a truth so often obscured by the pressure of ceaseless activity that it needs daily rediscovery: To know God, it is necessary to spend consistent time with Him.

The idea caught fire. "*A remarkable period of religious blessing*" followed, and culminated in the departure of the Cambridge Seven, a band of prominent athletes and men of wealth and education, for missionary service. They gave up everything to go out to China for Christ.

But these men found that getting out of bed in time for the morning watch was as difficult as it was vital. Thornton was determined to turn indolence into discipline. He invented an automatic, foolproof cure for laziness. It was a contraption set up by his bed:

"The vibration of an alarm clock set fishing tackle in motion, and the sheets, clipped to the line, moved swiftly into the air off the sleeper's body."

Thornton wanted to get up to meet his God!

INTIMACY OF COMMUNION WITH CHRIST

The intimacy of communion with Christ must be recaptured in the morning quiet time. Call it what you want -- the quiet time, personal devotions, the morning watch, or individual worship -- these holy minutes at the start of each day explain the inner secret of Christianity. It's the golden thread that ties every great man of God together -- from Moses of David Livingstone, the prophet Amos to Billy Graham -- rich and poor, businessmen and military personnel. Every man who ever became somebody for God has this at the core of his priorities: time alone with God!

David says in ([Ps 57:7](#) - [Spurgeon's note](#))...

My heart is fixed, O God. My heart is fixed: I will sing & give praise (KJV)

Prepared is my heart, O God. Prepared is my heart. I sing & praise (Young's Literal)

A fixed and established heart produces stability in life. Few men in the Christian community have this heart and life. One of the missing links has been a workable plan on how to begin and maintain a morning watch.

I want to suggest that in order to get under way, you start with seven minutes. Perhaps you could call it a daily "Seven-Up." Five minutes may be too short, and ten minutes for some is a little too long at first.

Are you willing to take seven minutes every morning? Not five mornings out of seven, not six days out of seven -- but seven days out of seven! Ask God to help you:

"Lord, I want to meet You the first thing in the morning for at least seven minutes. Tomorrow when the alarm clock goes off at 6:15 a.m., I have an appointment with You."

Your prayer might be,

"Morning by morning, O Lord,
You hear my voice; morning by morning
I lay my requests before You and wait in
expectation"

[\(Psalm 5:3 - Spurgeon's note\)](#).

How do you spend these seven minutes? After getting out of bed and taking care of your personal needs, you will want to find a quiet place and there with your Bible enjoy the solitude of seven minutes with God.

Invest the first 30 seconds preparing your heart. Thank Him for the good night of sleep and the opportunities of this new day.

"Lord, cleanse my heart so You can speak to me through the Scriptures. Open my heart. Fill my heart. Make my mind alert, my soul active, and my heart responsive. Lord, surround me with Your presence during this time. Amen."

Now take four minutes to read the Bible. Your greatest need is to hear some word from God. Allow the Word to strike **fire in your heart** (See book - **Fire in Your Heart** if your "spiritual coals" need stirring). Meet the Author!

One of the Gospels is a good place to begin reading. Start with the Book of Mark. Read consecutively – verse after verse, chapter after chapter. Don't race, but avoid stopping to do a Bible study on some word, thought, or theological problem which presents itself. Read for the pure joy of reading and allowing God to speak -- perhaps just 20 verses, or maybe a complete chapter. When you have finished Mark, start the Gospel of John. Soon you'll want to go ahead and read the entire New Testament.

After God has spoken through His Book, then speak to Him -- in prayer. You now have two and a half minutes left for fellowship with Him in four areas of prayer that you can remember by the word...

ACTS

A -- ADORATION. This is the purest kind of prayer because it's all for God -- there's nothing in it for you. You don't barge into the presence of royalty. You begin with the proper salutation. So worship Him. Tell the Lord that you love Him. Reflect on His greatness, His power, His majesty, and sovereignty!

C -- CONFESSION follows. Having seen Him you now want to be sure every sin is cleansed and forsaken. Confession comes from a root word meaning "to agree together with." Apply this to prayer. It means to agree with God. Something happened yesterday you called a slight exaggeration -- God calls it a lie! You call it strong language -- God calls it swearing. You call it telling the truth about somebody in the church -- God calls it gossip.

"If I regard iniquity in my heart,

the Lord will not hear me"

([Ps 66:18- Spurgeon's note](#)).

T -- THANKSGIVING. Express your gratitude to God. Think of several specific things to thank Him for: your family, your business, your church and ministry responsibilities -- even thank Him for hardships. "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1Th 5:18-note).

S -- SUPPLICATION. This means to "ask for, earnestly and humbly." This is the part of your prayer life where you make your petitions known to Him. Ask for others, then for yourself. Why not include other people around the world, such as missionaries, students studying abroad, friends in distant places, and above all the people of many lands who have yet to hear about Jesus Christ.

LET'S PUT THESE 7 MINUTES TOGETHER	
TIME IN MINUTES	ACTIVITY IN TIME
0.5	Prayer for guidance (Ps 143:8- note)
4.0	Reading the Bible (Ps 119:18- note)
2.5	Prayer consisting of...
-	A doration (1Chr 29:11)
-	C onfession (1Jn 1:9-note)
-	T hanksgiving (Eph 5:20-note)
-	S upplication (Mt 7:7-note)
7 minutes	

This is simply a guide. Very soon you will discover that it is impossible to spend only seven minutes with the Lord. An amazing thing

happens -- seven minutes become 20, and it's not long before you're spending 30 precious minutes with Him.

**Do not become devoted to the habit,
but to the Savior.**

Do it *not* because other men are doing it -- *not* as a spiritless duty every morning, *nor* merely as an end in itself, but because God has granted the priceless privilege of fellowship with Himself. Covenant with Him now to guard, nourish, and maintain your morning watch of seven minutes.

RELATED RESOURCES

- MEMORIZING HIS WORD - illustrations, helps, devotionals, testimonials, etc on the value of memorizing God's Word
- [BORN TO REPRODUCE](#) - A short biography on the abundant life of Dawson Trotman founder of The Navigators. If you are not familiar with how God supernaturally used this man, you NEED TO READ his encouraging, motivating biography, because every saint is exhorted to "remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith ([Hebrews 13:8](#)) (see commentary note) but we cannot imitate one whom we do not know.
- Quiet Time - [Click here](#) to listen to Gene Warr's (Navigator's) Message
- The Navigators is an international, interdenominational Christian organization. Jesus Christ gave His followers a Great Commission in Matthew 28.19. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations. The primary aim of the Navigators is to help fulfill Christ's Great Commission by making disciples and developing disciple makers in every nation.
- [In His Presence - Dennis Fisher](#)
- See Pastor Ray Stedman's Devotional [The Power of His Presence](#) - Excellent Adjunct to your Morning Time in His Presence! Beloved, How goes your daily communion with Your Best Friend, the Living Lord, the King of kings?
- Simple Study on the Power of God's Word
- A Primer on the Lost Art of Biblical Meditation
- [Meditation - Part of Application in Inductive Bible Study](#)
- Memorizing God's Word - Why? How? Resource links...
- [How to Perform A Greek Word Study on the Web](#)
- Greek Tense, Voice, Mood Reference Guide
- Greek Word Studies - in depth
- [Bible Interpretation - Figures of speech](#)
- Interpretation-Supernaturalistic, Naturalistic, Existentialistic, Dogmatic
- Introduction to Inductive Bible Study
- [Observation - What does it say?](#)
- Interpretation - What does it mean?
- [Application - How do I respond?](#)
- Bible Commentaries - some comments and caveats
- Bibliography recommended resources
- RBC Discovery House Booklets: many Biblical topics

I NEED HELP WITH MY QUIET TIME

Rob Morgan

Note: (Some duplication in excerpts quoted above)

I **rise before** the dawning of the morning, and cry (Sept = [krazo](#) = loud, urgent) for help; I hope (Sept = epelpizo = buoy up with hope, pin one's hope upon) in your Word.

My eyes **anticipate** the night watches, That I may meditate on Your word.

Psalms 119:147-148

Ed Note: The Septuagint translation for **rise before** in v147 and **anticipate** in v148 is prophthano ([4399](#)) from **pró** = before + **phthánō** = to come, arrive. To come or get before someone, to anticipate another in doing something or in speaking. "(1) to be ahead of someone in some activity, be ahead of, come before, anticipate (2) to be ahead of someone in some activity, be ahead of, come before, anticipate" (BDAG)

The only NT use is Mt. 17:25 "He said, "Yes." And when he had come into the house, Jesus **anticipated** him, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?" (Mt 17:25NKJV) In this passage Jesus "prevented" (KJV), i.e., "anticipated," Peter's thoughts about paying taxes and instructed him to catch a fish in which a coin was found to pay their assessment.

Septuagint - 1 Sa 20:25; 2 Sa 22:6; 2 Sa 22:19; 2 Ki. 19:32; Job 30:27; Ps. 17:13; Ps. 18:5; Ps. 18:18; Ps. 21:3; Ps. 59:10; Ps. 68:25; Ps. 68:31; Ps. 88:13; Ps. 95:2; Ps. 119:147; Ps. 119:148; Jonah 4:2

Ps 95:2 **Let us come before** (Lxx = prophthano) His presence with thanksgiving, Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. (Psa 95:2 NAU)

Today we're coming to the end of our series of messages entitled "I Need Help ASAP" and our concluding study will be on the subject: "I Need Help with My Quiet Time." By quiet time, I mean the practice of having a daily appointment with the Lord, a regular period of daily Bible study and prayer. Some people call this the practice of having daily devotions. Others call it the Morning Watch. It's the missing vital ingredient in many a Christian life, and today I'd like to approach this from three different angles. First, I'd like to share a word of personal testimony on this subject. Second, I'd like to show you some Scriptures that address this topic in the Bible. Third, I want to share with you a handful of practical ideas and suggestions for having a meaning Quiet Time on your own.

A Personal Testimony

By way of personal testimony, I want to give a word of thanksgiving to the Lord for bringing several influences into my life that helped me establish this practice when I was younger.

The first influence, although I wasn't aware of it at the time, was my father. As I grew up, I would often see him reading his Bible at night; and when I was barely old enough to read, he bought me a little Bible which I kept beside my bed, and in this way I learned as a child to read the Scriptures daily.

That didn't mean, however, that I was actively having a meaningful quiet time, and as I grew older I got away from any sort of close daily fellowship with the Lord and grew confused by life, as young people often do. In my confusion, I enrolled at Columbia Bible College in South Carolina, transferring there as a sophomore. It was on my second night there that I surrendered my life to the Lord, and it was at that school that I began to learn the importance of the Quiet Time.

In fact, student life was, at that time in the early 1970s, very regimented, and the daily Quiet Time was a required part of our schedule. We were awakened every morning at 6:15 by a bell loud enough to call the fire department. We had a half-hour to shower, shave, and dress, then another bell would ring, signaling our Quiet Time. We had half an hour every morning, from 6:45 to 7:15, and then a third bell would clang, releasing us to go to breakfast. For three years that was my college routine, and it established my Quiet Time habit for life. But I'll also have to say that I first I wasn't too excited about it. I liked to stay up late, and sometimes I'd just sit there during my Quiet Time period in a dead sleep.

Then one day a man came to preach in our chapel services, and I had never heard anyone like him. He stood in the pulpit like a machine gun, with a rapid fire, crystal-clear delivery with a crisp British accent, and he delivered brilliant expositions on interesting passages of Scripture. He had a great deal of spiritual power about him, and after chapel one day I went up to him—his name was Stephen Olford—and I asked him if he had any advice for a young man contemplating going into the ministry.

"Yes," he said with the same dramatic delivery I had heard in the pulpit. "Yes," he said, "I do. Never, never, never miss your Quiet Time."

That's all he said. But that was enough. I began to realize that there must be something pretty important about this half-hour between the bells.

It was shortly after that when another influence came into my life. Through a mutual friend, I had the opportunity of spending several seasons of extended time with Ruth Bell Graham, and she described to us how important the Quiet Time was to her. One day, when I was asking her about it, she said, "Robert, do you have the notebook habit?" I didn't know what the notebook habit was, so I said no, I didn't think I did. So she told me about her little loose-leaf notebook made of leather. She said that she kept wearing it out, but she knew a leather crafter who kept repairing it for her. There she would record the thoughts God gave her each day as she studied her Bible. That very day I drove down to Ashville near her home and found a stationary shop and bought a notebook, and it's been a lifesaver to me ever since. All these years, I've used a journal as part of my Quiet Time, and I owe it to that conversation in North Carolina.

And then I began to come upon another set of influences. I became interested in Christian biography and autobiography, and over and over, as I read about the lives and ministries of great Christian men and women, I discovered they all had one thing in common.

They maintained a Quiet Time habit. I'll give you some examples:

Ø **Missionary and author Isobel Kuhn**, in her book *In the Arena*, wrote about a time when she was a student at Moody Bible Institute and found herself so busy with school and work demands that she was in danger of quenching her devotional life. Other students were facing similar problems. So they met together and Isobel suggested they sign a covenant—not a vow, but a statement of intention—to this effect: “I suggested our making a covenant with the Lord to spend an hour a day (for about a year) in the Lord’s presence, in prayer or reading the Word. The purpose was to form the habit of putting God in the centre of our day and fitting the work of life around Him, rather than letting the day’s business occupy the central place and trying to fix a quiet time with the Lord somewhere shoved into the odd corner or leisure moment.” Only about nine people signed the covenant to begin with, but the news spread and others began to join. For Isobel, the major problem became finding a quiet place. She wrote, “The only place I could find where I would disturb no one was the cleaning closet! So each morning I stole down the hall, entered the closet, turned the scrubbing pail upside down, sat on it, and with mops and dust rags hanging around my head, I spent a precious half-hour with the Master. The other half-hour had to be found at the end of the day.”[1]

Ø **Another missionary to China, Bertha Smith**, wrote an absolutely fascinating story of her life. It was bitterly cold in her part of China. During the day she wore thirty pounds of clothing, and at night she slept under heavy bedding and with a hot water bottle. But her challenge came in the early morning hour when she wanted to rise before others so she could have her quiet time before the scores of interruptions that each day brought. She would struggle in the darkness to put on her thirty pounds of clothing, then break the ice to wash her face in the cold water, and then she would slip out to a particular haystack where she should rake aside the frosted part of the hay, kneel down, and spend time with the Lord before the sun came up.[2]

Ø **The great Puritan, Thomas Watson**, wrote: “The best time to converse with God is before worldly occasions stand knocking at the door to be let in: The morning is, as it were, the cream of the day, let the cream be taken off, and let God have it. Wind up thy heart towards heaven at the beginning of the day, and it will go the better all the day after. He that loseth his heart in the morning in the world will hardly find it again all the day. O! Christians, let God have your morning meditations.”[3]

Ø **Here is what one of his biographers said about William Carey, the “Father of Modern Missions” who served many years in the land of Burma:** “On Carey, as the director of the whole enterprise, the heaviest burden of responsibility fell. He was still a gardener at heart. He found God specially near among the flowers and shrubs of a garden. In the walled garden of the mission house at Serampore, he built an arbor which he called his ‘bower.’ There at sunrise, before tea, and at the time of full moon when there was the least danger from snakes, he meditated and prayed, and the Book which he ceaselessly translated for others was his own source of strength and refreshment.”[4]

Ø **A well-known British statesman, the late Earl Cairns**, Lord Chancellor of England, was an extremely busy man, but no matter what time he reached home in the evening, he always arose at the same hour to have his quiet time the next morning. His wife said, “We would sometimes get home from Parliament at two o’clock in the morning, but Lord Cairns would always arise at the same hour to pray and study the Bible.” He later attributed his success in life to this practice.[5]

Ø **This is what a biographer wrote about evangelist D. L. Moody:** “He was an early riser. He generally rose about daybreak in summer, devoting the early hours to Bible study and communion with God. He used to say that one who followed this plan could not get more than twenty-four hours away from God.”[6]

Ø **This is what I read in the biography of the well-known 19th century Bible teacher, G. Campbell Morgan:** “Here was a man who coveted for himself a constant withdrawal from the pressing demands of his busy life, and kept inviolate the sanctity of the early morning vigil of prayer and meditation. Here he breathed the atmosphere of heaven, and daily recharged his spirit with the power that in turn poured out in extravagant measure in the preaching and proclamation of the Word.”[7]

Ø **In the biography of missionary physician, L. Nelson Bell**, John Pollock writes: “Most important of all was Nelson Bell’s discipline of devotional life. Early every morning he had a cup of coffee and went to his desk for about an hour of Bible study and prayer. He set himself to master the content and meaning of the Bible, devising such study schemes as looking up every Old Testament reference which occurs in the New Testament and typing it out. Then he turned to prayer, for friends, colleagues, and patients, praying especially for every patient listed for operation that day... This cycle of reading and prayer did not strike Nelson as formidable but vital.”[8]

Ø **In the biography of the famous Christian philanthropist, George Muller of Bristol, there’s a very interesting story.** Muller was having health problems, and the doctors advised more sleep. So he began sleeping later each day, and he grew worse and worse. He finally determined that his late rising was interrupting his Quiet Time, and that was affecting him spiritually. His spiritual decline was simply worsening his physical health. So he resumed his habit of rising early for prayer and Bible study. His biographer wrote, “This resumption of early rising secured long seasons of uninterrupted interviews with God, in prayer and meditation on the Scriptures, before breakfast and the various inevitable interruptions that followed. He found himself not worse but better, physically,

and became convinced that to have lain longer in bed as before would have kept his nerves weak; and, as to spiritual life, such new vitality and vigor accrued from thus waiting upon God while others slept, that it continued to be the habit of his (later years).”[9]

Those are just a sampling of things that I observed as I read the stories of great men and women, and so it’s no wonder that my appreciation increased for the importance of the Quiet Time. And so, by God’s grace, this is a habit that I’ve maintained since 1971. I can’t say that I’ve never missed a day, because I have. Occasionally I still do. But by and large, I consider this the most important habit of my life and I frankly think I would collapse without it. It provides the daily nourishment for my soul just like food and water for the body.

A Biblical Mandate

Now we come to the second angle on this subject: What does the Bible say? A personal testimony is worthless unless it’s validated by the authority of Scripture. I’d like to show you several verses that speak to this very clearly. Let’s begin with the prophet Daniel where I want to show you seven very important words. Perhaps you’re familiar with the story of Daniel in the lion’s den. Daniel, at the time the incident occurred, was quite old, and everyone knew about his faithfulness to his daily devotions and to his prayer time. His political enemies schemed against him by persuading the king to issue a one-month prohibition against prayer. Look at Daniel 6:10 and notice especially the last seven words of the verse:

Now when Daniel knew that the writing (the prohibition) was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before His God, as was his custom since early days.

As was his custom since early days! This was a lifelong habit. I suppose Daniel rose in the morning for his Quiet Time, then went to his office and worked through the morning before coming home at lunch where he also found a few minutes for prayer. And then at the close of day, his work behind him, he spent time with the Lord before going to bed. That was his lifelong habit.

Now look at the example of one greater than Daniel in Mark 1:35: Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, (Jesus) went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.

And finally, look at Matthew 6:6: “But when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”

The old versions say, “Go into your closet.” I still like that old translation. I remember visiting in London with my wife, Katrina, and we took a tour of the house of John Wesley, the famous evangelist and the founder of the Methodist movement. On the second floor was Wesley’s bedroom, and attached to the bedroom was a little room about the size of a closet with nothing in it except a small table and chair and a little window. This was Wesley’s prayer closet, and it was called the powerhouse of Methodism.

The actual Greek word Matthew used was *tameion*. It occurs four times in the New Testament, and it means a storage room, a pantry, a spare stable in the barn, a root cellar. In those days, large families tended to live together in rather small houses. There was very little privacy. The only room not inhabited would be the storage room. Jesus was advising us to find a quiet, private place and use it as a place to meet secretly with the God of this universe. That’s what the quiet time is.

TWO WORDS OF WARNING

Now I need to say two words of warning.

First, it’s important to realize that a daily Quiet Time does not represent the totality of our fellowship with God. It doesn’t mean that we can meet God in the morning and then leave Him there in the closet while we go into the day. The Bible tells us to pray without ceasing. In other words, communion and fellowship with God is the constant privilege of the Christian.

Earlier I mentioned something Dr. Stephen Olford had said to me when I was a college student. Well, many decades later, just before he went home to be with the Lord, I met with him again, and once again, I asked him about his daily Quiet Time habit. He said:

“I have a very, very simple procedure. I read from Genesis to Revelation. When I reach Revelation I go back to Genesis. Even though I have read it over the years—over and over and over again—never a morning with God that He does not reveal something new to me. I read the passage three times: First time generally, second time expositively, third time personally. I let the Lord speak to me, showing me in His Word a promise to keep, a prayer to echo, a command to obey, a sin to confess, etc. I personalize it entirely and write in that form. And then I like to take what I have written and loosely turn that into prayer so that my prayers are not mechanical. It is not a Chinese wheel I can just put on and watch TV while it plays. It is a prayer that comes right out of my quiet time before I go into thanksgiving, intercessions, etc.”

Then I asked him if he kept a prayer list. He replied:

“Yes. My prayer list is a very interesting one. Monday-Missions. Tuesdays-Thanksgiving. Wednesday-Workers, staff, etc. Thursday-Tasks. Friday-Family. Saturday-Saints (so much of Paul's praying was for the saints). And Sunday-Sinners. On the list of sinners for this present period of my life, one of them is a famous golfing figure that I'm praying for earnestly, because I believe if he were converted it would turn the youth world upside down. Anyway, I do have a prayer list, and under those headings. Now, it isn't the length of time I spend in my quiet time, though I usually take an hour, but there is a carry-over of the activity of prayer, the attitude of prayer, that marks the rest of the day. I never pick up a telephone without a prayer. I never dictate a letter to my secretary without a prayer. I never let anybody into my study or out of my study without a prayer, and as my beloved workers know, any time we get together we say, 'Let's pray.' And so, prayer is literally praying without ceasing. At the drop of a hat... and so I feel I live in that of perpetual prayer.”

You see, the Quiet Time is not the totality of our fellowship or communion with Christ. Instead, it sets the stage for it all day long.

Second, it's also important to realize that a daily Quiet Time is not simply a routine or a ritual. It's a relationship. We meet Christ at the cross, and we call that conversion. We meet with Him in the closet, and we call that conversation. At the cross is where we come to know Christ, and in the closet is where we grow to know Him better.

Exodus 33:11 says that Moses met with the Lord face to face, as a man speaks with His friend.

If I may go back to my college days for just a moment, it was just as I was learning this habit that Ralph Carmichael wrote a song about it that was popular during those days.

There is a QUIET PLACE
Far from the rapid pace,
Where God can soothe my troubled mind.
Sheltered by tree and flow'r,
There in my quiet hour,
With Him, my cares are left behind.
Whether a garden small
Or on a mountain tall
New strength and courage there I find;
Then from this quiet place,
I go prepared to face
A new day with love for all mankind.

[Heritage Singers - There is A Quiet Place - YouTube](#)

A Practical Plan

Now I'd like to devote the remainder of the message to some practical suggestions as to the daily Quiet Time. How do we do it?

First, remember the purpose of the Quiet Time. It is essentially a conversation, a time of fellowship, a daily meeting or appointment with the Lord. It isn't a complicated thing, and the simpler we can keep it the better. It isn't even always necessary to have a Bible. Sometimes it's nice just to go for a walk and spend some time meditating on some verse of Scripture and thinking it through, and then talking to the Lord about it and praying over the things that concern you. Usually, however, it's very helpful to have a Bible, preferably a new translation. And remember that you aren't reading your Bible to get through a certain amount of Scripture or to prepare a sermon or to develop a Sunday School or Bible Study lesson. You're going to the Bible in order to find nourishment for your soul. Psalm 37:3-4 puts it very well when it says: “Feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the Lord.” That's a good definition of the Quiet Time.

Second, have a procedure for your Quiet Time. I like to follow a two-step plan. First, I open God's Word and, after a brief prayer asking for His blessing, I start reading where I left off the day before. I don't try to read a certain number of verses or chapters; I just read until I find a verse that speaks to me. Right now I'm reading through the Gospel of John. It may take me a couple of weeks or a couple of months, but I'm in no hurry. I just begin reading today where I left off yesterday, and I look for that verse to underline as my verse for the day. Then I begin praying at the point of that verse, and move into a time of prayer. For example, my verse this morning was John 1:43: “Follow Me.” I began praying at that point and I said, “Lord, help me follow You more closely,” and then I prayed for my loved ones that they would follow the Lord, and from there I went into a time of prayer. So that's the essence of it—a time of Bible reading and meditation followed by a time of prayer. It's a conversation. The Lord speaks to me through His Word, then I speak to Him in prayer. And it's through this sort of daily conversation that we get to know Him better.

Third, use a pen. As I said earlier, I like to keep a little notebook. It's divided into two parts. The first part is my journal. Every morning I come to my desk fairly early. I have a cup of coffee and my Bible, and I open my journal and put down the date. Then I might or might not write something about my day or how I'm feeling. Usually I make a little entry of some kind. But then I just put down the Scripture reference that I'm reading, and as I read through the passage I make notes. I find this an enormous help.

For example, one day this week I came to the passage in John 1 in which John the Baptist introduced Jesus to the crowds at the River Jordan. I read the paragraph several times, but it just didn't seem to register with me. I felt I was brain-dead. I just didn't get much out of it. So I decided to make a little list of everything that John said on that occasion about Jesus, and, putting pen to paper, I developed a list of five things about Jesus that John articulated in introducing the Messiah to the world. I thought, "Wow, this is pretty neat!" One day I might convert that into a little five-point sermon (for I often find that my messages are best when they're the overflow of my own devotions).

The last half of my notebook is for my prayer lists. I have a daily list, for there are some things I want to pray about every day. Then I have a list for every day of the week. For example, if I want to pray for a particular missionary family on a weekly basis, I just take their prayer card, punch holes in it, and insert it under the Monday tab, or the Tuesday, or whatever.

So I find a little notebook to be an incredible aid. However, a notebook isn't necessary, and I'd like to give you a simpler alternative. Try using the margin of your Bible. Suppose, for example, you are reading through the Gospel of John. Beside John 1:1, put today's day—11/7/04, for example. Then start there and read through the passage, marking anything that is of interest until you find just the verse that speaks to your soul for that day. Let's say that it is verse 16: "From the fullness of His grace we have all received one blessing after another" (NIV). Circle that verse and end your reading there. The next day, put the new date—11/08/04—beside John 1:17 and read on until you find that day's verse, then circle it. And so forth.

For a prayer list, you can use the flyleaf of your Bible or a slip of paper in the back cover. Or you can just use a mental list. I'm not sure that our Lord took a paper list with Him when He rose early on that morning in Capernaum and retreated to the nearby mountains. Perhaps it would work better for you just to say, "Lord, guide me today to those things You want me to pray about."

Again, simplicity is the rule. The Word of God and prayer. Going into the closet and meeting with the Father in secret. A notebook works for me, but don't feel like you have to do it the way I do. Find the method that works best for you.

Fourth, have a place and a regular time. As I read through the Gospels, it seems to me that Jesus had two places that He used for His closet. When He was in the north of Israel, He would retreat into the mountains to be alone. We saw that in Mark 1, and we also see it later when He sent His disciples by boat to the other side of the lake while He Himself went up into the mountains to pray. But where would He go when He was in Jerusalem? It was much more difficult to be alone there. John 18:2 says that He would often go out of the city, across the Kidron Valley, and into an olive orchard which was apparently owned by a friend who gave Him access to it. I suppose the friend said, "Jesus, here's the key to the gate. Feel free to relax there whenever you'd like. The place was called Gethsemane and Judas led the soldiers there to arrest Jesus, for He knew that Christ often went there late at night or perhaps early in the morning for His Quiet Time.

For you it might be the kitchen table, or the front seat of your car, or your bedside at night. And that brings up another question. Does it have to be in the morning? No. If the evening is better for you, or the midnight hour, or the noon hour during your lunch break, that's fine. We each need to find the routine that works for us. My suggestion is just that you have a regular time or place in order to make it habitual and regular and a part of the normal routine of your day.

Some people say, "Can I have my Quiet Time at night?" Absolutely. In fact, in the Hebrew culture, the day began the night before. Here in our society, we think of the day beginning with sunrise; but the Jewish people thought of the day beginning at sunset. The Jewish Sabbath, for example, begins at sunset on Saturday night and extends into the next day. Genesis chapter 1 says, "The evening and the morning were the first day," etc.

They understood the fact that whatever you are thinking about when you go to sleep is what will reside on your subconscious mind all through the night hours and will determine our mental mood and makeup for the next day. So if it works for you to have your devotions at night, that's perfectly all right.

Now, whenever I speak on this subject, the question comes up—what about those times in life when our schedules are out of our control. Sometimes, despite our very best efforts, we go through periods of life in which we have a difficult time maintaining a habit such as I've described. This is especially true of mothers of preschoolers.

In my reading, I was intrigued with the testimony of Rosalind Goforth, who was a mother and a busy missionary in China. She was very eager to maintain her Quiet Time habit, but she was greatly frustrated by the fact that no matter how early she got up and how quiet she tried to be, one or more of her children woke up, and the daily circus just started that much earlier. So she finally just kept a small Bible or testament with her all the time, and she learned to take those odd moments all through the day to memorize

Scripture. That way, she had it available for meditation all day long, and she just turned each day into one long 24-hour Quiet Time.

I've read several magazine articles by mothers who have done that very thing. One had five children between the ages of ten months and ten years, and finally she went out and bought a handful of small Bibles which she kept open at various places in the house. One was by the ironing board, one was by the bathroom vanity. One was by the kitchen sink. And all day she would catch a snatch of Scripture here and there. And when she bathed the baby, she would pray for that child. When she folded clothes, she prayed for the one to whom they belonged. She kept the radio on a Christian station so that day was filled with Christian music and Bible teaching. She just turned each day into an extended Quiet Time.

My wife, Katrina, however, has a different idea about it. She was a stay-at-home mother with three small children; but she sat them down one day and had a talk with them and said something to this effect: "Now, girls, I want to be a good mother, and to be a good mother who is kind and patient, I need to spend time with the Lord each day. So every afternoon I'm going to have my quiet time, and that's going to be your alone time in your rooms. You can sleep or nap or read or play quietly by yourselves, but you are not to come and interrupt me—and if you do I'll break your necks." I'm really not sure she said that last part, but whatever she said worked, and she was able to maintain her quiet time even during that phase of her life.

So there's more than one way to skin a cat, and there's more than one way to have your Quiet Time; but all things being equal, I still think a few minutes early in the morning with a Bible, notebook, and a cup of strong, hot coffee is the best way to start the day.

Finally, exercise perseverance. Paderewski, one of the world's greatest pianists, said: "When I miss a day of practice, I can always tell it. If I miss two days, the critics will pick it up. If I miss three days, the audience will notice it."^[10]

I feel the same way about my Quiet Time. Harriet Beecher Stow, the famous 19th century novelist and author of Uncle Tom's Cabin, was a dedicated Christian and a hymnist. She regularly rose early in the morning for her time with the Lord. One of her most famous poems speaks to this when she writes:

Still, still with Thee, when purple morning breaketh,
When the bird waketh, and the shadows flee;
Fairer than morning, lovelier than daylight,
Dawns the sweet consciousness, I am with Thee.

Notes:

1 Isobel Kuhn, *In the Arena* (Singapore: OMF Books, 1995), pp. 30-32.

2 Bertha Smith, *Go Home and Tell* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), p. 76.

3 Thomas Watson, *Gleanings from Thomas Watson* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1995, first published in London in 1915), p. 107.

4 Iris Clinton, *Young Man in a Hurry: The Story of William Carey* (Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1961, pp. 55-56.

5 R. A. Torrey, *How to Succeed in the Christian Life* (Chicago: Moody Press, u.d.), p. 50.

6 A. P. Fitt, *The Life of D. L. Moody* (Chicago: Moody Press, u.d.), p. 114.

7 Jill Morgan, *A Man of the Word: Life of G. Campbell Morgan* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972), p. 342.

8 John C. Pollock, *A Foreign Devil in China* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: World Wide Publications, 1971), p. 52/

9 A. T. Pierson, *George Muller of Bristol* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., u.d.), pp. 163-164.

10 Clipping in my notebooks.

Mastering Life Before It's Too Late

Robert J Morgan

A few weeks ago I had a conversation with a very nice man whom I had not previously met. We were together at the same table. When I asked him what he did for a living, he told me he had just retired after forty years at the same job. He didn't really want to

retire, he said, but the company had shut down and his job ended. So because he was at retirement age, he retired. Now, as he told me, he doesn't know what to do with himself or with his time. He had never really planned ahead for retirement. He has no hobbies and no outside interests. His whole life was his job, and now feels he has nothing meaningful to do. "I don't play golf," he said. "I do like to hunt and fish, but not every day." And then he told me what a friend had told him. "I was talking to a friend about this," he said, "and my friend agreed with my frustration and said something terrible. I wish he had never said it because now I can't get it out of my head. He said, 'It's like every day is Saturday, isn't it?' I wish he had never said that because that's exactly the way I feel. It's great to have one Saturday a week, but who wants seven Saturdays every week?"

I told this man, "You need to master life before it's too late. I wish you could hear my sermon series." Our current series of messages is based on the premise that God has a meaningful plan for every day of our lives. There's never a reason to be bored. Psalm 136:16 says, "You saw me before I was born and scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe. Every day was recorded in your book" (The Living Bible). Our days are not random or rudderless. Every day is an opportunity to serve the Lord in a meaningful way according to the agenda He has established for us. We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (see Ephesians 2:10). But how do we know what God wants us to do each day? How do we learn to live like this and to master life? In this series of messages we're looking at ten biblical strategies for living a lifetime of purpose.

• **The first is: "Listen to a Twelve-Year-Old."**

That twelve-year-old is Jesus, who knew even in childhood that His Heavenly Father had a plan for His life. He said, "I must be about My Father's business." Success is doing the Father's business and the Father's will in one-day increments and with the right attitudes. It's learning to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. It's putting Christ first and seeking to do His will every day. The Bible says, "In all things He must have the preeminence" (see Matthew 6:33 & Colossians 1:18)

• **The second pattern is: "Redeem the Time."**

God has apportioned to each of us a limited amount of time to do the work He has assigned. It's easy to waste our time but vital to use it wisely. The Bible says, "Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise, but as wise, making the best use of your time because the days are evil (see Ephesians 5:15-16).

• **The third pattern is: "Clear the Decks."**

This has to do with bringing basic organization to our lives, and it is predicated on the understanding that God is, by His very nature, organized. According to 1 Corinthians 14, God is not a God of confusion but of peace, therefore everything should be done in an orderly way (see verses 33 & 40). When we invite Jesus Christ into our lives, He comes in with a mop and broom so to speak, and He begins to clean up our lives on the inside. As this happens, we began creating a different environment around us. Without being obsessive about it, we want to live with a sense of order and of arrangement and of healthy routines. This extends even to things like keeping our calendars and making lists and straightening our beds and finding our sneakers.

Now today we're coming to our fourth strategy: "Maximize the Morning." There are three things I want to say on this subject. I have a little outline for you, and I confess it may sound a little trite, but it represents what I want to say and maybe it will help you remember my points.

1. The Morning's the Best Time to Start Your Day

First, the morning is the best time to start your day. When God created this world, He took it in one hand and with His other He gave it a good solid spin. Maybe you've done that with a basketball or with a top. The earth revolves once every twenty-four hours, and that gives us one new morning for every day of our lives. We get a fresh beginning every twenty-four hours, and the first moments of the day are the heirloom hours of life. Now, I didn't start out my life being a so-called "morning person" and my current opinions about the morning aren't the result of my own personality or preferences. But I've learned to appreciate the morning because I believe the Bible teaches that the first hours of the day represent a special time God has given us for starting each new day. The Bible has a lot to say about the morning hours:

- When the Tabernacle was set up, Aaron was told to burn fragrant incense on the altar every morning when he tended the lamps (Exodus 30:7).
- The Israelites were instructed to go out and gather manna for nourishment each morning (Exodus 16:21).
- The priests were to begin each day with the morning sacrifices (Leviticus 6:12).
- King David decreed that each day should begin with the Levitical choirs singing and thanking and praising God in the morning (1 Chronicles 23:30).
- The patriarch Job began the day by offering sacrifices early in the morning for his family (Job 1:5).
- The Psalmist said, "In the morning, Lord, You hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and

wait expectantly” (Psalm 5:3).

- The author of Psalm 59:16 wrote, “I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress.”
- In Psalm 88:13, he prayed, “In the morning my prayer comes before you.”
- Moses prayed in Psalm 90:14, “Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.”
- Isaiah 50:4 says, “The Sovereign Lord has given me the tongue of the learned, that I may know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed.”
- Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, reminded himself God’s compassions never fail. “They are new every morning,” he said, “great is your faithfulness” (Lamentations 3:23).
- The prophet Ezekiel said, “In the morning the word of the Lord came to me” (Ezekiel 12:8).
- The greatest event in history occurred as the sun was rising over Jerusalem and a faithful band of women trekked to the Garden Tomb, which they found empty. It was a great day in the morning, the greatest day that ever was.

The writers and heroes of the Bible seemed to rejoice in knowing that God had created a new day for them every twenty-four hours, and the biblical attitude is to wake up to each new morning saying, “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it” (see Psalm 118:24). As the hymnist put it:

Awake, my soul, and with the sun
Thy daily stage of duty run;
Shake off dull sloth, and joyful rise,
To pay thy morning sacrifice.

2. The Morning’s the Best Time to Stop and Pray

Here’s the second thing. Not only is the morning the best way to start the day; it’s the best time to stop and pray. You can begin every day with a divine appointment with the Lord.

The Bible teaches that God is limitless in both duration and geography. He is omnipresent, which means that He is present always and everywhere. His presence has no parameters. There is no place in the universe or beyond where He is not. He is not limited to a certain radius or neighborhood or territory.

- Jeremiah 23:24 says He fills heaven and earth.
- Isaiah 57:15 says He inhabits eternity.
- Solomon said that not even the heaven or the heaven of heavens could contain Him (1 Kings 8:27).
- Psalm 139 says, in essence, wherever I go You are there.

But though God is limitless, there’s a sense in which His presence is localized. I don’t understand this, but in some way the center or core of God’s presence can appear to us to be localized. So even though God is everywhere, we can still talk about coming into His presence. For example, look at Exodus 33:7-11:

Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the “tent of meeting.” Anyone inquiring of the Lord would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp. And whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood at the entrances to their tents, watching Moses until he entered the tent. As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the Lord spoke with Moses. Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, they all stood and worshipped, each at the entrance to their tent. The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend.

The next chapter says that after Moses had met with the Lord and reemerged among the people, he had to put a veil over his face because His face was shining as though it soaked up the glory of the Lord like a luminescent plastic (see Exodus 34:29-35).

Now, in His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus indicated that every one of us should have a similar meeting or appointment with our Heavenly Father. In Matthew 6:6, He said, “When you pray, go into your inner room, your closet, your own personal tent of meeting, and talk to your Heavenly Father, with whom You can meet in secret; and your Heavenly Father, whom you meet in secret, will reward you openly.”

Jesus Himself gave us the example of doing this in Mark 1:35, where it says, “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed.”

Because God is limitless, we can pray anywhere and all the time; we can pray without ceasing; we can practice the presence of God

wherever we happen to be. We can pray all day long. But because God is also localized, we can establish a habit in life of meeting with Him each day at a regular time and place; and if your schedule will allow it, the morning is an excellent choice.

I was taught how to do this when I was in college, and I've been doing it ever since. In very practical terms, I find I need three things.

The first is paper. You might do this electronically; probably I would too if I were just starting out. But whether electronic or with old-fashioned pen and ink, I think it's helpful to begin with a journal of some kind. The woman who taught me this technique called it the "notebook habit." So in the morning I got to my desk or table, and I open my notebook. I go to the first blank line on the page where I left off the day before and I put the date. I usually write just a sentence or two about what I did yesterday or what's ahead for today. It's like a very simple dairy entry, but I don't wear myself out writing. I just write a few sentences to prime the pump, so to speak, and to get my mind awake.

Then I need a passage of Scripture. I typically start reading where I left off the day before. I'll jot the passage down at the end of my little diary entry and I'll read and ponder some Bible verses. Very often I also turn to whatever passage I'm memorizing and read over those verses again. Some days I may spend several days on the same passage. The point is to get a verse for your heart and mind.

Then I turn to my prayer list. I have a very simple way of listing the people and things I'm praying about, and I want to pray about them.

The idea of all this isn't just to establish a ritual but a relationship. It's like meeting a friend for coffee or having a date with your spouse. There is a routine and even a ritual about it, but it's much more than routine or ritual. It's a relationship. One lady told me she calls it having coffee with God. He speaks to us in His Word and we speak to Him in prayer. And as we meet with Him day by day, we come to know Him better and our intimacy and closeness to Him grows.

We can do that anytime, of course. But how wonderful to begin every day with this divine appointment! The morning is the best time to start your day, and it's the best time to stop and pray.

3. The Morning's the Best Time to Plan Your Way

Third, the morning is the best time to plan your way. I want to share with you one of the best personal habits I've ever developed. For several years now, I've been spending a few extra moments at the end of my morning appointment with God planning out the agenda for the day. While I'm still sitting there at the desk with my Bible open and in the conscious presence of the Lord, I say, "Now, Lord, what do you want me to do today?"

This is the prayer Paul prayed on the Damascus Road. In Acts 22, Paul recounted his conversion experience. He was on this way to Damascus to persecute the Christians, and Jesus appeared to him in a light that was brighter than the noonday sun. Saul fell to the ground and he asked two questions: "Lord, who are you? And what do you want me to do?"

That second question is a good prayer request for each new day. Lord, what do you want me to do today? Let me show you a verse that points in this direction. Look at Psalm 143:8:

Let the morning bring me word of Your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in You. Show me the way I should go.

In other words: Lord, let me have a daily meeting with You every morning to seek Your guidance on the way I should go.

If you read any book on productivity and efficiency, it will suggest you plan your day in advance, either the night before or upon arising in the morning. I believe we can do this prayerfully, biblically, and in a way that will reveal God's will for us. So at

the end of my daily prayer time each morning, I say, "Lord, what do you want me to do today." Then I look at my calendar and see what's on the docket for today and for tomorrow and for the next few days. I look at my project list. I look at my to-do list. I briefly consider all the options. I could spend my time doing this or doing that, on this project or on that one. On a little three-by-five card, I jot down a possible schedule for the day. I jot down my obligations and appointments, and I jot down the projects I should tackle with my discretionary hours or moments. I commit them to the Lord and go into the day with a plan. I take the little card and either put it in my pocket or in the front window of my notebook. It becomes my roadmap for the day.

It's as simple as that. But I think you'll find this a practice that brings about a minor revolution in your life – some paper, a passage, a prayer, and a plan.

Of course, this isn't original with me. Listen to this sentence from an 18th-century Scottish clergyman by the name of Hugh Blair: He who every morning plans the transaction of the day and follows out the plan, carries a thread that will guide him through the labyrinth of the most busy life.

Conclusion

Let me close with a few questions-and-answers about this.

First, do I have to do this in the morning hours? The answer is, of course, no. Despite everything I've said about the value of the morning, some people work the graveyard shift. Some people have to be a work at 4 a.m. Some people have to get half-a-dozen kids to school. Everyone's schedule is different. Maybe your lunch hour works better for you, or bedtime. Remember that in the Old Testament, the Jews seemed to consider the day as beginning the night before. The book of Genesis says, "The evening and the morning were the first day." The Jewish Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday. So we don't have to be legalistic, but I do think it is important to make this a regular daily habit that fits within the routine of your life.

Second, where do I start in the Bible? When you sit down to open the Bible on that first morning, where do you turn? A lot of people use devotional books, but I would encourage you to go straight to God's Word. I like to take a book at a time. You might start, for example, with one of the epistles – with Philippians or Ephesians. Or you might want to begin with the book of Proverbs. The Bible appears to be a big book, but the more you read and study it the more familiar and wonderful it will become.

Third, what if I'm not getting anything out of this practice? Keep with it. Starting a new habit or learning a new skill is always awkward at first. But the more you develop your own routine the more meaningful it will become.

Fourth, what if I miss a day? Well, don't beat yourself up but try not to miss two in a row. This is important enough to warrant real effort on our part.

Fifth, what if my day doesn't go as planned? Well, it may not go as planned, but nevertheless you'll get a lot more accomplished with a plan than without one. With a plan, you can try to stay on task and minimize interruptions, and then when interruptions do occur you can deal with them as from the Lord. One day this week I was invited to share a luncheon with a group of people who were all retired. They would have stayed and talked all afternoon. I stayed with them a reasonable time, but I had sketched out my agenda for the day. I had some work I wanted to accomplish. So at a certain point I just politely said, "Well, I have some plans on the docket and some work to tackle, so would you mind if I slipped out." They understood and I was able to return to my room and finish this sermon.

Sixth, what if I don't have time to do this every day? Then try what I call the fifteen-minute plan. I know you can set aside fifteen minutes in a day. We have 1,440 minutes every day. Fifteen minutes is about one percent of your day. Surely you can give the Lord one percent of your day. Sit down with your clock or watch, and spend five unhurried minutes in Bible reading and meditation. Then spend five minutes in unhurried prayer. Then spend five minutes planning out your day. Now, I like to take between 30 and 60 minutes, but I've been doing this for forty years and I have some flexibility with my mornings. If you don't feel you have as much time as you'd like, just try the fifteen-minute plan for a solid month and see if the Lord doesn't make all the other minutes and hours of the day richer and fuller because of it.

Listen to a twelve-year-old. Redeem the time. Clear the decks. And maximize the morning, for the morning is the best time to start your day. It's the best time to stop and pray. It's the best time to plan your way. Try those simple steps and see if God doesn't begin to bring about a quiet revolution in your ability to master life before it's too late.

How to Have a Meaningful Quiet Time

Psalm 119:97

By Adrian Rogers

August 7, 1994

Outline

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II. You Must Have the Proper Preparation

III. You Must Have the Proper Place

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Introduction

Would you take God's Word and find please Psalm 119. I want to begin reading in verse 97, Psalm 119. In just a moment, I'll begin in verse 97. And by the way, you could just almost jump in anywhere in Psalm 119 and read a portion for the message tonight that deals with how to have a meaningful quiet time.

"Oh, how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day. Thou, through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies. For they—that is my enemies—are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. I have refrained my feet from every evil way that I might keep thy word. I have not departed from thy judgments for thou hast taught me how sweet are thy words unto my taste. Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth, through thy precepts I get understanding, therefore, I hate every false way."

Christianity is not a legal relationship; it is a love relationship. And people who are legalists, never have victory. Ten thousand "don'ts" will never make you one iota more like the Lord Jesus Christ. Now there are some "don'ts" in the Christian life and there are some "dos." But friend, it is Jesus himself, who makes you like Him. You need to spend time with Jesus Christ. Christianity is a love relationship.

Now, you cannot love someone that you do not know. And you can not know someone that you don't spend quality time with. To know Him is to love Him. To love Him is to trust Him. To trust Him is to obey Him. And to obey Him is to be blessed.

To know Him is to love Him. You cannot know Jesus without loving Him. And to love Him is to trust Him. You cannot trust someone you do not love. And trust Him is to obey Him. The reason we don't obey is because we don't trust. And to obey Him is to be blessed. Trust and obey, for there's no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey. And it begins with a quality quiet time, a daily communication with the Lord.

Now I'm not here tonight to put you under a guilt trip. I could do that very easily, but I want to say you could put me under one, too. Because I'm certainly not holding myself up here as the paragon of excellence in anything and especially in needing and wanting and desiring a better quiet time with the Lord than I have already.

But I have learned some things. And I'm going to share with you what others have taught me, and also, some things I've learned in my own pilgrimage about having a quality quiet time. I want to give you about 5 factors and they'll be easy to remember because we'll let them begin with the letter "p."

I. You Must Have a Proper Period

First of all, you must have a proper period. That is, the right time. When should you have your quiet time? Here are two keys. Number one, it should be the very best time and number two, it should be early in the day. Now don't give the Lord the leftovers. Give Him the very best time and that best time should be sometime in the morning.

Now I think that it takes at least a half an hour to have an effective quiet time. Ha, but sometime is better than no time. So, start out with sometime and by the way, you won't just find this time. The devil will see to that. You have to make time. You study the life of the Lord Jesus, you find that Jesus made time to be alone with the Father. He in the midst of a very busy ministry would withdraw Himself and be alone.

This quiet time ought to be in the morning. Psalm 5:3, says, "in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee and will look up." Why in the morning? Well, obviously in the morning because you're getting ready to live the day. You don't take the trip and then read the map, do you? I mean it's early in the morning that you take your time. You don't get the car tuned after you taken the trip. You don't pray for your bread, your daily bread after the day is over. I mean it's very obvious that this is the prayer that unlocks the key of the morning. It's a time to get started with God. And any athlete knows that it's the start that insures a good finish.

Now I dare say that most of us feel we don't have time in the morning. Well, obviously we do have time if we make time. It's just a matter of determining to make time. Now, it may seem to some of you who are efficiency experts to have a quiet time is a waste of time. But if you were chopping wood, would it be a waste of time to sharpen the ax? If you're going on a trip and you don't know where you're going, are you wasting time when you study the map? If you're trying to read a book, are you wasting time when you turn on the light?

You see, God's Word is a lamp to light the way. It's a map to show the way. It is a tool that we work with along the way. And so, it's,

it's very, very important that you make time. There must be the proper time. The best time for me is sometime after breakfast. Now I've told you before, while I have to wake up in the mornings and my alarm clock is generally set at 6 or 6:30. It meanders a little back and forth. But I have to get up and get started, but I never want to get up. It's a resurrection for me every morning. I mean, to get the bed off my back is difficult. I mean, confession, I don't know whether that's a sin or not. It's just the way I'm wired.

Now the longer I go, the stronger I get. I mean, I'm like a steam engine and if I want to be alert, I have to get up and get going because as I've told you before, Joyce is a lark, but I'm an owl. And she's a springer and I'm a proper. And when I wake up in the morning, you know I stumble into the bathroom, put my knee on the toothpaste to squeeze it. Just to try to get going. So, for me to have my quiet time when I first wake up, would be just a good cure for insomnia. If I bowed my head and closed my eyes, I'm off again. And so, you know I just have to get up and get ready and so what I try to do personally is bathe, shave, have breakfast, and Joyce and I'll have a prayer time together at breakfast. We'll pray for our family and try and pray around the world and then, retire to my study. By that time, that's my best time. Now, what I'm trying to say is, it's got to be early, but it needs to be your best time. That is when you can bring all the mental acuity that you have.

II. You Must Have the Proper Preparation

So, there must be the proper period. Ask God when that time is and don't try to find it, make it. And you'll make it as a matter of priority. Now here's the second thing, not only must you have the proper period, but you must have the proper preparation—the proper preparation. And there three things that will prepare you for a quiet time. Number one, you must be physically alert. I've already mentioned that. Physically alert. Find a time when the cobwebs are out of your mind, when you can think clearly, when your juices are flowing in you body, physically alert.

Number two, and this is very important. You must be morally pure and clean to have a quiet time. Do you know what quiet time is? Quiet time is fellowship with a holy God. The reason that some folks don't have a quiet time, they feel uncomfortable. And the reason they feel uncomfortable is, they don't want to look God in the face. And the reason they don't want to look God in the face is there's sin in their life. What did Adam do after he had sinned and God came walking in the Garden? Adam fled. Before that, Adam had a quiet time with God, didn't he? I mean, Adam and God walked in the Garden, they had fellowship. That was Adam's quiet time, in walking in the Garden, in the cool of the day. But then, when there was sin in Adam's life, he did not want to look God in the face.

If you find in you, sometimes a reluctance, maybe even a repugnance to what I'm talking about, it's simply because there may be sin in your life. Now you've got to have your heart clean and pure in order to have a quiet time. Now it may be that a part of your quiet time will be to get you heart clean and pure, but you need to take yourself by the nap of the neck and do it, though confession because you're foolish and wicked to pray from a wicked heart.

Because Psalm 66:18, says, "if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Now we quote the prayer promises. That's a prayer promise. If I regard iniquity in my, the Lord will not hear me. Or again, the Lord Jesus said in the, in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:23, 24, "Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar and there remember that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, then come and offer thy gift."

Now obviously, he's talking there about the temple worship. But the principle is, you can't worship God if there's a bad relationship in your heart that needs to be put right.

So what you come, you come physically alert, you come morally pure. Well, how do you get morally pure? Does that mean you can't have a quiet time? No, it just simply means that you search your heart at the very beginning of the quiet time and say Oh, God, search my heart, try me and see if there be some wicked way in me. And if God, the Holy Spirit, points that out, 1 John 1:9 says "if we confess our sin—He's what?—faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

There's no reason that any of us should not be as clean, as pure as the driven snow because of that. The blood of Jesus, that we've been singing about tonight, 1 John 1:7, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from what? All sin. Not some, all. And don't you let the devil intimidate you by some failure in the past because you may through the precious blood of Jesus and by the grace of God be clean.

So what is the proper preparation? You're physically alert, you're morally pure you are thirdly, mentally aware. And this is very important. You know the Bible tells us often to gird up the loins of our minds. Now what does that mean? Well, in Bible times the men wore long flowing robes and if you go to Israel today, you'll still see the Bedouin's and others wearing these long robes. Now when a man was going to work, to plow or to fight, he would take those robes and he would take the loose ends and gird them up and tie a rope around there. And that be called girding up his loins. Just taking those long loose ends and bring them all together and tying them up tight so he wouldn't trip over them.

Now your mind is like that. You've got a lot of loose ends. And in order to have a quiet time, you have to get mentally tough. It's hard

for me. I have a peculiar type of mind. My mind wants to run off on all kinds of ideas all the time. And I have to gird up the loins of my mind and bring it. You see, when you, when you come to a quiet time, you've got to be serious. Come with anticipation. Come eagerly. Come expecting to receive something. And don't just wait till you get all warm around the heart and wet around the lashes and just think, I've got to feel real mellow.

Be tough-minded. Say I'm coming, Lord, and emotion doesn't really have all that much to do with it. It's good to feel juicy when you pray, but you don't have to. And I hear people say, well, you know, my prayers didn't get above the light bulb. Well that's probably your problem because God is underneath the light bulbs as well. I mean, He's here, He's present and your emotions don't bring Him near. He is near by the blood of Jesus Christ. And what you need to do is to be physically alert, morally pure, and mentally aware.

III. You Must Have the Proper Place

Now we've said you have the proper period, you have the proper preparation. Now here's the third thing if you would have a good quiet time, a meaningful quiet time. There must be the proper place. Now what is the proper place? Jesus said, when you pray, enter into your closet and pray. Now He did not mean the clothes closet. I'm serious about that. Some people, the only thing we know about a closet is a clothes closet.

I went to school with a boy, a preacher boy, at Stetson University. He took this so literally, his name Jud. Jud in the dormitory, went into the clothes closet, shut the door to pray. And after a while, I mean late in the day, or late in the night, we said, where's Jud? Anybody seen Jud? Has something happened to Jud? Finally, when finally when we opened the closet door, he was in there sound asleep on his knees in that closet. He had gone in there, shut the door, and gotten quiet, no air in there. It's a wonder he didn't suffocate in there. He had just taken this so literally, he went into a little closet and shut the door.

What did our Lord mean when He said enter into your closet and pray? The word "closet" simply means into a place of isolation. Somewhere where you can shut the door on the world and open the windows to heaven. As you study the life of Jesus, you find out that Jesus was not always in a literal closet. But you will find out that Jesus would seek to be alone. Sometimes He'd go out into a mountain. Sometimes He went into the wilderness. Sometimes He went into a garden.

You see, it is the secret place that is the sacred place. Now, when I say the secret place, I don't mean a place that no one else knows about. I simply mean a place where you are there alone with the Lord. My suggestion is that it be well-lit and well-ventilated.

What is, why is the Lord saying enter into your closet and pray? Well, number one, we are to, what you are when you're alone is what you are. I mean it—the mark of your prayer life is not really how well you pray in public, but in private. Your Father who sees you in secret will reward you openly.

Now that's one reason just to keep us from being hypocrites. But another reason that you go to the secret place is to avoid distraction, visual distractions and noises, audible distractions and people who come in. And so, have the proper period, "in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee and will look up."

Have the proper preparation physically, morally, mentally. Be prepared. Find a proper place. Get someplace that is the place that you're accustomed to going. My place, I'm blessed in that I have my study at my house. And I love that. It's a blessing to me. Most people don't have that, but I have that. I do my work there. I, when I'm there, I can go into my study, my books are there. My desk is there. I have my materials out there. And that's a blessing to me, and granted, many people don't have a place like that. My wife has a place where she gets up and goes around. There's a hallway that connects our garage to our living room and we have some books out there and there's a little nook out there. That's the place that she retires to be alone with God. And it's her special place, but find a place. Pray and ask God to give you a place. It just may be your bedroom. It may be if you got a lot of children in the house, you may have to go to the bathroom and lock the door. Whatever, but find a special place to get alone with God.

IV. You Must Have the Proper Provisions

Now here's the fourth thing. Not only should there be a proper place, but you need to have the proper provisions. You need to have the right tools. And these are going to include first of all, a readable Bible. Now don't get a small print Bible. Invest in a Bible. If your Birthday's coming up, go in the bookstore and let Curtis show you a good Bible with good print and wide margins and good paper. Something that you can write in and make notes in and don't be afraid to write in your Bible and make notes in your Bible. Wear it out and get another one! And but don't throw the old one away. Save it and keep it and look back on it sometime. Be like an old friend to you.

I have Bibles that are decades old. Sometimes I go back and find things that, notes I made there and memories will spring back up of things that God taught. Things that maybe I had long since forgotten. But get a good readable Bible. As a matter of fact, you need two or three Bibles. Maybe a Study Bible, and then a Bible to bring to church. But, that's the best investment. Somebody said the person that has a Bible falling apart probably has a life that's not. I mean when you read it and underlined it and wept over it and

written in it. That's fine. That's not irreverent to do that. But still treat the Bible with reverence.

Now, not only should you have a readable Bible, but get also a loose leaf devotional journal. I have a journal and I don't write in the journal every morning, but I will write something when I study. If I don't put it in the journal, if I don't think it's worthy of the journal, I'll write it on a piece of paper and maybe discard it. Maybe on a yellow legal pad. But get a journal.

To me it would almost be unthinkable to think that I would read with a pen in my hand. Almost unthinkable! I mean, I instinctively, when I reach for the Bible, reach for a pen. Why? Expect God to give you something. You say, well, that's all right Pastor, I've got a good memory. I'll remember it. Who are you kidding? I have a fair memory, but I want to tell you folks, that it is better to write it down. It impresses it in your mind. And the weakest ink is better than the best memory. Write it down in your journal. Expect God to give you something.

Not only should you have a journal where you keep thoughts, but you need a companion which is a prayer journal. I've kept a prayer journal for many years. And I don't use it every morning, but I use it many mornings. I'd get down to remind myself of things that I'm praying about for myself and for my family and for my loved ones and for you and for this church.

And then a third thing that you need, and this doesn't need to be a piece that you keep all the time, but just keep a little notepad there to write down things that you need to do during the day. Just your daily assignment. And those things will come to your mind as you pray or come to your mind before you pray, so you can pray for them. So if you have your devotional journal, you have your, where God is giving you thoughts from His Word. You have your prayer journal of people that you're going to pray for and by the way, when you have a prayer journal, that will help you spread out your prayers and to pray systematically for things and people that you might not pray for ordinarily.

And then also, have that notepad of things that God wants you to do during the day. What you're doing when you come to the prayer time is reporting for duty and asking God to show you what He wants you to do that particular day and also, pleading for power to do what He wants you to do. So, there are the proper provisions, the Bible, the devotional journal, the prayer journal and a note reminder of things to do.

That's a very simple thing, but at least those things. There are many other tools if you are into serious Bible study. Of course, you want a Bible dictionary, you want a concordance and all that, but I'm not talking about that for this. This is your quiet time. You're not even here preparing your Sunday School lesson. You're not here preparing a sermon, per se, you're just here to meet with the Lord.

V. You Must Have a Proper Procedure

Now, number five: a proper procedure. What is the proper procedure? Now, you're walking into the place. It's your best time. Physically, alert, you're morally pure, you're mentally aware. You've come. You've shut out distractions. You're in there with God. You're ready.

All right, now what do you do? What procedure do you take? May I recommend that the very first thing you do is just to get still and to get quiet. You know the Bible says, "be still and know that I am the Lord." Just fix and focus your mind on Him. Calm down, relax, recognize His presence. Be still and know that I am God. If you'll think about what's happening, you are having a private interview with the Lord Jesus Christ. Now you need to think about that. Let your mind dwell on the fact that Jesus is there with you.

Night before last, I had a very wonderful privilege. I taught a couple of days in North Carolina at The Cove, which is The Billy Graham Learning Center. On Thursday night, Dr. and Mrs. Graham came over and said to Joyce and myself, they would like to have dinner with us. And so, we sat down in a little upper room with Dr. Billy Graham and Mrs. Graham and Joyce and myself. And had a wonderful dinner. And just to talk about the things of God and the blessing that was. And what a humbling experience, and a great experience it was for us.

But friend, we all have a bigger, better honor than that every morning. And that's to meet with Jesus. I mean to be alone with the Lord Jesus Christ. To sup with Him and He with me. That's what He has invited us to do. And we need to fix our minds and focus our minds on the, on the gift of privilege for the Lord Jesus said, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

So, number one, just get quiet. Take a deep breath. Focus your thoughts on the Lord. I have begun to do something recently and it's been a blessing to me. Now, you don't have to do this, but I want to tell you something: it's one of the sweetest things to me personally that I have learned to do. I want you to try it sometime. Get alone with the Lord. When you're getting ready to have that time with Him. Look up and lift your hands to Him. When you lift your hands, first of all lift your hands in praise and say, Lord, I praise you, just praise you. Then, lift your hands again and say, Lord, I surrender. You know when you lift your hands, you surrender. Just say, Lord, I surrender, I'm yours! I am under your control. And then lift your hands a third time and say, Lord, I receive, as you're expecting to receive something. Just try it. Just try those three things. Just get alone, and just before God, just lift your hands and say, Lord, I praise you. Lord I surrender. Lord, I receive. Now that just will tune your heart to think about the presence of God.

Now, I think those kind of things are a lot better done in private than in public and I, if I feel even a little embarrassed talking about those kind of things alone in private with the Lord. It's such a blessing to me to do that! To know that I just something about saying, Lord, I lift my hands in praise. Lord, I lift my hands in surrender. Lord, I lift my hands in expectation. You just do this. Even before you begin to pray and so, you get still and know He's there.

Now next, get into the Word of God. It's better to start reading the Bible than it is in prayer—than to start in prayer. Don't pray first, this is my advice. Don't pray first and then read the Word. Read the Word first, and then pray. It is more important for you to hear from God, even than for God to hear from you—because God already knows all about you, but you need to know a lot more about Him.

So, you start, first of all, reading the Word of God. That will tune your heart and get your heart ready to pray. You hear God and then talk to God in prayer. A quiet time is a time alone with God where you hear from God and God hears from you.

Now when you read the Bible, read for quality and not quantity. Don't see how much of the Bible you can read. Now, a lot of people have a goal to read the Bible through in a year, read the Bible through in six months. That's wonderful! Do that! But that's not your quiet time. I mean if you're not careful, you'll be pushing ahead when you ought not to be pushing ahead. Sometimes you might spend a morning on one verse. Stop and think as your reading the Word of God, what is God telling me? Not what does this say, of course it says something. Of course, it's the Word of God, but what is God saying to me, to me! Not what does God want me to tell somebody, not what am I going to teach in Sunday school. What is God saying to me?

So, read it very thoughtfully. Now, of course, read the Bible like you would read any other book in one sense of the word. You don't just pick up a book and just open it up at random and start reading in the middle of a paragraph and then say, well, this book doesn't make sense to me. That's the way a lot of people read the Bible, just kind of a lucky dibs. I mean, there it is! No, read it sequentially and read it in paragraphs or units.

I mean, use some common sense when you read the Bible.

And keep your Bible reading balanced. Read from the Old Testament and read from the New Testament. Read regularly from the Psalms because when you read the Psalms, you learn to worship and you'll get encouragement. Read regularly from the book of Proverbs. Because from the book of Proverbs you'll get wisdom. And then, read balanced reading in the rest of the Bible.

Now, what about having devotional books? Well, devotional books are wonderful, but even now, this is not the place for devotional books. Read devotional books. Joyce and I read almost every morning from Oswald Chambers, My Utmost for His Highest. Wonderful, but that is still not the place for this. This is the place where you just open the Bible and read intelligently, sequentially, with an open mind, a readable Bible to let God speak to you.

All right, so, get quiet, focus your mind on the Lord. Begin to read the Word of God.

And then meditate on it. Meditate on it! Think about it. And I don't mean oriental meditation. I don't mean mystical meditation. The difference between oriental mystical Buddhism and all that kind of meditation is that those people assume that the answer is within them. But the answer is not. You focus on the Word of God and you meditate on the Word of God and let the Word of God permeate you. Just think about it, meditate on it.

Now, I've given you many times these questions to ask as you meditate on the Word of God. And if you're a teacher or a preacher or anybody else and you're trying to get up a sermon or you just simply, or a lesson or you want a blessing out of the Word of God, you can ask these questions with a clean heart and the Bible will burst aflame. Here they are. Jot them down. Joyce says, when you give lists, you always give them too fast. So we will slow down.

Number one, is there a command to obey? Number two, is there a promise to claim? Number three, is there a sin to avoid? Four, is there a lesson to learn? Five, is there a new truth to carry with me? Now, just simply take those questions. There may be others.

I used to have those questions recorded in the flyleaf of a Bible. And I would refer to them often. It's amazing. Let me give them to you again in case you did not get them all. Is there a command to obey, a promise to claim, a sin to avoid, a lesson the learn, a new truth to carry with me?

So, prepare your heart, get into the Word of God. Meditate on the Word of God and then record what God has given you. This is where the Prayer Journal comes in. Write it down. It doesn't have to be flowery. You're not writing it for publication. You're not writing it to impress other people. Make it intensely personal, but once you do this, you'll find yourself sharing it with other people. I mean, you will, when you do this and you leave it, you will be wanting to share the nuggets that God has given you. And that will make you a blessing to be around. You'll have a wealth of material for lessons and devotions, though that's not even your purpose in doing it.

At the same time, take that notepad and write down the things that you need to do. Action points. This is the one that may be just for

the day—obligations and goals and decisions that come out of that time.

Now you're ready to pray. Pray it in and when you pray pour out your soul. Be natural. Don't try to use flowery language when you pray. Jesus said don't use vain repetition. You're not hurt for your much speaking. Be honest with God. Tell Him how you feel, He already knows. Tell Him. Be honest.

This is a time from time to time you refer to your Prayer Journal. Continuing burdens and prayer. People that you're praying for, answers to prayer. Pray out loud. Pray, pray audibly. If you just try to pray silently, and you have to pray silently sometimes if you're in a crowd, but when you're alone, pray audibly. Why? It keeps your mind on track. It enables you to stay focused.

Try to make complete sentences. Try to use good English when you pray. I'm not talking about King James English. I'm just simply saying that you're speaking to God. Speak clearly; speak plainly. Think about what you are saying when you pray and don't rush your prayer, but don't draw it out. I mean when you finished. When you finish, quit. Pray as long as you have a concern on your heart. Don't just keep repeating things like you're going to impress God with the number of words that you say.

What about when you pray and your mind wanders? Do you ever try to pray and your mind wanders? Lift your hands. Sure, sure! Why? Well, two reasons. Number one, it may be an attack of the devil and if you sense it's an attack of the devil rebuke the devil. But, number two, it may be that something is coming to your heart. You're praying over here, but your real need and your real desire and your subconscious is saying, this is what I'm concerned about, my meeting this afternoon. And your mind goes to that. How do you deal with that? Just leave this thing and go over there and pray about that thing. That thing that's caused your mind to wander, well then, pray about it. Tell God about it. Talk to God about it and then you're done with it. But until you deal with it, it'll just keep coming back again.

So, have that time where you, where you, tell God the concern of your heart and then go back to your other praying. Now after you've done this, begin to share out of your quiet time with one another. We ought to meet people and exhort one another. You see, God did not make us to be reservoirs. God made us to be conduits.

All right, now what have we said. Number one, get still and know He's God. Number two, get into the Word of God. Number three, meditate on the Word of God and ask those questions. Number four, write down what we've learned. Then, number five, pray it in, be natural, pray our hearts out to God. Number six, share what we've learned and now listen.

Obey what God tells you. That's the seventh thing we're talking now, about this proper procedure. Obey. Trust and obey, for there's no other way. Now, your spiritual train is going to run on two rails. One is revelation and the other is obedience. Revelation and obedience. And if either rail stops, your train stops. Learn to obey the Word of God and when you fail, confess it.

Conclusion

Now you say, Pastor, if I begin to do this, how soon will it be before I see a change in my life? Well, I don't know. You'll see some change, I believe right away. But don't expect anything radical and dramatic.

Do you know what my wife gives me every morning? You won't believe it, but brewer's yeast. Did you ever taste brewer's yeast? Have you tasted brewer's yeast, Bob? I'm gonna give you some. Brewer's yeast, two big tablespoons full of it. And then on top of that, bee pollen. Did you ever take bee pollen? Bee pollen. About a half a teaspoon full of bee pollen. And then a fist full of vitamins and then 2% milk. And, certain brands of food that have, that's good. You know what? I've learned to like it.

But I'll tell you something. When you begin to eat that or to ingest that, you're not going to feel 100% better in 15 minutes. But if you'll get on a regiment of eating right, it'll change you. It'll change you. And if you'll get on a regiment of obeying the Word of God, getting into the Word of God and feeding your soul, the change will not be spasmodic and it may not be dramatic, but on the long run, it will change you for eternity. We need to have a quality quiet time. And again, I don't stand before you as the paragon of excellence and I'm well aware when I put that finger out, they're three pointing right at me. But these are some things that I've learned and may you learn them, too.

Father, seal the message to our hearts, and help us to learn, dear Lord, how to have a quality quiet time. In Jesus' wonderful name. Amen.