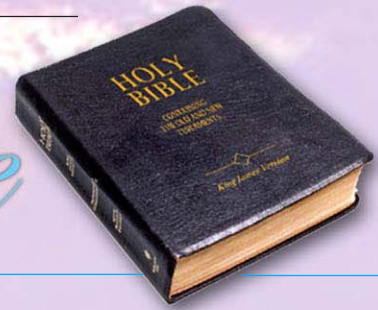


Planning a Personal Time of Devotion

A Quiet Time



No one truly born of God doubts that it is a commendable practice to have a daily quiet time with the Lord; in fact, it is absolutely vital to Christian growth and development. The Bible associates the man of God with a disciplined devotional life.

David proclaimed in Psalm 57:7, *"My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise."* A fixed and established heart produces stability.

How many of us can really claim to have a fixed heart? The late Dr. Robert Cook closed his radio program with a friendly reminder to "walk with the King today and be a blessing." In order to walk with the King of Kings and reap the blessings and promises of God each day, our attention must be focused on Him. A missing element in this endeavor might be a workable plan on how to begin and maintain personal devotions called a quiet time.

I. THE REASON FOR A QUIET TIME

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

The Lord Jesus spoke these words to testify to the value of the quiet time. He is telling us that the whole Bible is for the whole man. Therefore, we cannot afford to miss any part of it, regardless of the difficulty of certain portions of the Bible. Communion with God in the light of His Word is vital for our spiritual foundation, spiritual correction, spiritual counsel, and victory in spiritual conflict.

A. Spiritual Foundation

1 Peter 2:2 *"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."* God has built into every child at birth the insatiable desire for the very thing by which that child lives. If there is no desire for the sincere milk of the Word, then there is no new birth. It is impossible to live the Christian life without a daily quiet time because God has put into our spiritual life and nature a hunger for the Word.

B. Spiritual Correction

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for...correction" (II Timothy 3:16). Nothing will cleanse and correct like the Word of God. In one of the Psalms, David asks: *"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word"* (Psalm 119:9).

The Lord planned the correcting and cleansing power of the Word, and He says to His disciples, *"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto*

you" (John 15:3). The Word is the means through which we are being daily cleansed.

C. Spiritual Counsel

"All scripture... is profitable... for instruction in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16). *"Give me understanding according to thy word,"* said David in Psalm 119:169. And in Psalm 73:24, God gives us this assurance: *"Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel"*. The more we read the Word of God, the more His teachings in righteousness are understood and obeyed. No one is guided by the spirit unless he seeks guidance in the Bible. All wisdom and knowledge is embodied in Jesus Christ and He is revealed on the pages of Scripture. *"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not: and it shall be given him"* (James 1:5).

D. Spiritual Conflict

"The sword of the Spirit," said Paul in Ephesians 6:17, *"is the word of God."* The context of this passage is spiritual warfare (see Ephesians 6:11-12), and in light of this, we are to have on our defensive armor, which is the Lord Jesus Christ. The weapons we are to use are prayer and the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17-18). How did the Savior overcome the devil in the wilderness? He spoke the Word of God every time (Matthew 4). Isaiah said that his ears were open to hear the voice of his Lord; and thus, he was not rebellious (Isaiah 50:5). Jesus is God; He could have destroyed the devil in the wilderness, but He did not. He depended on the Word of God and the Spirit of God— and He defeated the devil.

II. REQUIREMENTS FOR A QUIET TIME

A. The Bible

Every day, when you open your Bible, ask God to give you understanding and a willingness to obey His Word. On the margin of your Bible, record nuggets of truth that God gives you. Jot down things that you would like to remember and reflect upon in the future days.

B. A Quiet Place

This may be difficult for some people, but where there's a will, there is a way. Jesus did it. Mark 1:35 says: *"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."* You, too, can find a place with no distractions to be alone with God.

C. A Definite Time

David said in Psalm 5:3, *"My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up."* Set a specific time and try to adhere to your daily schedule.

D. Proper Attitude

II Corinthians 10:5 says, *"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."* Philippians 4:8: *"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."*

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"Let the words of my mouth, and the mediation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."

Psalm 19:14

The person of God must keep his/her mind on God during the personal devotional time. The proper attitude may be determined by these three factors.

1. The Physical Factor

Do not keep late hours at night and expect to be fresh to meet God in the morning. I Corinthians 9:27: *"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection."* Your life must be disciplined if you want to get the maximum blessing from your time of devotions.

2. The Moral Factor

The Word says in Psalm 66:18, *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."* This verse emphasizes the need for holiness.

3. The Spiritual Factor

The spiritual factor stresses the need for obedience. God conditioned the revelation of truth on obedience. Jesus declares in John 7:17: *"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself."* As I obey, God reveals; as I disobey, God ceases to reveal.

III. BEGINNING A QUIET TIME

The most important step in starting a quiet time is to BEGIN – Don't put it off! Start with the following suggested guidelines and enjoy your time with the Lord:

A. Read the Bible

The Psalmist declared, *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"* (Psalm 119:105). Read verse after verse, chapter after chapter, consecutively. Don't race, but avoid stopping to do a Bible study on some word, thought or theological problem that may present itself. Jot it down if you'd like, and come back to it later to do the study. Read for the pure joy of reading and allow God to guide you into all truth (John 16:13). Read 20 verses or maybe a complete chapter. For example, you might choose to read a chapter from the Book of Proverbs every day to start your devotional.

B. Pray

After God has spoken to you through His Word, then speak to Him in prayer. Four areas of prayer are easily remembered by the acronym, ACTS:

A - Adoration: This is the purest kind of prayer because it's all for God- there's nothing in it for you. Romans 16:27: *"To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen."*

You don't barge into the presence of royalty. You begin with the proper salutation. Worship Him. Tell the Lord that you love Him. Thank Him for salvation in Christ our Lord. Reflect on His greatness, His power, His majesty, and His sovereignty!

C - Confession: I John 1:9 tells us, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* The root word of confession means "to agree together with." Apply this to prayer and it means to agree with God. Something you said yesterday that you call a slight exaggeration - God calls a lie! You call it strong language - God calls it swearing. You call it telling the truth about somebody - God calls it gossip. *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me"* (Psalm 66:18).

T - Thanksgiving: Psalm 136:1 *"O give thanks unto the LORD; for He is good: for his mercy endureth for ever."* Express your gratitude to God. Thank Him for specific things: your family, your job, and ministry responsibilities - thank Him for your hardships, too. *"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you"* (I Thessalonians 5:18).

S - Supplication: Philippians 4:6: *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."* Supplication means to ask for, earnestly and humbly.

During this part of your prayer life, you make your petitions known to God. Ask for others, then for yourself. You

could include people around the world, like those who have been ministered to by Family Radio. Pray for God's guidance that you will be a faithful servant today, walking with the King and being a blessing to those around you. Pray that loved ones, friends, neighbors, co-workers and people who listen to Family Radio, will hear the true Gospel message and be fed by God's Word, the Bible. *"For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."* (Revelation 7:17).

C. Obey

Ask the Lord to give you grace to obey Him unconditionally. Set your mind to obey – for *"know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"* (Romans 6:16). Memorize and learn God's truths and promises – *"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee"* (Psalm 119:11).

CONCLUSION

The barometer of the Christian life is the quiet time. Have you started a personal devotional quiet time when you spend time alone with God? If not, begin your "Quiet Time" with God right away. Don't put it off! Do it not because other people are doing it, not as a spiritless duty every day, and not merely as an end in itself, but do it because God has granted you the priceless privilege of fellowship with Him. Take time to be holy — speak often with the Lord – abide in Him only and feed on His Word. Don't become devoted to a habit, but be devoted to the Savior. God grant you the blessings of a quiet time!

If you have any questions or comments, please write to:

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