

DEVOTIONAL LIFE

As with any other relationship, the only way to grow close to God and know Him is through spending time with Him.

Important Definition:

Quiet Time - regular time of relating and listening to God through Bible reading and prayer

Disciples who follow Jesus...

- Put Jesus first over family, self, and everything else. *Luke 14:26, 33*
- Abide in the Word of God. *John 15:5,7*
- Must learn to nourish their relationships with the Lord through a regular time of Bible reading and prayer. *Mark 1:35*

... Therefore, your commitments are:

- Audio: "[How to Have a Quiet Time](#)" by Max Barnett (25 min)
- Read Chapter 1 in Basic Ingredients for Spiritual Growth (BIFSG) by Leroy Eims
- Bible Study: "Devotional Life"
- Practice having a Quiet Time every day using the "7 Minutes with God" on pg 36
- Memorize **one** of the following verses concerning spending regular relational time with our Lord and Savior:
 - Mark 1:35 with topic: Quiet Time
 - Psalm 143:8 with topic: Devotional Life or Quiet Time
 - Exodus 34:2 with topic: Devotional Life
 - Luke 5:16 with topic: Time Alone with God
- Attend CV and take notes
- Write down a key thought (on the Action Plan page at the end of the manual)
- Meet with your group leader - Discuss your KEY THOUGHT from this week

BEFORE YOU MOVE ON:

What in your heart draws you to want to know & love your Abba Father more and more every day? (Read Ps. 27:8; 1 Chron. 16:11; Gal. 5:22a)

Basic Ingredients for Spiritual Growth

Chapter 1: Quiet Time

I suppose the vote would be unanimous. If you were to go to the members of your church and ask them if the practice of spending time alone with God was a good idea, everyone would be for it. Some might even back up their reasons with a passage from the Bible. Daily time alone with God is a practice everyone applauds. But for many, that's where it ends. Applause? Yes! Action? No!

I was first made aware of this discrepancy when I heard Dawson Trotman tell about his interview with a group of missionary candidates who were heading for the mission field. Daws was a member of the board of directors of the organization, and the leadership of the mission had invited him to talk to the prospective missionaries to determine if they were ready for such a momentous undertaking.

Daws had one question for the candidates: "Are you currently meeting with the Lord on a daily basis in a devotional time of prayer and Bible reading?" In simple terms, "Do you have a quiet time?" Not one of them said yes. And the thing that was such a shocker was the fact that these men and women were not just your average people in the pew. These were among the best the church had produced. They were willing to leave loved ones and homeland for the sake of Christ.

Why do you suppose this simple practice is not taken more seriously? It seems to me that many people have never understood the benefits to their walk with the Lord. A person who goes to work for a corporation wants to know the starting salary and the long-term benefits. I think we need to look at a few of the long-term benefits the Lord brings our way as we form the practice of a daily quiet time.

Quiet Time Eases Pressures

God can use your quiet time to cease the pressures and problems of your life. I have talked to people who bring the pressures of work home with them, and then take the problems of home back to work. When these pressures become too great, an explosion can occur. I know that it's true because it almost happened to me years ago when my wife and I were facing a very difficult problem in our family. We both had very heavy hearts, and we shed buckets of tears. During the time when the problem was at its worst, I was invited to go to Denver to spend a couple of days with the directors of six Christian organizations. Each of these directors brought an assistant with him and that's why I was there. After one of the meetings, Bill Bright suggested to me that we have some time of prayer together. We went to Bill's room, and he told me his organization was facing some rather stiff problems. "But," he said, "I am not under the burden of these things because I have appropriated the truth revealed in I Peter 5:7, 'Casting all your cares upon Him for He cares for you.' The problems are still there, but the burden is lifted. I have cast them on the Lord."

And then he made this amazing statement. "I have learned that either I carry them or Jesus does, but we both can't do it. And so I have cast them on Him." And there I sat with my burdened heart. After our time together, I went to my room and began to talk to God. I had memorized 1 Peter 5:7 years ago, but I had never done what Bill was talking about. So I knelt at the foot of the bed and said something like this, "Lord, I don't know if this will work or not, but right now I cast my burden on You and ask You to carry it for me. What happened next is hard to explain.

I felt the burden melt away. I felt light, almost giddy. The burden was lifted, my heavy heart was healed, and I was free. The problem was there, but the burden was gone. David explained it this way: "Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you" (Psalm 55:22).

Many thousands of Christians have discovered the blessings that God showers down upon His people as we meet with Him day by day, reflect on His Word, claim the promises He makes, face the rigors of discipleship, unburden our hearts in prayer, offer the sacrifice of praise, and in everything give thanks. So let me ask you -- are you right now facing more than your share of the pressures and problems of life? Let me encourage you to begin the lovely practice of meeting the Lord on a day-by-day basis. As you experience His transforming power and are guided by His infinite wisdom, your life will change. As you stay close to Him, He will see you through.

This great truth was brought forcibly to my mind by an incident that happened to me at O'Hare Airport in Chicago. Our plane was late getting in and I only had a few minutes to catch the connecting flight to Toronto. When I checked the monitor to see where I was supposed to go, my worst fears were realized. The plane was departing from the gate that was farthest away. And to make matters worse, the airport was so crowded I could barely move. O'Hare is always very busy, but I had never seen anything like this. I tried to hurry but was trapped in a slow-moving mob. I twisted and turned and squirmed but got nowhere fast. I was doomed to miss my flight and spend several hours waiting for the next flight. And on top of all that, I would not arrive in time to speak at my meeting. At the height of my frustration, I saw a uniformed airline employee watching me. After some time he called over to me and asked, "What is your problem?" "I am trying to catch my plane to Toronto," I replied. "Don't worry, you'll make it," he said. "I don't see how I can possibly get to the gate on time in this crowd," I answered. He edged his way over to me and said, "If you will stay close to me, everything will be okay." "Why is that?" I asked. "Because," he replied. "I'm the pilot on that flight and they aren't going to leave without me." I almost fainted with surprise. Later a passage of Scripture came to mind, "I saw the Lord constantly before me. Because He is close by my side I will not be shaken or cast down" (Acts 2:25). What the pilot said to me suggests a great spiritual truth. In essence God says, "If you will stay close to Me, everything will be okay." David put it this way. "In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (Psalm 16:11).

Quiet Time Kindles Devotion

God can use our daily quiet time to fan the flame of devotion to Christ and fervency in His service. We all find our spirits growing cold from time to time. When I find this happening to me, I set aside a day to spend alone with God just to thaw out. If I leave the refrigerator door open long enough, the ice will melt. And if I leave my heart open to the Lord Jesus Christ, the spiritual ice will melt and my lost zeal will be rekindled. Do you recall the story of Jesus cleansing the temple?

He found some things going on in His house of prayer that He didn't like, so He threw the rascals out. And as the disciples watched they were reminded of an Old Testament Scripture, "Zeal for Your house has eaten me up" (John 2:17). Jesus Christ was consumed with a fiery zeal that left no room for a cold heart and icy spirit. This fire that burned was no temporary thing, and it had a profound effect on those around Him.

Toward the end of His time on earth, Jesus took a little walk with two disciples who were anything but on fire. In fact, the record indicates they were downhearted, confused, frightened, and their hopes were dashed. But during that walk with Jesus, an amazing transformation occurred, and they later said to each other, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road and while He opened up the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32) After a time of communion with Jesus, their hearts began to burn. Why? As they talked, the fire spread from His heart to theirs.

If you desire a heart filled with devotion for Christ and zeal for the work of Christ, from the practice of spending some time each day in close communion with Him, and let His fire set your heart aflame. How would you like the following words to be the testimony of your life? "And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, in the law and in the commandment, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart. So he prospered" (2 Chronicles 31:21). Those words can reflect your life if you will invest some time each day in fellowship with the Lord. He will enable you to be "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord" (Romans 12:11).

A Quiet Time Can Help Prevent Burnout

The quiet time is a great help in preventing burnout. If you go and go and go and never stop, you are going to run into problems. Some months ago I ran out of gasoline on the way to work. The car sputtered and coughed and came to a standstill. There was nothing wrong with the engine or transmission or electrical system, but there the car sat. I called a friend who went to the filling station and got a can of gas for me. And so it is in our Christian life that we must allow time to fill the tank. And that's one of the great benefits of the quiet time. It provides a means whereby we can stop and "fill up our souls" as we spend some quiet moments with God. And if we don't, we will cause trouble for ourselves and for others around us.

Now let me ask you a question. What causes burnout? Is it a result of too

much hard work? My mother used to say, LeRoy, hard work never hurt anybody." Was she wrong? No, I don't think she was. I don't think it is the work that causes us to burn out. It seems to me that it happens something like this. I have lots to do so I spend lots of time doing it. And if the work piles up, I begin to look around to find some extra hours in the day. I've got to find something I can cut out to give me more time to do what I have to do. And all too often, the thing I cut out of my schedule for the really important stuff is my quiet time. And with that spiritual dimension gone, I find myself not conducting my life in the energy of the Spirit but in the energy of the flesh. And if I work long and hard in the energy of the flesh, it will soon catch up to me and I will find myself stalled along the side of the road in need of someone to come to my rescue.

Let me ask you a question? Did Jesus work long and hard hours? Of course He did, but many do not realize that fact. Their idea of a typical day for the Lord Jesus was spending the day taking leisurely strolls through the meadows, enjoying the birds and the flowers, without a care in the world. But, the facts present quite a different picture. His life was filled with long, busy days, with death threats, with the sorrow of seeing His beloved city of Jerusalem turn its back on Him, and the pressures of fame and popularity. Notice Luke 5:15-16, "Then the report went around concerning Him all the more; great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed." By His example He has taught us how to choose the priority in the midst of secondary things that demand our attention.

Look at the lesson recorded in Mark 1. Jesus was in the house of Simon and Andrew where He healed Peter's mother-in-law. And then, at evening after the sun went down, the entire city gathered outside the house in hope of finding help, and Jesus responded to their need. Now think with me for a moment. If He did not begin this ministry until after the sun went down, and He ministered to the needs of an entire city, what time do you think He went to bed? I'm sure it was in the wee hours of the morning. But nevertheless, "In the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed" (v. 35). I believe the Holy Spirit led Mark to record this incident to show us the kind of priority that Jesus placed on the quiet time. Some of you may be thinking, "LeRoy, what you seem to be doing is trying to place us under some sort of legalistic bondage." Not at all. What we must see is that if we go day after day without setting aside some time for prayer and reflection on the Word, we are simply making a declaration of independence and saying to God, "I don't need the strength and grace that comes from spending time with You. I can go it alone." And that's where burnout rears its ugly head.

Having a daily quiet time is a clear declaration of our dependence on God and our commitment to live by His strength and not our own. The Prophet Isaiah speaks directly to this truth.

“Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. There is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint” (Isaiah 40:28-31).

From Failure to Success

Thus far in this chapter we have looked at three benefits that are ours in having a quiet time. God can use this quiet time with Him to ease the pressures and problems of life. God can use our daily quiet time to fan the flame of devotion to Christ and fervency in His service. God can use the quiet time with Him to keep us going and prevent burnout. Now let's look at two people who were totally defeated in their efforts to have a regular daily time with the Lord. Bob's problem was his busyness. He had a small animal hospital in Sioux City, Iowa and it ran him ragged. In addition to his work at the hospital, he drove all over the place taking care of the cattle, hogs, sheep, and horses on the surrounding farms. Bob Taussig was one busy man. And whenever I talked to him about the quiet time, he told me how busy he was. I knew Bob was an Eisenhower booster, and so one day I asked him what he would do if he ever got a call from 'Ike' asking if he would like to have an early morning breakfast with him. Well, of course, Bob said he would be honored and would make certain he had the time. It was there that I reminded Bob that someone far more important than General Eisenhower wanted to meet with him on a regular basis. Bob saw it in an instant, and as far as I know, he hasn't missed a quiet time in the past thirty-five years. For Bob it was simply a matter of making an appointment. Let me ask you a question. Is busyness keeping you from daily time with God? Make an appointment with Him in the same way you make an appointment to see the doctor. Unlike the doctor, God will not keep you waiting; He will be ready when you are. After all, it is God's idea that the two of you get together around His Word and at the throne of His grace.

The second person who struggled for years to be consistent in her daily time with God was my wife, Virginia. At night she would putter around the house finding one more thing that needed attention before she went to bed. It nearly took an act of Congress to get her to go to bed at night, and it almost took another act of Congress to get her out of bed in the morning. Her time with the Lord was practically nonexistent. After many years of defeat in this struggle, she was led to make a very simple prayer that totally revolutionized her life. She prayed that God would give her a hunger for Himself, and through a series of circumstances, that prayer was answered. Today her quiet time is a thing of beauty. She spends at least two hours each morning reading her Bible and some favorite devotional books, and spending time on her knees in prayer.

Exodus 34:2-3 gives us a simple and brief pattern to follow. “Be ready in

the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself to Me there on the top of the mountain. And no man shall come up with you, and let no man be seen throughout all the mountain; let neither the flocks nor herds feed before that mountain.”

- Be ready. For me that means making sure that the night before I put my Bible and reading glasses on my desk for me to use in the morning, so I don't waste time hunting them down when I get up.
- Present yourself to God. Many years ago I was told, “Remember, LeRoy, you are not meeting a habit, you are meeting God.”
- Go to a place where you can be alone with the Lord to pray and read His Word. If the Lord lays it on your heart to start the day with Him, there is a vital truth for you in Genesis 19:27, “And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord.” It is a helpful practice to go to bed at a decent hour if you want to get up early. May God grant you His joy as you meet with Him.

Bible Study: Devotional Life

This study is designed as a guide for your daily quiet times. Journal your responses and related thoughts to all questions and verses.

Day 1

The Bible has recorded what people did and why they made time for a devotional life. What attitudes or actions are modeled in the following verses?

- a) Acts 4:13
- b) Philippians 3:7-14
- c) Luke 5:15-16
- d) Psalm 27:4-8
- e) Psalm 42:1-2, 84:2

Do you believe you can have a relationship like these? What keeps you from having this type of relationship with God?

According to the Scriptures, you are chosen, and it is possible to have a close relationship with God.

- a) John 17:3
- b) 1 Corinthians 1:9

Have you experienced close fellowship with God? How have you seen God be close or even seemingly distant? What was going on in your life at those times of perceived closeness or distance?

Day 2

“Intimacy requires development.” E.M. Bounds. Reflect on this statement.

What kind of intimacy can be expected from spending time with God?

In what areas of life should you see change if you spend time with God?

What is your part in developing intimacy? Try to find a relevant verse.

What is God’s part in developing intimacy? Try to find a relevant verse.

How do you think David got to the stage of intimacy with God as described in Psalm 42:1-2, 84:2? Could you get to the same place? What would it take?

Day 3

Assuming at this point that it is worth having a time to personally meet with God (which we will call a quiet time), what are some things to consider in light of the following verses?

- a) Psalm 5:3
- b) Matthew 6:6
- c) Mark 1:35

When would be a good time and where would be a good place for you to consistently have a quiet time? (Respond in specifics!)

Day 4

Having now established a time and place for a quiet time you should have a skeletal plan or structure to follow during that time. Everyone has their own way of spending

time with God. Here are a few tested ideas for using your time wisely during a quiet time.

1) Take time to pray.

An acronym to pray through is PRAY

P-raise Psalm 100:4-5

R-equest Psalm 119:18

A-dmit 1 John 1:9

Y-ield James 4:7-10

2) Read the Bible - The Bible is God's explicit manual given to help us live life to its fullest! Spend time in it!

- a) Do you believe that the Bible contains the very words of God? If you do, then does your life reflect that? Do you read it? If it is truly correct and reliable, then you will be spending time in it. That is, if you really believe it holds truth.
- b) The Bible makes an unusual claim about itself. Do you agree with this verse, 2 Timothy 3:16?
- c) A man wrote what God's word did for him in Psalm 119:97-105. Sometimes we judge whether or not something is true by whether or not it works. It seemed to work for this fellow. Could it do the same for you?

3) Record what you are learning in your quiet times in a journal. It helps tremendously to look back at old journal entries to see where God has taken you.

4) Apply what you are learning to your life. James 1:22-25

Here are some sample questions to ask when looking for an application:

- Is there a promise to claim?
- Is there an error to avoid?
- Is there something to praise God for?
- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a sin I need to confess?
- Where am I falling short? Give specific examples.
- What did this reveal about you?
- What am I going to do about it?
- What can I do with this to help me know you more?

Day 5

We have now discussed ways to spend time with God, but what really is the crux of the matter? What are you striving for in even having a quiet time? Psalm 27:8

Don't forget, it is knowing God that is important. Do not let yourself be fooled into believing that your relationship with God is based on your ability to DO or KNOW things that make him happy or simply give you a clear conscience!

Take some time to pray that God would give you the desire to know him even as David did.

Day 6

Examine the following verses and determine what insights they have regarding your quiet times. When reading these think generally, i.e. time management, authority.....

a) Psalm 66:18

b) John 7:17

c) Matthew 6:26

Day 7

What do you anticipate being most difficult about consistently having a quiet time?

What will it take for you to have a quiet time?

What will God think when you miss a quiet time?

What will happen in your life if you never have a quiet time?

Got 7 Minutes for God?



Most Christians will tell you that they firmly believe in the importance of spending regular time in God's Word and in prayer each day. Yet, so many of us struggle to do this consistently. Perhaps that's because we think this time with God has to be a monumental, mystical experience. In fact, you can begin developing this spiritual discipline in as little as seven minutes a day.

Longtime Navigator Bob Foster developed a simple outline, called *Seven Minutes with God*, to help deepen your daily relationship with the Father.

"This is simply a guide," Bob emphasized. "Very soon you will discover that it is impossible to spend only seven minutes with the Lord. An amazing thing happens—seven minutes becomes 20, and it's not long before you're spending 30 precious minutes with Him."

Do It for the Right Reason

Bob also offered additional words of wisdom: "Do not become devoted to the habit, but to the Savior. Do it not because other [people] are doing it—not as a spiritless duty every morning, not merely as an end in itself, but because God has granted the priceless privilege of fellowship with Himself."

Time & Place:

Set aside time each day.

The morning may work best before you start your day.

Find a place where you will not be distracted.

½ Minute: Preparing Your Heart

Invest the first 30 seconds preparing your heart. You might pray, "Lord, cleanse my heart so You can speak to me through the Scriptures. Make my mind alert, my soul active, and my heart responsive. Surround me with Your presence during this time."

4 Minutes: Listening to God (Scripture Reading & Meditation)

Take the next four minutes to read the Bible. Your greatest need is to hear a word from God. Allow the Word to strike fire in your heart. Meet the Author!

Application: How can I specifically apply this passage to my life?

2½ Minutes: Talking to God (Prayer)

After God has spoken through His Book, then speak to Him in prayer.

- What is your response to God after He spoke to you from the Word?
- Time of thanking God.
- Pray for friends, family, and your needs.