

## Read God's Word

Once we have confessed any known sin, we should begin by reading God's word. Here are a few things to keep in mind while reading His word.


### 1. Read it Attentively

Do not let your mind wander while you read. If you finish a paragraph or a chapter and find that you have allowed yourself to be distracted start over and read it again until you understand the passage.


### 2. Read it Expectantly

Psalms 119:18 says *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law*. This ought to be our prayer when we open God's word. Expect to receive something from God in his word. Keep a pen in hand and a notepad near by, be ready to right down new truths that God shows you.

### 3. Read it Obediently

 James 1:21. **Q.** How did James tell us to receive God's word?

When we read the Bible we should read it with a ready heart and be willing to submit to the new truths that God has shown us. We should be ready to change areas of our lives or personalities that God shows us are sinful. To receive his word with meekness means that we are submitting ourselves to the word. We are allowing it to judge us, and not making ourselves the judge over it.

 Ps 119:34. **Q.** What did the Psalmist say he would do if God gave him understanding from His law?

This should be our prayer too!

### 4. Read it Personally

Although the Bible was not all written directly *to you* it is all intended *for you*. We should read every book and passage of the Bible as if God has a message intended for us personally.

This quiet time is your *personal* time with God. This is a time for you to receive wisdom, guidance, instruction, encouragement, reproof and correction from His word. This particular time should not be your time to look for your next sermon idea or lesson idea. You are not reading to find something for someone else, but for you personally. The truths that you find may *lead to* a sermon or lesson, or some point of encouragement for a fellow Christian, but this is not your main purpose.

## Developing a Daily Quiet Time


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*Learning to Live the New Life*

Last week we learned that our Lord Jesus Christ has provided a new life for us to live. His death on the cross and victory over sin broke sin's legal claim on our lives, we can now choose to turn from sin and to yield to the Holy Spirit whom he has given us. This new ability does not mean that we will be free from the influence of sin, but that we can choose to reject its influence and to obey Christ. This conflict between sin and the Spirit is a continual battle in the life of the Christian, but it is a battle that can be consistently won by walking daily with the Lord.


This week we are going to consider this idea of developing a daily quiet time with the Lord. Every Christian who desires to have victory over his flesh, and to walk in a way which pleases God everyday, must seek to develop a daily time of prayer and Bible reading with the Lord. Let's look now at some practical ideas regarding what a daily quiet time is, and how to have it.

### When Should I Have My Personal Quiet Time with the Lord?

 Psalms 5:3 My voice shalt thou hear in the \_\_\_\_\_, O LORD; in the \_\_\_\_\_ will I direct my \_\_\_\_\_ unto thee, and will look up.

 Mark 1:35. **Q.** When does this verse indicate that Jesus prayed?

The best time for the Christian to spend a daily quiet time with the Lord is in the morning. There are some practical reasons for this. First, when you meet the Lord in the morning, you are not yet burdened with the affairs of your daily life; Secondly, spending time in God's word and in prayer early in the morning gives you strength and wisdom to face the burdens of the day; thirdly, oftentimes when we begin our day it is difficult to slow down and make time to spend with the Lord; Fourth, we must spend time in prayer in the morning if we want to ask God for our daily provision; and Lastly, spending time with the Lord in the morning helps us to have the right attitude and perspectives throughout our day.

 Matt 6:11, 6:13. **Q.** What two things did Jesus tell us we should ask God in these verses?

These are both things that we must ask for as we prepare for our day. It would be silly to ask God to provide for our daily needs and to *lead us not* into temptation after our day is already done!

We should spend a quality time of prayer and Bible reading in the morning. This is not time that you will *find* but time that we must *make*. Think for a moment about how you could arrange your schedule so that you could spend at least 30 minutes of quality time with the Lord in the morning. This may mean going to bed sooner or setting the alarm earlier. This is not easy at first, it is a definite lifestyle change.

This is your devotional or quiet time, pick a time that is practical and that you can be consistent with. The things of this world and Satan himself will seek to keep you from maintaining this time – so protect it!

Write below what time you think you can set aside for the Lord:

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### **How Do I Prepare for This Quiet Time?**

In preparation for your time of Bible and Prayer, you should attempt to be *physically ready, morally ready, and mentally ready*.


#### ***Be Physically Ready***


**Q.** Why do you think it might not be a good idea to kneel and pray immediately after you get out of bed?

This time that we give to the Lord should not only be early but it should be our *best* time. If you find yourself dozing back off to sleep when you kneel to pray than perhaps your best time is after you shower and have breakfast, but before you begin your daily routine.

#### ***Be Morally Ready***

When we approach the Lord in the morning we must be morally ready. That is, we must ensure that there is no unconfessed sin in our lives.

 Ps 66:18. **Q.** What did the psalmist say would happen if he was harbouring sin in his life (regarding iniquity in his heart)?

 Matt 5:23,24. **Q.** What did Jesus say one must do if he wants to offer a gift to God but has unresolved conflicts in his life?

Before we come to the Lord we must cleanse our heart from unconfessed sin. God has promised that if we confess our sins he is faithful to forgive them. If we wake in the morning with sin that must be confessed, we can claim the promise found in 1 John 1:9, and continue with our quiet time, knowing that God has heard our confession and has forgiven our sin. Write out 1 John 1:9 on the next page.

 1 John 1:9: \_\_\_\_\_

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### ***Be Mentally Ready***

When we sit to read our Bibles and to pray during this daily quiet time, we must ensure that our minds are clear from things which will distract us from the Lord. We must take time before we open our Bible and before we pray to stop and to consider what we are about to do. This quiet time is your time to fellowship with your Saviour, it is only right that you put out of your mind anything that may distract you from the Lord. Psalms 46:10 says *Be still, and know that I am God*. Take a moment and just sit, considering the Lord. Prepare your mind to receive truths from His word.

### **Where Should I Have my Daily Quiet Time?**

 Matt 6:6. **Q.** Where did Jesus say we should pray?

The word *closet* found here does not mean a clothes closet like we have in our homes, but literally means *a secluded place*. We must find a place that is apart from the distractions of the home. Jesus prayed on a mountain, in a garden, and in the wilderness.

 Luke 5:16 And he \_\_\_\_\_ himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

The key here is not the location of our quiet time, but the fact that we are separate from distraction. Write below the *place* that you believe you can have your quiet time with the Lord.

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### **How Do I Go About Having This Quiet Time?**

We now know that we should decide to spend time with the Lord early in the morning with a cleansed heart and mind, and that we should do it apart from distraction, but how do we actually go about this quiet time?

After we have come to our secluded place, we should examine our heart and determine whether or not we have any unconfessed sin in our lives. This sin may not be obvious but may manifest itself in the form of a bad attitude or bitterness towards someone else, this sin must be confessed before you continue.

### 5. Read it Qualitatively

This special time that you are spending with the Lord is not the time to race through a Bible reading schedule. It may be a good idea to keep your Bible reading schedule separate from your quiet time. You may find yourself reading a small portion of scripture many times. This is a time where you are concerned more with the *quality* of your Bible reading than the *quantity*.

### 6. Read it Proportionally

It is a good idea to consistently read from the book of Psalms and the book of Proverbs. Psalms provide great encouragement, and Proverbs instruct us in wisdom. Try to read God's word proportionally by reading a balance of Old Testament books and New Testament books.

#### *Pray to the Lord*

Now that you have spent some time in the word of God, you are ready to pray. Perhaps you have learned new truths you wish to thank God for, or perhaps you need to ask forgiveness for sin that God has revealed in your life through his word.

We will spend more time on Prayer in a later lesson, but regarding our personal quiet time, here are some good ideas:

1. **Pray Out Loud:** Praying out loud tends to help you stay focused on what you are praying for and prevents your mind from wandering. Praying out loud may also help you to learn to pray in front of others.
2. **Pray Naturally:** Remember that you are praying to your Heavenly Father. You can ask and tell him anything. Do not be concerned with praying a "flowery" prayer. You are not praying as a *ritual*, you are participating in a *relationship* with your Heavenly Dad!
3. **Pray Until You are Done:** Do not drag out your prayer time. God is not impressed with the amount of time that we spend in prayer if it is not sincere prayer. Pray about the burdens and desires on your heart and pray for others. On the other hand, do not rush your prayer time. Be willing to kneel in silence as God brings things to mind that he wants you to pray for.

As you conclude your personal time with the Lord remember that this is just the *beginning* of your walk with the Lord. Remain in a constant state of prayer throughout the day. You should be able to whisper a prayer to the Lord at anytime. Throughout your day take moments to reflect on the things you read in his word and meditate on them. If you do not develop a real, daily quiet time with the Lord, you will not succeed in living the new life that God has intended for his children. Make the decision today to spend daily time with the Lord in Bible reading and prayer!

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