

Breathing New Life Into Your Daily Quiet Time with God

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Introduction

*After all, to what profit is it that we dwell in Jerusalem if we do not see the face of the King?
(See 2 Samuel 14:28)*

As many of you know, most of my training has been in music and worship. But God has also called me to a ministry of encouragement to my sisters in Christ. I have been burdened for the past 14 years to help people learn for the first time about the basics of the Christian life, and also to encourage those who have been following Christ for a long time in the same areas. I have come to believe that all of us struggle in our faith in various ways and that everyone, no matter how “together” they may seem, could use a refresher course, now and then. Many of our struggles are not because we aren’t terribly familiar with a certain book of the Bible or that we haven’t read from a certain theologian, but they stem from us losing sight of the things we have already learned. Stuff we *know* but somehow have forgotten in our hearts.

So, I’m not here as your teacher or certainly as someone who has it all together. But, as an encourager – because God has called me to do this... to help you process why you are maybe feeling that your devotion to God has grown weak, or that you don’t know how to engage with Him right now, or that you just can’t make yourself get up early in the morning these days, or that you honestly haven’t had a “Quiet Time” in months, or that you’ve hit a wall in your spiritual growth. Or maybe some of you are here because your Quiet Times are going so great, that you want more. Certainly, you are all here because, deep down inside you are hungry for more of Him. That’s where we all can stand together and jump off from today: our deepest desire to experience God and know Him more and more. Remember this: We know from Philippians 3 that even Paul did not consider himself to have yet arrived at the intimacy with Christ that he longed for. He says, in verses 10 – 14:

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Therefore, we too should *never be content with where we are at (in our level of intimacy with Him) – always wanting to go deeper in Him.* I know that is why you are here – you want more of Him!

I am not going to pretend that I know more than you about anything spiritual. In fact, I firmly believe that everything here will be things you already have heard and know quite well. I’ve even struggled with whether or not I have any business doing this. But, in the end, I’ve known that God wants me to address it because this topic is *that important*. While we know that our relationship with God is not solely experienced in our DQT, and that it is an all-day-long relationship, we also know that spending regular time with God will precede most other

important aspects of our spiritual life, such as having a *Christ-like character*, knowing *God's Will* for your life, *bearing fruit* in ministry and relationships, and displaying *spiritual gifts*. The nature of your relationship with God should be reflected in your DQT. And vice versa.

First, let me ask this question: Is it possible to have a dynamic relationship with God and simultaneously experience a dull Daily Quiet Time? So, which comes first, the chicken or the egg?

I think that they happen simultaneously, and inseparably. You can't have a vital and powerful relationship with God if you are not:

1. Praying daily (concentratedly)
2. Reading your Bible daily
3. Spending time alone with God and *listening to Him*
4. Giving Him your time – the 1st 10% of you and not the leftovers (like deciding that you won't have a scheduled with Him, but your only prayer time will be when your brain has some free time – even if that means you are involved in another activity at the time with your hands. Or that you won't actually pick up your Bible much, but you will listen to it in the car on tape whenever you get a chance. Or that you won't really spend time with Him for yourself, but you will count your time that you spend preparing for Sunday School or the Bible Study you teach or your children's Bible lesson for homeschool as your Quiet Time, because, after all, you were reading the Bible and thinking about Him, weren't you? These are ALL things I have done and tried to justify – so I'm assuming that some of you in this room can relate).

Your relationship with God is directly related to and affected by the time you choose to spend with Him each day. It's not just another *part* of your Christian life, but it is essential and vital to having a constant dynamic relationship with the Father.

I also want to mention that we go through seasons in how we “feel” about God and if we are just being disciplined in meeting with Him or if we are running to Him. John Piper talks about different stages of worship, and says that it is actually *worship* when we feel far away from Him, but somewhere in our hearts want to get closer to Him. Isn't that comforting? That even a flicker of a flame hidden deep inside us is evidence of our love for Him, even if we don't feel it much. We'll talk about this more later...

Now, you are all missionaries, not baby Christians. I'm, of course, not telling you anything you don't already know. I'm new to the mission field – I've only been here 6 1/2 months. But, what I'm beginning to wonder is whether or not, as missionaries, we feel free to share our struggles in this area with anyone. Maybe with our closest friends – but what about openly saying, “I'm struggling in this area.” I suspect that maybe it's a bit scary to do that, given that we are all in ministry, many are the wives of men in leadership or we are in leadership ourselves, we have a great deal of pressure on us to know the Bible and to teach and lead others in it, to be the *model* of godliness and righteousness to our families and to those around us. But just for now at least, I want to encourage you to open up at least a little about your relationship with God and how you really hope to grow closer to Him than you have been before.

The Problem with Rule-Making

The last class I took in seminary, as a part of my Masters in Missiology program was “Missionary Spirituality.” As part of the class, we were to write a “Rule of Life” for ourselves. This was to be what would keep us on track spiritually, during the rough times ahead on the mission field, namely dealing with our habits, practices, and values. Recently I went back and read my reflection paper that I wrote at the end of that semester (in 2001) and, seeing as how I never looked back at it after that class, it was good to go back and reevaluate. Though it was meant to be an exercise to help me, I believe now that it somewhat hindered my spiritual growth. Having said that, and I will go into more depth on why in a moment, I was surprised to see that after the four years of ups and downs in following it, I have actually been following it quite faithfully for the past three years without realizing it!

First, why do I believe it hindered my growth? If you were at this past year’s conference at RVA, you may remember Johnny Long talking about the topic of a daily quiet time. When I heard him speak about it, I was so happy that he had the same view that I do about daily quiet time, and that he explained much better than I ever could. I want to review what he said briefly: First of all, he says, “Doing spiritual things does not equal fellowship with God.” What I believe happened to me, in making my “Rule of Life” was that I took something which was meant to be beautiful, organic, and dynamic (the *relationship* between God and myself), and started making rules about it and structuring it to death. If you’re like me, as soon as there are rules attached to anything, you want to start breaking them. This is also the way Johnny Long described it.

But, I’ve also had friends who want “rules”. They have begged me to tell them what to do for their quiet times. But I honestly think that the rule-followers don’t end up in a better spiritual condition than the rebels. The way Dr. Long puts it is that when we feel that we can never miss a quiet time and that our quiet time must look a certain way, we are now climbing the “ladder of human effort.” For some, this is to maintain favor with God. This turns into a fear that “if you fail to do these things faithfully, God might get mad at you and refuse to bless you.” For others, it is for appearances to other people. What if others who have expectations of your spirituality find out that you struggle with having a consistent and/or a meaningful quiet time? As a missionary, what if your supporters knew, what if your supervisor, your co-workers, or all those in AIM leadership knew? There is a great deal of pressure (whether we realize it or not) to bear fruit and to be a spiritual giant. But the truth is that we don’t feel like giants. Even those whom we hold in high regard don’t see themselves as great. Why do we try so hard to appear great and to achieve this greatness, then?

What’s more, we put pressure on ourselves often that our DQT should look a certain way, be a certain length, at a certain time of day, etc. We can get caught up in this so much that we can lose sight of *why* we are spending time with Him to begin with. Last Sunday, Romans 7 was my reading during my DQT. I have been reading through the book of Romans slowly over the past few months. Sunday, I had just finished writing a prayer in my journal begging God to engage my heart and to help me to connect my head to my *feelings* for Him. In my prayer, I wanted more of Him, to know Him better, to see His hand around me and in me. The section in Romans I read next helped me to understand even better what Dr. Long was talking about and my own experience that morning.

Now, I know that having a DQT is not in the book of Leviticus or anything, but many Christians consider it pretty much a law to read your bible and pray every morning when you wake up. So, a little bit for fun, but also seriously, as we read Romans 7:7-25, let's insert the term "**rules for daily quiet time**" whenever it word "law" is written and other terms that can apply this principle:

*What shall we say, then? (Are) the **rules for daily quiet time** sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the **rules for daily quiet time**. For I would not have known what **skipping my daily quiet time** really was if the **rules for daily quiet time** had not said, "**have a quiet time every day.**" But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the **rules for daily quiet time**, produced in me every kind of **excuse to not have a daily quiet time**. For apart from **rules for daily quiet time**, sin is dead. Once I was alive apart from **rules for daily quiet time**; but when the **rules for daily quiet time** came, sin sprang to life and I died. I found that the very **rules for daily quiet time** that were intended to bring life actually brought death. For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the **rules for daily quiet time**, deceived me, and through the **rules for daily quiet time** put me to death.*

*So then, the **rules for daily quiet time** (are) holy, and the **rule to have it every day** is holy, righteous and good. Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the **rules for daily quiet time** sin might become utterly sinful.*

*We know that the **rules for daily quiet time** (are) spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the **rules for daily quiet time** (are) good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, (**namely, follow the rules for daily quiet time**) but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.*

*So I find this law at work: When I want to **follow the rules for daily quiet time**, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in the **rules for daily quiet time**; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind (**to follow the rules for daily quiet time**) and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.*

What I really want to bring out here is captured in verse 13:

*“But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the **rules for daily quiet time** sin might become utterly sinful.”*

In other words: we needed to fail at the rules for daily quiet time in order to really understand that we CAN'T DO IT ON OUR OWN.

Let's keep reading in chapter 8. In this passage, it will especially address when we try to gain God's approval and even equate our daily quiet time with our righteousness – trying to make God love me, accept me, and answer my prayers through my efforts to do the right thing. We're actually going to read just sections of chapter 8, so I have it up here on the screen:

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death (**or the rules for daily quiet time**). For what the **rules for daily quiet time** (were) powerless to do in that (they were) weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the **rules for daily quiet time** might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

Please know that, even though I'm having a bit of fun with the “copy and paste” features of MS Word, I'm very serious about this. God still loves you just as much when you've skipped your quiet time as He does when you've done it without skipping a day for a year. You can't earn God's salvation, love or acceptance through any act of your own – it is only through the blood of Jesus Christ that we can even approach His throne to begin with! And He knows full well that we are powerless on our own to fulfill what He wants us to do: which is give of ourselves in worship, devotion and service to Him. Even these things must be empowered by the Holy Spirit at work in us.

According to my NIV study notes, the role the law plays in our lives now is “not as a means of salvation or justification, but as a moral and ethical guide, obeyed out of love for God and by the power that the Holy Spirit provides and that the only way we can meet the law's righteous requirements is by no longer letting the sinful nature hold sway but by yielding to the directing and empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit.”

Let's keep reading the next verse (vs. 5) which serves as an encouragement to us.

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

Sisters, what do we have our minds set on? We've already said it: we are *hungry* for God. We have our minds set on Christ. When we have put Christ in the place of our greatest treasure, what we are seeking more than any other thing, then we desire what the Spirit desires: communion together. The rest of the section explains more:

The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please

God. You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you.

I want to skip down several verses now, to another part of this chapter which talks about the Spirit's role in our relationship with God.

Rom 8:26- 27 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

And finally, skipping to the section which we probably all have memorized, but now thinking in this context of maintaining and growing a dynamic relationship with God, let's read verses 31 – 39:

What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Nothing, nothing will separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord – not even our own sin can separate us – no powers, no demons, nothing IN ALL CREATION can separate us. He has given us our salvation, He has justified and made us righteous before Him by no merit or act of our own, and He has even given us access to the power we need to say “yes” to Him every day. Praise be to God!!

As Dr. Long spoke about the Law vs. Grace. He gave us the brilliant chart of “Behavior-Based” discipleship vs. “Faith-based” discipleship. The key words for the “behavior-based” side are: discipline, obey, try, duty, guilt, pride, strength, appearance, etc. When you are trying so hard to be disciplined and follow what you are supposed to do, you slip into living according to the flesh, according to your own strength. This could be an entire lifetime, or missionary career, of disciplining yourself to be the perfect Christian – and a lifetime of disappointment because you will never get there (though you would never tell a soul).

The key words for the “faith-based” side are: believing, change, faith, trust, God's child, love, repentance, freedom. We needn't hold ourselves to the version of discipleship which demands perfection any more – when we live *according to the Spirit*, and have our minds *set on what the*

Spirit desires, we can't lose. If God is for us, who can be against us? Life according to the Spirit doesn't produce more rules, it produces freedom because we know that without the Spirit's help, we will fail – and God knows that and still chose us anyway! It is a life wholly dependent on the Spirit and not on our flesh, on our own strength, fortitude, discipline, or will-power. It's a life that says, "I give up, God – you take over now."

So, if you remove the motives of appeasing God, impressing man, getting righteousness points, or (I will dare to say this) to increase our vast store of Biblical knowledge for why we do our DQT, then why DO we have one? *I believe the only right answer is what we said earlier: HUNGER for God.* Dr. Long referred to DQT as "wing-time" with God.

Read Psalm 63:

*O God, you are my God,
earnestly I seek you;
my soul thirsts for you,
my body longs for you,
in a dry and weary land
where there is no water.
I have seen you in the sanctuary
and beheld your power and your glory.
Because your love is better than life,
my lips will glorify you.
I will praise you as long as I live,
and in your name I will lift up my hands.
My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods;
with singing lips my mouth will praise you.
On my bed I remember you;
I think of you through the watches of the night.
Because you are my help,
I sing in the shadow of your wings.
My soul clings to you;
your right hand upholds me.
They who seek my life will be destroyed;
they will go down to the depths of the earth.
They will be given over to the sword
and become food for jackals.
But the king will rejoice in God;
all who swear by God's name will praise him,
while the mouths of liars will be silenced.*

Dr. Long talked about a mother hen, who when her chicks are in danger will spread her wings and they all will huddle beneath them. You can't even see the chicks who are finding their shelter there. Doesn't thinking of it as "wing time" with God help us to focus our hearts in the right place, to stop following rules, and to run to hide in the "shelter of His wings?" To find our lives hidden with Christ in God? (Col. 3:3).

The Often Missing Ingredient

I want to move away from our motive for having our DQT now and move to some other aspects. Let's talk about why it is that some people come away from their DQT with their faces glowing (i.e. Moses) and some come away wiping the sleep from their eyes. Is it possible that those of us who are unsatisfied with our DQT might be missing something? Traditional evangelicalism says that you must "pray and read your Bible every day."

I want to quote a book here, which makes a statement which is true, but I believe lacks the other half of the equation for an incredible relationship with God. The rest of the book is a good book, and countless women have gained a great deal from this book in the areas of contentment and anxiety, so I'm not trying to say there is anything wrong with the book, as much as I'm pointing out that it reveals a prevailing evangelical view-point which I believe can lead to the increased sleepiness and ineffectiveness of our DQT's.

The book is "Calm my Anxious Heart" and in a section at the beginning where she is talking about "The Secret of Contentment" she talks about Paul and his statement that he "can do everything through him who gives me strength" in Philippians chapter 4. She then goes on to say that God is the source and strength of contentment. I agree. Then she goes on to say that Christ is "able and willing to provide the strength we need to be content" by "infusing" His strength "into my weak body, soul, and spirit" ...and the way He does that is through His Word. That "as it seeps into our minds, it transforms us" and so we "become more content when we spend time in God's Word and allow it to seep into our lives, transforming us to be like Him."

What she says is true, certainly. But something very important and very Biblical is missing: *the power and influence of the Holy Spirit*. When we remove the Holy Spirit from the equation in our DQT's, all that is left is us and a book. We are reading the book and trying to understand it. But we can't without the Holy Spirit. We read something in it that we know we need to apply to our lives, but WE CAN'T without the Holy Spirit interpreting it for us. We look for answers to our questions and seek comfort in our trouble, but the only One who can apply these to our hearts is the Holy Spirit. Johnny Long said he grew up in a denomination that was Trinitarian ... barely... because they lacked teaching and any emphasis on the Holy Spirit. Many of us had the same experience growing up. Whether in the conservative or the liberal denominations, the *spiritual* side of the Holy Spirit, or let's say, *super-natural* side of the Holy Spirit (is there any other side of the Holy Spirit?) is often de-emphasized.

I didn't really understand the Holy Spirit's role in my life until we ended up at a wonderful church which labeled itself as "gently charismatic." What did this mean? Raising hands. Intercessory prayer. And a few more *supernatural* – type things. What it opened my eyes to is that the Holy Spirit is not a human, and is not limited to human functions, abilities, etc. We don't control Him, but we seek to understand Him and know Him. He is a spirit and I can't understand that fully – ever. But, because He is a spirit, He is capable of things which I am not capable of.

And, according to the Bible, the Holy Spirit is inside of me and serves in an intercessory role between me and the Father. So, how can I leave Him out of my Quiet Times and out of my relationship to the Father? It would be good for you to spend some time in your Quiet Times

pondering, studying, and praying for a deeper understanding of the Holy Spirit and a greater awareness of His work in you and around you. If you are looking for resources on learning more about the Holy Spirit, I recommend John Piper's book, What Jesus Demands from the World. This book also helped me to understand more about my own spirit and how the Holy Spirit awakened my spirit to new life. He explains things in a way I had not heard before.

How does this relate to DQT? Only to say that when we attempt to make our DQT's cut and dry, (read this chapter, pray the ACTS prayer, done), we can miss the connection between our spirit and the Holy Spirit – and spiritual things are not cut and dry, easy to quantify or understand. Spiritual things take patience, discernment, stillness, listening, awareness, and the willingness to be spontaneous. A de-emphasis on the Holy Spirit can create a rigid DQT – we stick to our schedule, our human plan to grow spiritually (or to check off our DQT box).

When we are attentive to things above, listening to the Holy Spirit, aware of His movement in our hearts, we begin to move from DISCIPLINE as we tend to think of it into a new kind of discipline – one that is focused solely on the Lord's guidance and not our own logical thinking. I like to call it: SPIRIT-LED FLEXIBILITY. To spend 1 month studying one passage of scripture because the spirit keeps directing you back there; to go topical, after being chronological your whole life; to read a certain book of the Bible because you have sensed the Holy Spirit's nudge leading you there, to be taught by the Holy Spirit and not a devotional or other book – to allow yourself to get off-track, if you are led to do so, and not feel guilty about it. This could change your DQT's, if you have found that they are lifeless.

Let's look at a few verses about the Holy Spirit:

As we read before:

Romans 8:26-27: In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

And then,

John 3:2 – 12: He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."

In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked. "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have

seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?

One commentary says this, on the John passage:

That there may be great variety in the modes of the operation of the Spirit. As the “wind” sometimes sweeps with a tempest, and prostrates all before it, and sometimes breathes upon us in a mild evening zephyr, so it is with the operations of the Spirit. The sinner sometimes trembles and is prostrate before the truth, and sometimes is sweetly and gently drawn to the cross of Jesus.

So, I don’t argue with the statement that the Word transforms us – but it only transforms us as much as we are open to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Major Obstacle #1: Consistency

Before we get to the how and what of DQT, I want to touch on maybe the two obstacles to a dynamic and powerful DQT: CONSISTENCY and VITALITY. These two go hand in hand. But for the sake of being organized, we'll look at them separately.

First, *consistency*. Have you ever struggled to have a consistent daily quiet time with God? I know that there are some who are naturally disciplined and being consistent in this comes with no trouble for them at all. I have met these people and I have stood in wonder and awe at the way God made them, because it is nearly the opposite with me. I have found, though, that nearly everyone has struggled at some points, and at other points has been able to establish a routine that works for them. If, however, you are like me, when the routine gets thrown off, you're back to the drawing board. This is very basic, but let's spend a few minutes talking about establishing a routine for your daily times with God.

In order to establish a daily quiet time, it is good to establish a REGULAR TIME during the day. Of course we all have heard that it's best in the morning. I agree, but, as we have said and we'll talk about more later, I don't think it's wise to set a rule for everyone to follow or even for yourself so much to follow. Our only proper motive for spending time with God is hunger for Him, not to follow a rule! Also, it is possible that, for instance, the morning just doesn't work out for some reason or another for any given person. It could be that their children already wake up at 5am, or that they are a night guard, or that they are the type of person who requires a brass band marching through their room to wake them up and make them coherent. The most important thing is that you *choose to spend time with the Father... why?... because you are HUNGRY and THIRSTY to spend time with Him, like a deer pants for water, as the Psalmist says.*

If you are struggling with consistency, one of the main reasons may be that your DQT's are lacking in vitality, which we'll cover a bit later. But, in regards to establishing a regular time, here's a good rule of thumb: EXPERIMENT with times and places (just as important as the time) until you find one that works well and TWEAK it when it no longer works! You probably won't hit upon a good routine that works for you at first. It will take a lot of trial and error until you figure out a time when you can be alone, focused, awake, and ready to meet with the Lord.

Settling into a regular time in the midst of family life.

If you are married, and if you have kids, you know that it is so hard to find a time to meet with God. Your time is not your own and finding a quiet moment is sometimes like finding a needle in a haystack. The good news is that YOUR SPOUSE can be a great help, accountability partner, and greatest ally for establishing a regular quiet time routine. If you aren't married, a roommate can also be a great help in the same way.

Many married couples go through their entire married lives viewing their spiritual life as a private matter—not realizing that their spouse can be the one person in the world to really be a *help-meet* in the area of finding a time during the day to meet with God. You can help one another *find* and *keep* a time. This is especially relevant if you have small children who require your attention. For many of my friends, having small children is the number one factor which

keeps them from having an intimate DQT. The basic idea behind this is to **guard each other's time**. If you think about it, you get a lot out of doing this—you get a spouse who is closer to God, (which makes him/her a better person to live with!), the two of you are working together towards the most important thing in your lives—building a relationship with God, your children will benefit from your improved character, etc. I wrote out our story of how we have tried to guard one another's time over the years at the end of this section.

What about how long to spend? This will probably be different for each person, so I will tell you what I do – I try to spend at least 30 to 45 minutes in my DQT. I find that it takes me at least 10 minutes to get focuses (if not more) and about another 20 minutes to get really *real* with God. For others it's more, and for others it's less. It may depend on how many different elements are in your DQT (more on that later), it may depend on how long you can pray without losing your concentration, it may depend upon the length of the Bible passage(s) you are reading that day. It may depend on how much your schedule will allow. Don't have anything going on? Spend a couple of hours – a mini-retreat! Don't have much time before your dr.'s appt. today, then shorten it without feeling guilty!

Again, remember not to worry about “rules” such as: I will have a DQT each day that is at least 1 hour long – and if I don't do it, God will be disappointed in me. Worse, He may even not bless me today or not answer my prayers. STOP thinking that way! This is the BEHAVIOR –BASED discipleship, remember? Life according to the flesh and not according to the spirit. We are free from these rules because Christ IS our righteousness, not our strict and disciplined adherence to what we think we should be doing. Nothing can separate us from God's love, not even our own inability to love Him as we should and as He deserves! The best motive for establishing a consistent daily quiet time routine is this: a HUNGER and THIRST for more of God and add to that an acknowledgement that without deciding on a time and place ahead of time, we will more than likely end up with no time for Him.

If you have to miss a quiet time because of the circumstances of your day, it's not the end of the world! Pray, though, that He will help you to get back into meeting with Him again and to help you to not let neglecting Him to become a habit. For me, I can feel the effects of missing only one or two days. Our hearts have a bad habit of drifting very quickly. Just read some of the Old Testament—Israel would forget God and His Words at every bend in the road! Even directly after a miracle He did for them! Don't think you are above them, it happens to us too, just as fast.

I want to give you an example of mine and my husband's story of establishing a routine. For 7 years, we both struggled with having a consistent daily time with God. Neither of us are good at routines or are very organized!

Then, my small group decided to do a Beth Moore Bible Study, which requires a great deal of daily study time. I asked Andy to guard my time for me each morning while he was still home, because I knew that there was no way I would get it done consistently any other time during the day while I was at home with our two youngest children (at the time an infant and a toddler). We carved out a space

in our morning routine, after our oldest son got on the bus for school and before my husband headed off to work. He did a great job of watching the kids while I did my daily lessons.

Something happened during this time. A switch went on in my brain that it wasn't actually so hard to have the daily routine I had always wanted when Andy was helping me. Also, I was gaining such a benefit from this time and was feeling so close to God by the end of it, I didn't want to ever go back to the sporadic quiet times I used to have.

Andy also was seeing such big changes in me that he was also inspired to establish the same for himself. We began to work together, tweaking the schedule as we went over the years, to establish a good amount of time for each of us to spend with God each morning. We eventually worked it so that we sat our little ones in front of the TV (I have no problem with that!) while we both had 30 to 45 minutes of quiet time. Coffee became a requirement for this time, as well as a private place where we could each be alone with God.

Like I said, neither of us are good at routines, so we see this as a special grace from God that He opened our eyes to this and helped us get started. We would often run into obstacles, such as summer time when the school routine was out. It was harder for us to get up early enough in the morning to have our quiet time then. We had to work harder together at that point to continue to carve out the time. We realized that our personalities are such that we really need structure imposed on us (like a school schedule) and so one of our biggest growth areas (it still is) is to be disciplined enough to get up to have our quiet time when our morning schedule is going to be out of our much needed routine.

For instance, when we moved to Africa, our schedules were completely off for about three months. Our relationships with God severely suffered at this time, because we let our quiet times routine slip. This was such a critical time for us to feel that God was there with us and that He had a purpose for having us in Africa, but our hearts were so far from Him due to the lack of time spent with Him. It was this experience that cemented our beliefs that a CONSISTENT daily time with Him is absolutely vital to living in peace and security in His purposes and work in your life.

Our newest "tweaking" of our plan is to pray for God's grace and help to get up extra early now. We are people who love sleep, so this will be huge. However, we see the need for it now due to the lack of time in our morning between the school bus and when Andy has to walk out the door for work. It's time for us to grow up and drag ourselves out of bed when our kids are sound asleep. Of course, we will appreciate Saturday mornings when we won't have to do that, but we are both so hungry for God and His hand on us during our alone times with Him, we are ready to take the leap!

Now after saying all of that, here is a warning regarding both a regular time and a regular place: life has a way of throwing us curve balls, and you must be ready and willing to adjust to the circumstances of the day in order to still meet with God in a meaningful way.

Major Obstacle #2: Vitality

The second greatest obstacle in our DQT's is keeping them dynamic, fresh, interesting, and relevant. You want to be actually ENGAGING with God and being changed because of that, not just checking boxes. I remember many times during my early years of having a DQT when I was enthusiastic and eager, so I had a plan to read 4 chapters a day: one OT, one NT, one Psalm and one Proverb. There was more than one time when I would open up to a chapter that I was scheduled to read and a sense of dread would come over me as I realized it ran for several pages. It came to the point where I would glance to see how long the chapter was before I started reading. I knew I was doing that and that it was wrong, but I couldn't help myself! It was a sign that I wasn't growing much from these times – they held little meaning for me. I was hardly absorbing and I had no time in my busy reading schedule for the Holy Spirit to teach me anything out of the way. It took me so long to read the four chapters, that I couldn't spend much time in prayer, in cross-referencing interesting things, in journaling, in meditating, in listening, etc. I would feel guilty if I didn't get through everything and my DQT quickly fizzled out because, frankly, I was so busy with my plan that I had no room for listening to God and I couldn't handle the guilt.

Below is a list of DQT descriptions. Circle all that resemble your DQT's either occasionally or all the time. (Remember to answer *truthfully*. You aren't trying to impress anyone!)

SOME DAYS, DQT IS LIKE:

- a. An oasis in the desert
 - b. Having coffee with a friend
 - c. Getting a massage
 - d. Sitting on my daddy's knee
 - e. Sitting in a classroom
 - f. Hiding in a bomb shelter
 - g. Laying beside still waters
 - h. A discipline akin to balancing my checkbook
 - i. Facedown, gut-wrenching worship
 - j. "Wing-time" as Dr. Long describes
 - k. A sedative
 - l. Homework
 - m. Having surgery performed on my sinful nature
 - k. others:
-
-

Now go back and star those which you wish your DQT's were like more often. I want you to keep these in mind for the rest of our time together. We will be considering ideas for DQT's – so be looking for ones that will help your DQT to be more like you want them to be.

Set the mood. The setting where you meet with Him can become very sacred to you and can help you get into the right frame of mind. Think about your five senses and how each of those can contribute or take away from your time with God. Your DQT is a place where God is trying to speak to you and you need to listen, so how can you create an atmosphere where you are ready to hear? That's hard to do with Veggie Tales blaring on the TV and your husband walking in and out getting ready for work (but, if that's all you can do, it's better than no time with God at all)! What relaxes you and calms you down, gets you focused? Hearing the breeze and the

birds through the open window? Sitting outside? Inside? Looking out your window to your garden or the golfcourse? Sitting in your bed or in your favorite chair? Lamplight or natural light? What smells might help you? A candle, potpourri, your garden? Does a cup of hot coffee or tea help you to calm down (or to wake up)? The goal isn't to lull you to sleep, but to make a place where you are undistracted and ready to meet with God. This is *YOUR* place with Him – it's a special place where you will begin to expect Him to be waiting for you there. A place of refuge – in the shadow of His wing.

It's good to get rid of things which stimulate you or cause your mind to drift. Sitting at your desk at work might be a distraction to you, so turn the chair away from the table, if you have to be in your office. Many people have developed a prayer closet – doesn't sound too doable in my household, but maybe in yours. The important thing is that you are there with God – getting your much needed time with Him.

It's BEST if you are alone in the room. I've known some couples to do a Bible reading and/or devotional time together every day. That is great! Keep doing that and don't stop. But that doesn't replace the time when you need to sit down and listen to God and what He has to say to *you* as an individual, about your sin, about what He wants to change in you or how He wants to work through you. He will also speak to you as a couple, and often this is through your husband's interaction with Him. However, God wants to be *your* Daddy – and when you climb up on His knee and say, "Abba, Father" that is between the two of you alone.

The interesting thing that I have found over the years, (in regards to the vitality of our DQT's), is that when I have asked people about their DQT's, everyone's looks different and we each experience it differently. It is amazing that we could each be so unique. This is because every person's relationship with God isn't exactly the same as other people's relationship with God. After all, isn't that all our DQT is, the time in our day when we are the most focused on relating with God?

Imagine a mother with several daughters. Each sister's relationship with her mother will differ than the other three sisters' relationships with the same mom. The first sister may climb up into her mom's lap and cuddle, while her mom strokes her hair and neither will say a word. The 2nd sister may help her mom in the kitchen and spend hours with her there. The next sister may ask her mom to come and sit on her bed for an hour each night, debriefing the events of the day and getting her mom's perspective. The youngest sister may go shopping with her mom, spending the day together chatting and enjoying each other's company. Is any one of the sisters closer to Mom than the others? No. Each is intimately connected with their mom. Wouldn't it be a shame if the kitchen sister thought that she had to go shopping and not help in the kitchen, and the debriefing sister stopped debriefing because she thought she was supposed to be silent? It would be very sad!

It's the same with our relationships with God. WHY? Because we are each different – uniquely made: understanding, communicating, expressing and receiving love in different ways. When we try to match someone else's way of relating to God, or to set up a "RULE" for how every person should relate to God based on a certain person's model or opinion, we miss out on the

real intimacy we could be having with Him.

Personality and learning style will play a great deal into what your daily times with God will look like. Also, each of us is in a different place *spiritually*. I can't say what your DQT should look like exactly (though I wish it was that easy)! However, YOU can say what your DQT is missing, especially after discovering more possibilities. It is a challenge to KNOW YOURSELF well enough to be able to design a STRATEGY for nurturing your relationship with God.

So, the question becomes: ARE THERE CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF A QUIET TIME THAT EVERYONE SHOULD BE DOING AND OTHER ELEMENTS WHICH ARE OPTIONAL? Think on that a while we look at these *elements*.

“Spiritual Disciplines” is a term often used for this topic. This term may spark something in you—positive or negative. To help those who think it sounds scary, think of it this way: “Spiritual Disciplines” are USEFUL METHODS by which we NURTURE our relationship with God. There are quite a few of these useful methods which have been practiced regularly and proven successful over the centuries. These include: prayer, Bible reading, fasting, silence and solitude, meditation, journaling, and memorizing Scripture, for starters. We will go into detail on several of these further on in our discussion.

We're going to stop here for a moment to take a Questionnaire to help you think through your DQT's and understand better how you are made. Then we will look at each of the common elements for quiet times.

Daily Quiet Time Questionnaire

1. How often do you spend alone time with God (in prayer, reading the Bible, etc.)?

- a. everyday/nearly everyday b. once in a while (sporadic) c. never

2. Check which elements you tend to incorporate into your daily times with God.

- a. Prayer
b. Bible reading/study
c. Meditation
b. Journaling
c. Silence
d. Fasting
e. Scripture memory
f. Others _____

3. Do you have someone to help hold you “accountable” for keeping up with your daily quiet times?

- Yes No I have someone who occasionally holds me accountable

4. If you are married (or in a serious dating relationship), are you and your spouse able to discuss spiritual matters?

- Yes No Occasionally

5. Describe your personality by checking all that apply to you (based on MBTI)

- I enjoy being alone and am “recharged” when I’m by myself.
- I need to be with other people a lot to feel fulfilled and energized.
- I like to work with facts/common sense. Prefer info based on what I can see, hear, touch, etc.
- I like to work with work with ideas, theories, possibilities. I like to create and problem solve.
- I am a person of real feeling who often follows my heart. I am very concerned for others’ feelings.
- I very fair and reasonable and I highly value logic. I am generally a very consistent person.
- I like to make plans and stick with them. My personal space tends to be very neat and tidy.
- I enjoy spontaneity/don’t stick well to a routine. Have to work hard to keep things neat and tidy.

6. Describe your learning and/or thinking style by checking all that apply to you:

- **Visual:** I need to see it, I have the ability to and prefer to understand visual things.
- **Auditory:** I need to hear it OR **Verbal:** I have the ability to use words and use language to express myself well. I need to write about it or to talk about it to learn.
- **Interpersonal:** I have the ability to relate to and understand others particularly well.
- **Intra-personal:** I have the ability to self-reflect and am very aware of my inner-state of being.
- **Tactile :** I need to being doing or touching to learn best OR **Kinesthetic:** I need to be moving to focus. I have the ability to control my body movements well and handle objects skillfully.

- **Musical:** I have the ability to produce, remember, and appreciate music. Music helps me think.
- **Logic/Mathematical:** I have the ability to and prefer to use reason, logic, and numbers.

7. How would you like to grow in your daily time? (i.e, “*I would like to incorporate more journaling.*”)

You may be wondering why I included the personality questions and learning style questions. Basically, it's this theory I've been tossing around that these affect the vitality of our DQT. For instance, if you are someone who needs to write information in your own way to really understand it - and yet your DQT consists of praying through a list of requests and reading a chapter in your Bible every day, you may find that you aren't really processing what you're reading and what God is teaching you heart. You could try journaling and using the journal as a place to process and think about what God is showing you. Maybe you are someone who really needs to hear things to get it, so maybe you could try reading out loud as you go. If you have a high kinesthetic intelligence, and you express things through movement, try various postures during your daily quiet time, try turning on a worship song and dancing to it in your living room, or try jogging while you memorize scripture. Of course, there are all sorts of possibilities for all of the various personalities and learning styles.

The issue is, you need to think about how your DQT practices are or aren't reflecting the way that God uniquely made you. Are you trying to be like someone else? Are you following a formula given to you by some book or some sermon, but it isn't working? I think it is because we can't say what everyone's DQT should look like across the board. Also, we're all changing all the time. What didn't work last year may work great this year. Be creative and think outside of the box!!

To show what I'm talking about, and also to help you to start coming up with ideas, I've included some worksheets, beginning on the next page, to get you thinking about each personality type and learning style. For all that apply to you, fill out the worksheet by thinking through how that aspect of how God made you will affect the way you best can relate with Him. Ask other people who are like you in that area for more ideas. Also on each worksheet, I've included some ideas for a person with that quality. Also, I've included a page of more random ideas anyone might like to try. Finally, you'll find a section called, "Common Quiet Time Practices" with lots of ideas and information on prayer, Bible reading, meditation, and Scripture memory.

When it doesn't work out. In closing, what if you have found a great time, place, coffee, a powerful devotional, and a nifty journal, complete with shiny pink pen. Your DQT's are going great and you've established a rhythm... and then.... something happens. It could be as simple as you are going on a 10 day vacation and you accidentally left your QT stuff at home (this happened to me). What do you do? Remember life throws us curve balls and all of this means nothing in the end besides that all these things are *USEFUL METHODS/TOOLS* to *NURTURE YOUR RELATIONSHIP* with God. Don't neglect to meet with Him because of the curveball and don't feel like you'll never find Him without your tools. You still have everything you truly need to nurture that relationship:

- your HUNGER for God,
- God's grace,
- the Holy Spirit
- God's Word - you can borrow a Bible (even if it doesn't have your notes in it...). If you can't find a Bible where you are, you still have His Word hidden in your heart!

Go back to the basics: *all you really need are these things* and to get on your knees and worship. It reminds me of the first line of the song, “Heart of Worship” by Matt Redman:

When the music fades and all is stripped away and I simply come.

Multiple Intelligences/Learning Styles Theories

While not trying to debate that these types of theories are completely correct or valid, I do find that we each tend to have certain areas which come easy for us and others which are more difficult. We each have certain ways to learn which help us to understand and process information.

For instance, you may be a visual person, you like to have a PowerPoint presentation to watch while a teacher is teaching and if that isn't available, you try to write down what they are saying so that you can remember it better. Or, you may be someone who needs to *hear* something said and not just see it. You are very comfortable in an aural culture, with stories being taught from generation to generation and you have no problem if someone gives you directions verbally instead of in writing.

Educational and psychological experts have developed this theory which includes seven intelligences. Some people differentiate between the "intelligences" and "learning styles," but for our purposes we will combine them. Again, this isn't necessarily to advocate these theories, or to be scientific about it, but to acknowledge that we are each uniquely made and this may make a difference in how we relate with God and understand His Word. On the following pages are the seven main categories that have been identified:

Visual/Spatial Intelligence

Ability to perceive the visual.

These learners tend to think in pictures and need to create vivid mental images to retain information. They enjoy looking at maps, charts, pictures, videos, and movies.

Learn through seeing...

These learners like to see the teacher's body language and facial expression to fully understand the content of a lesson. They tend to prefer sitting at the front of the classroom to avoid visual obstructions. They may think in pictures and learn best from visual displays including: diagrams, illustrated text books, overhead transparencies, videos, flipcharts and hand-outs. During a lecture or classroom discussion, visual learners often prefer to take detailed notes to absorb the information.

Their skills include:

puzzle building, reading, writing, understanding charts and graphs, a good sense of direction, sketching, painting, creating visual metaphors and analogies (perhaps through the visual arts), manipulating images, constructing, fixing, designing practical objects, interpreting visual images.

Possible career interests:

Navigators, sculptors, visual artists, inventors, architects, interior designers, mechanics, engineers

Spiritual Disciplines which may come easily for this person:

(i.e. Bible reading)

Possible pitfalls or challenges for this person in their Daily Quiet Times:

(i.e. difficult to pray in their head without seeing anything)

Ideas for strengthening and energizing Daily Quiet Times:

(i.e. write out prayers in a journal, utilize charts and maps in Study Bible, draw pictures or diagrams in their journal of concepts they are learning, focus on the visual sense as they create their DQT place with pictures on the wall or other visually pleasing or stimulating items, watch a video Bible study)

Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence

Ability to use words and language. These learners have highly developed auditory skills and are generally elegant speakers. They think in words rather than pictures.

Auditory Learners learn through listening...

They learn best through verbal lectures, discussions, talking things through and listening to what others have to say. Auditory learners interpret the underlying meanings of speech through listening to tone of voice, pitch, speed and other nuances. Written information may have little meaning until it is heard. These learners often benefit from reading text aloud and using a tape recorder.

Their skills include:

Listening, speaking, writing, story-telling, explaining, teaching, using humor, understanding the syntax and meaning of words, remembering information, convincing someone of their point of view, analyzing language usage.

Possible career interests:

Poet, journalist, writer, teacher, lawyer, politician, translator

Spiritual Disciplines which may come easily for this person:

(i.e. memorizing Scripture)

Possible pitfalls or challenges for this person in their Daily Quiet Times:

(i.e. DQT's are usually very QUIET!)

Ideas for strengthening and energizing Daily Quiet Times:

(i.e. rewrite Bible passages in your own words, pray out loud, read Bible passages aloud, utilize books or Bible on tape, write your own psalms and poetry, work on learning Greek or Hebrew, have a conversation with God out loud and speak out loud what you think He is saying to you, journal your thoughts as if you are speaking them, write letters to God or others to help you process your thoughts and emotions).

Logical/Mathematical Intelligence

Ability to use reason, logic and numbers.

These learners think conceptually in logical and numerical patterns making connections between pieces of information. Always curious about the world around them, these learners ask lots of questions and like to do experiments.

Their skills include:

problem solving, classifying and categorizing information, working with abstract concepts to figure out the relationship of each to the other, handling long chains of reason to make local progressions, doing controlled experiments, questioning and wondering about natural events, performing complex mathematical calculations, working with geometric shapes

Possible career paths:

Scientists, engineers, computer programmers, researchers, accountants, mathematicians

Spiritual Disciplines which may come easily for this person:

(i.e. Bible Study)

Possible pitfalls or challenges for this person in their Daily Quiet Times:

(i.e. getting past the logic and into meanings, considering the *supernatural* element of God which you can't quantify)

Ideas for strengthening and energizing Daily Quiet Times:

(i.e. utilize the cross-reference and other features of your Study Bible and find connections between various passages and books, create a timeline of your spiritual growth and find patterns and identify ways that God has worked in various periods of your life and how that may be relevant right now, use the P.A.R.K. method to understand yourself and sin patterns better, make lists in your journal of prayer requests or of what God is teaching you (or of anything!), draw graphs or diagrams of concepts you are learning, use your journal to ask questions you don't understand as you read Scripture and work/research/pray to find the answers, use inductive Bible study methods,)

Bodily/Kinesthetic/Tactile Intelligence

Ability to control body movements and handle objects skillfully.

These learners express themselves through movement. They have a good sense of balance and eye-hand co-ordination. (e.g. ball play, balancing beams). Through interacting with the space around them, they are able to remember and process information.

Learn through moving, doing and touching...

Tactile/Kinesthetic persons learn best through a hands-on approach, actively exploring the physical world around them. They may find it hard to sit still for long periods and may become distracted by their need for activity and exploration.

Their skills include:

Dancing, physical co-ordination, sports, hands on experimentation, using body language, crafts, acting, miming, using their hands to create or build, expressing emotions through the body

Possible career paths:

Athletes, physical education teachers, dancers, actors, firefighters, artisans

Spiritual Disciplines which may come easily for this person:

(i.e. kneeling for prayer)

Possible pitfalls or challenges for this person in their Daily Quiet Times:

(i.e. DQT's often involve sitting still for a long time)

Ideas for strengthening and energizing Daily Quiet Times:

(i.e. change your place or posture based on the spiritual discipline you are doing – try various postures during your DQT such as kneeling or laying or standing or raising your arms in prayer based on what you are trying to express to God, like kneel for prayer, then dance to a hymn or praise song, memorize scripture and pray while you exercise, listen to a book on your iPod as you jog, sit in a comfortable and soft-to-the-touch chair and wrap up in a fuzzy blanket to read God's Word, pause in your DQT to get up for some coffee to keep from sitting for a long time, etc.)

Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence

Ability to produce and appreciate music. These musically-inclined learners think in sounds, rhythms and patterns. They immediately respond to music either appreciating or criticizing what they hear. Many of these learners are extremely sensitive to environmental sounds (e.g. crickets, bells, dripping taps).

Their skills include:

Singing, whistling, playing musical instruments, recognizing tonal patterns, composing music, remembering melodies, understanding the structure and rhythm of music, tend to remember lyrics and melodies for years

Possible career paths:

Musician, disc jockey, singer, composer

Spiritual Disciplines which may come easily for this person:

(i.e. worshiping with music)

Possible pitfalls or challenges for this person in their Daily Quiet Times:

(i.e. DQT's don't traditionally involve music)

Ideas for strengthening and energizing Daily Quiet Times:

(i.e. write a song as your prayer to God, memorize scripture through scripture songs, play music during your DQT if it doesn't distract you – instrumental music may keep you focused best, try to keep background noise at a minimum, if you can't shut out distracting noises try using a sound machine for ocean waves or birds chirping, spend a lot of time in the Psalms and even read them by singing them out loud with a tune, put in a Christian CD that addresses something you are praying about or you know you need to hear from God about, sing hymns or praise songs during your prayer time)

Interpersonal Intelligence

Ability to relate and understand others. These learners try to see things from other people's point of view in order to understand how they think and feel. They often have an uncanny ability to sense feelings, intentions and motivations. They use both verbal (e.g. speaking) and non-verbal language (e.g. eye contact, body language) to open communication channels with others.

Their skills include:

Seeing things from other perspectives (dual-perspective), listening, using empathy, understanding other people's moods and feelings, counseling, co-operating with groups, noticing people's moods, motivations and intentions, communicating both verbally and non-verbally, building trust, peaceful conflict resolution, establishing positive relations with other people.

Possible Career Paths:

Counselor, salesperson, politician, business person

Spiritual Disciplines which may come easily for this person:

(i.e. Accountability partners and group Bible studies)

Possible pitfalls or challenges for this person in their Daily Quiet Times:

(i.e. DQT's are usually by yourself!)

Ideas for strengthening and energizing Daily Quiet Times:

(i.e. consider how a character in the Bible is feeling or experiencing a certain event and how you would experience it if you were there, get together with a friend weekly to talk about your DQT's, have conversations with God in your journal, write letters to God or to people about your spiritual walk)

Intrapersonal Intelligence

Ability to self-reflect and be aware of one's inner state of being. These learners try to understand their inner feelings, dreams, relationships with others, and strengths and weaknesses.

Their Skills include:

Recognizing their own strengths and weaknesses, reflecting and analyzing themselves, awareness of their inner feelings, desires and dreams, evaluating their thinking patterns, reasoning with themselves, understanding their role in relationship to others

Possible Career Paths:

Researchers, theorists, philosophers

Spiritual Disciplines which may come easily for this person:

(i.e. journaling)

Possible pitfalls or challenges for this person in their Daily Quiet Times:

(i.e. to become self-focused instead of God-focused)

Ideas for strengthening and energizing Daily Quiet Times:

(i.e. keep a journal for prayers, thoughts, ideas, to conduct self-interviews - like P.A.R.K. - to understand your sin patterns; pray through Scripture and use a regular Bible reading schedule to make sure you are staying in the Word and not just journaling!; use a prayer request list for intercessory prayer to make sure you remember to pray for others, too; meet with another person for accountability to gain fresh perspective; use a devotional – like My Utmost for His Highest – which will take you even deeper)

Personality Type Preferences

Most of us are familiar with the Myers Briggs Personality Type Indicator or another personality type indicator. For our purposes with this, just consider how your preferences might affect your Daily Quiet Times. Try to choose one (per group of two) based on which you identify with the most. For each one you choose, consider which spiritual disciplines will come easy for you and weak spots for a DQT. Think of ideas of how to strengthen and energize your DQT for each area.

ENERGY SOURCE

- A. **INTROVERSION:** I enjoy being alone and am “recharged” when I’m by myself. (Possible weak spot: to retreat to your DQT because it’s an excuse to be alone and not because you long to be with God). (Idea: focus on developing your DQT space, use a journal)
- B. **EXTROVERSION:** I need to be with other people a lot to feel fulfilled and energized. (Possible weak spot: the tendency to avoid DQT because of more ‘important’ things to do with other people). (Idea: meet with another person weekly to talk about how your DQT’s are going and to pray together).

INFORMATION GATHERING

- A. **SENSING:** I like to work with facts/common sense. I prefer information based on what I can see, hear, touch, etc. (Possible weak spot: tendency to de-emphasize the super-natural work of the Holy Spirit in His role as intercessor – so remember to pray for discernment!). (Ideas: utilize study features in your Bible and other reference books – try the Archaeology Study Bible)
- B. **INTUITIVE:** I like to work with ideas, theories, possibilities. (Possible weak spot: tendency to focus on ideas and not learn specifics in Scripture – possibly low in area of Scripture memorization). (Idea: use a journal to process what God is teaching you and ask questions/seek answers)

DECISION MAKING

- A. **FEELING:** I am a person of real feeling who often follows my heart. Values and harmony are important to me, as well as how others are feeling. (Possible weak spot: tendency to focus inward on one’s own emotions too much – so don’t forget to pray for others and to listen to God). (Idea: use a journal to “talk out” and process your feelings in the light of God’s Word)
- B. **THINKING:** I am very fair and reasonable, I highly value logic. I work to get the job done. (Possible weak spot: overly relying on one’s own logic and not God’s guidance – remember Proverbs 3:5-6!. (Idea: use a devotional book by a well-respected author/theologian)
- A. **JUDGING:** (doesn’t mean judgmental!!) I like to make plans and stick with them. I like order in my world. (Possible weak spot: becoming inflexible and unwilling to follow a different direction the Holy Spirit may lead you in). (Idea: use a read through the Bible plan like the One Year Bible).

- B. **PERCEIVING:** Spontaneity and flexibility are important to me. I want to experience my world. (Possible weak spot: not finishing reading chapter/books you felt led to read and thus getting an incomplete picture of the Word). (Idea: have several different devotionals/books that you use in your DQT and have several different DQT “spots” you like to be in - then choose which to utilize based on the day... have a DQT bag to hold all of your books and such that you can take them all with you to which ever spot you prefer.)

More Ideas for DQT

1. I keep a bag which holds all of my current Bible studies, Bibles, references, devotionals, etc. that I may be using or want to use. This way I can carry it to my DQT place or in the car or to my small group or whatever and I have everything I may need right there on hand.
2. I keep a notepad in my bag or a section in my journal to jot down thoughts, ideas, lists, or whatever that I don't want to forget but which are distracting me from God in my DQT.
3. Try different postures in prayer. Kneel down, raise your hands, whatever...
4. I personally have a devotional or other book, right now it's My Utmost for His Highest, which I don't use every day, but I especially pull it out if I'm having a hard time focusing my thoughts or need a direction that day.
5. Your DQT should be challenging and life-changing – not just a reading. What happens there between you and God will affect the rest of your day and your life! Just like the parable of the sower. Jesus says, "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown." I find that I may have a great DQT in the morning, but by noon, I'm heading far off down the wrong track in my attitude or whatever. If I can, I have try to have a mid-course correction, or a little checkpoint – maybe I go back and reread my journal entry, reread that day's scriptures, have a separate book I'm reading for that type of occasion.
6. If you find that you need to spend your DQT in prayer and devotional Bible reading and are missing out on a lot of Bible *study*, try working on a separate Bible study (a group study is good) at another time in the day.
7. In my journal, I try to write down what Scripture I read that day in each entry.
8. Its' neat to title each journal entry (usually after you've written) and then enter it into a table of contents at the beginning, complete with page numbers. Makes for quick reference in the future.
9. Sometimes, if I'm really struggling with something – I'm upset with someone, I'm hurt about something, I'm anxious about something, etc., I use my journal for a sort of self-interview. The goal is to get to the bottom, or the root, of what my problem is. This doesn't have to be done in your journal, it can just be in your head. Be careful if you do it out loud though – people may begin to wonder who you're talking to. I've actually landed on a method of doing this that I call "P.A.R.K" – you can think of it as, "stop driving forward with this destructive attitude or behavior and P.A.R.K." I've written a full description in your packets.

Common Quiet Time Practices

I think we will all agree that the two absolutely necessary ingredients of a DQT are God's Word and prayer. However, I think there is a great deal of variety in how these two things can be approached and there are other elements which can be incorporated into your DQT to help you to cultivate your relationship with God.

The Bible is God's revealed Word to us. If anyone is waiting to hear from God, He has already spoken! The importance of knowing and internalizing God's Word to us can never be overstated (see John 15:1-17). We will discuss here two different contexts of Bible reading: Bible *study* and reading the Bible *devotionally*.

Bible Study

READ: Philippians 1:9; Colossians 3:16; 2 Timothy 2:15; James 2:22; Psalm 37:31;

End goals: knowledge, understanding, contextual awareness, wisdom

Reading the Bible to learn about God is absolutely vital. It is His Word (communication) to us – we need to constantly grow in our breadth and depth of knowledge of what God has said to us, we need to wrestle with it and make it our own (always be ready to give an answer). One important thing to remember is that even if we have already read a verse, chapter or book of the Bible, we have only hit the tip of the iceberg of the depths of how God can teach us and bless us through it. Don't assume that you ever have a complete and full understanding of any part of the Bible, always be asking Him to take you deeper in the understanding and knowledge of Him.

What are the contexts for studying the Bible?

- a. Small Groups, Bible Study groups, Sunday School classes, college/seminary classes
- b. Personal reading - for example:
 1. reading through a book of the Bible one chapter a day
 2. reading through the Bible in a year
 3. reading 1 NT, 1 OT, 1 PS, 1PR
 4. others personal reading ideas:
- c. Others contexts?
- d. What are the positives and negatives of the methods above?

Reading the Bible Devotionally

Read: Hebrews 4:12; Ephesians 6:17; Matthew 11:28-30; Psalm 119:105 and 133a

End goals: comfort, peace, rest, encouragement, affirmation, conviction, direction

So often, we come to Lord in need of help. When we have been faithfully learning His Word, and have hidden it in our hearts, then it is there when we need it. We know where to go in His Word to get the wisdom, comfort, encouragement or direction we need regarding the situation we are facing. Even if we don't know exactly where to go, we will have learned methods of finding what we are looking for and how better to navigate our way through His Word. Sometimes we find a passage which we have read before to take on new meaning when we read it in light of our present circumstances. This is the Holy Spirit applying God's Word to our hearts – God is speaking to us!

Scripture Meditation and Memorization

Read: Psalm 119:11, Joshua 1:8

We need to commit Scripture to memory (hide it in our hearts) by memorizing key passages – those who have committed to this practice say that this has been a big part of the work God has done in them to transform them. We also need to meditate on what we read, “To think about the scriptures, turning them over in our minds and applying them to life's situations... the objective of our meditation is application – obedience to the Scriptures.” (Jerry Bridges, “The Pursuit of Holiness”).

Contexts we can practice our memory verses and meditate on scripture:

1. Daily Quiet Time – in our minds and in our journals
2. Driving Time
3. Exercise/Jogging Time
4. While preparing meals and doing housework
5. Others:

Memorizing Scripture (tips from Charles Swindoll):

1. Choose a time when your mind is free from outside distractions
2. Learn the reference by repeating it every time you say the verse(s).
3. Read each verse through several times – both in a whisper and aloud. Hearing yourself say the words helps cement them into your mind.
4. Break the passage into its natural phrases. Learn the reference and then the first phrase. Then repeat the reference and first phrase as you go to the second phrase. Continue adding phrases one by one.
5. Learn a little bit *perfectly* rather than a great deal *poorly*.

6. Review the verse(s) immediately after you have gone through this process. 20 or 30 minutes later, repeat what you've memorized. Before the day has ended, firmly fix the verse(s) in your mind by going over it fifteen to twenty times.
7. Use the verse(s) orally as soon as possible. After all, the purpose of Scripture memory is a practical one, not academic. Use the verses in conversation, in correspondence, in teaching, in counseling, in everyday opportunities. Relate what you've learned to your daily situation

Ways to meditate on Scripture.

1. Ask yourself questions (adapted from "The Pursuit of Holiness"):
 - a. What does this passage teach concerning God's will for a believer's life?
 - b. Do I follow this regularly in my life, do I understand it at the heart level?
 - c. What can I do to allow God to move me towards obeying Him and changing in this area?
2. Select a passage (such as the 23rd Psalm or wherever God has directed you):
 - a. Read it repeatedly each day.
 - b. Record in your journal new insights that the Holy Spirit is showing you.
 - c. Think on the passage throughout the day and apply it as circumstances arise, keeping it in the forefront of your mind.
 - d. Try praying through the passage (such as: "Lord, you are my Shepherd, I'll never be in want...")
 - e. Consider other Scriptures which help you understand it better.
3. "...Search into every verse, to get blessing out of it; not for the sake of the public ministry of the Word; not for the sake of preaching on what I had meditated upon; but for the sake of obtaining food for my own soul... after very few minutes my soul has been led to confession, or to thanksgiving, or to intercession, or to supplication; so that though I did not, as it were, give myself to prayer, but to meditation, yet it turned almost immediately more or less into prayer. When thus I have been for awhile making confession, or intercession, or supplication, or have given thanks, I go on to the next words or verse, turning all, as I go on, into prayer for myself or others, as the Word may lead to it; but still continually keeping before me, that food for my own soul is the object of my meditation... For my heart being nourished by the truth, being brought into experimental fellowship with God, I speak to my Father and to my Friend... about the things that He has brought before me in His precious Word." (Quoted from George Muller in John Piper's book, "Desiring God").

Prayer

Read the passages below and consider what each one teaches us about prayer. Then answer the questions:

1. James 5:13-16
2. Ephesians 6:18
3. 1 Thessalonians 5:18
4. 1 Peter 4:7
5. Matthew 5:44
6. Matthew 6:5-8
7. 1 Peter 3:7
8. Colossians 4:2-3
9. Philippians 4:4-7
10. Romans 12:12
11. Matthew 14:23
12. Luke 6:28
13. Luke 22:39-44
14. Mark 11:24-25
15. 1 Timothy 2:1-2

Group Discussion on Prayer:

1. What is prayer and why do we pray?

Communication with God (2 way); without it you are disconnected. God hears our prayers. We become more dependent on God/relying on Him, He deserves our VERBAL praise and honor, we need to express our repentance to Him, and we need to communicate our surrender

Read: Jeremiah 33:3 and Philippians 4:6-7

2. What are the requirements of prayer?

(confess sin, pray for each other, have faith that He will answer, ask in His name, pray according to His will, pray in secret, few words, continually, joyfully and giving thanks)

3. What are some different forms that prayer can take in our everyday life?

Group (small), congregational, special prayer time set aside, written in journal, prayer throughout the day, “help” prayers, etc.

4. Are there certain elements that prayer should and could include?

Some people like to use:

A.C.T.S. (adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication)

P.R.A.Y. (praise, repent, ask, yield)

Also: intercession, listening, journaling, scripture

5. How do you want to grow in your prayer life?

a. praise/adoration

b. thanksgiving

c. repentance/confession

d. supplication/intercession

e. yield

f. listening

g. journaling

h. scripture

PRAYER PLAN (location, time of day, duration, activities)

Journal Exercise on Prayer:

The Lord’s Prayer is found in Matthew 6:9-13. Read it first. Then write out one phrase at a time and what that phrase means in your life.

The Practice of the Presence of God by Brother Lawrence

Notes on one excerpt (regarding things which he “prays” all day long):

1. continually renouncing things which don't lead to Him (specifically seeking approval of others instead of God)
2. continual conversation
3. recognize that He is intimately present with us every moment
4. ask His help for knowing His will in things we are unsure of
5. ask His help for doing things well which we plainly see He requires of us
6. offering them to Him BEFORE we do it
7. giving thanks for His help afterwards
8. praising, adoring, and loving Him incessantly for His infinite goodness and perfection
9. pray for His grace with confidence that He, through Jesus Christ, will forgive us (without being discouraged from our sins) He has never failed to offer grace!

Journaling – can be a place where you meet with God daily

- Writing out prayers
- Repentance
- Listing prayer requests
- Asking God questions
- Write out a letter from God to you
- Thinking through/processing what you read in the Bible
- Drawing pictures and diagrams
- Take notes on Bible and devotional readings
- Conduct self-interviews (such as P.A.R.K.)
- An excellent way to track your spiritual growth
- Go back and reread what you have written in the past – you will relearn things that you have learned before (be reminded) and even get more out of it.

P.A.R.K.

This is a method for conducting a “self-interview.” I do this in my journal (or in my head if I can’t get to my journal) when I know that I need to get to the root of something that is troubling me.

When you find that someone is greatly upsetting you, you are obsessing over something other than God, or are experiencing anxiety, you need to *stop driving down the road of this destructive behavior and... P.A.R.K.!!!*

Pause and Pray: “Lord, please give me Your peace and show me Your truth now. I need the joy of Your presence.” (or any appropriate prayer)

Ask and Analyze: (ask yourself the following series of questions – progressing deeper and deeper until you get to the root issue.)

1. What is causing this anxiety (or whatever you are currently experiencing)?
(for example: I am worried that if I try to do this thing, I will fail)
2. Why does this cause you to be upset? (your answer needs to take it a step further)
(for example: if I fail at it, I will look stupid in front of everyone)
3. What if you knew that [you wouldn’t look stupid], would that make it better?
(for example: Yes!)
4. Why?
(for example: because that would mean that they are impressed with me and that would mean that they would like me better)
5. Restate it: (in this case: “You want the people to love you and you think that they will only love you if you impress the – this belief/desire is your treasure right now – the love of others.” Then ask yourself: “How would this situation look if you didn’t have this desire?”)
(for example: I would be focused on the Lord and obeying Him. Listening to Him. I would be interested only in blessing those people, not in them blessing me)

Repent: (for example: “Father, I am so sorry for treasuring anything more than you. Please help me to learn to put my confidence in You and not in my ability to gain people’s acceptance.”)

Know: Remember God’s promises and truths from His Word.

(for example: My treasure is Christ. Nothing else in all creation, not things, not the love of others, nothing is better than knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord....)

Encouraging Quotes on Quiet Time

Dr. Johnny Long:

“I boot up in orphan-mode every day.”

“You wake up insane every day.”

“We cannot survive (much less grow to any semblance of spiritual maturity) on a “weekly drip” of sermonic food from our pastors.”

“Rather than my needing to invite God into my presence, I need to understand that God, my welcoming Father, is inviting me into his presence!”

“Be careful! Be sure you meet with your Heavenly Father and not your habit!”

“I should begin thinking of my devotions as *just the beginning of a day-long fellowship/partnership* with my Father.”

“If you have difficulty in being intimate with God, make sorting that out a priority. Get help if you need to.”

“There is NO LADDER TO CLIMB at the top of which is some heavy door you must force open – behind which you might find Christ *if* you are able to prove yourself diligent enough.”

Greg Ogden:

“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.”

“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.”

“Christ is the source of power, and meeting with Him is essential to our receiving it.”

“Being alone with a person we love is enjoyable, and as we spend time with Christ we experience a joy unavailable anywhere else.”

“The question is whether we will be mediocre Christians (stuck in spiritual neutral) or growing Christians (moving forward).”

“The battle for the daily quiet time is often lost the night before.”

“The devil’s 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. Deny the devil the pleasure of defeating you.”

Oswald Chambers:

“When the Spirit fills us, we are transformed, and by beholding God we become mirrors.”

“There is no circumstance in life which we cannot abide in Jesus.”

“Get moving – begin to abide now. In the initial stages it will be a continual effort to abide, but as you continue, it will become so much a part of your life that you will abide in Him without any conscious effort. Make the determination to abide in Jesus wherever you are now or wherever you may be placed in the future.”

“Anything that disturbs our rest in Him must be rectified at once, and it is not rectified by being ignored, but only by coming to Jesus Christ. If we will come to Him, asking Him to produce Christ-awareness in us, He will always do it, until we fully learn to abide in Him.”

“The lives of others are examples to us, but Jesus requires us to examine our own souls.”

“As you journey with God, the only thing He intends to be clear is the way He deals with your soul... Are we alone with Him now? Or are we more concerned with our own ideas, friendships, and cares for our bodies? Jesus cannot teach us anything until we quiet all our intellectual questions and get alone with Him.”

“Are we more devoted to service than to Jesus Christ Himself?”

“Watch how your Father will upset your schedule if you begin to worship your habit instead of what the habit symbolizes.”

“Never live on your memories of your past experiences, but let the Word of God always be living and active in you.”

St. Augustine:

“Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee.”

Dr. Jack Miller:

“I have to read the Bible everyday because I forget what God said.”

Ruth Haley Barton:

“How does one attend to the heart’s desperate longing for God in the midst of so much religious activity?”

“Solitude and silence are not self-indulgent exercises for time when an overcrowded soul needs a little time to itself. Rather, they are concrete ways of opening to the presence of God beyond human effort and beyond the human constructs that cannot fully contain the Divine.”

John Piper:

“O how we need to learn what it is to commune with God – to fellowship with Him, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

“For your own soul, come to the fountain of the Word and drink. You will not be alone... O come with me to the Word of God... whatever it costs, do not read it and leave it. It transforms us by its presence in our minds not by staying on the bedside table.”

“All I have ever read and experienced teaches me that deep spiritual influence for the good of sinners and the glory of God comes from men and women who give themselves to prayer and meditation.”

“It seems to me that in a literate culture like ours, where most of us know how to read and where books are available, the biblical mandate is to keep on reading what will open the Holy Scriptures to you more and more, and to keep praying for Bible-saturated writers.”

“Without the engagement of the heart, we do not really worship.”

“The Holy Spirit has given us a sword called the Word of God for the defense of our joy... we need to hear a practical challenge to renew our daily meditation in the Word of God and to bind that sword so closely around our waist that we are never without it.”

“Even on days when every cinder of our soul feels cold, if we crawl to the Word of God and cry out for ears to hear, the cold ashes will be lifted and the tiny spark of life will be fanned. ”

“Prayer is the open admission that without Christ we can do nothing. And prayer is the turning away from ourselves to God in the confidence that He will provide the help we need. Prayer humbles us as needy and exalts God as wealthy.”

“Prayerlessness produces joylessness.”

“Unless I’m badly mistaken, one of the main reasons so many of God’s children don’t have a significant life of prayer is not so much that we don’t want to, but that we don’t plan to... and we all know that the opposite of planning is not a wonderful flow of deep, spontaneous experiences in prayer. The opposite of planning is the rut. The natural, unplanned flow of spiritual life sinks to the lowest ebb of vitality. There is a race to be run and a fight to be fought. If you want renewal in your life of prayer, you must *plan* to see it.”

Charles Swindoll:

“I know of no other single practice in the Christian life more rewarding, practically speaking, than memorizing Scripture.”

“Meditation is not optional. The same Bible that commands us to pray, rejoice, give thanks... also urges us to meditate.”

Rick Warren:

“You will never grow a close relationship with God by just attending church once a week or even having a daily quiet time. Friendship with God is built by sharing ALL of your life experiences with Him. He wants more than *just* an appointment in your schedule.”

“If God made us all different, why should everyone be expected to love God in the same way?... You don’t bring glory to God by trying to be someone he never intended you to be.”

“God’s Word is the spiritual nourishment you MUST have to fulfill your purpose... millions of believers are plagued with spiritual anorexia, starving to death from spiritual malnutrition. To be a healthy disciple of Jesus, feeding on God’s Word must be our first priority.”

“There are enormous benefits to memorizing Bible verse. It will help you resist temptation, make wise decisions, reduce stress, build confidence, offer good advice, and share your faith with others.”

“Reviewing your spiritual journal regularly can spare you a lot of unnecessary pain and heartache.”

Beth Moore:

“Let’s be spiritually healthy enough not to always need a crisis to increase our holiness. We need some concentrated time to become more spiritually healthy.”

“I’m very committed to a daily quiet time, but I often long for more time to be alone with God for no other reason but for personal consecration.”

“As you stare into your Bible and take in what He says, the light of God’s Word reflects off your face and you become radiant. Imagine Christ looking at His Father right at this moment and saying, ‘Isn’t she gorgeous?’... You will never have a beauty secret with more visible results than the study of God’s Word. Let His Word evoke your beauty daily.”

George Muller:

“It is as plain to me as anything, that the first thing the child of God has to do morning by morning is to obtain food for his inner man... now what is the food for the inner man: not *prayer*, but the *Word of God*: and here again not the simple reading of the Word of God, so that it only passes through our minds, just as water runs through a pipe, but considering what we read, pondering over it, and applying it to our hearts.”

“I saw more clearly than ever, that the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was, to have my soul happy in the Lord. The first thing to be concerned about was not how I might serve the Lord, how I might glorify the Lord; but how I might get my soul into a happy state, and how my inner man might be nourished. For I might seek to set the truth before the unconverted, I might seek to benefit believers, I might seek to relieve the distressed, I might in other ways seek to behave myself as it becomes a child of God in this world; and yet,

not being happy in the Lord, and not being nourished and strengthened in my inner man day by day, all this might not be attended to in a right spirit.”

D.L. Moody:

“The Bible was not given to increase our knowledge but to change our lives.”

Henry and Richard Blackaby:

“Don’t settle for a religious life that lacks a vital relationship with Jesus Christ.”

“God never communicates with us merely to give us a warm devotional thought for that day. He never speaks to us simply to increase our biblical knowledge. Our Lord has far more significant things to reveal to us than that!”

“If you will immerse yourself daily in the Word of God, you will not be caught off guard when crises come. Your focus will already be on God, and He will safely guide you through your difficult moments.”

“Have you ever heard people say they are experiencing a dry spell in their Christian life? ... Are they saying that the Lord ran out of water?... You don’t need to run all over the country looking for spiritual refreshment... the source of living water already resides within you.”

“If you say you want to know God better but neglect studying His Word, are you truly seeking Him? Have you regularly forsaken the place of prayer? If your actions reveal that you are genuinely seeking God, then He promises that you will find Him.”

Amy Carmichael:

“Don’t feel it necessary to pray all the time; listen...And read the Words of Life. Let them enter into you.”

“And if the day ends in what seems like failure, don’t fret. Tell Him you’re sorry. Even so, don’t be discouraged.”

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