

# GETTING THE MOST FROM **QUIET TIME**

Do you set aside time every day for you and the Lord? All of us need to have a period where we pause to be with the Lord. If you have never developed a time like this, I hope what we are about to share will be helpful, and if you have a quiet time already, maybe something here can help enhance it.

## **Stop everything and be still (Psalm 46:10).**

The first step is to stop everything and be still. Psalm 46:10 says, “Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.” Now, the Psalm is about getting through the worst day of your life. The Psalm begins with “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.” A day when the mountains fall into the middle of the sea is a bad day. So, this Psalm is about how God gets us through the worst days of our lives. Really, every moment you spend with God prepares you for the day when some tragedy will come upon you.

What does God mean by being still? He is telling us to remove all the distractions. Turn off the television, put away the computer, and of course silence the phone—no peeking at social media! For just a few moments, be still and focus on God.

## **Expect to hear from the Lord (Psalm 119:18).**

Focus, expecting to hear from Him. Pray this prayer from Psalm 119:18: “Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.” If you expect to get something out of a sermon, lesson, movie, or book, you are more likely to do so. How much more should we expect when it is God we are hearing from. What does He want to say to us? What does He want to change about us?

## **Be changed (Acts 4:13).**

Expect to be changed from reading the Bible. In my work with people over the years I have encouraged them to read the Bible. I remember reading about Rosario Butterfield’s conversion. She had been a lesbian, openly antagonistic toward Christianity. Today she is a vibrant Christian, a pastor’s wife actively engaged in ministry. One day before she became a believer, a transgender friend told her, “This Bible reading is changing you.” Indeed it was. Expect the Bible to change you, too, and people will notice, just as they noticed that Peter and John (Acts 4:13) had been with Jesus.

### **Have quiet time at the same time and place (Mark 1:35).**

It helps to have quiet time in the same place and time. For much of my life I helped people leave bad habits behind and develop good habits. It might not sound spiritual, but having a quiet time involves the development of a good habit. In Mark 1:35, we see Jesus had a habit of getting up early and going to a solitary place for His quiet time.

I tend to get up early in the morning and my solitary place is the kitchen table. Part of this habit is that I always have my coffee, water, Bible and pen. I also tend to have a study Bible, sometimes a Bible handbook, a journal, and other tools.

You may have a different place. I used to commute to work one to two hours one way every day. No matter how early I got up, I could hear in the back of my head, "traffic is building." A one-hour commute could turn into a two-hour commute with one minor accident.

So, I began to have my quiet time in my car. I would start out early and listen to various Bible passages, usually an Old Testament passage, a proverb, a psalm and a New Testament passage. Once I beat the traffic, I would stop at Cup-a-Joe in Raleigh, North Carolina, and get my coffee. As I enjoyed my coffee, I would spend some reading Scripture in my car. There is something about holding the Bible, reading it, and marking it. That's just me. The point is: you do whatever works for you, but when you are make a habit of that place and time, you begin to feel a pull to have your quiet time.

### **Note the character and characteristics of God (Psalm 25:4; 29:2).**

As you read, ask God to reveal His character to you. Consider praying Psalm 29:4: "Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths." You might use one of our prayer journals or a journal of your own and record the characteristics of God. Thank God for his character and enact Psalm 29:2: "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

### **As you read the Word, delight in it (Psalm 37:4).**

God tends to work in our hearts and make His desires our own when we pray, "Not my will but thy will be done." And, as we delight in His Word and in Him, that relationship begins to develop, deepen, and grow sweeter.

### **This process is enhanced by asking four questions. Ask yourself:**

- 1. What did this passage mean to people who received it the first time?** It helps to have a Bible handbook like *Unger's* or a study Bible. I have a study Bible on my iPad and like to look up the introduction of each book. I also focus on the time period in which the people who received the message the first time lived. That helps me to have context as I read a passage. I also ask myself...

2. **What is the timeless principle?** Take Psalm 46, which was mentioned earlier. This may have been written when Sennacherib was threatening King Hezekiah with invasion. But the principle is true for you too. This Psalm is the backdrop for Luther's hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." As one takes all of this into consideration, it becomes clear that the principles in this passage have helped God's people throughout history. At this point it helps to ask...
3. **What does this passage teach me about God?** In the example of Psalm 46, the passage teaches that God helps me and protects me in the most difficult of times. I can depend upon Him. The final question is simply...
4. **What do you need to do based on this passage?** Examine your life (Proverbs 4:26; 2 Corinthians 3:18) in light of the Scripture and make needed changes (Proverbs 3:6; John 13:17).

**The value of a quiet time is that it enables us to examine our lives daily.** We are instructed to ponder the path we are taking. If we pause and reflect upon how we are living, in light of God's word, it is like having a regular checkup.

Rather than comparing ourselves to others or to the world, we want to hold up the word of God like a mirror (2 Corinthians 3:18), which helps us to get back on track as we look at every area of our lives (Proverbs 3:6). Over time, we learn that as we give our relationships, finances, family, and all other parts of our lives to the Lord, we are happy—even if we fail—when we live out the Scriptures (John 13:17).

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