

Lesson #1 - Date the Word by Finding Your Chair - A Place to DATE the Word

The primary difference between Christianity and other religions is Christianity is based on a RELATIONSHIP. Our relationship status changes the moment we make the decision to accept Jesus Christ as our Savior. As a sinner who is alienated from God we hear the glorious gospel and respond to it and at that moment we are born again. We go from being an alien from God to being adopted into the family of God. A relationship has begun in which God is our heavenly Father and we are His child. God wants to have a close, personal relationship with each one of us. With this new relationship God wants us to know Him. God delights in His children getting to know who He is.

"Thus says the Lord: Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, exercising loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness. For in these I delight, says the Lord." Jeremiah 9:23-24

And one of the great joys of being a believer is we can get to know God. However, getting to know God just does not happen. For us to get to know God better and become closer to Him calls for making the CHOICE to spend time with Him.

In God's Word we find several appeals for us to get alone with Him.

"Seek the Lord while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near." Isaiah 55:6

"Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the post of my doors. For whoever finds me finds life and obtains favor from the Lord." Proverbs 8:34

Knowing God was King David's greatest desire for his son Solomon.

"As for you, my son, Solomon, know the God of your fathers and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind. For the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you, ... 1 Chronicles 28:8

How might one go about getting to know God? While we can answer this question with many viable answers we want to propose that one of the best was to grow in knowledge of Jesus is to have a quiet time. In conveying the idea of a quiet time we like say each person needs to find their chair. In finding one's chair one is finding a place to meet with God to talk and listen to Him. We will talk more about finding your chair when we get to the specifics of a quiet time. For now let us look at some examples of having a quiet time starting with Jesus Himself.

In Mark 1:21-39 to see a couple of days in the life of Jesus where He is busy doing ministry.

*Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, saying, "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are -- the Holy One of God!" But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" And when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him. Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him." And immediately His fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee. Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. But Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once. So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her. And she served them. At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him. **Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.** And Simon and those who were with Him searched for Him. When they found Him, they said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You." But He said to them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth." And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons."*

In the very middle of doing the work of the ministry we find Jesus purposefully pausing His ministry work to get alone with His Father. While ministering late He still got up early to go to a solitary place to pray. Even though people, people in great need, were looking for Him to help solve their problems, He went to what I call His chair to spend time talking with His Father.

NOTE: So often we find our work is so heavy that we don't have time for a quiet time. Well, Jesus was busy yet He made it a priority to get alone with God.

✎ One cannot use the excuse for missing my quiet time that I was too BUSY for the Lord. (A note I wrote in my Bible by Mark 1:35)

✎ Let us consider David as he made numerous statements about reading God's Word and praying to God. Here are two very powerful statements about praying and reading the Word.

David wrote in Psalm 5:3 that "My VOICE You shall hear in the morning, O Lord; In the morning I will direct my voice to you and I will look up."

1. DAILY DECLARATION OF DEPENDENCE ON GOD

In Psalm 143:8 he desired to hear of God's loving kindness in morning.

"Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning, for in You do I trust; Cause me to KNOW the way in which I should GO, for I lift up my soul to You."

2. Getting REAL: To have a time where you get alone with God means a CHOICE has to be made.

Notice a story of two women who faced such a choice and how they responded to the opportunity to sit at the feet of Jesus. It is found in Luke 10:38-42.

Luke 10:38-42 *Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."*

One of the most important spiritual life lessons is SITTING precedes SERVING.

****We must be careful not to become so busy doing the work of the Lord that we have no time for the Lord of the work.**

SOME DIRECTIONS – GUIDANCE FOR HAVING A QUIET TIME

Let us now look at "how" to have a quiet time. (Everyone is different and has different needs. What follows are suggestions on how to establish your quiet time, not some hard and fast rules. Use what you need to help you.)

1. We need to first decide that our quiet time is a PRIORITY in our lives. This means it is a part of our daily schedule.
2. We need to make PREPARATIONS.
 1. We do this by: Determining the TIME. "Quiet Time 101 happens at _____!" We recommend the morning as best as it gets you started. A phrase I use about having my quiet time goes like this: First thing in the morning I give WORSHIP to God, then I get WISDOM from God and then I go to WORK for God. However, mornings do not always work. Ultimately you must choose a time that allows you to be uninterrupted for 15 to 30 minutes.
NOTE: If you do your devotions in the morning, set the alarm a little earlier. So first, determine a time.

"It should be our rule never to see the face of men before seeing the face of God." – Charles Spurgeon

"I feel it is far better to begin with God, to see His face first, to get my soul near Him before it is near another. – E.M. Bounds

*"The morning watch anchors the soul so that it will not very readily drift far away from God during the day. He who rushes from his bed to his business (or his books or his battle) without first spending time with God is as foolish as though he had not washed or dressed, and as unwise as one dashing to battle without arms or armor."
- Charles Spurgeon*

- 2 Prepare by determining the PLACE.

You will also need a place where you can be alone. Find a place you can consistently go to and not be disturbed. FIND YOUR CHAIR!!!!!!

- 3 Prepare by getting key MATERIAL.

You should have a good study Bible, a PEN or marker, and a notebook to write comments and prayer requests. You may find it helpful to have a prayer journal. It is highly suggestion that you get a devotional - We wholeheartedly recommend using the DATE the Word Daily Devotional. Preparing ahead of time will help you stay consistent in your quiet time.

3. We need to make Develop a PLAN for Bible reading and Prayer.

Bible Reading thoughts: It is good to think of your quiet time separate from Bible reading. You can develop a plan to read through the Bible – to read various books of the Bible and this will be your Bible Study. Your quiet time should be a time of reading just a few verses – one chapter - designed to get wisdom from God.

*Begin by reading one chapter of Proverbs every day. Read Short NT books like James!

If you use a devotional you will find that most give a Bible reading for the day.

In having a time of prayer think ACTS -

have a time of ADORATION

have a time of CONFESSION (use your shower time – confess head to toe, eyes, ears, mouth, mind, hands, feet & heart)

have a time of THANKSGIVING

have a time of SUPPLICATION (our personal requests for ourselves and others).

Over the years I have used the word PRAYER as a guide.

There is a time of PRAISE

There is a time of REPENTANCE

There is a time of ASKING

There is a time of YIELDING as I may be asking for something I should not have

There is a time of EXPECTATION

There is a time of REJOICING

You can also pray the Lord's prayer. "Start your day praying the Lord's Prayer!"

Luke 11:1-4 Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. So He said to them, "When you pray, say: Our FATHER in heaven, Hallowed be Your NAME. Your KINGDOM come. Your WILL be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us day by day our DAILY bread. And forgive us our SINS, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into TEMPTATION, But deliver us from the EVIL one."

Matthew. 6:9-13 "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

A quick Review of DIRECTIONS FOR HAVING A QUIET TIME so far are

1. We need to first decide that our quiet time is a **PRIORITY** in our lives. This means it is a part of our daily schedule.
2. We need to make **PREPARATIONS** . – time, place, material, etc.
3. Develop a **PLAN** for Bible reading and Prayer.
Now we need to:
4. Be PERSISTENT until consistent.
 1. Aim for consistency rather than length of time. Consistency leads to habits.
 2. Expect interruptions. They will come and you will have to work through them.

QUESTION - WHAT DO I DO IF I MISS MY QUIET TIME? ANSWER - WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOU MISS A MEAL - YOU EAT AT THE NEXT MEAL. DON'T LET THE DEVIL PUT GUILT ON YOU THAT CAUSES YOU TO STOP HAVING YOUR QUIET TIME.

To become persistent it is good to have an ACCOUNTABILITY partner - someone who asked you not just did you have your quiet time, but what did you learn today about God in your quiet time?

5. Focus on the PERSON you are meeting rather than the habit of a quiet time.
This is not a program. It is a relationship that you will want to cultivate.

In conclusion, notice some verses that reveal some benefits from a quiet time.

Psalms 119:9, 11 "How shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your Word. Your Word have I hid in my heart that I may not SIN against you.

Psalms 119:105 Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my PATH.

Proverbs 8:32-36 "Now therefore, listen to me, my children, For blessed are those who keep my ways. Hear instruction and be wise, And do not disdain it. Blessed is the man who listens to me, Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoever finds me finds life, And obtains favor from the LORD; But he who sins against me wrongs his own soul; All those who hate me love death."

Philippians 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the PEACE of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

1 Peter 2:2 "As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may GROW ."

Take time to consider your relationship with the Lord. Is it as close as you would like? Would you consider yourself a diligent seeker of the Lord or a casual seeker? Did you see yourself more like Mary who makes it a priority to sit at the Lord's feet and learn or like Martha who is distracted from spending time with the Lord?

Today make a commitment to have a quiet time. Find your chair.

TIP: Make a commitment to have a quiet time for the next 5 days. Then recommit.

"Our relationship with HIM is established through faith and then maintained through a personal devotional life. In the midst of all the demands of life we must remember to keep our relationship with Christ up-to-date and in good repair." – Paul Powell

"Draw near unto God and He will draw near unto you!" James 4:8

Bonus on having a quiet time:

Our verse to DATE the Word on May 3 (5/3) is Psalm 5:3. Psalm 5:3 says "My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; In the morning I will direct it to You, And I will look up."

A DAILY DECLARATION OF DEPENDENCE ON GOD

Psalm 5:3 is a declaration of dependence on God as David states emphatically that God will be hearing his voice as he awakens in the morning. He will not be saying "good Lord, it is morning" but rather "Good morning, Lord." This declaration of dependence on God continues with David stating he will be looking up to God because he knows his help comes from the Lord, who made the heavens and the earth (Psalm 121:1)

*I look at Psalm 5:3 as great way guide to start each day!!! My guide for the start of a day goes like this:
First thing in the morning I give worship to God.*

Then I get wisdom from God.

Then and only then do I go to work for God.

I Give Worship! (God hears our voice)

I Get Wisdom! (Our ears are open to God to hear God's voice)

I Go to Work for the Lord where I am a Witness for the Lord (wherever we are we represent God)

In putting this guide into action, I would like to suggest that you start each day by praying the Lord's Prayer. This allows you to give adoration and praise to Him! It allows you to acknowledge His place of authority in your life. It allows you to ask Him for the provisions you need and the protection you need. It closes with another round of praise to Him.

Then you want to READ a portion of God's Word. Offering worship to God you have spoken to God. Now you need to allow God to speak to you! As far as what to read I leave that to you. There are so many PLANS. You can read one chapter a day out of the NT, reading Monday through Friday (5 days a week) and you will read through the entire NT in a year. I suggest for a month like May that has 31 days that you read one chapter a day from Proverbs. In the month coming up I would suggest to you to read 5 chapters a day from Psalms as it has 150 chapters. Most important here is that you READ some of God's Word every day.

Then after giving worship to God and getting wisdom from God go to work for God with a mindset of being a witness for the Lord wherever you find yourself throughout the day. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

Our verse to DATE on May 3 (5/3) is Psalm 5:3. It says, "My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; In the morning I will direct it to You, And I will look up."

Have you declared your dependence on God for this day?

*Continue Strong looking up to the Lord,
And remember to DATE the Word*

