



PRAY, READ & MARK, REFLECT, APPLY, JOURNAL, SHARE

The objective of having routine 'Quiet Times' is to invest time with God in dialog. Just as we get to know people by spending time with them, listening and communicating with them, and doing things together; so we will develop a deeper relationship with God by investing meaningful time with Him. We dialog with God by listening to Him speak through His Word and Spirit and responding to Him about His thoughts and our lives through prayer.

A quality quiet time includes having two-way communication. The time is not meant to be limited to just reading the Bible. It is time well invested by listening and responding to God, aka enjoying fellowshiping with God. You enter His courts with thanksgiving and praise; He listens. You share what's on your heart. God listens. Then the roles reverse when you invite God's Holy Spirit to guide you into knowledge and understanding of His word. You read and you listen; He speaks. You meditate on its truths and its application to your life; He speaks. Then, when circumstances later arise as you come alongside another person, you share what He has shown you; He speaks through you. You are His vessel to minister.

God-seekers over the ages have found this personal spiritual discipline to be essential in maintaining an intentional intimate relationship with God. This time deserves being our priority. The operative word is "intentional." Yet, it is not necessarily reflected by the amount of time we spend with Him, but in our faithfulness and heart for the time invested. A daily appointment can range from a handful of minutes to many more. Start small, but be faithful. We must put Him first and not allow the busyness of life to crowd out our time with Him.

We cannot apply what we do not know or understand, and we cannot understand God's truth unless the Holy Spirit reveals it to us. In either case it takes time and it requires us to have a willing attitude to allow God's Word to touch our total lives. God is ready and willing; the question is 'are we'? The daily choice is ours to make.

When we say yes, we open up a three- fold expression, as we reflect upon these three issues:

▶ **HEAD** - WHAT DOES GOD SAY?

▶ Because God's Word is true, what am I discovering?

▶ **HEART** - HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO MY LIFE?

▶ Because God's Word is relevant, what is He telling me to do?

▶ **HANDS** - WHAT MUST I DO TO TAKE STEPS TO OBEY/FOLLOW THIS WORD?

▶ Because God is loving and faithful, what next step will I take?

STEPS TO HAVING A FRUITFUL QUIET TIME

Pray: Ask for revelation by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:12), wisdom on the actual condition of our heart (Psalm 139:23-24), and wisdom and courage to apply the truth to our lives (Psalm 1:1-3; Proverbs 1:1-7).

Read and Mark: Develop a set of symbols which helps focus your mind on what God is saying:

▶ **Circle** - Thought linkage words:

- ▶ And - links thoughts
- ▶ But - introduces a contrast
- ▶ If - introduces a condition
- ▶ Because - introduces a reason
- ▶ Therefore or so - introduces a result
- ▶ Since - introduces a reason or order
- ▶ As or like - introduces a comparison
- ▶ So that or that - introduces a purpose
- ▶ Underline - Highlights a phrase or sentence that stands out.
- ▶ Square - Highlights repeated or important words in passage.
- ▶ Double arrowed line - Links connected thoughts in passage.
- ▶ Question mark - Calls attention to a portion you want to study for greater clarification.
- ▶ Date - Denotes the date God led you to claim the highlighted promise.

Reflect:

Reflection is seeking to discover through meditation what God is saying to you through the Scriptures (HEART).

- ▶ Focus on understanding what Scripture is telling us by asking questions.
 - ▶ Is there a new fact about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit that gives me personal direction?

- ▶ Is there a truth to believe and obey?
- ▶ Is there an example to follow?
- ▶ Is there a sin to avoid or ask forgiveness for?
- ▶ Is there a promise to claim and keep?
- ▶ Is there a warning to heed by changing something I think, do or say?
- ▶ Is there something I should offer praise for?
- ▶ Is there a discipline I should be building into my life?
- ▶ Is there a situation of cause and effect that I can use to guide my life?
- ▶ Is there an encouragement to enjoy?

Apply:

Review what God has stated. What He has shown you about your life, beliefs, values, attitudes, or behaviors? Discuss with God how the truth(s) learned can best apply to your life and what steps you need to take to obey His direction. In review, you can use the three questions below to focus on your next step(s):

- ▶ What is God's truth specified in this verse(s) (Head).
- ▶ On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 is perfect) where do you rate yourself in living this principle and where would I like to be (Heart)?
- ▶ What step can you take to get 0.5 closer to the goal (Hands)?

Journal:

Record the date, passages covered, truth discovered, and what next step you would take. This journal becomes a record of what God is doing in your life over time. The journal can also help you keep your commitment if you leave blank pages for and day missed.

Share:

Share with others what God is talking to you about. Also get an accountability partner to help you as you help him keep this commitment of a daily time with God.