



DEVELOPING THE HABIT OF A DAILY QUIET TIME

Life Group Study

Our dream for each of Bridgeway's members is that we grow in the habit of seeking the Lord daily through a "devotion" or "quiet time", built upon the study of Scripture. Developing or strengthening a habit takes time, so our hope and goal for each of us is that by Christmas we are each experiencing breakthroughs, large or small, in this area.

The purpose of this study is to reinforce ideas we talked about in the last study, "*The Art Of The Quiet Time*", then practice using any of the meditation methods we have talked about.

1. First things first. Grab your materials – a Bible and something in which to jot down notes.

Which Bible should I use?

The Bible was written in Greek (New Testament) and Hebrew with some Aramaic (Old Testament) so any Bible you read will be a step removed from the original language. When it comes to English versions, translations fall on a spectrum between *accuracy* (staying close in wording to the original language) and *understanding* (where greater liberties are taken with the wording in the attempt to help the reader grasp its meaning.)

While we encourage you to consult numerous versions in your study of Scripture, it is good for your regular study to land on a version that is high in accuracy, while remaining an enjoyable read. We use the ESV as our "preaching Bible" but the NKJV and NASB are also exceptional reading Bibles. The NIV which used to be a church staple a generation ago has suffered from several revisions which have greatly reduced its closeness to the Greek or Hebrew.

Some English Bibles, such as the Living Bible or the Message, are called "paraphrases" because the translation is so loose and modern. These can be fun to read, and can provide surprising insights, but as a general rule, we recommend using a version more dedicated to accuracy.

2. Now, pick a book of the Bible to read.

A tip from our teaching:

For your main quiet time, we encourage you to read the Bible one *book* at a time. There are times to study a topic, or a theme, or a Bible hero. We recommend that 75% of the time, read Scripture a book at a time. And 25% do something topical.

Why do this? God has revealed his truth to us one book at a time, so it shows God respect by reading his Word the same way. Each book has a structure to it; it makes points in an orderly way, which build on each other. This allows you to better understand the context, which will make you a stronger thinker, and guide you in interpreting the Bible properly.

Reading a book one chapter and verse at a time will also bring you face to face with truth that will challenge you, even unsettle you. You won't be "allowed" to pick and choose the truth you'd prefer to hear, and forget about the rest. Read the Bible a book at a time, and you'll never join a cult, because cults are masters of taking God's Word out of context, and reading only the pet verses they're taught to read.

Read the Bible one book at a time, because "*All Scripture is breathed out by God...*" (2 Timothy 3:16).

Which book of the Bible are you reading right now (or going to read)? We recommend consulting the 3-Year Bible reading plan we provided in the last study.

3. Try to gravitate toward a set time of day for your regular quiet time. This will be an important step toward establishing it as a habit. When do you regularly have your quiet times? Or what time do you think will work best for you?

Remember, we want to learn to connect with the Lord throughout the day – what's called 'practicing his presence', or 'the daily office'. These are meant to be short times to recalibrate, refresh, reboot (any other R-words you can come up with?) Your quiet time though is meant to be a non-negotiable, baseline, foundational "meal" with the Lord.

My best time is _____.

4. Finally, sit down and do it! We encourage a 15-30" time that generally follows the roadmap we laid out in our prior teaching.

1. Relax – Prepare and Pray (3-5 Minutes)
2. Read. (Or Hear) (10-15 Minutes)
3. Reflect. (3-5 Minutes)
4. Record (Write). (3-5 Minutes)
5. Request (Pray). (3-5 Minutes)

Is this amount of time appropriate? Too legalistic? Too burdensome? Not enough?

5. While we encourage you to be 'led of the Spirit' in your quiet time, we trust you'll master the following three "meditation methods", then grow from there. Professional musicians need to 'learn their scales' first, before they start improvising. Furthermore, in time, the Lord will use you to teach others how to meet with God and read his Word. You will find these tools and resources to be useful as you disciple others.

God can any of these methods to speak to our hearts in our quiet times. Sometimes even just picking up the Bible at random and reading a verse can produce some powerful, even heart-stopping, moments (though let's not make this our main approach!)

Here's a question for you to think about, though you don't have to answer it now: *As you get familiar with these models, why might the OIA approach be the best one more often than not?*

For the rest of your time in this study, practice using any of these methods with a favorite Scripture passage or story.

Some suggested passages: Genesis 4:1-16 / Joshua 1:1-9 / Nehemiah 1 / Psalm 23 / Matthew 5:1-12 / John 3:16-21 / Acts 1:1-11 / 1 Corinthians 13 / Philemon / Revelation 21:1-8

Meditation Model #1: SPACEPETS

Read your passage, then ask the following questions, and jot down answers which come to mind.

Is there a Sin to confess?

Is there a Promise to claim?

Is there an Attitude to adjust?

Is there a Commandment to keep?

Is there an Example to follow?

Is there a Prayer to pray?

Is there an Error to avoid?

Is there a Truth to believe?

Is there a Scripture to learn?

Meditation Model #2: Discovery Bible Study

1. Read the passage.
2. Rewrite, retell, recite the passage – The purpose of this exercise is to begin to plant the passage deeper into your heart.
3. Unpack The Passage Using 3 Questions
 - a. What does the passage teach me about God?
 - b. What does the passage teach me about humans? About me?
 - c. If what I learned is true, how should I change? Complete the following sentence:

In light of this Scripture, this week with God's grace I will...

Meditation Model #3: Observation / Interpretation / Application

Step One: Observation ~ *What do I see?*

- A. Scripture Text: _____
- B. Observations: Any detail, however small, might open the door to useful insights. A word, a phrase, an action, the context, who/what/when/where/why – all may be worthwhile. Jot some down.



Step Two: Interpretation ~ *What does it mean?*

Ask questions! – *What was the author saying to his original readers? Is there anything difficult to understand? What would I like to know more about? Can the passage be interpreted in different ways?*

Step Three: Application ~ *What should I do about it?*

- A. What timeless principles does the passage teach?
- B. What truths does this passage teach me about God? About me?
- C. What do I sense the Lord wants me to do in response?

