

THE DAILY QUIET TIME

The daily quiet time is the time that you have with God that is special for just you and Him to be alone. Have you ever thought that this is the God of the universe? He made the clouds, animals and the bugs. He holds back the sea and made the land. He made the universe and all that is beyond, beyond, beyond. Our galaxy is so tiny in the grand scheme of things. The God that made all of that wants to be with you. You think, "Well, isn't that kind of person too powerful and too important to want to be with me?" No, because that is the way He is. He is loving, kind and He is interested in you. He desires intimacy, an intimate relationship with all people. He desires to spend time where it is just you and Him and nobody else. He wants to spend this special time with everyone. You are not the only one that He would have it with, but the one you have with Him is very special. It will not be like others.

Are there some basic ways to have a quiet time? Yes, there really are. Probably, the best and the most basic is to have a daily time alone with God where you read the Bible every day. I heard that if you spend 15 minutes a day on any subject, it will make you an expert in five years. It is not possible to know all there is to know about God. We could spend 24 hours a day our entire life and still just barely scratch the surface, barely. We have all of eternity to get to know Him. In a church service I heard that the reason the angels say Holy, Holy, Holy, Holy, Holy, Holy, Holy for all of eternity is because every time they say Holy, God shows them another aspect of His character and they shout all over again. We have a wonderful, wonderful opportunity, each one of us, to choose to walk with God. Do you choose it? Do you choose to be there with God? You can have it in a daily way just by spending time with Him.

How do you have a daily quiet time? The best thing to do is to have a special place just with Him; nobody else, just you and the Lord. For me, it is in my kitchen. Maybe it is for most women. It may be in your living room, a bedroom or outside. Pick a special time of the day. For most people it is early in the morning. You may say, "I am so busy. I know I ought to have a quiet time every day, but I am so busy I cannot get it done." Well, you can. You just might have to get up earlier. You know that God does not chart it by how many hours you spend with Him, even how many minutes you spend with Him. He just wants you to be with Him until you know the two of you have had koinonia, that means fellowship together. In developing this intimate relationship with the Lord, many times you tend to think, "I am kind of sinful. I have done things I am ashamed of." The Lord says, "Don't do it any longer. Repent. Quit doing it. I love you. I will work with you. I will strengthen you. I will help you." There is really no other way to have depth in your Christian life without daily Bible study. If you ask any major Christian that you respect, "Do you spend time with God every day in the Bible?" They will say yes because you cannot do it without it. It would be like saying "Do you breathe oxygen every day? Do you have to breathe oxygen every day?" You would say "Yes, I can't live without it." That is the way it is with quiet time. It brings you into presence with God.

I need to be real honest with you, there are times that it gets kind of boring or just too busy. At those times, I do not get much out of it. I have learned even in those times to say, "Lord, I need to be real honest with You, it's boring. Would You do something to make it exciting again or interesting again?" Do you know what has happened when I have prayed that? God has many times said, "Just start reading a book about Me or maybe read a devotional book. You are not having enough variety, Betty, and the Word is in all kinds of things. It can be in an Oswald Chambers Daily Devotion. It can be in some of the modern preacher's daily devotions, like Charles Stanley. They can have a small verse with an explanation that God has given them to write about that verse. Sometimes I do that for variety. I do read the Bible every day and I have for about 40 years. There have been a few days I have not done it. Sometimes I am so busy that I am in bed at night and I think, "I forgot to read the Bible." I turn on the light and just try to get it done because I am so tired. It helps to keep consistency in my life. It helps keep me in the habit and it helps keep me faithful.

Are you one of those people who think that you do not need church, that you do not need to read the Bible daily, and that you can feel close to God when you are out in nature so you do not need to be around all of that? I really question it. I need to just tell you that. Can you have a relationship with your spouse if you are not around them daily, talking to them daily, sharing personal issues and personal details? You cannot have intimacy that way. You have to do what God says to do. He says, "Do not

neglect assembling yourselves together.” He also says “Study to show yourself approved, a workman that does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of God.” God wants you reading his Word. How much time does it take to spend with God to get anything out of it? Early in my quiet time, I went to a Christian seminar and the man said “I want to make a challenge to you. I want you to consider making a vow (which is very serious when you do it before God). Commit that you will spend five minutes a day with the Lord. I am not telling you to make a vow for an hour. I am not telling you to make a vow for 30 minutes. I am saying five minutes.” I thought, “I could do that. Everybody has five minutes.” I said, “Okay Lord, I will do it. I’ll make a vow to you.” He certainly held me to it. I will be in bed at night and think that I did not have a quiet time. Who is telling me that? The Lord is. It is like he is saying, “Get up Betty, you haven’t done what you said you would do.” I keep a Bible by my bed. I keep Bibles all over the house. I keep one under my bed, pull it out and try to read it. The Lord of the universe wants to spend time every day with you. Every day.

What does God say about spending time in the Word? He says, “Search the Scriptures.” Look at this Scripture in Acts 17:11, “Now the Bereans, which were a group of people, were of more noble character than the Thessalonians for they received the Message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.” We know about the Thessalonians from First and Second Thessalonians in the Bible. We do not have First and Second Bereans. But this is what the Bible speaks about the Bereans, that they were of more noble character. One of the signs of character as far as God is concerned is, “Do you receive His messages with great eagerness and do you examine the Scripture every day to see if what is being said on television, in church or in Bible study is true?”

Why is the Bible called the Lord’s Book or the Book of the Lord? It is because He watched over the writing of it. There are 66 actual books that make up the one book that we call the Bible. They were written over a period of about 1,500 years by all kinds of different men. The Bible says “Holy men wrote as they were directed by God. They spoke as they were directed by God.” How did that happen? I will give you an idea of how it could have happened. Have you ever needed to write a letter to someone and you put it off and you just did not know what to say? All of a sudden you knew what to say. You sat down, picked up the pen and started writing the letter. The letter was done. You really did not think that much about it, but your hand just moved so fast and it was done. These men of God were honorable, reputable men of God. They had proven character. They had great integrity and a lifetime of service to God. God spoke through these men. He chose them and He spoke through them. He had a specific message he wanted each of them to write down. Through the years there were groups of Christian leaders in the Christian faith that examined all of these books and decided these are the ones that we think have no errors and they are God’s written Word. They are the Book of the Lord and so they are written down. Did you know they are not in chronological order? They are not in the order of how it actually happened. They switch around. Why? The first five books of the Old Testament were written by Moses. The major prophets are next, followed by the books by the minor prophets. 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Chronicles are the history of all of the kings. The Psalms and Proverbs are a collection of other writings. The Bible is a collection of these 66 books.

Do you delight in the law of the Lord? Psalm 1:2 says, “They delight in the law of the Lord.” Does it bring you great pleasure? Do you learn things in it? Do you say, “God lead me and teach me?” A fun thing to do when you read the Bible is to get a topical Bible like Naves. Find a topic that interests you, and then go all over the Bible reading everywhere that subject can be found. It will really make you interested to see how God cared so much about that particular topic that he has it all over the Bible. Another way to do that is online. I am such a computer person that I live on the computer. A good study tool online is www.biblegateway.com. Type in a word to do a keyword search, and it will bring up all of the places in the Bible that it occurs. You can also research by a person’s name. It is fun to do a character study in the Bible. You can type in a person’s name and see everywhere it comes up. I recently taught a lesson on Ahithophel and being betrayed by a friend. I just typed in Ahithophel and brought it up and thought “This is really interesting.” I did not even know how I thought of the guy’s name. I am sure the Lord led me. I thought that this would make a really good Bible study because he betrayed his good friend.

Do you know that the Bible is a sword? It does not look like one, no sharp points. It does not look like it could really hurt anything. You can bend it. But it is a sword of the Spirit, and it is powerful. It is able to divide things; even the bone, the marrow, the joints, and the sinew. It can divide and make so clear. This little thing is a sword. When you know it; when you spend time in it every day, your sword gets sharpened. Just at the time that you need to use the Bible to help you, what you have been reading day

after day after day pops out. You find yourself saying something and it just comes out of your mouth because you have hidden this Word in your heart to please God. In Ephesians 6:12-18, it talks about the tools that we have, as a Christian, to help us. It says, "Be prepared." You are up against far more than you can handle on your own. God's Word is an indispensable weapon, so is the sword of the Spirit. When you think about the Holy Spirit, how do you picture Him? You know He is God and He is not an "it", like a nonperson. He is the Third Person of the Trinity, and it is His sword. He is real powerful. He is able to teach you, correct you, encourage you, and make clear the meaning of things to you through His sword. He can have you use the sword to do the same thing for other people.

The purpose for reading the Bible and daily quiet time is to get closer to God, to get to know Him. Should you try to have a certain translation? Well, you need one that you love to read and understand. King James was around forever. I think it was Mary, Queen of Scots who had a son named James. I went to Scotland and went through the castle where she lived and where James was. He had the Bible written during his reign and then it lasted for so long. It was the only translation of the Bible that people had for many, many years. Now there are so many translations of the Bible, you can find one that speaks to you. For me, it is not just one. I need more than one translation. You would laugh if you came to my house. I just had somebody come to my house and he got so tickled at the size of my Bible that we took a picture of us holding that Bible up. People tease me about that Bible. I never let it go out of my house. I did one time and I lost it, and I mean really lost it. I just cried and cried and prayed and prayed. It was too precious to me because my Daddy gave it to me in 1977. He is gone. He has gone on to Heaven and it meant the world to me. Also, I had written a lot in that Bible. Why did I like that Bible? Because it has four translations side by side; it had the King James, Modern Language, New Living Translation and Revised Standard versions.

When I study the Bible every day, I read out of a Bible I have had all of these years. Learn to underline in your Bible. In your quiet time when God leads you to a passage, you read it and you think, "What does that mean? What is He talking about? I don't quite get that." You can put a little question mark in your Bible. God will reveal it to you later or you can ask somebody. God wants to talk to you during this quiet time. When He does, be sure you underline that in your Bible or get a highlighter and highlight it and put a date by it. Put just a little something there that can remind you of what was going on in your life when God spoke to you that day. Jesus said, "My sheep know My voice. I know them and they follow Me." Some people say "I don't believe you can hear God talk to you." Oh yes you can. You ask anybody that is really trying to hear God. You bet you can hear Him. Sometimes you wish you could not, because He says things like, "You better straighten up." God will speak to you by His voice out of the Word, probably 95-96% of the time that you are saying "I want to hear You talk to me. God talk to me." He does it other ways, but primarily out of His Word. If you want God to talk to you but you are not having a daily quiet time, you are kind of defeating the purpose. You are not doing what you have to do to make it happen.

There is something special about a man reading the Bible. It makes an impression on people. My husband keeps a Bible at his office. A man that went to work for him that had never been around Godly men, only been around actually pretty evil men, said, "Miss Betty, when I go in there and I see Doc reading that Bible I am just so touched." My husband is not doing that to make an impression on anybody. He is just doing it because he has a daily quiet time at work. He has to wait until he gets to work.

It says in Luke 22, "All things have been committed to me by My Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal it." If you put that verse along with John 10:27, "And My sheep listen to My voice. I know them and they follow Me," you realize that to get close to God you are going to have to know Him. To know Him you are going to have to read the Bible. To read the Bible you are going to have to do it on a daily basis and have that daily quiet time.

What else happens if you read that Bible on a regular basis? You get your marching orders for the day. If you have your quiet time early in the morning; God can tell you "I need you to go here. I need you to go here. This is what I need you to do." He can instruct you with verses out of the Bible. You can do it the night before, but it is to prepare you for what lies ahead. There have been times I read the Bible and later in the day the very situation occurred that I had just read about in the Bible. You know the Bible is very current. It may be thousands of years old, but it is as current as *USA Today*, maybe even more current. Having a daily quiet time is a place to keep a journal and write down the questions you have, your inner

feelings, your dreams, your desires and any problems you are going through. I do it on my computer. It is easier because I can type faster than I can write. I do not do it every day. I imagine there are people watching this show that think, "I do it every day. I never miss." Well, I miss keeping a journal every day, but every so often I will go in there and just bring up the latest things God has taught me. Many times I have put a Bible verse in there that has really spoken to me.

How long do you read the Bible? Time really does not matter. I do not believe that God keeps a schedule. We are all made differently. Some people are so regimented and disciplined; they can do the same thing every day, day after day, year after year, forever. I am not like that. Maybe you are. But I am consistent in my own way and it has really paid off. I have had times that I have heard preachers preach a sermon about "Couldn't you tarry one hour?" meaning could you not have prayed one hour and stayed there for one hour? I would try it and about the third day I would be asking, "What do I talk about now? Lord help." It really did not help me. It became more of a religious act, and so I just went back to not even worrying about the time. Sometimes it is a really short amount of time, five minutes; sometimes it is 20, sometimes it is 30 and sometimes it is hours. I do not even worry about the time. Whatever happens is what happens.

Finally, you may have decided to start reading the Bible and you say, "All right Betty, you have convinced me. I am going to do it. Where do I start?" Have you ever read the Bible all the way through? Many Christians have not, maybe most Christians have not. A good way to do it is to start in Genesis and go all the way through. When you get to Leviticus hang on, it is hard. It does have some interesting things in there. Go all the way through so you can at least say, "Yes, I have read the Bible all the way through." What else can you read? You can read Proverbs. There are 31 chapters of Proverbs and there are 31 days of the month, so pick the day of the month and read that Proverb. If you will read this way over and over and over, you will get a lot of common sense and a lot of good wisdom. You can read the Psalms. You can try reading a few chapters in the Old Testament, a few chapters in the New Testament, some in Psalms and then your Proverb for the day." I have done that to study the Bible also.

Another way to study is to pick a book of the Bible and read it from beginning to end. Stick with it until you get it read. That is what I have been doing lately. I am reading Acts right now. I read John before that. I just got interested in it. One time I sat down and read Hebrews all the way through over several days, because it just really spoke to my heart. I believe that was because the Lord wanted me to read it then.

You can also read about a specific topic. If you are going through a problem in your marriage, finances, relationships or friends; find all of the Bible verses about that subject by using a Nave's Topical Bible. Look up your topic and read what the Word says about it. Memorize the verses that mean the most to you. If you are unsure about a real problem or real situation that you are going through, just read until you find a verse that says here is your answer. Memorize it. I copy the verse, read it out loud and put it where I will see it often. I have one up now where I put on my make-up. It is about Stephen. I wrote it down on a piece of paper and crossed out Stephen's name and wrote in Betty. The verse tells that Stephen was anointed by God and the Holy Spirit. He went around doing great signs and wonders. I put my name on that Scripture to encourage me to think, "Betty, you can do it too." Stephen was not a prophet. He was an ordinary person and he did it. He did great signs and wonders.

Study aids like a commentary, devotion book or written articles can also be helpful in your study of the Bible. But you can begin to have a daily quiet time with God. Just say, "Jesus, speak to me. I want to know You."

Quiet Time Questions

1. What are the two ways covered in this lesson to have a relationship with God?
2. What is the purpose for having a quiet time with the Lord?
3. Why is it important to have your quiet time in the morning?
4. What are the benefits of spending quiet time with the Lord?

5. What study tools could you use in your daily quiet time?
6. List at least ten suggestions given that you can use during your quiet time with the Lord.

To watch the video on THE DAILY QUIET TIME, Pillar One, Basic Discipleship go to:
www.bettyswann.com

Permissions: Feel free to reproduce and distribute any articles written by Betty Swann, in part or in whole, in any format, provided that you do not alter the wording in any way or charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction. It is our desire to spread this information, not protect or restrict it. Please include the following statement on any distributed copy: by Betty Swann, Betty Swann Ministries, P.O. Box 8882, Amarillo, TX 79114-8882, Amarillo, TX 79109, phone 806-433-4649, www.bettyswann.com, betty@bettyswann.com