



## *Quiet Time with God*

### **8 WAYS TO KEEP YOUR DEVOTIONS VIBRANT**

Every morning before my household wakes, I tiptoe downstairs, pour a cup of coffee, and settle into my leather loveseat for quiet time with God. Bible and journal in hand, I spend an hour delving into the Scriptures where—without fail—I discover nuggets of life-changing truth.

I regard this “sacred habit” not as a duty, but as a delight. It’s a discipline I guard selfishly. The benefits of maintaining it far outweigh the effort.

Spending time with God in this way helps me get to know Him better. I learn more about His thoughts regarding marriage, purity, communication skills, priorities, money, and other matters relevant to my every day life. I learn to view life and people through His eyes, and my perspective matures as I allow His thoughts pervade mine.

For instance, if unforeseen circumstances complicate my schedule, I’m now able to rest in knowing that God is in control rather than fussing and fuming about the unexpected changes. If someone behaves unkindly toward me, I resist the urge to do likewise and, instead, pray that God will meet that person at her deepest point of need. I now understand His compassion for the poor, the widow, and the orphan, and I share His desire to, in as much as is possible, live at peace with all men.

Spending time with God and thereby becoming more and more familiar with His promises also changes the way I view myself. The knowledge of His forgiveness and restoration washes away discouragement due to failure. His guarantee to equip me to do His work calms my fears of inadequacy. His assurance of divine strength carries me when I feel weak.

Establishing a daily quiet time with God transforms me, and it will do the same for all who pursue this discipline of delight. Here are a few suggestions to get started and to keep your time with Him vibrant:

- **Decide what time of day works best for you.** Early morning suits me now, but that wasn’t always the case. When my kids were toddlers, I snatched a few minutes when they napped. Some women use their lunch breaks. Some prefer to spend a few minutes with God at bedtime. Circumstances and life seasons change, so be flexible.
- **Create your own “sacred space.”** Find a place that’s welcoming and make it your own. Ensure good lighting. Keep a basket nearby to hold your Bible, journal, and study resources so you don’t waste time hunting for these things.



- **Choose a Bible version that's easy to understand.** I've used the New International Version and New American Standard Version in the past. Currently I use the New Living Translation. You might prefer a different version. That's okay—each to his own.
- **Set realistic goals.** I read only one or two verses per day when my kids were young and my time with God was limited. Now I read through the Bible in a year using the New Living Translation's *One Year Bible*. It's better to do what works than to set unrealistic goals and then quit because they're unattainable.
- **Keep a journal.** Some people write their insights in great depth. Others write only a single thought or a short prayer. Do what suits your nature knowing that journaling serves a dual purpose: Writing the insights you glean helps you process and remember them, and it enables you to see how you've grown spiritually over time.
- **Add variety.** Over the years, I've supplemented (not replaced) my Bible reading with a good devotional book or a women's Bible study. Occasionally I'll play quiet worship music, close my eyes, and meditate on the lyrics. Sometimes I read the Psalms aloud to the Lord. Often, I read the Word and then go for a walk, praying aloud as I go.
- **Regard it as a special time to build your friendship with God.** Several years ago, I thought I'd multi-task by using my quiet time to prepare a women's Sunday school class I taught. I soon realized that I was cheating myself and God. As author Bruce Wilkinson writes, I'd become an expert at serving God and a novice at being His friend. Ouch! Ensure that your goal is to become an expert at being His friend.
- **Ask God to speak to you.** When we meet with a good friend, we enjoy a two---way conversation. The same is true when we spend time with God. He invites us to tell Him our needs and concerns, but He desires to communicate His heart with us, too. So, go ahead— share your thoughts with Him but be still and listen for His voice, too. Write down what He says.
- **Avoid compartmentalizing your quiet time with God.** What new insights did you learn about God's character? What instructions did He give? What promises did He offer? Now take these thoughts gleaned in your "sacred space" and apply them as you go throughout your day. That's when change truly occurs.

My prayer for you is that your quiet time with God will be a duty of sheer delight. "My heart has heard you say, 'Come and talk with me.' And my heart responds, 'LORD, I am coming'" (Psalm 27:8).

