

Quality Time with God

Simple Steps toward Dynamic Devotions

It is important to learn to hear God's voice.

And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. - John 10:4

They are working for others' good; their duties are pressing, their responsibilities are many, and they allow their labor to crowd out devotion. Communion with God through prayer and a study of His word is neglected. ... They walk apart from Christ, their life is not pervaded by His grace, and the characteristics of self are revealed. Their service is marred by desire for supremacy, and the harsh, unlovely traits of the unsubdued heart. Here is one of the chief secrets of failure in Christian work. (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 52)

Create an appropriate environment – BEFORE you get on Facebook or a news website!

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 walk,
For I lift up my soul to You. - Psalm 143:8

The words and the character of Christ should be often the subject of our thoughts and of our conversation, and each day some time should be especially devoted to prayerful meditation upon these sacred themes. (*The Sanctified Life*, pp. 91, 92)

One passage studied until its significance is clear to the mind and its relation to the plan of salvation is evident, is of more value than the perusal of many chapters with no definite purpose in view and no positive instruction gained. (*Steps to Christ*, p. 90)

As you read, ask:

- Does a term, sentence, or phrase stand out? Underline it.
- Do you find yourself reading the same words over and over? Circle them.
- Does what you read bring an event, a song, a person, or a problem to your mind? *Write it down in the margin or in a notebook.*

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. - 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Read Several Versions of the Passage

Interacting with the Text:

Allow the text to speak to you personally by asking yourself, How is God using this to speak to me? Interacting with the text creates an active participation rather than a passive skimming of the words.

Engage the senses:

Sight – Read the text

Sound – Read the text out loud, listen to an audio Bible, or imagine the sounds

Smell – How would you “smell” the text?

Touch – Write out meaningful passages. Circle, underline, highlight.

Taste – “Taste and see that the Lord is good...” = experience

Ask questions of the text.

How does God reveal His love through this text?

What does this text make me feel like doing?

When would this text be useful to me?

The benefits of dwelling thoughtfully on a text.

1. Circle the benefits of dwelling thoughtfully on the text.
 2. Highlight the ones that mean the most to you.
 3. What do you hear God saying to you?
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As the mind dwells upon Christ, the ***character*** is molded after the divine similitude. The thoughts are pervaded with a sense of His goodness, His love. We ***contemplate*** His character, and thus He is in all our thoughts. His love encloses us. If we gaze even a moment upon the sun in its meridian glory, when we turn away our eyes, the image of the sun will appear in everything upon which we look. Thus it is when we behold Jesus; everything we look upon reflects His image, the Sun of righteousness. We cannot see anything else, or talk of anything else. His image is imprinted upon the eye of the soul and affects every portion of our daily life, softening and subduing our whole nature. By ***beholding***, we are conformed to the divine similitude, even the likeness of Christ. To all with whom we associate we reflect the bright and cheerful beams of His righteousness. We have become transformed in character; for heart, soul, mind, are irradiated by the reflection of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. (*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 388)

As you read, ask these questions:

- What is the main point of this text?
- What is God saying to me?
- How should I respond to this text?
- Draw a picture! Make a Post-it note

The Importance of Abiding in God

I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more ***fruit***. ³You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it ***abides*** in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

⁵"I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who ***abides*** in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸By this My Father is glorified, that you bear ***much fruit***; so you will be My disciples. – John 15:1-8

Beware of Distractions

Satan well knows that all whom he can lead to ***neglect*** prayer and the searching of the Scriptures, will be overcome by his attacks. Therefore he invents every possible device to ***engross*** the mind. (*The Great Controversy*, p. 519)

Find something that you are excited about! Then find a way to interact with it.

Twelve Ideas to Liven Up your Devotional Time

1. Every Word devotional – Use as a launching point
2. Revival and Reformation, daily devotional –
<https://www.revivalandreformation.org/devotional>
Sends you the Bible chapter for the day, a short commentary by a Bible scholar (such as Dr. Michael Hasel), and the SOP chapter for the week (also in audio format).
3. Daily and Weekly Bible and SOP readings PDF -
<https://cdn.ministerialassociation.org/cdn/believe-his-prophets/BHP%20Schedule%202018-2019.pdf>
4. A daily devotional book from the ABC – Read the corresponding entry for each day and write down your thoughts about it.
5. Reading the Spirit of Prophecy – Each chapter of the Conflict of the Ages series usually begins with a list of Bible passages that correspond with that chapter. Read the Bible verses first and then the chapter of the SOP book.
6. Proverbs – Read one chapter a day.
7. The Gospels – Read through the gospels, comparing one with another.
8. The words of Christ – Find a Bible with the words of Christ in red. Study Jesus’ teachings.
9. Prayer Journaling – Ask God what you should study each morning and listen for His answer. Focus on God’s presence within the events of life. Be honest.
10. ESCAPES
Example: Is there an example for me to follow in this passage?
Sin: Is there a sin mentioned or alluded to in this passage that I need to consider?
Command: Is there a command or promise in this passage? Commands are also promises. When God tells us to do something, He will provide the means to follow His command. What is the command or promise telling me? How does the command or promise affect me in my life right now?
About God: What can I learn about God, Jesus, and/or the Holy Spirit in this passage?
Praise: Is there something to praise God for in this passage? Is there something to thank Him for?
Examine difficulties: Does this passage reveal any personal difficulties I need to be aware of? Are there issues in this passage that I don’t understand and need to spend more study time on?
Something for me to talk to God about: What is God saying to me through this passage that I need to talk to Him about?
(*Time With God*, Judy-Ann Neal, p. 59)
11. Imagine being part of a Bible story – Choose a Bible story and imagine that you were there. Write down what you would have seen, heard, smelled, and felt. What did you learn that can help you today? (see Ellen G. White, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 1)
12. Scripture memorization – Choose one Bible verse to memorize each day (or week). Each day, review the verses you have already memorized and add a new one.

Other Ideas:

Homework: Read *Steps to Christ*, Chapter 10 – A Knowledge of God

Suggested reading:

Neal, Judy-Ann (2017). *Time with God*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association.

Samaan, Philip G. (2009). *Christ's Way to Spiritual Growth*. Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald Publishing Association.

White, Ellen G. (1892). *Steps to Christ*. Oakland, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association.

White, Ellen G. (1937). *The Sanctified Life*. Washington, DC: Review & Herald Publishing Association.

White, Ellen G. (1956). *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association.