

## **WEEK 6: HOW TO SPEND TIME ALONE WITH GOD**

Devotional times or “quiet times” are vital to our spiritual growth. Seek to spend time alone with the Lord each day in His Word and in prayer. There is no one way to do it, and the method may change as you change seasons in life. The important thing is that you spend time with Him consistently. The purpose of a quiet time is not to do Bible study, although spending time in His Word should definitely be part of your time alone with Him. The purpose of a quiet time is not to just pray, although that also should be part of your quiet time. The purpose of a quiet time is not just a time to confess your sins, although we certainly should include that in our quiet times. But those three things are not the purpose of a quiet time. They are essential ingredients to help us accomplish the main purpose, which is to fellowship with the Lord, enjoying being alone in His presence, getting to know His heart through His Word, and sharing our heart with Him in prayer.

### **DAY 1: THE IMPORTANCE OF A DEVOTIONAL TIME**

First we will look at an Old Testament example of meeting with God. Then we will spend the remainder of the week using different methods to help you in spending time alone with the Lord in your devotional or quiet time.

#### **LOOKING UPWARD**

1. What do you typically do in your quiet times with the Lord?
2. What keeps you from spending time alone with God each day? What keeps you from spending time in His Word each day?

#### **LOOKING TO GOD’S WORD**

3. As you read Exodus 33:7-11, what are some principles you can derive from this passage about spending time alone with God?
  - Where? (v. 7)
  - What took place in their time together? (vs. 9-11)
  - Is there anything else that stands out to you about this time?

4. What observations can you make from Ecclesiastes 5:1-2 (NASB 95) concerning time alone with God? What imperatives did Solomon give?

“Guard your steps as you go to the house of God and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil.

Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God. For God is in heaven and you are on the earth; therefore let your words be few.”

5. Why do you think Solomon gave those specific imperatives?

6. If Jesus felt the need to get alone with the Father while He was on this earth, how much more should we? What can you learn about time alone with God from Jesus' example in Mark 1:35 (NASB 95)? You might ask the questions when, where, why, what?

“In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.”

## **LOOKING REFLECTIVELY**

Our days are naturally filled with lots of noise, hurrying from one place and one event to another. We are surrounded by people. To take time away to just sit and enjoy the presence of God is not easy for some, especially in the midst of busyness. Unless we plan for daily times alone with God and in His Word, that time will be pushed aside to make room for all the other pressing voices screaming for our attention. We all have situations that will draw us away from spending time with Him – children, jobs, family responsibilities, other pressing needs – but make time alone with the Lord a priority each day. Spend time in His Word each day, even if it's just to meditate on one verse.

- Are your "quiet times" something you look forward to each day ... or something you HAVE to do ... something you can check off your "to-do" list? What can you do to make your times alone with the Lord more of a "delight"?
- Will you seek to spend time with the Lord each day? What do you need to do to make that happen?
- Spend some time with Him now. Meditate on the memory verse for the week.

## DAY 2: ACTS

For the rest of this week, I will guide you through several ways to have a “quiet time.” We will not be using the regular format of Looking Upward, Looking Deeper, Looking Reflectively. This is not a Bible study on how to have a devotional time, but rather, you will spend time each day having a quiet time guided by the material for that day. Using variety in our times with the Lord keeps our times with Him fresh, instead of making them seem like a ritual. Ask God to speak to you each day from His Word through the Holy Spirit. Go to Him with a listening heart.

Two important ingredients in our times alone with God are prayer and the Word of God. Prayer is the way we talk to God, and the Word is the means through which God speaks to us. Today, we will focus on the aspect of prayer and how to implement the different forms of prayer into a quiet time. A familiar method that is often used in quiet times is ACTS.

### ADORATION

#### Psalm 29:1-2 (NASB 95)

“Ascribe to the LORD, O sons of the mighty,  
Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.  
Ascribe to the LORD the glory due to His name;  
Worship the LORD in holy array.”

- Adoration is not so much thanking God for **what** He has done as it is praising God for **who** He is.
- Worship God for who He is – His attributes and character. You might take each letter of the alphabet and praise Him for that attribute. Or you may take a passage and praise Him for the attributes in the Scripture.
- Write your own psalm of praise to God.

## CONFESSION

**Psalm 26:2** (NASB 95)

**“Examine me, O Lord, and try me; test my mind and my heart.”**

- Ask God to reveal to you any unconfessed sin. Did you speak an unkind word to someone? Did you have a jealous thought? Are you angry about something? Have you gossiped? Do you have a critical spirit? These are a few questions to consider. Be still and ask the Holy Spirit to show you any unconfessed sin.

If you are walking in the Spirit moment by moment, hopefully, you are dealing with sin as soon as you commit it. Keep short accounts with God. Don't let your "list of sins" build up and then confess them once a week, or once a month. Confess them moment by moment as God reveals them to you. Ask Him to keep you sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit in your life.

## THANKSGIVING

**1 Chronicles 16:8–12** (NASB 95)

“Oh give thanks to the LORD, call upon His name;  
Make known His deeds among the peoples.  
Sing to Him, sing praises to Him;  
Speak of all His wonders.  
Glory in His holy name;  
Let the heart of those who seek the LORD be glad.  
Seek the LORD and His strength;  
Seek His face continually.  
Remember His wonderful deeds which He has done,  
His marvels and the judgments from His mouth. . . . ”

- What should we be doing according to this passage? List the imperatives.
- Take some time to give thanks for His deeds, what God has done. Write them down.
- Sing to Him, sing praises to Him. Sing a chorus or a favorite hymn, giving thanks. One of my favorite choruses is: “The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. His mercies

never come to an end. They are new every morning; new every morning. Great is Thy faithfulness, O Lord. Great is Thy faithfulness.”

- Paul gave instructions to always give thanks for all things (Eph 5:20) and to give thanks in everything (1 Thess 5:18). Does that mean we are to give thanks for even the unpleasant and difficult circumstances in our lives? Explain your answer.

## **SUPPLICATION**

### **Phil. 4:6** (NASB 95)

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”

### **Ephesians 6:18** (NASB 95)

“With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.”

- Supplication means prayer, request, or petition.
- Take some time to pray for others . . . for yourself. Lay your requests before the Lord.
- Pray through the prayers of Paul as you pray for others this week.
  - Ephesians 3:14-21
  - Philippians 1:9-11
  - Colossians 1:9-12
- Pray “kingdom prayers.” Pray for God’s work in the church, in our city, our nation, the world.
- Meditate on the memory verse for the week.

## **DAY 3: WALKING THROUGH THE TABERNACLE**

When I was a college student at LSU, I went on a summer beach project to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina with Campus Crusade for Christ. Each night we gathered together at our house for Bible teaching. One night Rich Bademan shared with us how to have a quiet time by "walking through the Tabernacle." He challenged us to take some extended time that week and find a lonely place on the beach and "walk through the Tabernacle." It revolutionized my quiet times. I don't use this method every day, but when I do, it is always such a sweet time with the Lord. So, today, walk through the Tabernacle with the Lord! (I have included a diagram of the Tabernacle at the end of this day's lesson for you to refer to.)

### **THE OUTER COURT**

#### **1. Enter the outer court.**

- Enter His courts with thanksgiving and song. (Psalm 100:4)
- Sing praises to Him. A chorus or hymn.
- Praise Him through a psalm. (Psalms 95, 103, 139, 146, 147 are good examples to use.)
- You may want to write your own psalm of praise to Him.

#### **2. Altar of Burnt Offering (Sacrifice) - (Ex 29:10-25) – Aaron and his sons would offer a sacrifice on the altar of burnt offering.**

- Romans 12:1-2
- What does it mean to present your body as a living and holy sacrifice? How do you do that?
- Present yourself to the Lord. "Lord, I lay myself on the altar as a living sacrifice. Use me today however you please. I'm yours."
- Is there something hindering you from laying yourself on the altar, giving yourself completely to Him? If so, take time to talk to Him about those issues. Journal. Ask God to remove those hindrances.
- Ask Him to make you willing to present yourself a living sacrifice to Him.

**3. Laver for Cleansing** (Ex 30:18-21) – Aaron and his sons would wash their feet and hands before entering the tent of meeting so they wouldn't die. This is a time of confession.

- Psalm 139: 23-24
- Psalm 26:2
- Psalm 51:1-3
- 1 John 1:9
  
- Are there any unconfessed sins in my life?
- Have I spoken unkindly to or about someone? (Eph. 4:29)
- Do I have a critical spirit?
- Am I grumbling and complaining? (Phil. 2:14)
- Is there someone I have not forgiven? (Eph. 4:32)
- Am I causing any dissension or strife within the body of Christ by my actions or words?
- Are my thoughts true, honorable, right, pure, gracious? (Phil. 4:8)
- Do I want my way more than God's way?
- Am I bitter or angry about something? (Eph. 4:31)
- Am I walking in my flesh, or by the power of the Holy Spirit?
- Go before the Lord. Ask Him to search your heart and to reveal any unconfessed sin. Confess it, and turn away from it. He has forgiven you and cleansed you from your sin.

## **THE INNER COURT – THE HOLY PLACE** (Heb. 9:2)

**1. Candlesticks on the lampstand** (Ex. 25:31-40). The lampstand was made of pure gold with 6 branches. Oil was from beaten olives. The priests would trim the wicks twice a day – morning and evening (Ex. 30:7-8).

- The oil symbolizes the Holy Spirit, the power source.
- Ephesians 5:18 - Be filled with the Spirit.
- Ephesians 3:14-19
- "Lord, take control of my life. I acknowledge that I cannot live the Christian life in my own strength. Empower me through the power of your Holy Spirit."



## **2. Table of Showbread** (Ex. 25:23-30)

- A reminder of God's provision. Jesus is the Bread of life. (John 6:48)
- Phil. 4:19 God provides for us and meets our needs.
- Thank Him for His provisions and answers to prayers.
- Thank Him for what He has done in your personal life. Thank Him for what He has done and is doing in this church and in this ministry.

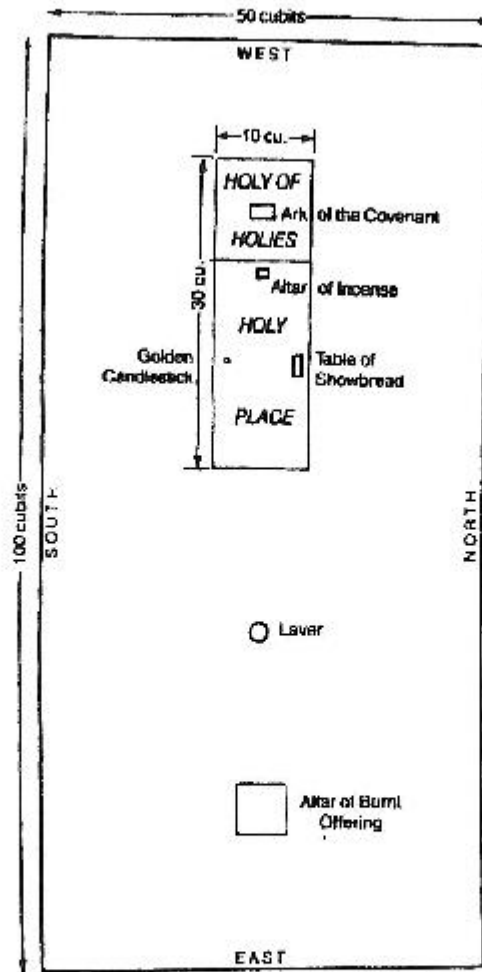
## **3. Altar of incense** (Exodus 30:1-10)

- Aaron burned fragrant incense on the altar twice a day, and he made atonement on its horns once a year before going into the Holy of Holies.
- Psalm 141:2, Rev 5:8, Rev 8:3-4 (The prayers of the saints are like incense before the Lord.)
- This is the place of intercession and supplication for others. Pray for others, your own personal needs, issues that need to be prayed over, etc. (Phil 4:6)
- What is on your heart today? Take it before Him.

## **THE INNER COURT – THE HOLY OF HOLIES** (Ex.40:3; Heb. 9:3-5)

- Now you're ready to just spend time enjoying being in His presence.
  - Psalm 46:10 (KJV) - "Be still and know that I am God."
  - Enjoy being in His presence. Sing, journal, study His Word. Be silent. Let Him speak to you through His Word.
  - Even though I look at Scripture throughout each section of the Tabernacle, this is where I spend time in His Word. I do my Bible study here, and I ask God to make me attentive and responsive to what He wants to say to me through His Word.
  - Linger in His presence. Enjoy the Holy of Holies all day long. Just because you leave your devotional or quiet time does not mean you leave His presence or that your sweet fellowship with Him is over. Continue to enjoy sweet communion with Him throughout the day.
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- Meditate on the memory verse for the week.

MOSES AND THE GODS OF EGYPT



The Plan of the Tabernacle Complex

The Tabernacle  
From *Moses & The Gods of Egypt*, by John J. Davis. Baker Book House, p. 270.

## DAY 4: A THREE-STEP DISCIPLINE

In Bill Hybels' book *Honest to God? Becoming an Authentic Christian*, he talks about how he developed a three-phased "life-changing" discipline that he uses every day to keep him "connected" to God.<sup>1</sup> Today, we will use this discipline in our time alone with God.

### I. JOURNALING

1. Why is journaling helpful? What does it accomplish?
  
2. Begin by journaling. Start with the word, "Yesterday..." Bill Hybels explains, "Write a brief description of people you met with, decisions you made, thoughts or feelings you had, high points, low points, frustrations, Bible-reading – anything about the previous day. Then analyze it. Did you make good decisions, or bad decisions? Did you use your time wisely or waste it? Should you have done anything differently?"<sup>2</sup> Evaluate yesterday.
  
3. Write down what you would like to accomplish today.

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<sup>1</sup> Bill Hybels, *Honest to God? Becoming an Authentic Christian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

## II. PRAYER

If you have trouble concentrating and staying focused when you pray, write out your prayers in your journal. I often do that and it is encouraging to look back over my prayers throughout the week, and see how God has answered.

Use the ACTS pattern again.

**Adoration:** Bill Hybels continues, "Each morning after filling my 'yesterday' page, I write a big A on the next page, then spend a few minutes writing a paragraph of praise to the Lord. Sometimes I paraphrase a psalm, or attempt to write a poem. Sometimes I write the words to a praise song, and then sing it quietly in the privacy of my office. Often, I focus on the attributes of God, sometimes listing them all, sometimes meditating on just one. . . . Begin to worship God when you pray. Be creative. Experiment. Use choruses and psalms."<sup>3</sup>

**Confession:** Write out specific sins.

**Thanksgiving:** In your journal, thank God for specific spiritual, relational, and material blessings.

**Supplication:** Bill Hybels breaks his prayers into four categories: ministry, people, family, and personal. You can make up your own categories of prayer. Keep a list of what you've prayed for and periodically look back over them to see how God has responded to your prayers. Keep a journal of answered prayers.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 20-21.



## **DAY 5: PRAYING THROUGH A PSALM**

Many of the Psalms are David's "quiet times," his conversations with God. Some of the psalms were written during times when David was scared, tired, in need, and they express supplication and requests. Other psalms were written to praise God. It is refreshing to take a psalm and pray it back to God, as well as make notes on what speaks to you from the psalmist's words. David's psalms tend to always focus on who God is and what He has done, and brings that to the forefront of our thoughts. Today, we will take Psalm 145 and pray through it in our time alone with the Lord. Go before Him in awe and worship.

### **Psalm 145**

1. Begin by praying the psalm back to God. For instance, beginning in verse 1, "I will extol You, my God, O King. I will bless your name forever and ever. Lord, You are great and highly to be praised. Your greatness is unsearchable."
2. How have you seen God's greatness in your life?
3. Write down all the attributes of God that are mentioned in this psalm and praise God for them.
4. Make a list of all that God does for us. Thank Him.

5. How did David respond to God? How are we to respond? Ask God to give you the desire to respond in the appropriate way to Him.

6. "All Your works shall give thanks to You, O Lord" (v. 10). Give thanks to the Lord.

7. How have you seen God's grace and mercy in your life?

8. How have you seen His abundant goodness (v. 7) in your life?

9. Write down anything else that stands out to you from this psalm. Perhaps write a psalm of your own to the Lord.

You can develop your own creative ways to spend time alone with the Lord.

- Meditate on the memory verse of the week.

**HELPFUL RESOURCES:**

Chambers, Oswald. *My Utmost for His Highest*. Barbour Publishing, 1963.

Coleman, Mrs. Charles E. *Streams in the Desert*. Zondervan, 1966.

Hybels, Bill. *Honest to God? Becoming an Authentic Christian*. Zondervan, 1992.

Lotz, Anne Graham. *Daily Light for Every Day*. Thomas Nelson, 1998.

Rhodes, Tricia McCary. *The Soul at Rest: A Journey Into Contemplative Prayer*. Bethany House, 1996.

Young, Sarah. *Jesus Calling*. Thomas Nelson, 2004.