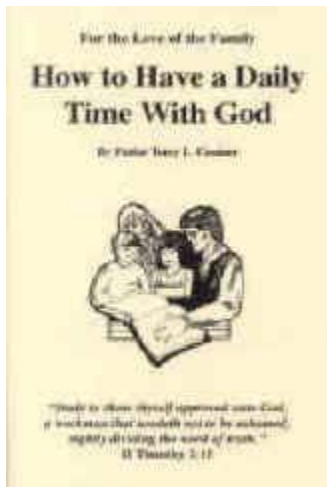


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How to Have a Daily Time with God



The most important thing that can happen in a person's life outside of receiving Jesus Christ as Savior is to learn how to have an intimate, personal, passionate relationship with the Lord. This is imperative to all other areas of the Christian life. Many children have not been trained by their parents to live for the Lord and the parents do not know how to have an intimate relationship with the Savior. Unfortunately, it is a vicious circle that ends up in destruction of many Christian families. Let me say that the Lord loves you and he wants to have a relationship with you. He wants you to really know Him in an intimate, personal, passionate way. He has provided everything you need to have that relationship through the Word of God and the Comforter the Holy Spirit. (II Peter 3:18, Philippians 3:10, John 16:7-8,13-14). If you are a parent it is your Biblical responsibility to convey to your children how to have an intimate, personal, passionate relationship with God. He will help you do that if you really desire to do so.

The following is a program to help you better realize the importance and understand how to read and study the Bible and to have a daily time with God. This is the only way for the Christian to grow spiritually, by being in the Word of God on a daily basis and to be in fellowship with God so God can teach the Christian spiritually.

II Timothy 2:15 "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." The word study here means, "give diligence to." The word workman means a "consistent building type of effort." Developing a relationship with God requires you commit yourself to the diligence of working at and building the relationship. Nothing ever good happens without making an effort. It requires you work at it. Most Christians are lazy at their spiritual life and expect God to do something in their life without them obeying the commands of God. Here, God commands us to study and work at it!

Romans 12:2 "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind (daily in the Word of God), that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Our mind is transformed by a renewing of our mind daily in the Word of God. We need to study the Word daily, to know the perfect will of God.

Every Christian should attend a Bible preaching and teaching church Sunday morning, Sunday evening and Wednesday evening, (Hebrews 10:25). God has commanded that you hear the preaching and teaching of God's word by one who has studied the Word of God and who is living a godly life, (Romans 10:14-15), Romans 10:17 "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God."

The question is how do I start to have a daily time with God? First of all you need to make sure you really are a Christian. You can never have a relationship with God unless you have really been saved. Do you know a time in your life that you realized you were a sinner and repented (turned from your sinful self and your dependence upon yourself) to Jesus who alone is the only one who can save you? Did you sincerely ask Jesus to forgive you of your sins and ask Him to come into your life and be your Savior? You are not a Christian because you are a church member, been baptized, are a good person etc. The Bible tells us very plainly "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." We need to repent of our sins and ask Jesus to come into our heart and save us. Romans 10:13 "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Are you a Christian? If not you can become a Christian right now. Stop where you are and pray this prayer. "Lord, I know that I am a sinner and I ask you right now to forgive me of my sins. I turn from my sins and myself to you and ask you to forgive me of my sins and to come into my heart and be my Savior. I receive you now. If you did that you are now born again or born from above. That is the place to start first. Now you can start a new life in Christ to have a personal, intimate, passionate relationship with Him. He loves you and died for you and wants you to have an abundant life in Him. If you did make a decision for Christ please let us know that so we can rejoice with you and send you some material that will help you.

As a Christian, attending services is not enough. You need to study the Bible every day for yourself.

Before You Start

1. You need a good study Bible, King James Version (see Some Essential Books to help you Study the Bible).
2. Get a spiral bound notebook for your spiritual diary. (You must have this to use this program).

How to Start

Now that you are a Christian you need to understand that the moment you asked Jesus Christ into your heart God the Holy Spirit came to indwell you, (II Corinthians 1:22, Romans 8:9). The Holy Spirit will convict you of the sins you commit in your daily life and expect you to repent and confess those sins, (I John 1:9). Prior to starting to read your Bible pray and ask God if there is any sin in your life that is causing you a problem between you and God. This is called having proper fellowship with God. You will not be able to read and study your Bible properly without first making sure there is no unconfessed sin in your life hindering your fellowship (relationship) with God. Pray this prayer, "Lord, I ask you right now to show me if there is any sin in my life that causes me to not have fellowship with you." The Lord will immediately bring to your mind any sin that you have committed that would hinder you from reading and studying your Bible properly. If He does bring something to your mind, pray this prayer, "Lord I ask you to forgive me of this sin (name whatever it is) and I turn from this sin now." Then you need to pray and ask God the Holy Spirit to teach you His Word this day and to fill and control you by the Holy Spirit today. Ask Him to show you specifically what you need for your life and for your family, I Corinthians 2:9-14, John 16: 12-15, John 14:26. Now you are ready to have the Holy Spirit, the master teacher, teach you today.

How to Read the Bible

1. Read daily.
2. Set a regular reading time. (Morning or evening consistently). I have used the morning because it gives me a better perspective on my day.
3. Keep a daily spiritual diary. I recommend using a spiral bound notebook. However, any notebook will do. Never read your Bible without some type of notebook to record what God is teaching you. The notebook does not lie. It lets you know whether you have spent your time with God today. Many Christians think they are a lot more faithful at reading their Bible than they are.
4. Set a regular pace. (Two to four chapters daily). Answer all the entries in your spiritual diary. (See what to include in your spiritual diary). This may take reading more chapters.
5. Read with a pen or a pencil in hand.
6. Mark in your Bible, underline, or note any important thought the Holy Spirit shows to you.

What to Include in Your Spiritual Diary

Start at the top of a page (I use one page a day) in your notebook.

1. Include at the top of the page: the day, the date, and the passage.
Example: Monday, 6/2/00, Colossians, Chapters 1-3. I start off by writing Colossians Chapter 1 and put the ending chapter after I finish because I do not know how long I will read. On the first line write:
2. God's Message to Me Today, then go down 4 or 5 lines and write:
3. A Promise from God, then go down 4 or 5 lines and write:
4. A Command to Keep, then go down 4 or 5 lines and write:
5. A Timeless Principle (A principle that is good for all time, Galatians 6:7). This principle is good in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, then go down 4 or 5 lines and write:
6. Your Application, then go down 4 or 5 lines and write:
7. Additional Comments

7/5/97 Luke 3-6

GOD'S MESSAGE TO ME TODAY

A PROMISE FROM GOD

A COMMAND TO KEEP

A TIMELESS PRINCIPLE

MY APPLICATION

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

You have now created a page (try to keep it on one page it is much easier) that as you read your Bible you are looking for these things as you read. Many people read their Bible but do not remember what they have read when they get down to the end of a chapter. You are now looking for specific things in your reading. You are now looking and concentrating, in essence asking God to show you these things. When you find one of these things in your reading write it down under that heading. Example: You find a promise from God in your reading write down exactly what that promise is from the Bible. Make sure you find each item on your spiritual diary page and write it down from the Bible.

Reasons for Keeping A Spiritual Diary

1. It provides a handy method for recording special daily insights from God's Word.
2. It provides an attitude of expectancy. (I will receive something from God today).
3. It provides a handy check on regularity. (The notebook does not lie).
4. It provides a handy review of what you have learned.
5. It provides an easy appraisal of spiritual growth. (What are you learning and how has God spoken to your heart).

What to Read in The Bible

1. The New Testament is where to start. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable." However, some scripture is more profitable than others.
2. The new Christian or someone who has never studied the Bible needs to get a handle on the New Testament first. There are books in the New Testament that are more profitable than others.

Where to Start Reading in Your Bible

1. When starting in a new book of the Bible always read the introductory material in your Bible first. This helps you to understand what is happening in this book.

2. Repetition is the Key to Learning. The more time you spend in a book, the better you will know that book. Go over and over the material asking God to open it to you.

Follow the following order in reading the books of the Bible. I recommend you start in the book of I John. I John has 5 short chapters, but it is the book every Christian needs to master because it tells us how to have fellowship with God. Read I John every day for 30 days (all five chapters).

Then follow this order. Read two to four chapters daily. Read completely through a book. Start over and read through the book again. Do each book at least twice. I would recommend 3 or 4 times. If you need to, go through the book several times until you understand the book. Remember that repetition is the key to learning. I believe the following order of reading will be most beneficial to you. After you have finished reading I John:

1. Read Gospel of John.
2. Read Gospel of Mark.
3. Read the Epistles of Paul (Galatians through Hebrews).
4. Read the Gospel of Luke.
5. Read the book of Acts.
6. Read the book of Romans.

I believe these are the most important books in the New Testament and they should be read and studied in this order first.

7. Read the remaining books in the New Testament you have not already read.
8. After reading through the New Testament, start reading one book in the Old Testament and one book in the New Testament alternately.
9. Start in the Old Testament with the following schedule: Proverbs, Psalms, Job, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. Then start with Genesis and read the rest of the Old Testament books. Example: Proverbs, I John, Psalms, Mark, Job, Galatians, Ecclesiastes, Ephesians, Song of Solomon, Philippians, Genesis, Colossians, Exodus etc. Until you are completely through the Bible. Remember that repetition is the key to learning.
10. This order should be followed for a few years until you are comfortable with your knowledge of the Scripture. I have used this in my own life for the past twenty years.

Some Essential Books to Help Study the Bible

1. A good King James Version reference study Bible (Open Bible, Life Application Study Bible, Thompson Chain, or Old Scofield). The Life Application Study Bible is available on our Web site:
<http://www.churchpages.org/fortheloveofthefamily/>

2. A Bible Concordance, Strong's Exhaustive Concordance King James Version. This helps you to look up any word in the Bible and find the verse. It also has a section for the Greek and Hebrew meaning of the word.
3. A Bible dictionary, Unger's Bible Dictionary. This helps you look up subjects just like a normal dictionary only this is for the Bible.
4. A one volume Bible Commentary (Wycliffe Bible Commentary).
5. It would be helpful to purchase Dr. J. Vernon McGee's Commentaries on the Bible. I would recommend reading his book on the Bible along with the book you are reading in the Bible. You can also use his books if you have a question about what you have read in your Bible. These books are in paperback and can only be purchased from Thru the Bible Radio, P.O. Box 7100 Pasadena California 91109. They are very easy to read. Cost ranges are from \$2.00 to \$4.00 each. They can also be purchased in hardback but are much more expensive. These books are excellent for young Christians to read. I would recommend reading these in connection with your daily study. Note: Dr. McGee was a good Bible teacher however, he is not a separatist. He will give you valuable easy to understand knowledge of the Bible.

Things to Look For in Your Reading of Your Bible

As you read a book, it would be wise to look for the following things and ask yourself these questions to determine the context of the book and what the overall theme of the book is.

1. Who is the author?
2. What were the circumstances of the author when the book was written?
3. To who written?
4. Is there anything special about them?
5. Where written?
6. Why was it written?
7. What is the key verse?
8. What is the theme?

What Studying Your Bible Will Do For You

1. It will make you a strong Christian (I John 2:14).
2. Assures us of salvation (I John 5:13).
3. Gives us confidence and power in prayer (I John 5:14-15, John 15:7).
4. Cleanses us from sin (John 15:3, John 17:17).
5. It gives joy (John 15:11).
6. It gives peace (John 16:33).
7. It guides us in making decisions of life (Psalm 119:105).
8. It enables you to articulate your faith (I Peter 3:15).
9. It guarantees your success (Joshua 1:8).

Prayer List

Keep a prayer list in the back of your notebook. It is best to pray for people and things specifically each day. Example:

1. Church - any needs you know of. Pray that souls would be saved at your church etc.
2. Pastor - any needs you know of. Pray for your Pastor to have God's power in his preaching. Pray for protection in his spiritual life etc.
3. Name of person - Salvation
4. Name of person - Spiritual growth
5. Other needs etc. Remember to pray specifically.

Pray for this list after you have done your Bible reading. Also pray about what God has shown you about your life that day. Make notes of what God has shown you.

How Long Will it Take?

Daily Bible Reading and Prayer, about 30 minutes to an hour each day. This is not very much time, but will be a direct benefit to your life. It will establish a life long habit of Bible reading, study, and prayer that will enrich your entire life. I cannot convince you of the importance of being in your Bible. I pray that the Holy Spirit will make this truth real to your heart. What if you do not feel like doing your Bible reading? Ask God to forgive you for your carnal attitude and to help you to have the right attitude toward study.

After reading your Bible daily in I John (read all 5 chapters each day) for 30 days to begin with, you will see a definite change in your life and spiritual maturity. You cannot afford not to study the word of God. You will find the results well worth the time invested.

Scripture Memorization

I would encourage you to seek to memorize scripture. Take a 3 X 5 card or a smaller card and write the scripture verse on the card. Also, write the subject of the scripture on the card. Example: Salvation-Romans 10:13, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." It is important not only to memorize the scripture, but what it is about. Carry the card with you and work on it as you have time. You are in no rush, but getting the scripture into your mind and heart is important. In our church we memorize a passage of Scripture a month and say it out loud together in the services. Generally at the end of the month all the church people have that passage of scripture memorized. This also helps in time of temptation as the Lord can bring the scripture back to our heart and mind.

Special Thoughts from God

Set aside a few pages at the back of your notebook for special thoughts from God. As you are doing your Bible reading and study, and God brings a special thought to you write it down in the back of the notebook. Put the date beside it and your thoughts about it. This is a very precious thing to be able to go back and review over these thoughts. It helps to remind you of the preciousness of the relationship you have with Him and how much He loves and cares about you. These are very special to go over when you have had a difficult day. It also increases your faith in times of review.

What about Small Children?

Your Biblical responsibility as a parent is to learn how to have a spiritual, intimate, personal, passionate relationship with the Lord. It is also your responsibility to convey that relationship to your children. It is your responsibility to bring your children up in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4, Proverbs 22:6, Proverbs 23:26). When your children are small have daily prayer and Bible reading with them. Talk to them about what you are reading to them. There are books available like Little Talks with God. The sooner you start the more opportunity the Holy Spirit has to work in their life. As they get older, devotionals like *Keys for Kids*, kfk@cbhministries.org or www.cbhministries.org, CBH Ministries, Box 1, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501, (616) 451-2009 are helpful. (Please note this is not a separatist ministry and we watch their material carefully). When they learn how to read well enough start them on the program outlined above. We did this with our girls and of course I reviewed their notebooks and talked about what they were learning from the Lord. This opened up times to have spiritual conversation and times of spiritual interaction, which is extremely important. I would suggest reading our book For the Love of the Family which is a "how to book" on rearing children to actually grow up and serve the Savior (available on the web site).

It is our prayer that the Holy Spirit will teach you much in the spiritual realm through your Daily Time with God and you will "grow in the grace and knowledge" of our precious Savior, II Peter 3:18.