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“Only in Holy Scripture do we learn to understand reality correctly. For example, our life, our troubles, and guilt are only ever a part – not the whole – of reality. In the Scriptures we see the full reality, for there is our life, our troubles and guilt, and our salvation”

-Dietrich Bonhoeffer-
Getting Started:

Did you know God wants to transform you into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ, by the power of his Holy Spirit? (2 Corinthians 3:18) God transforms people over time through corporate (publicly with others) and private worship, prayer, and bible reading; fellowship with God’s people (believers, Christians, disciples, followers of Christ); and acts of love toward all. The early Christians laid the pattern for our transformation as they “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” (Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:23-25) We should be using the Bible in our daily life to be transformed to the image of Christ. We should make it a daily goal of ours to hear, read, mark, learn and inwardly take in God’s word. We HEAR God’s word through teaching, reciting, reading, praying and listening to it. There are many reading plans and bible plans out there to help us READ through the whole scripture or individual books of the bible. We should TAKE NOTES, marking key verses or passages of scripture that stand out to us or teach us something about God or connections between Old and New Testaments. We should seek to LEARN the whole Bible, through memorizing key passages for spiritual growth, encouragement and sharing with others. As you TAKE IN scripture it should change your way of thinking and feeling about God, others, the world and yourself. It should shape your prayers, become the lens through which you view the world, and guide your attitudes and actions throughout life. Scripture is very important and crucial to our spiritual transformation. That’s why we should make it a priority to spend time in God’s word every day, valuing our alone time with Him. Transformation begins one day at a time as you set-aside time to be with God, hear and learn from Him, through prayer and the reading of His word.

What you’ll Need for Quiet Time:

1. Your Bible
2. A Pen
3. A Place
4. A Time
5. A Bible Plan or Reading Program
6. A Journal or Notebook
Quiet Time Methods

4 R’s Method:
4 R’s for Bible Reading, devotions and Quiet Time

1. **Read:** Read and mark the words and verses that speak to you.

2. **Reflect:** Think about what you marked or stood out to you from your reading.

3. **Record:** Capture what God said by writing in a journal or notebook.

4. **Respond:** Focus on truths God revealed to you, the ones you wrote down, pray to God and choose to apply them to your life.
The S.O.A.P. devotional method devised by pastor, bible teacher, and author Wayne Cordeiro. This method requires that you use a notebook or journal to record your thoughts and any actions you plan to take as you read from God’s Word daily. Your journal can be as simple or elaborate as you like, but the key is to write down what you take in each day so God’s Word can transform your life!

Here’s what S.O.A.P. means.

**S** is for **Scripture**: Open your Bible to the reading found under today’s date of your Bible reading plan. Take time reading and allow God to speak to you. When you are done, look for a verse that particularly spoke to you that day, and write it in your journal.

**O** is for **Observation**: What do you think God is saying to you in this scripture? Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and reveal Jesus to you. Paraphrase and write this scripture down in your own words, in your journal.

**A** for **Application**: Personalize what you have read, by asking yourself how it applies to your life right now. Perhaps it is instruction, encouragement, revelation of a new promise, or corrections for a particular area of your life. Write how this scripture can apply to you today.

**P** is for **Prayer**: This can be as simple as asking God to help you use this scripture, or it may be a greater insight on what He may be revealing to you. Remember, prayer is a two way conversation, so be sure to listen to what God has to say! Now, write it out.
1. **TALK** with God through Prayer

2. **INVESTIGATE** God’s Word by Reading

3. **MAKE IT PRACTICAL** and take active steps to live out God’s commands and words

4. **EXPRESS YOUR THOUGHTS** through Prayer, writing down your thoughts or what God taught you in a journal or notebook

**“IT” Method: “It” is the Bible**

1. Pray it
2. Read it
3. Hear it
4. Study It
5. Think It
6. Meditate on it
7. Journal it
8. Memorize it
9. Share it
10. Obey it
Daily bible reading is a great way to grow spiritually.

“The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right. It is God’s way of making us well prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR BIBLE READING:

1. Make daily reading a habit

2. Read with a purpose in mind. You should be reading the Bible in order to understand the will of God for your life.

3. Study as you read. Take notes.


5. Pray before and after you read.

6. Find a partner to read along with you.
One way to know God is to spend time with him each day. Set aside a specific time for prayer and Bible study and plan to stick to it... Ask yourself, Have I surrendered this new day to God and will I seek and obey the guidance of the Holy Spirit throughout its hours? Wait until you can honestly say, Yes...

**Liddell Method:**
Eric Liddell’s Morning Quiet Time Routine

Here are some suggestions to help you make the most of that time:

1. **Be still.** God, the source of all truth and love, is here. Take time to realize his presence. Be glad that he speaks when we listen and hears when we pray. Thank him for his Spirit living in us. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name.

2. **For what are you especially thankful this morning?** Name some of God’s gifts to you: friends, family, lessons learned, challenge of difficulties, new responsibilities, etc. Thank him particularly for Christ and the new freedom he has given you. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.

3. **Accept Christ into your life for today with all his qualities... and with his passion to do God’s will.** Where you failed yesterday to measure up to Christ’s standards, be honest about it. Accept promptly God’s forgiveness and release in Christ. Get up and go on in his strength. Create in me a clean heart, O God (Ps. 51.10) Go and sin no more. (John 8.11)

4. **In light of God’s love and the world’s needs, what new responsibilities for people and situations does God want you to take today?** Find out his plan. Make notes of thinks he wants you to do, people to pray for, etc. Listen to God fearlessly throughout the day. In the world you have trouble, but courage! – I have conquered the world. (John 16.33).

5. **What new message has God for you from the Bible this morning?** What new light does your study throw on his plan for the world, and your part in it? If anyone loves me, he will obey my word.

6. **Remember your duty today is to witness for God by example, character, in the home, at your work and in your spare time.** Be ready also to witness to God’s grace, mercy and guidance. Be alert to pass on any message that would help or cheer another. You have prayed, Thy kingdom come. How are you going to help God answer that prayer?
Liddell’s Morning Prayer checklist:

1. Have I surrendered this new day to God, and will I seek and obey the guidance of the Holy Spirit throughout its hours?

2. What have I especially to thank God for this morning?

3. Is there any sin in my life for which I should seek Christ's forgiveness and cleansing? Is there any apology or restitution to make?

4. For whom does God want me to pray this morning?

5. What bearing does this morning's Bible passage have on my life, and what does He want to do about it?

6. What does God want me to do today and how does He want me to do it?
The “ART” Method: The ART of having a Quiet Time

A = ASK God to speak to you
R = READ God’s Word & listen
T = TALK with God in prayer

Getting Started:

You need to select a place and a time that works for you. Since consistency is the key, having a set place and time of day that is comfortable, practical, and maintainable is essential. It may take you a week or more of ‘trial and error’ to figure out what works best for you.

*NOTE: As life changes, you may need to adjust this to fit

You should consider selecting material to help you. There are many devotional aids in the Christian bookstore. Over time, you will likely need to experiment with different things to keep your experience ‘fresh’ and help you maintain motivation.

*NOTE: The One-Year Bible is an excellent resource to begin with, as it is already arranged into 365 daily readings. For example, on day one, you read a few verses in Genesis 1, a few verses in Matthew 1, Psalm 1, and Proverbs. The next day, you begin where you left off. At the end of the year, you will have read the entire Bible!
1. **ASK** God To Speak To You

Begin by praying and asking God to help you to understand His Word, by the power of His Spirit, so that your mind and heart are open to His instruction.

2. **READ** God’s Word & Listen

Read the day’s verses. If something ‘jumps out at you,’ make note of it (underline it, highlight it, or write it down). Meditate on what you’ve read. Sit quietly and think about the verses, especially the things that ‘jumped out’ at you. Ask yourself if there is a command to obey, a promise to claim, a sin to repent of, and so forth. Commit to do what you’ve read. Make a decision to obey the command, claim the promise, confess the sin, etc.

3. **TALK** With God In Prayer (A.C.T.S)

   a. **ADORATION**: Tell God what you appreciate about His character, creation, etc.

   b. **CONFESSION**: Admit sins that come to mind. Ask for forgiveness/cleansing and commit to obey.

   c. **THANKSGIVING**: God for His provision, love, blessings, presence, help, etc.

   d. **SUPPLICATION**: Ask God to intervene on specific issues in your life and in the lives of others.
In the space that remains I would like to suggest a few thoughts for developing a consistent quiet-time. As you go about this process remember that it will not be easy nor without a fight. That you can be sure of. So arm yourself. There are four things to think about. First, a consistent time. Second, a consistent place. Third, a consistent plan. Fourth, a reward.

**A Consistent Time**

It is important in the process of developing a regular and meaningful quiet-time, where you can be alone and away from distractions, to nail down a specific time each day. For those of you who have a set schedule every day this is usually not too difficult. I find the best time is early in the morning, before I go to work. This may work for many guys who are working outside the home. Some of you may find the evening a better time. It's up to you; trial and error. Others of us, say, women with young children, may find it easier to sit down and pray when the children are either having a nap or, if they're old enough, immediately after they've gone to school and before the day gets rolling. The important thing is that you have a block of time (15 minutes? 30 minutes? 1 hour?, etc.) set aside each day (or as often as you can) in which to draw near to the Lord. Guard this time and ask the Lord to keep it free for prayer and meditation on scripture. Obviously we are not saying that you cannot have a quiet-time at any other time, but it is important in developing a good (holy) habit to pave the way by seeking consistency.

**A Consistent Place**

Another important factor is a consistent place, preferably not in front of the T.V.! Again, think of a place where you will have no distractions (or at least as close to none as possible) and where you will have freedom to pray out loud. Again, we can have a quiet-time anywhere (e.g., on the subway travelling to work), but not if we’re being distracted constantly by various intrusions. One of the reasons Jesus went up into the hills at night to pray was because there were no crowds there and he could focus on the Father without interruption. Whatever place we decide on, it should be similarly chosen.
A Consistent Plan

Once we’ve decided on the place and time, we should then set about the task of determining what portion of scripture we’ll be reading. It should be a portion long enough to provide some context to the story or teaching, but short enough so that much time can be spent in meditating on what has been read. It is here that we ask the Lord not only what the text means, but also what it now means for me. I recommend a Psalm, a paragraph or two in Paul, or an episode in the narrative literature such as the gospels or OT. You will also want to take along a pen and journal to record your thoughts and to list things to pray about. In my prayers I often use the acronym ACTS: A=adoration; C=confession; T=thanksgiving; and S=supplication.

The Reward

The best way to envision your quiet-time is not as another thing to do—on top of the already overwhelming list of things to do—but as an opportunity to deepen a bond of love with the ultimate Friend. We should look forward to it like we did Christmas morning as youngsters. Remember Christmas Eve? Guests were over, mom and dad were sitting in the living room talking with friends, lights were twinkling on the tree, presents underneath, and the sound of laughter all around; excitement filled the air like a rich perfume. No kid can wait for Christmas morning. My prayer is that God would fill our hearts with that sense of excitement and expectation as we come to fellowship with him each day. Come to each quiet-time with that expectation and see if the Lord does not reward your seeking him. I leave you with a passage of scripture: Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please him, for the one who comes to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him
First, be quiet before the Lord. The Bible calls it waiting on God. You start by simply sitting down and keeping quiet. As you do this, you’ll find yourself revving your engine down and calming yourself.

Second, pray briefly. Start off with a short opening prayer. Ask God to open your mind and guide you. Ask him to cleanse your mind.

Read a portion of Scripture slowly. This is where your conversation with God begins. He starts speaking to you through his Word, and then you speak back to him through prayer. Read the Bible slowly. Don’t try to read too quickly or too much. The more slowly you read Scripture, the more you’re forced to think about what you’re reading.

Meditate on the Word. Spend some time chewing on what God is saying. Chew on the Word like cows chew on cud. Ponder and wrestle with it in your mind. There are lots of great methods for meditating on the Word. You can find specific ideas on how to meditate on the Bible in my book “Rick Warren’s Bible Study Methods.”

Write down what you discover. When God speaks to you through his Word, care enough about what he is saying to write it down. Writing enables us to remember what God has said to us and record our discoveries.
Pray again. Be quiet. Ask God to show you his Word. Talk to God about what he has said to you. Tell him what you’re thinking about what he is saying. Talk to him about anything else that’s on your mind. There’s not just one way to have a quiet time, but following a plan similar to this can get you started on a rewarding devotional journey.

Talk It Over
Have you ever thought about your quiet time as an intimate conversation with God? What distractions do you need to eliminate in order to “be quiet”? 
The Bible Encourages Quiet Time

Psalm 1:2
but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

Psalm 46:10
“Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”

Psalm 62:1
For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation.

Psalm 91:1
He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

Psalm 119:9
How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.

Isaiah 2:17
And the haughtiness of man shall be humbled, and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low, and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day.

Isaiah 41:1
Listen to me in silence, O coastlands; let the peoples renew their strength; let them approach, then let them speak; let us together draw near for judgment.

Matthew 6:6
But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Matthew 6:33
But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
Matthew 14:22–23
22 Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone,

Mark 1:35–37
35 And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. 36 And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, 37 and they found him and said to him, “Everyone is looking for you.”

Mark 11:22–24
22 And Jesus answered them, “Have faith in God. 23 Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. 24 Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

2 Timothy 2:15
Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

Hebrews 13:9
Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them.

James 4:8
Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Revelation 3:20
Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.
The Bible is God's revelation to humankind and it teaches us much about who God is and who we are. Through the Bible we are called to be in a relationship with God. God's word is of immense importance to Christians as it teaches, rebukes, corrects, and shows us how to live a holy life. Thus it is worthy of our examination and memorization, the following verses reflect:

1. **GOD’S COMMANDS SHOULD FILL OUR LIVES**

   Deuteronomy 6:6–9
   6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

2. **DELIGHT IN GOD’S WORD AND PROSPER** *(aka GROW + FLOURISH)*

   Psalm 1:2–3
   2 but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

3. **OBEYING GOD’S WORD KEEPS US FROM SIN**

   Psalm 119:9
   How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.

4. **GOD’S WORD REVEALS GOD’S PLAN OF SALVATION**

   Romans 1:16
   For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

5. **GOD’S WORD TO BE HANDLED RIGHTLY**

   2 Timothy 2:15
   Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.
6. GOD’S WORD EQUIPS US FOR LIFE
2 Timothy 3:16–17
16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

7. GOD’S WORD IS CONVICTING: JUDGING OUR THOUGHTS & ATTITUDES
Hebrews 4:12
For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

8. WE SHOULD NOT ONLY LISTEN TO GOD’S WORD, BUT OBEY IT
James 1:22
But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

9. GOD’S WORD IS INSPIRED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT
2 Peter 1:21
For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
Here are the three most practical suggestions for consistent success in Bible reading.

**First find the time.** Perhaps one of the main reasons Christians never read through the entire Bible is discouragement. Most people have never read a thousand-page book before and get discouraged at the sheer length of the Bible. Do you realize that tape-recorded readings of the Bible have proven that you can read through the entire Book in seventy-one hours? The average person in the United States watches that much television in less than two weeks. In no more than fifteen minutes a day you can read through the Bible in less than a year’s time. Only five minutes a day takes you through the Bible in less than three years. And yet the majority of Christians never read the Bible all the way through in their whole life. So we’re back to the idea that it’s primarily a matter of discipline and motivation.

Discipline yourself to find the time. Try to make it the same time every day. Try to make it a time other than just before you go to sleep. There’s value in reading the Bible just before you drop off, but if this is the only time you read Scripture then you should try to find another time. There are at least two reasons for this. First, you will retain very little of what you read when you’re so tired and sleepy. And second, if you’re like me, you probably do very little evil in your sleep. You need to encounter Christ in the Scriptures when it will still have an impact on your day.

**The second practical suggestion is to find a Bible-reading plan.** It’s no wonder that those who simply open the Bible at random each day soon drop the discipline. There are inexpensive Bible reading plans available in all Christian bookstores. Many study Bibles contain a reading schedule somewhere within the pages. Most local churches can provide you with a daily reading guide also.

Apart from a specific plan, reading three chapters every day and five on Sundays will take you through the Bible in a year’s time. Read three in the Old Testament and three in the New Testament every day, and you will finish the Old Testament once and the New Testament four times in a twelve-month span.
My favorite plan involves reading in five places each day. I begin in Genesis (the Law), Joshua (History), Job (Poetry), Isaiah (the Prophets), and Matthew (the New Testament) and read an equal number of chapters in each section. A variation of this plan is to read in three places daily, starting in Genesis, Job, and Matthew, respectively. The three sections are roughly the same in length, so you will finish them all about the same time. The great advantage of such a design is its variety. Many who intend to read straight through the Bible become confused in Leviticus, discouraged in Numbers, and give up completely by Deuteronomy. But when you are reading in more than one place each day, it’s easier to keep up the momentum.

Even if you don’t read through the Bible in a year’s time, keep a record of which books you have read. Put a check beside a chapter when you read it or by the title of a book in the table of contents when you’ve completed it. That way, regardless of how long it takes, or in what order they’re read, you’ll know when you’ve read every book in the Bible.

The third suggestion is to find at least one word, phrase, or verse to meditate on each time you read. We’ll look at meditation more closely in the next chapter, but you should recognize now that without meditation you may close your Bible and not be able to remember a single thing you’ve read. And if that happens, your Bible reading is not likely to change you. Even with a good plan, it can become a mundane chore instead of a Discipline of joy. Take at least one thing you’ve read and think deeply about it for a few moments. Your insight into Scripture will deepen and you’ll better understand how it applies to your life. And the more you apply the truth of Scripture, the more you’ll become like Jesus.

**INSPIRATIONAL BIBLE READING STORY**

We should all have the passion for reading God’s Word of the man in this story. Evangelist Robert L. Sumner, in his book The Wonder of the Word of God, tells of a man in Kansas City who was severely injured in an explosion. His face was badly disfigured, and he lost his eyesight as well as both hands. He had just become a Christian when the accident happened, and one of his greatest disappointments was that he could no longer read the Bible. Then he heard about a lady in England who read braille with her lips. Hoping to do the same, he sent for some books of the Bible in braille. But he discovered that the nerve endings in his lips had been too badly damaged to distinguish the characters. One day, as he brought one of the braille pages to his lips, his tongue happened to touch a few of the raised characters and he could feel them. Like a flash he thought, “I can read the Bible using my tongue.” At the time Robert Sumner wrote his book, the man had read through the entire Bible four times. If he can do that, can you discipline yourself to read the Bible?
