My Quiet Time with God

(Why a Devotional Journal?)
3/3/2013

Every Christian needs a daily quiet time alone with God

No relationship can succeed without consistent communication.

I. I Need the <u>Word</u> *(every day)*
Time in the Word is essential: PSALM 1:1-3

II. I need <u>Prayer</u> *(every day)*

III. I need <u>Accountability</u> *(every day)*

Why a Devotional Journal?

A Devotional Journal will provide…
1. Direction
2. Consistency
3. Accountability

How to Use the Journal:

Mutual Involvement & Interaction
(Small Groups/Accountability Partner)

Mutual involvement & Interaction is evident in the N.T. church! See: I Cor. 14:24-26
The greatest support group in the world is the local church!
Why accountability?
--To provide a strong deterrent to secret sin.
--to provide mutual encouragement and prayer support.
--To reinforce positive behavior and faithfulness to commitments.
--To remind ourselves that we all share the same struggles and that no temptation is the unique experience of any particular person.

Accountability Verses: Hebrews 3:13; Hebrews 10:24; Romans 15:14; James 5:16; James 5:19-20; Romans 12:5; II Cor. 1:3-4; Gal. 6:1

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Introduction:

Every Christian needs a daily quiet time alone with God

No relationship can succeed without consistent communication. This is true of the believer and God. We need a time in which God can speak to us and we can speak to Him. He speaks to us through His Word, the Bible. We speak to Him through prayer.

A quiet time (or devotional time) is a time to meet with God. The Lord Jesus said, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me...If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:4, 7). To "abide" means to remain close to Him or to maintain intimate fellowship with Him. This relationship is the key to a fruitful and successful Christian life.

All problems (marital, social, societal, national) can be solved, if we cultivate a relationship with the God of the Universe!

Most people do not have a real relationship with the living God. Most who do have a relationship with God, do not have deep fellowship with Him.

We must commune with God in His Word and in Prayer!

I. I Need the Word (every day)

Time in the Word is essential:
PSALM 1:1-3
"This psalm, like a sign-post, points the way to blessedness" (F.B. Meyer, p. 11)

THE PATH OF THE BLESSED MAN (v. 1-3)
"Blessed" = fortunate, happy, joyful
"Blessed" = plural - meaning, "Oh, how very blessed"
The idea is that the man who does right receives as a reward from God many, many spiritual joys!

A. THE BLESSED MAN IS SEPARATED FROM THE WICKED (v. 1)
(He is a man of distinction)

Separation is holiness! (being set apart) "Be ye holy for I am holy."

God is concerned that we not be contaminated with the world (I Jn. 2:15-17)

1. He doesn't follow what they say (v. 1a)
(Their advice is no good)

"Ungodly" = those out of bounds, transgressors. Those guilty of overstepping God's boundaries.
We don't go to the world for spiritual, moral, family-related, etc., advice!
We should seek counsel from: 1) church 2) pastor 3) Bible 4) Christian friends.
It may not always be what you want to hear, but it will always be right!

2. He isn't found where they go (v. 1b)
(Their alley/avenue is no good)

3. He doesn't fellowship in what they do (v. 1c)
(Their assembly is no good)
"Sitteth" = points to a permanence and settled enjoyment.
The scorner like a dog barks at everything. He is sarcastic. He mocks truth. Makes fun of righteousness. He is an agnostic - he questions truth.

B. THE BLESSED MAN IS SATURATED IN THE WORD (v. 2)
(He is a man of direction)

1. He finds pleasure in God's Word - His attitude is "delight" (v. 2a)

NOTE: God's Word should not be a burden, drudgery, or mere duty, but a delight!
Psalm 119:16 - "I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word."

2. He faithfully ponders God's Word - His action is "meditates day and night" (v. 2b)

He memorizes and repeats it in his heart. The word must be digested to benefit us, just as literal food must be digested.

Meditate - Josh. 1:8 - "This book of the law . . ."

Why don't we meditate?

1) preoccupation with other things (too busy; too many burdens, etc.)
2) sin (This book will keep you from sin, and sin will keep you from this Book)
3) laziness (it takes work! Thinking is hard!)

It is better to have one verse welded in your brain than to skim over a whole chapter.

C. THE BLESSED MAN IS STABLE IN ALL HIS WAYS (v. 3)
(He is a man of durability)

"Planted" = passive; lit: That has been planted (by someone)

The picture is of a tree that has been transplanted. This is what the Lord did for us when we were saved - uprooted us from the world and replanted us in His Son!

1. He is productive (v. 3a) (fruitfulness)

Why is it fruitful? It is planted by rivers of water. it receives proper nourishment.

Like a tree which draws its vitalizing moisture from a constant source, so the godly man will derive his strength from the unfailing Word of God.

Fruit - Gal. 5:22 - "fruit of Spirit."

NOTE: Jesus plucked up unfruitful tree (cp. Heb. 6:7)

2. He is preserved (v. 3b) (vitality)

"Leaf" = an outward sign of inner life.

--Even if the winds of the world blow, this tree will stand!

--Even if the heat of this world comes, its leaves will stay moist and alive!

3. He is prosperous (v. 3c) (success)

Why does he prosper?
1) He has direction (v. 2) (not "spinning his wheels" aimlessly through life)
2) He has strength (the power of God)
3) He has purpose (no opposition will move him)

The Importance of the Bible:

Job considered God's Word more important than his necessary food.
Job 23:12 Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

Jesus said God's Word was vitally important for a person to sustain his life.
Matthew 4:4 - But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Jeremiah testified that God's Word was a food that brought joy to his heart.
Jeremiah 15:16 Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart:

Joshua discovered that God's Word was the key to his life's success.
Joshua 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

The Psalmist testified that God had elevated the importance of His Word even above the importance of His Name!
Psalm 138:2 I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

David considered God's Word sweeter than honey and of more value than gold.
Psalm 119:103 - How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!
Psalm 119:72 - The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.

Paul said in Colossians 3:16:
"let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom"

II. I need Prayer (every day)

"WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DON'T PRAY?"

Isaiah 59:16 - "And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him."
Isaiah 64:7 - "And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities."

1. You don't have the blessing of God in your life
   "...Ye have not because ye ask not" - Ja. 4:2

2. You are easily deceived and forfeit the discernment God provides
   Josh. 9:14-15 - "And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD. And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them."

3. Your ministry will not prosper, but fail
   Jer. 10:21 - "For the pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the LORD: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered."

4. You jeopardize the lives of others who are dependent on your prayers
   Jonah 1:6 - "So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not."

5. You miss out on the good things in life that God longs to give to you
   Mt. 7:7-11 - "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

6. You enter into temptation and succumb to its pressure
   Mt. 26:41 - "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

7. You don't see God accomplish what seems to be impossible
   Mk. 9:29 - "And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."

What Happens When We Pray?

When we pray.....

1. God responds with incredible, astonishing might
   (Jer. 33:3; cp. Acts 12:5-16)
   "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." (Jer. 33:3)

2. Satan's forces are withdrawn from us and held in check
   (Mt. 6:13; Eph. 6:10,12,18)
   "...lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from (the) evil (one)." (Mt. 6:13)

3. God's man has power & boldness in preaching the Word
   (II Th. 3:1; cp. Eph. 6:19-20)
   "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you." (II Thes. 3:1)

4. Fellow believers gain strength both Spiritually (Psalm 138:3) and Physically
   (Psalm 30:2,3) (Cp.Eph.3:14-19)

5. Our witness gains a Holy Spirit empowered boldness
   (Acts 4:31)
   "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." (Acts 4:31)

6. God brings deliverance in times of trouble
   (Psalm 34:6; 107:6; Jonah 2:1-2; Cp Acts 16:25-26)
   "This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." (Psalm 34:6)
   "Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses." (Psalm 107:6)
   "Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly, And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice."

7. Fear and worry flee from tormenting our minds
   (Psalm 34:4; Phil.4:6)
   "I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears." (Psalm 34:4)
   "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." (Phil. 4:6)
8. Our faith in God & our love for God grows as we see Him answer prayer.
   (Psalm 116:1)
   "I love the LORD, because He hath heard my voice, and my supplications." (Psalm 116:1)

9. God gives us needed wisdom & understanding
(cp.I Kings 3:9-12)

10. The Lord sends out Gospel laborers into the "harvest fields"
(Luke 10:2)
"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2)

11. The Lord applies a healing balm over a sick society
(II Chronicles 7:14)
"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." (II Chron. 7:14)

12. God's people gain peace and freedom from tyrannical, oppressive governmental leaders (Ezra 6:22; Prov.21:1; cp. I Tim 2:1-2)
"And (Israel) kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy: for the LORD had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel." (Ezra 6:22)
"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will." (Prov. 21:1)

13. The blind eyes of unsaved men are opened to the knowledge of the Truth
(cp. I Timothy 2:3-4)

III. I need Accountability (every day)

Mutual Involvement & Interaction

(Small Groups/Accountability Partner)

Mutual involvement & Interaction is evident in the N.T. church!
People shared testimonies of the new things God was teaching them and doing in their lives!

See: I Cor. 14:24

> Verse 26 teaches:
> --Layman participation in the service
> --Diversified types of service
> --All with a unified purpose of edifying the hearers
>
> The Body unites each week to build itself up spiritually.
> Every one of us needs the verbal encouragement received at a Biblical church service.
> Don't "Forsake the assembly" (Heb. 10:25) or you may miss out on just what you needed to hear to strengthen you in the faith.
>
> "All things" - All church ministry should have as its goal: edification. If it will not edify, it should not be part of a church service.
>
> "I [Wiersbe] recall being in a testimony meeting where a woman took forty minutes telling a boring experience and, as a result, destroyed the spirit of the meeting. Evangelist D. L. Moody was leading a service and asked a man to pray. Taking advantage of his opportunity, the man prayed on and on. Sensing that the prayer was killing the meeting instead of blessing it, Moody spoke up and said, "While our brother finishes his prayer, let us sing a hymn!" (Wiersbe, p. 615)

One of the greatest lacks in churches today is mutual accountability.

Even the world recognizes the need for support groups.
The secular world also recognizes the need for the positive force of peer pressure and accountability to help people struggling with addictions.

However, the greatest support group in the world is the local church! In this setting God provides spiritual friendships.

In the Bible, David had a courageous friend like Jonathan; he also had Nathan who lovingly rebuked him. Timothy had Paul to mentor him, and even Paul had the encouragement of Barnabas.

Why accountability?
--To provide a strong deterrent to secret sin.
--to provide mutual encouragement and prayer support.
--To reinforce positive behavior and faithfulness to commitments.
--To remind ourselves that we all share the same struggles and that no temptation is the unique experience of any particular person.

Obviously , the LORD is the One who keeps the believer faithful; however, one of the ways He works to keep us faithful is through the mutual support and encouragement of other believers. Just as God transmits the Gospel through believers, so He confronts, reminds, lovingly rebukes, teaches, and encourages through believers.

God's Word has much to say regarding the need for mutual accountability:

Hebrews 3:13 - But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Hebrews 10:24 - And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.

Romans 15:14 - And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

James 5:16 - Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

James 5:19-20 - Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

Romans 12:5 - So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

II Cor. 1:3-4 - "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

Gal. 6:1-2 - "Brethren if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Essentials for Christian Accountability

What is Biblical Accountability? What does it look like? What does it do?

1. **Accountability involves Encouragement**
   Hebrews 3:13 – "But exhort one another daily..."

2. **Accountability is Reciprocal (Mutual Care for each other)**
   Hebrews 3:13 – "But exhort one another daily..."

3. **Accountability involves Continual Communication**
   Hebrews 3:13 – "But exhort one another daily..."

4. **Accountability is Necessary to Keeping our Hearts Right with God**
   Hebrews 3:13 – "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

5. **Accountability Involves Attentive Consideration**
   Hebrews 10:24 - "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works"

6. **Accountability Involves Gracious Provocation unto Love & Good Works**
   Hebrews 10:24 - "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works"

7. **Biblical Accountability involves Loving Confrontation**
   Romans 15:14 - And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

8. **Accountability involves Humility**
   James 5:16 - Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed...

9. **Accountability involves Righteousness and Prayer**
   James 5:16b - ...pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

10. **Accountability involves Genuine Concern for the moral and spiritual well-being of your friend** (James 5:19-20)

11. **Accountability involves Truthfulness**
    Ephesians 4:15 - But speaking the truth in love...

12. **Accountability involves Confidentiality**
Proverbs 11:13 - A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

Why a Devotional Journal?

A Devotional Journal will provide…

1. Direction (A Plan; A systematic schedule yet allowing freedom)

2. Consistency (A Ruitine; Regular time with God; Just as eating daily is important, so is meeting with God)

3. Accountability

How to Use the Journal:

This Devotional Journal is designed to encourage a serious, daily time with God in His Word and in prayer.

It offers a guide to read through your Bible in one year and a lined section under each daily reading for your personal notes.

Reading with pen in hand ensures more attentiveness and is useful for your future reference of lessons learned.

The Journal also encourages one Bible Memory Verse per week as well as an accountability section for use in small groups or with an accountability partner.

A detailed section for your personal prayer list is also included along with other practical helps.

Conclusion:
It is our desire that you enjoy your time each day with God. Commune with Him. Let him speak to your heart daily. He has a great plan for your life. It all starts by you getting to know Him better.

May this tool encourage faith, discipline, accountability and a life-long habit of spending time with our Lord and Savior.

May God's grace empower you daily to experience spiritual maturity, continual personal revival, and spiritual prosperity.