

# The Fundamentals

## Lesson 1 – Quiet Time

Psalm 62:1-2 (ESV)

Before you start this lesson, please begin in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to reveal to you those things he has for you.

Now, get ready to open your Bibles.

In this study, we are going to look at the five fundamentals of the Christian faith. The fundamentals are something we need to grasp and understand, and perhaps learn for the first time, or refine. The five fundamentals are:

- 1) The word of God
- 2) Prayer
- 3) Worship
- 4) Serving
- 5) Giving

In addition to these five fundamentals, we are adding a sixth one, which is required just as much as the others:

- 6) Discipleship / Fellowship

However, before we can begin a study on the fundamentals of living the Christian life, we have to become aware of the environment where these fundamentals thrive and establish a pattern of living in that environment on a daily basis. This environment is what we call “Quiet Time.”

Our key verse for this first lesson will be Psalm 62:1-2. Write out those verses:

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Quiet time is not considered to be a fundamental of the Christian life because it is the *environment* in which the fundamentals are learned, practiced and developed. To some extent, all six fundamentals, especially the top three (the word of God, prayer and worship), exist in the environment of quiet time.

If you've never established a quiet time nor have any knowledge of the fundamentals of the Christian faith, this study will bless you immensely. If you already have a quiet time established and you're familiar with the fundamentals of the Christian life, this study can increase and enhance your quiet time and grow your knowledge as well as immensely bless you.

Before we dive into quiet time, let's talk about two Christian terms: **sanctification** and **salvation**.

## **SANCTIFICATION**

The term sanctification can be defined as "maturing." It literally means "being set apart" or "being made holy" or "being made fit for God's use."

Let's get something clear. If you've truly made a confession of Christ, received him as your Savior and your Lord, if you've believed in his name as John 1:12 says, then you are saved. You have been saved by God's grace alone and not of works lest you should have any reason to boast. You did nothing to earn your salvation, you simply received it. And, if you are being sanctified in the Christian faith, if you are maturing as a Christian, it will also be by God's grace alone. Both salvation and sanctification are by grace alone. There is nothing you can do to earn it or deserve it.

Write out Ephesians 2:8-9.

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The process of sanctification is you being set apart for God's use, you being made holy. It is a work wholly and completely of the Holy Spirit. It's what the Holy Spirit does in you and it is by God's grace alone and it is founded on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ - period. You cannot make yourself a better Christian. That is the Holy Spirit's job. You cannot earn your salvation; you cannot earn sanctification. However, that does not mean you don't have a role. We do have a role. Our life in Christ is all by faith alone. But there is a critically important "our part" part.

In the ESV Study Bible, there is a note under Romans 8:13 about sanctification. It says this:

“God and believers each have a role in sanctification.”

The Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB) says this about sanctification: “The believer participates with the Spirit in the process of transformation that continues until glorification. The goal of sanctification is progressive conformity to the image of Jesus Christ.”

That’s our goal: for us to be more and more like Jesus. The goal is for us to *actually change*. God’s goal is to transform us. *It’s to change us*. Transforming is the Holy Spirit’s job, we don’t get credit for it but we have a role in it.

Look up these scriptures:

Romans 12:2 (NKJ) - What are we told in this passage is our role in being transformed?

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2 Corinthians 3:18 (NLT) - Who is the one who changes us more and more into his image?

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It is the Lord, the Holy Spirit, who changes us into his image. Our part is to ask him to renew our minds through our personal relationship with Jesus and as we search the scriptures.

## **SALVATION**

Pastor Jon Courson explains salvation in a visually tangible way like this:

“It’s like if my dad owned a professional baseball team and his team was in the World Series and he calls to say ‘Hey Jon, you can’t catch a ball to save your life, you can’t hit a ball if it’s sitting on a tee, but I’m going to put you on the team anyway. I’m going to sign you up to a no-cut contract so we can’t cut you and I want you to come down here and just sit in the dugout the whole series.’ So I say ‘Okay, dad, I’ll receive that. I’ll come down and sign your no-cut contract and I’ll sit in the dugout the entire series. I’ll never play an out; I’ll never play an inning.’ Then, when my dad’s team wins the World Series, I still will get a ring; I’ll get the bonus check for the team winning the series; and I get to ride in the parade. I get all the glory of a World Series Champion. Some might say ‘Wait, you didn’t even play an inning.’ I respond ‘But my dad put me on the team. Talk to him about it.’ In this instance, all I had to do was receive his offer to sign that no-cut contract and I was on the team and received all the benefits.”

That’s our salvation. It’s all by our Father’s grace. We can sit in the dugout. We can do nothing all year and still get the rewards. *However*, wouldn’t it be better if we were in the

game? To actually be in the game, to learn how to catch a ball, to hit the ball (even if it's using one of those big plastic bats with a big plastic ball sitting on top of a tee), or catch a grounder. Playing is a lot more fun than being a spectator.

If you have put your faith in Jesus Christ, you're on the winning team; but there is a way for you to actually get in the game. We must realize that us being in the game is not required for our salvation. If we've received the no-cut contract (salvation by grace alone through faith alone), we can sit in the dugout and we'll get the ring and the bonus check when the team wins. But if we want to be in the game, we can be. It begins the same way learning to play baseball begins; it begins with the fundamentals. We can learn to be in the game. It doesn't earn us anything; we've already won the victory. But we get to be in the game. It's a privilege. It's an honor to serve our Father God by being in the game.

Being committed to living the fundamentals of the Christian life (or refining them) will make us an asset to the team (the body of Christ). So instead of just being on the sidelines, by living out the Christian fundamentals we are actually in the game. We have a part in what the Father is doing with the team. We do that by learning and living the fundamentals of the Christian life. When the fundamentals become second nature, we become used by the Father. The fundamentals don't save us; they make us more and more like him and enable us to be used by God.

Read Matthew 25:14-30. In this parable, two servants choose to be an active part of the "team" and one chose not to. What did the master say to those who choose to participate?

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With our salvation secured by the confession of our sins and our faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, let's press on for the prize by allowing the Holy Spirit to sanctify us. Let's engage in the sanctification process by doing our part by learning and living the Christian fundamentals. As we participate in the role God has for us, being transformed into his image, one day we too will hear him say "*Well done, good and faithful servant.*"

Okay, are you ready to begin our focus on quiet time? It must be said right up front that the quiet time we are referring to is a BIBLICAL, Jesus centered, God-filled quiet time and not Eastern mysticism and world religion "quiet time." It's not mystic, meditative implications of the silence and solicitude type teaching of Eastern mysticism or the teachings of the emerging church mixed with Eastern mysticism. But rather, the quiet time we are dealing with in this study is one hundred percent utilizing a specific, purposeful, set-aside, determined time for God's word, for Biblical prayer and for Biblical worship. The purpose of our quiet time is for absorbing God's word, learning how to pray according to God's word, and worshiping God in line with God's word.

In order for us to have a quiet time with God, we've got to get alone with God. We have to set aside time to grow in God's word, in prayer and in worship – all guided by his

word and by the Holy Spirit. The key to spending quiet time with God is a *desire* to do so. The apostle Paul had such a desire.

Write out Paul's desire found in Philippians 3:10:

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If you *desire* to want to know God like Paul did in Philippians 3:10, to know him intimately and experientially in an ever increasing way, if you want to be transformed by him, you're going to have to spend some quality time with him. If you want God to radically move in your life, if you want him to transform you, if you want to experience the peace that surpasses all understanding, the joy unspeakable and the anticipation of all that God has for you, you're going to have to spend some quality time with him getting to know him.

So the pre-fundamental to all the fundamentals is quiet time with the Lord. You must choose to create this environment, and some fundamentals require it more than others.

The purpose of creating a regular quiet time in our lives is for us to purposefully meet the Lord in such a way that his word and his Spirit will noticeably transform our lives. Pray that this becomes the desire of your heart, to purposefully set aside some time to meet with God in an intimate, personal, and honest way so that by his word and by his Holy Spirit he can noticeably transform your life.

If you are a Christian and you want to be in the game, that's the way you get there. If you want to be used by God, learn how to meet with God in a quiet time when it's just you and him.

In Psalm 62:1-2 (ESV), King David makes a declaration of his purposed quiet time with God when he says "***For God alone my soul waits in silence.***" Look at the end of verse 2. What does King David acknowledge is a fruit of quiet time with God?

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When we take a proactive, purposeful position to quietly wait in the presence of God, we start the process of being changed. Our hope and faith in God is strengthened as we sit quietly and alone with him. As a result of David's quiet time with God, he realizes that his salvation comes from God alone; that God alone is his Rock; that God alone is his Fortress; and that in God he shall not be moved or shaken. Those truths can strengthen all of us!

In Psalm 62, David is saying he's holding onto the Lord and hunkering down, waiting on God, looking to his word, praying according to his word, worshiping him and waiting for him to move on his life.

Our quiet time with the Lord will bring power in the Christian life. However, we've got to learn to be quiet. Write out Psalm 46:10.

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We need to *stop* and *be still* so we can *know* that he is God. This is easier said than done especially in this day and age of microwaves and drive-thru's, and our give-it-to-me-now society.

Let's be honest. If we're not looking at the TV, we're looking at the computer. If we're not staring at the computer, we're looking at our smart phone. And let's not forget about how much time we spend on Facebook or Pintrest or all the Twittering and texting we do! It's no wonder we "don't have time" to spend with God in quiet time; it's because we're too busy watching TV, staring at the computer, and looking at our smart phone.

This idea of being still, to wait on God – is vanishing. Not only are we always moving or watching something else move, we have thousands of images that bombard us every day. Every magazine we pick up, every commercial we see, every movie and TV program we watch, all of these things have images of product placement in them. This world barrages us with images designed to affect our life. There is information, there is advertisement, there are issues, there are concerns, there are stresses, there are dangers, and all of them are being developed into these individual images that hit you a thousand times a day in various forms of the media. Each and every one of them is designed to impact your decisions and your actions. That's the truth.

Those things affect us. They do. If you say they don't, you're not being realistic. They affect you. They impact you. So we have to be constantly reminding ourselves that we are sojourners in this land. This life is not our home.

Read Philippians 3:20. Where does the Bible tell us our citizenship is located?

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We are pilgrims; we're passing through this place. But how can we be not of this world if the world is monopolizing all of our time and all of our thoughts? If everything we do, everything we think about and everything we see is being directed by a world that we are not supposed to be a part of, then there's a problem. If we don't proactively take control

and make choices in our lives to the contrary, then the world will continue to guide us on the path it wants us to go – which happens to be an anti-Christ path.

There is a worship song that says “This world has nothing for me. I will follow you.” We sing it at church, we walk out the church doors and then the world guides us like a missile to its target. Don’t be deceived. This world is guiding us. We proudly proclaim “This world has nothing for me,” and then after that breath we say “I want a Diet Coke, an Apple computer, or an iPhone 6, and an iPad. I know I have last year’s model but I need this year’s model.” Then we take another breath and sing “This world has nothing for me,” and immediately after that we say “Oh I need to watch this TV show and be on Facebook and Pintrest and I need to answer my texts and there’s something I need to Tweet about...” On and on it goes.

The hard truth is that we have to make a *choice* to follow Christ. We have to make *decisions* in our life to follow Christ. We’ve got to stop doing what the world is doing ... at least for a moment (preferably a moment every day) in order to decide and choose to say “Lord, this time right now is for you. This is you and me right now. I’m going to set the world aside and you and I are going one-on-one in a real and intimate relationship.” *We have to make that choice* and, if we don’t, we will be carnal Christians (Christians led by the world). How can we not be? How can God lead us if we never give him a chance to lead us? How can he affect us if we never give him time to speak to us? How can our relationship with Christ impact our lives if we don’t ever really have a relationship with him?

There has to be a time *daily* to stop the bombardment of the world in order to say “Lord, this is you and me right now. I need to hear from you. I need to shut out the world and everything the world is bombarding me with. I need to hear from you. I need to set my eyes on heaven. I need to look over the horizon. I need to set my heart on things that are eternal and not temporal. I need you right now. Quickly, I need you.”

Read Philippians 4:8 and 2 Corinthians 4:17-18. What is the essence of these scriptures?

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Write out Colossians 3:2 and then live it out!

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The things of this world are temporary and not worthy of our constant attention. The only one who is eternal and worthy of all our attention is Jesus Christ. He is the one we should keep our eyes on and what should be consuming our thoughts and time! We need to set our minds on things above and not things of this world.

Let's turn to the Old Testament and see an example of a young boy who is alone and hears from God. Read all of 1 Samuel 3. How did Samuel reply in verse 10?

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The boy Samuel's relationship with God had not yet been fully established and that is why he didn't immediately recognize God's voice. Each time Samuel went back and laid down, he was quiet and alone. Likewise, to effectively and powerfully hear from God, we have to be in his presence quietly and alone.

This is why it so important to set aside quiet time with God on a regular basis where can get real with him. When was the last time you were really real with God? Dealing with sin that you don't think God is aware of. Dealing with feelings – bitterness, anger, resentment, and unforgiveness. When was the last time you met just with God and said "I'm going to pour it all out and it's going to be ugly? I'm going to dump it all on you."

We need to set a time to interact with God instead of the world. We need to set a time to feed our spirit instead of our flesh. We need to make a time when we can experience a real personal relationship with God, meeting with him, talking to him, and hearing from him. This takes a *serious commitment*.

Those of us who have tried it know it's hard. So often we end up saying something like "I've tried it but it's just too hard for me to find the time. I don't really know what to do when I get there. If I sit down to pray I just fall asleep. Or I sit down to pray and ten seconds later I'm thinking about something else. I can't keep my mind focused. I can't focus on the Lord." When we make statements like that (whether we speak them or act them out), we convince ourselves that it's just easier not to even try to meet with God. Sure, it's easier to be led around by the world than it is to break the cycle and meet with God – it's easier but it's not *better*.

But check this truth out: Every time we say it's just too hard, the enemy applauds our decision because the enemy of our soul wants to keep us from God. We've got to fight through the distractions of the world.

Jesus had to fight through the bombardment of the world while he was here on earth in order to make crucial alone time with his Father a priority. Let's look to see how Jesus did it.

Read Luke 5:15-16

It says that huge crowds would gather to have Jesus heal them and to hear him teach. But look at verse 16. What would Jesus do in the *middle* of the world clamoring for His time?

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Jesus understood the value of having a quiet time with God. Some of the versions say he did this *often*. This should give us some idea of how important it was to Christ that he spend quality, quiet time with his Father – often. Jesus lived like this the entire time he was on this earth. If Jesus lived a life in a pattern of meeting alone with God often, being fully God and but fully man, how much more important is it for us to live out a pattern of often meeting with God alone? Jesus is our example in all things.

We see another example of Jesus living this pattern of meeting with God even in the midst of life's demands. Read Mark 1:32-37.

All of Capernaum was pressing into Peter's mother-in-law's house because they wanted to hear what Jesus had to say and they wanted to be healed by him. In the *middle* of those important and worthy demands of Jesus' time, what did he do in verse 36 and at what time did he do it?

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He went to a *solitary* place and prayed. In the middle of people clamoring around him - wanting and needing something from him, he chooses to make the time, to set aside the time to get alone with God and to be quiet before him. Jesus chose to put away the demands and needs of his life for a set period of time to spend time with God. If Jesus can walk away for a period of time from the sick in need of healing, those hurting and needing to hear the Gospel, we can (and should) walk away from the piles of laundry and dishes, from our smart phones and computers, from our favorite TV shows and games, and choose to be in a solitary and quiet place to meet with our Heavenly Father to purposely meet with him and hear from him.

Jesus shows us, by role modeling it in his own life, how important it is to be with God before we are with people, before we do anything, especially those important things. Jesus did this *often* and *routinely*. He said no to people and said yes to God. Jesus said no to gatherings of people so he could say yes to private meetings with the Father.

John 1:1 says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The inference in that verse is that when the beginning came, the Word (Jesus) was already with God. This word (beginning) means an intimate connection, a face to face encounter, a bosom to bosom encounter. Jesus was already one with the Father when the beginning came. When he came to earth, he retained his deity and he took on humanity – yet he was one hundred percent God and one hundred percent man. While he was one hundred percent man, he fought to get alone with his father because it

was crucial for his life. To state the obvious, we are far less than one hundred percent God, but we definitely are one hundred percent man, which is why it is all the more important for us to fight to get alone with God.

Are you wrestling with your thoughts about *choosing* to meet alone with God on a consistent basis? We say things like “I’ve just got too much going on and I’m just too tired.” Jesus knows exactly what you are talking about. He experienced the very same things we do. The Bible makes this clear in Hebrews 4:15 (NLT): “***This High Priest (Jesus) of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin.***”

In Mark 6, we see Jesus and the disciples in a heightened state of ministry. They were so busy that it says in Mark 6:31 that “...***they had no leisure even to eat.***” We can assume if they didn’t have time to eat they certainly didn’t have time to rest. They were tired!

In this moment of craziness, tiredness and hunger, in the middle of their hectic lives and schedules, Jesus took the time to teach his disciples the importance of getting alone with God. What does he tell them in Mark 6:31?

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Unfortunately at that moment, the crowds kept coming and, despite Jesus’ and the disciples attempts to get away and be alone with God to rest, the people found them. So what does Jesus do? He feeds 5,000 people. (Mark 6:32-46)

Look at Mark 6: 45-46. What does Jesus do after he sent his disciples and the people away?

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After all of the ministry he was doing (Mark 6), when he was tired, Jesus feeds the 5,000. But after he sacrificially gives himself to others and when he was *exhausted*, Jesus went up on the mountain alone to pray.

Here’s the point: over and over again, we see Jesus departing (which means he made a conscious decision to leave the crowds to be alone with God). He knew that doing so was far more important than the things of the world which were pulling at Him, demanding his time, it was even far more important than his *leisure* time. It’s so critical to meet *first* with God. Jesus shows us that. Let’s follow His example.

Write out Psalm 63:1.

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Challenge yourself to make a lifestyle change and wake up 15 minutes early to spend with God first thing in the morning. Let's be honest, if we don't make Jesus a priority the first thing in the morning, more than likely we aren't going to be thinking about him most of the day, because as soon as things get going we are swamped with life and he gets pushed out of the way.

Jesus shows us in Luke 6:12 another reason to spend time alone with God. He had a huge decision to make – he had to pick his 12 disciples. What does Luke 6:12 say Jesus did the night before making this big decision?

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Jesus prayed all night. Although Jesus was one hundred percent God and was omniscient He was also one hundred percent man and he knew it was important to pray to God before making a pretty important decision. He knew it was important to align his will with the Father's and he knew that being in God's presence in prayer was critical in that alignment. When things were difficult, when there was a big decision to be made, when things were tough, we see many examples of Jesus going to God alone and in prayer – even in the garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus knew when it was time to get with God. It's just the opposite with us, right? We tell ourselves "I know it's really important that I get with God in quiet time and in prayer, but I don't have time. I have so much going on; I have so many people that need me to do so many things, I just don't have time. I don't have five minutes to stop and be with God. Maybe next summer when I go on vacation, I'll get some quality time in with God." When we tell ourselves stuff like that, we get taken out and Satan is happy because he's keeping us from God and decreasing our relationship, faith and trust in God. We can't practice the fundamentals of the Christian life *unless we are alone with God*. Ignoring the fundamentals will get us kicked out of the game.

Again, for reiteration, quiet time is not a fundamental. Quiet time is an *environment* in which the fundamentals are *developed*. We create this environment of quiet time where the fundamentals can grow in our life. It's like getting in position on the baseball field. If the coach says go out to first base and stand there, you're there but not playing yet. But when the ball comes you're going to play. Quiet time is like saying "Okay coach, I'll get my glove and I'll go out to first base and then roll me some really easy grounders." Getting into our quiet time with God is getting into the game.

We'll talk about what to do in our quiet time in the lessons ahead. But for now we need to have a *desire* for it. We need to desire spending quality, alone time with God. If we don't start praying and asking the Holy Spirit for this desire to spend quiet time with our Heavenly Father, we simply won't be able to do it, let alone remain committed to

meeting with God on a daily basis in quiet time. We need that desire and commitment so that the world doesn't squeeze out the eternal life that God wants to pour in.

Let's make God and his word and our quiet time with him a priority in our lives so we can put our hope in his promises.

We've already touched base on a similar scripture; however repetition is good for us. Write out Psalm 119:147 (NLT):

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Rise up early and cry out! Meditate on his promises. If you do that, he'll transform you and give you hope, strength, peace, power. We make the environment; God does the work. We have to commit to setting aside dedicated, purposeful time to God's word, to Biblical prayer and to Biblical worship.

When God called the prophet Ezekiel in Ezekiel 3:22, he said: ***"Then the Lord took hold of me and said, 'Get up and go out into the valley, and I will speak to you there.'"***

Jesus says something similar in Matthew 6:6 (NLT): ***"But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you."*** The context is not to have pretentious prayer like the Pharisees; but Jesus is still conveying this need for humble, private, pour your heart out time with God.

If you are doing it, that's awesome. Do it more. If you're not doing it, purpose yourself to start. Once we've committed this time with God, then God can start working.

This brings us to the lessons that lay ahead of us. We have to be careful what we choose to do during our quiet time, so we'll be studying just that in the future lessons. We live in a consumer Christian culture. There's a whole bunch of people making money off of us by getting us to think that if we buy a certain book that we are going to achieve something with God. Those books can be good and it can work theoretically. But be careful thinking that if I buy this or that devotional book then I'll have quality quiet time with God. Maybe. Maybe not. These books promise productive quiet time with God and some of them can generate that environment if it's done right. But be careful because this stuff is made for the checklist mentality Christians. We are prone to look at a devotional book and say something like "Oh great; here's a devotional book that is only half of one page! This is perfect; all those other ones take up the whole page. Now I can crack this open because it's so short and at the same time I can think about the six different things I

really need to do today so that I can check off my quiet time with God from checklist of things to do today.” Just be careful that you’re not spending all of your quiet time in a devotional book but rather in *the Book*.

What we need is *real* time with God where we are face to face with him, with our heart open, with our life laid bare, honestly sharing with God and honestly receiving from his Word and from his Spirit. It is a time when we are beholding his glory in his word, in prayer, in worship. As we behold the glory of the Lord, the Holy Spirit transforms us.

**2 Corinthians 3:18** (ESV): “*And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*”

We must set time aside to behold the glory of the Lord. If we will, God will speak to us there. He will fill us with his spirit. He will speak out of his word to us. And, he will transform us.

Let’s pray.

*Lord, I need you to help me set aside some quality time with you. Give me the desire to put the things of the world away for a set period of time when you and I can meet face to face. Lord, I ask that you make it a permanent desire of my heart to spend time alone with you daily. Thank you, Jesus, for being faithful to me even when I am not faithful to you. And thank you Lord for speaking to me through your word. Use my quiet time to make me more like you. In your own name I pray, amen.*