

1-23-2022, COTR Texarkana

Title: God Time!

Purpose: Provoke people to develop the daily discipline of spending quiet time with God in thanksgiving/ worship, prayer and Bible reading.

Truth for Today: Spending time with God every day in thanksgiving/ worship, Bible reading, and prayer is the foundation of a mature Christian life.

Text: Mark 1:35

Topic: Quiet Time, Daily Devotions, Thanksgiving, Worship, Bible Reading, Prayer

Series Title: The Big 10...the Path to Spiritual Maturity

Series Purpose: Provoke people to actively pursue spiritual maturity by applying the Big 10 causes for spiritual growth.

God Time!

- I. Introduction (*ushers hand out Big 10 flyer and prayer guide*)
 - A. Review series, The Big 10...the Path to Spiritual Maturity. It's about the power of daily disciplines and experiences proven to produce spiritual maturity. The problem, [1 Cor. 3:1-3 (NLT) I had to talk as though...you were **infants (NKJV babes in Christ)**, or you are still **controlled by your sinful nature**. Aren't you **living like people of the world?**] Spiritual growth and maturity are the goal of the Christian life.
 - B. Big 10 Flyer I want to help you grow spiritually and mature by making these daily disciplines and experiences a part of your life in 2022. I guarantee you'll grow.
 - C. Today we'll talk about, #4, the most important path to spiritual maturity, having a daily quiet time/ devotional with God. I call it, God Time! Daily time with God was the pattern of Jesus' life. [Mk 1:35 (NIV) **Very early in the morning...Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.**] Follow His ex.
 - D. Title: God Time!
 - E. Truth for Today: Spending time with God every day in (1) thanksgiving/ worship, (2) Bible reading, and (3) prayer is the foundation of a mature Christian life.
- II. Start your day with God, the cornerstone of spiritual maturity
 - A. David, a man after God's heart, [Psalm 63:1 (NCV) God, you are my God. **I search for you. I thirst for you** like someone in a dry, empty land where there is no water. Psalm 42:1-2 (NIV) As the deer pants for streams of water, so **my soul pants for you, my God. 2...When can I go and meet with God?**] David wanted to be with God. He wanted to spend time with Him and know Him.
 1. We become a Christian for a more important reason than going to heaven when we die. We become a Christian to have a personal relationship with God now. To know God, the most important thing we can do is communicate with Him through thanksgiving, daily prayer, and Bible reading. It's called a daily devotion or quiet time with God. The best time is in the morning before our day begins. Why?
 2. When we spend time with God, we find direction for decisions and questions, peace to calm our troubled mind, truth to live by and strength when we're weak.

B. Quotes: “Nothing will help us grow spiritually more than spending time alone with God every day, reading His Word and praying. Time alone with God is essential to our spiritual welfare.” (**Billy Graham**); I have a fundamental belief in the Bible as the Word of God...I study the Bible daily. **Isaac Newton** “The Bible is meant to be bread for daily use, not cake for special occasions.” **Anonymous**

C. Sometimes we feel like reading our Bible and praying. Sometimes we don't. Do it anyway. [1 Corinthians 9:27 (ESV) But **I discipline my body and keep it under control**, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.]

1. This is why we call our daily quiet time with God a spiritual discipline.

2. Quote “It is not easy to shut out the world, set aside a few minutes by yourself, and spend time in God's Word and prayer. But it is essential if we are to grow in our relationship with God and be strengthened for the battles ahead. Don't delay. Begin now to spend time alone with God every day.” (**Billy Graham**)

III. Mature believers begin their time with God in thanksgiving and worship

A. [Psalm 100:4 (NIV) Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.] [Colossians 4:2 (NLT) Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a **thankful heart.**]

B. Sometimes I express thanks/ worship to God before I read the Bible, but usually it's before I pray. Some people play worship music before they read. Telling God thank you does 2 things: (1) It recognizes Him as the source for all that is good in our lives, (2) Remembering what God did for us yesterday builds our faith for today's needs.

IV. Mature believers read the Bible every day

A. The Bible is also called Holy Scripture and God's Word. [Ps.119:105 (NLT) **Your word is...a light for my path.**] John 17:17 (ESV)...**your word is truth.**]

B. The greatest need in America and particularly for Christians, is to know and follow the Bible, God's Word. Sadly, in 2021, The American Bible Society and Barna, 1 in 6 U.S. adults (16%) reads the Bible most days during the week. 42% never read at all.¹

C. Why should we read the Bible daily? Daily Bible reading does 3 things:

1. (1) It helps us know the difference between right and wrong, truth and lies. [2 Timothy 3:16 (NLT) All Scripture is **inspired by God** and is useful to **teach us what is true** and to **make us realize what is wrong** in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.]

2. (2) God speaks to us through the Bible, God's Word. [Hebrews 4:12 (NIV) For **the word of God is alive and active...it penetrates** even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; **it judges** the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.] LaNell's cancer, [2 Sam. 18:28 (ESV) Then Ahimaaz cried out to the king, “**All is well.**”] 2 Greek words for the Word of God: The ‘Logos’ became a ‘rhema’

3. (3) The Bible can help me make everyday decisions that will benefit us and please God. [Psalm 1:1–2 (NCV) **Happy** are those who don't listen to the wicked, who don't go where sinners go, who don't do what evil people do. 2 **They love the Lord's teachings, and they think about those teachings day and night.**]

D. How do we read the Bible in our quiet time?

1. Find a quiet place, preferably the same time same place every day, and minimize distractions, e.g., silence phone.
2. Use a reading plan: Instead of haphazardly ‘Opening the Bible and reading’, use a reading plan. Picture App, Proverbs challenge
3. Use a good study Bible. The Bible was written 1,000’s of years ago to different people in different cultures in different language. We need the Holy Spirit to reveal God’s Word to us, but we also need Bible scholars to help us bridge the culture gap. I suggest the SFLB in a translation you can understand. A study Bible has 2 Pictures: Introduction to the book, notes, word definitions. We hope to get a shipment in mid Feb. We sell at cost.
4. Picture page: pens and markers

V. Mature believers pray every day

- A. [Daniel 6:13 (NCV)...“Daniel...is not paying attention to you, O king, or to the law you signed. **Daniel still prays to his God three times every day.**”] Why is daily prayer important?
1. Prayer humbles us by making us look to God and not just ourselves for everything. Prayer conditions us to trust and depend on God for everything.
 2. Prayer is how God speaks to us. [Ephesians 6:18 (NLT) Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. **Stay alert** and be persistent in your prayers...]
 - a. Stay alert means to be on the lookout for, to be on watch. ² Context/ Translation: “remain sensitive to the prompting of God’s Spirit” or “keep on listening to God’s Spirit.”³
 3. Petitions in prayer are deliberate invitations to invite God into our situation. If we don’t ask for His help, He may not give it.
 4. Prayer gives us hope that change is possible in difficult circumstances.
- B. I start my day getting out of bed on my knees, inviting God in my day committing my day to Him. I tell Him, and myself, I can’t make it without Him.
- C. A disciplined, daily prayer time is particularly important if we’re successful. If we’re healthy and have money, we can live like we don’t need God. When things are going well, we don’t pray much, but when we’re in trouble, we feel the need to pray. We need to pray daily whether we feel like it or not. That’s why prayer is a discipline.
- D. How should we pray? Illustrate with ladder, [Matthew 6:6–13 (NKJV)...when you pray, **go into your room**, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the **secret place**...⁹ **In this manner...pray**: Prayer handout Lord’s prayer
1. Step 1, Worship and Reverence, Vs. 9 Our Father in heaven, Hallowed (*NLT holy*) be Your name. This is a time for thanksgiving/ worship.
 2. Step 2, Advancement of God’s Kingdom/ will in every area of life. Vs. 10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
 3. Step 3, Personal needs. Vs. 11 Give us this day our daily bread.

4. Step 4, Forgiveness. Vs. 12 And forgive us our debts, (*NLT sins*) as we forgive our debtors.
5. Step 5, Spiritual Warfare. Vs. 13 And do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.
6. Step 6, Faith and Worship, Vs. 13 For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

VI. Conclusion

A. Being a Christian is more than doing religious things, it's 1st and foremost about knowing Jesus as Savior and Lord. Paul shared his religious pedigree and accomplishments and said, [Philippians 3:8 (NLT)...everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of **knowing Christ Jesus my Lord...**] God time: Daily thanksgiving/ worship, Bible reading, and prayer is the starting place to know Him. Let's be one of the 16% who spend time with God in His Word every day, not the 84% who don't.

VII. Response

A. Prayer: Commit to a daily time with God.

B. Souls

VIII. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.

1. <https://www.barna.com/research/sotb-2021/>
2. Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 332). New York: United Bible Societies.
3. Bratcher, R. G., & Nida, E. A. (1993). *A handbook on Paul's letter to the Ephesians* (p. 165). New York: United Bible Societies.