

Time Alone With God

By: Pastor David Holt

Have you ever stopped to consider what your main purpose as a Christian is? Well, Jesus was asked this question in Mark 12:28-29. The religious leaders of the day asked Him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" Jesus replied, "The one that says, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only God. And you must love Him with all your heart and soul and mind and strength.'"

It is simple: The most important thing we can do in all of life is to love God supremely. Though it appears simple, most of us find this goal very difficult to achieve. Loving God supremely seems impossible because we don't know how to do it or because we think it is strictly an emotional thing.

I SUGGEST THAT THE GREATEST WAY TO LOVE GOD IS TO SPEND TIME ALONE WITH HIM GETTING TO KNOW HIM. GOD CREATED US PRIMARILY TO HAVE FELLOWSHIP (SHARING TOGETHER) WITH HIM. (See 1 Corinthians 1:9)

Think of someone you love deeply right now (parent, spouse, girlfriend/boyfriend, classmate, etc.). Do you have them in mind? Could you truly and intimately love that person if you did not know them? Of course not. You cannot deeply love someone you don't know very well. **MOST CHRISTIANS DO NOT KNOW GOD VERY WELL.** Maybe this is why many Christians are not very serious about their relationship with Christ.

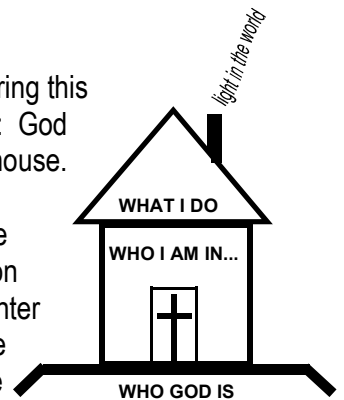
Think once more of the person you deeply love. Could you get to know that person very well without spending time alone with him/her? Very unlikely. Can you get to know Jesus Christ without spending time alone with Him? Of course not.

Consider the relationship between a husband and wife. When they first met, they did not "fall in love." It was as they spent time together that they got to know each other better; and as they got to know each other, they grew to love each other deeper and deeper; and as they grew to love each other more, they began to trust each other more; and as they increasingly trusted each other, they began doing things for one another out of this love relationship. For example, the husband naturally does something special for his wife on her birthday because he loves her.

The Christian life is meant to involve the same process. It works like this: Spend time alone with God => Get to know God => Grow to love God => Learn to trust God (faith) => Obey God => Produce spiritual fruit for God [fruit of the Spirit in us (Galatians 5:22-25) and introducing others to Jesus (John 15:5)] => Glorify God!!! God desires that our relationship with Him be so intimate and close that we would naturally want to do the things that please Him. Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15). God doesn't want our obedience to be out of obligation. Instead, He wants it to naturally flow out of a love relationship with Him. It is through spending quality time alone with God that this love relationship is established and built.

Here is another way of considering this progression in the Christian life: God desires that our lives be like a house.

The foundation of the house is understanding who God is. The door into the house is the person and work of Jesus. Once we enter the house through this door, the house is understanding who we are in Christ. Finally, the roof is what we do in obedience to God. The balanced Christian life is one in which our obedience (the roof) flows out of an understanding of who God is, what Jesus has done for us, and who we are in Christ. We should never make the roof our foundation. If we do, we will end up living a very performance-oriented Christian life. The key to experiencing the proper balance is by spending quality time alone with God for the purpose of getting to know Him. Don't allow your times with God to become a performance by which you measure your spirituality. Spend time with God simply to know Him better and grow in intimacy with Him. Spend this time strengthening the foundation of your house. Then, and only then, will your obedience be proper obedience.



Could anything be more adventuresome than getting to know the God of all the universe, Jesus Christ? Most people know a lot about God without really knowing God. For example, we know much about our President,

but most of us do not know him personally. How well do you know God? Do you have a desire to begin getting to know Jesus in an intimate way? It will cost you time, but it will be the most important thing you could ever spend your time doing. Just think that God Almighty actually wants to spend time with you! You will be amazed at the changes in your life as you do this each day.

HAVING A TIME ALONE WITH GOD COULD BE THE MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITY OF YOUR DAY!!!

The Word of God affirms the value of knowing God. Thus says the Lord, "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, nor the mighty man in his might, nor the rich man in his riches. Let him boast in this alone--that he truly **knows Me**, and understands that I am the Lord . . ." (Jeremiah 9:23-24). The Apostle Paul expressed his desire in life in Philippians 3:10 when he said, ". . . that I may **know Him**" (Christ). Notice that Paul did not say his chief goal was to witness to 1,000 people or pastor the largest church in the world. Rather, his #1 desire was to intimately know Jesus. Is your #1 goal in life to know God? If so, allow this desire to motivate you to spend daily time alone with God. If you do not have the desire, ask God to give it to you. In the meantime, begin spending time alone with God and the desire will probably follow.

In summary, here are several reasons it is crucial that we spend time alone with God daily:

1. To know God!
2. Because Jesus desires our fellowship.
3. To get our spiritual food. In the same way we need physical food (meat, vegetables, etc.) for our bodies, we need spiritual food (God's Word) to nourish our spiritual life. Most Christians just rely on one or two spiritual meals a week (Sunday morning, midweek Bible study, etc.), and they are starving themselves spiritually. (See 1 Peter 2:2 and Jeremiah 15:16).
4. To learn to trust Jesus more (increase in faith). We naturally trust the people we know the best, provided they are trustworthy. God is trustworthy (See Romans 10:17). He longs for us to trust Him. "Those who know Thy name will put their trust in You" (Psalm 9:10).
5. To become more like Jesus. We become like the people we spend time with. Let's spend time with Jesus!

6. It pleases God. He deserves our time. God gets great pleasure from our company. "For the Lord takes pleasure in His people" (Psalm 149:4).

WHERE DO I START?

So, how do you begin to spend time alone with God on a regular basis?

COULD ANYTHING BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN DAILY MEETING WITH GOD?

A. Choose a time you can do this every day. I suggest the morning, because it is such a great way to begin your day (see Psalm 5:3). Besides, a soldier doesn't put on his armor after the battle, does he? We are in a spiritual battle. So before you head out for the day, put on the Word of God. If you are just starting, I suggest you devote 15 minutes per day to this.



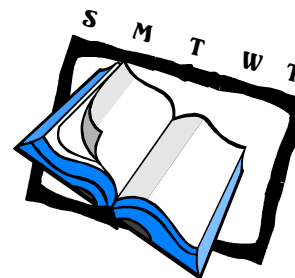
B. Choose a place where you can be alone and without distractions (see Mark 1:35).

C. Choose a plan that best fits you. The two essential elements in your time alone with God are (1) the Bible and (2) prayer. The Bible is God's Word to us, and prayer is how we communicate with God.

Here is a suggested plan:

1. The Bible

Read 5-10 verses from the Bible, systematically going through a book of the Bible. For example, if you were going through the Gospel of John, you could do the following:



Day 1: John 1:1-5

Day 2: John 1:6-10

etc.

Before you read, ask God to give you understanding. After reading it several times, write down the following in a notebook that you can use each day:

Date _____

Passage _____

Title: (In your own words give a title to this reading.)

Summary: Look for 4 areas in your reading.
(Not every passage will address each of these areas, but you should look for these areas.)

1. What does this teach me about who God is?
2. What does this tell me about the person and work of Jesus?
3. What does this teach me about who I am in Christ?
4. Does this say something to me about what I am to do?

Key Verse: (Write out word for word the verse you liked the best. You may want to put it on a card and carry it with you that day in order to meditate on it.)

The other part of your time alone with God is prayer.

2. **Prayer:** Use the **ACTS** of prayer. Spend a few minutes doing each of these in your prayer time.

A. (Adoration): This is where you praise God simply for who He is (See Psalm 100:4). You could read one or two Psalms a day and pray parts of the Psalm back to God.

C. (Confession): Ask God to bring to mind any specific sins in your life (actions, thoughts, or attitudes that don't please Him) and then receive His forgiveness for them based on 1 John 1:9. It is important to come before God with a clean heart. When our hearts are clean from sin, we are able to have a much closer time with God (Matthew 5:8).

T. (Thanksgiving): Thank God for specific things He has done for you and given you (see 1 Thessalonians 5:18). This will help you see more of what God is doing for you. Even thank God for difficult situations.

S. (Supplication): This is where you pray for specific needs in your own life as well as needs with other people (see John 15:7 and 1 John 5:14-15). You may want to use a notebook where you keep a list of items you are talking to God about. It is exciting to check them off as God answers! I divide my prayer life into different days of the week. This way I am praying for different people and situations on designated days. For example, on Tuesday I pray for church leaders; on Wednesdays I pray for missionaries; and on Thursdays I pray for unsaved friends and relatives.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST

Let us conclude by looking at one of the most challenging passages in the Bible. It is found in Luke 10:38-42.

Now as they were traveling along, Jesus entered a certain village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. And she had a sister called Mary, who moreover was listening to the Lord's word, seated at His feet, but Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him, and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me." But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one: for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken from her."

From this passage, we learn that:

1. Jesus desires to spend time with His people.
2. Time alone with Jesus is more important than service for Jesus. Martha was not doing anything bad. She was serving Jesus. However, she was serving when she should have been seated. Often the good is the enemy of the best.
3. Time alone with Jesus is of utmost importance. Jesus said, "Only a few things are necessary, really only one."
4. Time with Jesus is eternal. It "shall not be taken from her."

Are you more like Martha or Mary? If you are more like Martha, what do you need to do to become a Mary?

Someone once said, "Don't get so caught up in the work of the kingdom that you don't spend time with the King." We somehow find time for what is really important to us. Is quality time alone with God important to you?

ARE YOU WILLING TO MAKE THE SACRIFICE TO DAILY SPEND TIME ALONE WITH GOD?



Getting to know God does not just happen. It involves an aggressive effort on our part. God wants us to be "seekers" after Him. What does this mean? It means we aggressively pursue our relationship with Him.

LET US SEEK GOD

Jeremiah 29:13 says, "And you will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart."

God's Word says, "If you seek Him, He will let you find Him" (2 Chronicles 15:2). What a marvelous promise: God desires to reveal Himself to us! The church of Jesus Christ is in great need of people who will determine to seek after God with all their hearts. If we are too busy to spend time alone with God, we are busier than God intends for us to be!

HELPFUL TIDBITS

1. It is not a sin to miss your time alone with God occasionally; you just miss out!
2. Remember, nothing of any value comes without a cost. This will not be easy to do, but God will change your life in great ways when you faithfully spend time with Him.
3. Your fellowship with God doesn't end after your time alone with Him; enjoy talking with God throughout the day. "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17).

4.. Be consistent even when you don't feel like spending time with the Lord. Act on your conviction that this may be the **MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITY OF YOUR DAY**. If your times with God get dry, tell Him about it and claim the promise of His presence (Hebrews 13:5).

5. Be awake and alert if you have your time in the morning. Do exercises, if necessary, to stay alert.

6. Go to bed on time. You cannot soar with the eagles if you hoot with the owls.

7. Try spending part of your time with God just being silent. God wants us to hear His voice, and He often gives us "impressions" as a way of speaking to us. He will bring thoughts to your mind that you may need to know for that day.

"FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD MOVE TO AND FRO THROUGHOUT THE EARTH THAT HE MAY STRONGLY SUPPORT THOSE WHOSE HEART IS COMPLETELY HIS."

2 CHRONICLES 16:9



**May God's
eyes stop
on you as
you determine
to be a
"seeker after Him."**

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