

Developing Your Spiritual Life

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Listening Guide

I. Finding Time to Spend with God

[1] How would you rank the importance you feel for a consistent time to meet with God?

High? Medium? Low? Not at all?

[2] Briefly describe what you see as the major obstacle or obstacles to you carving out a time to meet with God on a daily basis.

[3] Do you live with a sense of guilt from neglecting personal devotion time? How do you rank guilt as a valid motivator for relating to God?

[4] Where do you think this lesson ranks guilt as a motivator for relating to God?

[5] What does God's relationship with Adam and Eve tell you about God and human relationships?

[6] Do you have any kind of longing or desire to be with a beloved friend or spouse? Can you relate to the illustration in this section? Many people do not long for God like they do a beloved friend or spouse because they do not know Him well. One asset of spending time with God is that it cultivates that kind of longing. To know God is to love Him.

[7] Making a time to meet with God is more than an item on a checklist, just like meeting with a friend or spouse cannot be. Think for a few minutes about this section and 2 Corinthians 3:18, and ask God to cultivate a passion in your soul to meet with Him.

II. A Relational Approach to Spending Time With God

[8] Do you have a time of day that you feel would best meet your needs and work with your schedule? Look over your daily calendar and see where you could set aside 30 minutes for a time with God.

III. Building a Relationship

[9] The key to wanting time together is the depth of love between those who meet. We may need to exercise discipline early on to meet regularly because we don't know God well enough for that deep love to be an incentive. If need be, are you willing to exert the discipline to keep your appointment with God until your relationship with Him develops?

[10] Practice for the beginner athlete can be dull and humdrum until enough skill develops to play the game well. Are you willing to develop a plan that helps you exercise these spiritual disciplines on the days you don't feel like it?

[11] The lesson asks, "But what happens when the time and place are reserved and you actually show up for your quiet time, but you're not in the mood to have one?" How would you answer this question? What have you done with other commitments that had to be kept when you didn't feel like it? Is this a genuine concern for you?

IV. Exchanging Human Strength for Divine Strength

[12] How confident are you that asking God to bolster your discipline and your desire to build a relationship will work?

[13] How do you relate to the story about the student making a commitment to prioritize his quiet time? Do you believe you can have similar support from God? Stop for a moment here and pray that God will strengthen your resolve to engage with Him in a growing spiritual relationship.

V. Cultivating Two-way Communication

[14] How do you respond to the kind of personal – even intimate two-way conversation and relationship with God described in this section?

[15] How easy is it for you to have this kind of open relationship with other people? Knowing that some find this easier than others may give you some comfort if you prefer to go a little slower as you open up to God. Tell Him about it if you are hesitant and ask Him to help you trust Him enough to become more open.

[16] This excellent and time-proven three-step approach to reading the Bible is important to follow. Next time you read a passage, apply all three steps. A little bit of Bible well read is more valuable than large portions that we don't process.

[17] How have you approached Bible reading in the past? How well has it worked for you?

VI. Taking Time to Digest Your Meal

[18] What has been your experience with the Bible? Has it produced new teachings and challenges? Take this section to heart and give God a chance to actually speak to you from His Word. Select a book of the Bible and spend a few weeks reading and re-reading it.

VII. Writing it Down

[19] Have you ever kept a journal or a diary? If not, you may want to try the advice in this section. Try writing short letters to God as a way to record your prayer thoughts. That's where most of the psalms came from. As you read and meditate on Scripture, God will give you some new thoughts and ideas. It's important to keep them so you can come back and meditate on what you have gleaned.

VIII. Varying Your Methods

[20] Have you experimented with devotional books before? Do you have a favorite one? Almost any devotional book you use will introduce its thoughts with a Bible passage. Be sure to read the passage along with the devotional thought.

[21] Do you have a favorite way of relating to other people? While we use a variety of methods, some prefer writing, some talking and some listening. With God we add silent, meditative thinking our thoughts to God and then quietly listening for His Spirit to respond.

[22] Review the objectives for this lesson.

Can you explain the priority of a relational approach to devotions?

Have you picked a time of day and place for devotions that fits your personality?

Explain how we exchange human strength for divine power.

Reflection

Record one new fact or insight you discovered in this lesson.

Application

Before you finish this lesson, take a few minutes with your calendar and plug the times you plan to meet with God into each day.