

January Development Guide

SUBJECT: DAILY TIME WITH GOD



Daily time with God may be one of the most important spiritual disciplines for us as Christians, yet many of us struggle with it. Let's look at a few foundational truths from Scripture to help us overcome some of the obstacles to this important practice.

Two key words to remember: Identity and Consistency

IDENTITY

One of the biggest obstacles to spending daily time with God is our lack of understanding of the new identity we have in Christ. Feelings of guilt, shame, rejection, and inadequacy can hinder us from freely accessing God's presence.

For our context, identity refers to the characteristics that define us. Have you renewed your mind with the Biblical truth of who you are in Christ? Do you see yourself as God sees you? This is very important because our behavior is usually a reflection of our identity; how we see ourselves.

Who do you see when you look in the mirror? Not physically, but internally. Who we are "in Christ" because of the work of redemption provided to us by Jesus is one of the most important subjects for believers. As we renew our minds with Scriptural truth, we'll gain confidence and boldness in approaching our Heavenly Father.

Understanding God's love for us and our access to God's presence are key to our daily time with God - He loves YOU!

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. - John 3:16 (ESV)

Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.") No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. ***And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love.*** Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. - **Romans 8:35-39 (NLT)**

You must be fully convinced of God's love for YOU! Sometimes it's easier for us to believe God loves others than it is to believe He loves us. Yet God is consumed with love for us, so much so that He sent Jesus to die for us so that we could have intimate, personal fellowship with Him. That's what daily time with God is all about! The God of the universe wants to meet with you. He died so that could happen, that's how much He wants it. Through the sacrificial work of Jesus, He also purchased access for us to the very throne of God.

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*And so, dear brothers and sisters, **we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus.** By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place. And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God's house, **let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.** Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise."* -Hebrews 10:19-23 (NLT)

*So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, **let us hold firmly to what we believe.** This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most. - Hebrews 4:14-16 (NLT)*

Understanding our access to God's presence is crucial to us having a consistent, viable daily time with God. Otherwise, feelings of guilt and shame will rob us of this confident, bold relationship with our Heavenly Father. Take time in the coming weeks to renew your mind with the truth of God's love for you and the access to His presence that Jesus purchased for us.

CONSISTENCY

Strive for consistency, not perfection, in your daily time with God. You may struggle with thoughts of failure because you miss a day or two or don't spend the amount of time you planned. Yes, daily time with God means just that, daily time with God. But if you aren't careful, this life-giving spiritual discipline can deteriorate into feeling like a religious duty or obligation that becomes dull, rote, and anything but life-giving. Also, don't fall prey to "perfectionism paralysis" which means "if I can't do it perfectly, I shouldn't do it and I should just quit." Again, shoot for consistency, not perfection.

A few Daily Time with God tips:

1. Set the stage for success: plan in specific detail when, where, time of day, etc.
2. Pray and speak God's Word over yourself and your loved ones.
3. Practice thankfulness each day!
4. Journaling – journaling is simply having a method to “capture” what God shows you in His Word, what He speaks to your heart about, and to record your thoughts.
5. Practice stillness and quietness in God's presence (contemplative prayer). We live in a distracted, noisy world, and the practice of being still will open the door for God's voice in your life.