

A Quiet
Time,
Worth the
Time



Heidi @ ABCJesusLovesMe

A Quiet Time, Worth the Time

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Interrupted Expectations...

🔗 The Chaos

Let's see if we are speaking the same language.

The house is a wreck. The dishes are stacked to the ceiling. The laundry has taken permanent residence in the laundry basket. For safety reasons, opening a closet door requires a hardhat and a shield.

Then, if housework isn't enough to worry about, have you seen the children's behavior lately? *Where did they pick up those nasty habits?* The husband has a list of requests and don't forget the looming deadlines of your volunteer work.

If seeing the evidence of chaos isn't enough proof of a failure, have you read what the Bible says in Proverbs 31 about the role of a mother and wife? We are to get up while it is still dark, plant vineyards, sew, have strong arms, be wise...by the way, how are the early morning devotions going?

Breathe in and out...in and out...

Sometimes I want to quit because I can't be all, to all. Seriously, was this the dream I held of motherhood? I mean, if I can't match up to the world's expectations and the biblical Proverbs 31 woman, then why try at all?

***Sometimes I
want to quit
because I can't
be all, to all.***

But God continually reminds me that I am not alone on this journey. Upon acceptance of the Lord as my Savior, I was given a Helper – the Holy Spirit. He is my guide to help me keep everything balanced. One hundred percent of the time He is with me, helping me to not only survive but thrive! *(If you have not experienced the forgiveness of sins and accepted the free gift of life from a God who loves you, please skip to Appendix A of this ebook to read more.)*

So why did I still feel frustrated and worn out? What was I doing wrong?

Thankfully God has given us girlfriends as well as the Holy Spirit to come along side us with encouragement and laughter. That's what I would like to be for you, if you will allow me; just a girlfriend sharing ideas and thoughts that the Holy Spirit has given me and lessons that I am learning along the way *(some of them the hard way)*.

Don't worry; I am not a super mom. I haven't learned to squeeze 25 hours out of a 24 hour day. Nope. I am just a mom with four kiddos, a wife to my best friend, and a daughter of the King of Kings.

Probably not much different than you.

A mom who now understands that there is more to life than mere survival. A mom who searched high and low to find it. Join me as I share what God has taught me along the way.

Many of the sections in this ebook will end with a piece called "Journaling Jots." This is a place for you to "jot" down answers to questions and thoughts that God has placed on your heart. Also included is a prayer to get you started in your honest communication with God. Feel free to add further requests and thoughts that you have in a separate notebook as well.

So grab your favorite pen and join me as I share what God has taught me along my journey.

Journaling Jots: Take a moment to be honest with God. Share your hurts, fears, and other emotions concerning having a quality quiet time.

Here is a prayer to help you get started.

Prayer: Abba Father, thank You that You are into details and that You deeply desire to give me more than I could ever imagine. I desire to move past the feelings of inadequacy and meaningless days. God, please show me that there is more. I ask you to show me how to find it. In Jesus' name...

🔗 Beyond Survival Mode

I ran into a friend one day and as always our conversation immediately turned toward the day-in and day-out exhaustion motherhood entails. She made a comment that I have heard from so many moms and said so often myself, "I am just trying to survive!"

Not long after, utterly frustrated, I looked at my husband and said, "I don't want to live in survival mode...because survival mode means that I miss out on so many memories and wonderful times." For me, living in survival mode meant I was unemotional and going through the motions to tend to my family's needs. Sometimes going through the motions was easier than facing reality. But I knew in a few years when our children started leaving the nest, I would realize that I missed out on so much.

I don't want to live in survival mode...because survival mode means that I miss out on so many memories and wonderful times.

The reason I had moved to survival mode was because motherhood was not matching my expectations. Frankly, it was really hard. I dreamed of laughter around the dinner table, family game nights, and making memories with holiday traditions. What I didn't expect was a multitude of disorders including ADHD, exhaustion, therapy several days a week, defiant disobedience, and sheer disappointment.

Through several different experiences, God showed me that my expectations were out of whack. I was mad at the world because God didn't get the memo of how motherhood was supposed to be. All I wanted to do was create a loving, laughter-filled atmosphere in which my family enjoyed one another. In simple terms, I wanted to be a good mom. But, not just a good mom - I wanted to be a Proverbs 31 woman. Then reality hit and between the frustrations of raising my four little

blessings, the mounds of laundry, and the always full sink of dishes, I felt angry.

Please understand that my desire to be a labeled a "Proverbs 31 Mom" wasn't about bragging rights. Rather, my heart ached to be the good mom that my children needed me to be and the wife that my husband deserved. What Christian mom doesn't desire for her "children to arise and call her blessed; her husband also?" That would be a dream come true!

Let's be honest. Being a Proverbs 31 woman isn't a bad goal. And just so we are on the same page, let's make a list of what this type of woman in the 21st century would or wouldn't do.

She...

- Is the envy of everyone who knows her.
- Never yells at her children.
- Works out every day and runs marathons to raise money for research and orphanages.
- Simply "looks" at her children and they straighten up.
- Volunteers at her children's schools, the church, and at the local soup kitchen.
- Makes memories for her children by creating traditions that her family looks forwards to.
- Wears a size 4 and can easily wear the latest fashions because everything looks great on her body!

- Never gripes or complains, yet is “real” with people.
- Has children who have never seen a spat between their parents.
- Has the kind of home where all the neighbor kids want to hang out because of her fabulous yard and amazing snacks.
- Holds family devotions for her children every day.
- Starts each morning with coffee or hot tea and her Bible while sitting on the back porch watching the sun rise.
- Provides a listening ear and godly counsel for all the neighborhood teen girls - and they heed every word she offers.
- Has perfectly mannered children.
- She stands by her man - especially in front of the children.
- Has a home which is always clean, straight, and beautifully decorated.
- Loves to have company over and prepares magazine-worthy meals.
- Wisely bites her tongue when she and her husband disagree.
- Adores her mother-in-law and sister-in-laws. Considers them precious friends, in fact.
- Makes only healthy and delicious meals, school lunches, and snacks.
- Is completely humble and gives God all of the glory, but not in a cheesy-sorta way.

Looking over the complete list, it is almost comical.

But as I read through a list similar to this in Julie Barnhill's book, [She's Gonna Blow!](#), I realized how subconsciously I actually believed some of these points. *And if you dissect this list, looking at each individual attribute, I bet you can find several which you believe to be true as well.* I believed that in order to be a Proverbs 31 woman I had to do at least a few of these things - all of the time.

The problem? This list isn't realistic. We are all human and no one can do it all...perfectly...all of the time.

Second, this list doesn't take into account the abilities that God has uniquely gifted each one of His children. None of us have been given all of these gifts! I Corinthians 12 and Romans 12 specifically list the gifts given to Christians by the Holy Spirit - wisdom, faith, teacher, serving, leading, etc. Romans 12:6 (NIV) says, "We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us." To do all of the things in the modern Proverbs 31 woman list above, we would need all of the gifts available.

Third, Proverbs 31 provides us with a list of attributes of the perfect woman. Because we live in a sinful state we will never attain these characteristics this side of heaven. Our goal should be to continually reflect more of Him in our lives. In the same way, our goal is to mirror the attributes of the Proverbs 31 woman because she mirrors Christ.

Last, God is sovereign. He is the Alpha and the Omega. He is above all and over all. This means that

He may have plans for me other than those I have for myself.

So, if the list is unrealistic due to our sinful nature, how God has uniquely gifted us, and the fact that God is sovereign, then how do we go from survival mode to becoming the coveted Proverbs 31 woman?

Julie Barnhill helped me see that God doesn't call me to be a "good" mother, wife, or friend. God is not asking me to match up to the culture's ideals. Instead, He has called me to become more like Him - to be a "godly" woman.

Upon reading this my heart cried out, "My expectations and my goals to be a Proverbs 31 woman aren't bad. They would impact the world for good!" This is where I felt God taking my hand and saying, "My daughter, my plans are better! Reflect my image and *then* you will impact the world."

God has called me to become more like Him - to be a "godly" woman.

Godly woman. Got it. But what does this mean and how do I get there?

Praise God, that He didn't stop with this proposal. He made a way for all of us to be a reflection of His image. This will be the topic for our next section.

Journaling Jots: Write a list of expectations that you have for your life including how you believe a Proverbs 31 woman looks.

Prayer: God, my expectations are unrealistic. But more than that, my expectations don't match up with Your plan for my life. God, take me from the dream of a good woman to the reality of being a godly woman. Show me where I have placed You in a box expecting You to allow me to be and do certain things. Break apart the chains that hold me back from serving You wholeheartedly.

Have You Been with God?

God is calling us to be godly women. Let's read a portion of Scripture from Acts 4 to see how we can do this.

Jesus' disciples, Peter and John, were teaching the people. The priests and captain of the guard were greatly disturbed by this and put them in jail. The next day, the rulers, elders, and teachers of the law brought Peter and John before them to question them. The Bible says in Acts 4:8 that Peter was "filled with the Holy Spirit" as he spoke to the accusers with great courage.

Read the reaction of the leaders in Acts 4:13: "When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus."

Who were Peter and John? *They were unschooled, ordinary men.*

What had they done to astonish and make the men take note? *They had been with Jesus.*

Love this!

There is nothing special about me. But, when I have been with Jesus, people are going to look twice. They will see the love, peace, and joy. They will see kindness, faithfulness, and gentleness. And they will see self-control, goodness, and patience (*Galatians 5:22-23*). They will see Jesus in me.

That my friends, is a godly woman. A godly wife. A godly mom.

Peter and John were godly men because they spent time with their Savior studying, praying, and living life.

Want to be a godly woman? Spend time with Jesus.

Not sure how to spend time with Jesus? That's where we are headed next.

Spending Time with Jesus

🔒 What is a Quiet Time?

A relationship with God is similar to a relationship with a husband or girlfriend. The better we know each other, the more transparent we can be. Transparency allows for deeper relationships. It is only through spending quality time with God that we can grow in our relationship with Him and begin to reflect His image more and more, thus becoming godly women.

Spending time with Jesus goes by many names: devotions, quiet time, personal devotions, meditation and the contemporary “devos” to name a few. No matter what you call it, personal devotions is time set aside to sit at your Savior’s feet to *glean wisdom and strength* to face the day and whatever life throws at you. It is time to *search the Scriptures* for answers and encouragement. It is an opportunity to be *honest* with God about your emotions and feelings. Having a quiet time is spending a few moments *reading God’s Word, praying, and reflecting*. It is time set aside to *be still and focus* on God, who He is, and who He desires us to be.

Think of it as a “time out” for mommy. Time where God reveals who He is and what He desires of us. It’s when God points out rough edges in our hearts and personalities that need to be sanded. This is the time when our pitchers are refilled by the Holy Spirit so that we can pour out to those we love.

Oftentimes when asked about quiet time, I hear women say that they pray all day long or that they have a constant dialogue with God. Others say that they are too busy and there isn’t time. The kiddos are up throughout the night and rise early in the morning. I used each one of these excuses. I once believed that I was too busy and tried to justify each excuse as well. Yes, the Scriptures tell us to “pray continually” (I Thessalonians 5:17), but the Bible also says in Psalm 46:10, “Be still, and know that I am God.” Again in Psalms 119:97, “Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.” And, in all honesty, my “all day long” prayers consisted more of requests and “God, please help me” than meditations, praise, and growth.

Quiet time is when my pitcher is refilled by the Holy Spirit so that I can pour out to those I love.

I am continually convicted when I read that Jesus rose early in the morning to spend time with His Daddy (*Mark 1:35*). “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed.” Throughout the Gospels we read that Jesus got away from it all to spend time with His Father. In Luke 5:16, “Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.” Jesus, who is God, needed to spend time in prayer! To put it in perspective, our crazy days will never be as demanding and exhausting as what Jesus went through teaching the crowds and healing people, and yet He still

made time with His Heavenly Father. Makes our excuses look pretty weak!

One word of caution, quiet time is more than something that you check off your list. Once you begin to understand what devotions are and can become, you will earnestly crave more time with your Savior, making it well worth the time.

When Should I Have Quiet Time?

There is a movement in the Christian world that says you can have quiet time with the Lord whenever you want and however you want. Well, I am going to go out on a limb and say that I believe it is wise to at least have some time with the Lord before starting your day.

Verses fill the Psalms of the importance of rising early to spend time with the Lord.

- Psalm 5:3 - *In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly.*
- Psalm 88:13 - *But I cry to you for help, LORD; in the morning my prayer comes before you.*
- Psalm 143:8 - *Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life.*

With that said, I know many women who spend the vast amount of their quiet time either during their child's nap time or bedtime. And, if this is when you can consistently devote a set amount of time to study and prayer, great. In my life, I found exhaustion and other things often came up which pushed my afternoon or evening quiet times off the schedule. Also, morning devotions force me to align my day and plans with the Lord's. Without this focused time, I often started the morning thinking about all of the things that I had to get done and never gave God a second thought – until I needed something.

I know what you are thinking. *How much earlier can I get up?*

Let me guess. Your kids wake up *waaaayyyyyy* before you are ready to greet their smiley faces. With four young children myself, I understand that child wakeup times are not always convenient. For a while our eldest son got up at 5:30 every morning. At that time I only had one child and didn't want to hear his little sweet voice until at least 7:00.

Times, schedules, and priorities have changed. My clock radio sings God's praises at 5:00 each morning. I understand that this is *very* early. But this is the only way that I can have my quiet time and prepare for the day before my kiddos scamper out of bed.

Ephesians 5:16 says, "Making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil." Seize the

moment. Don't sleep it away.

Your next question may be something like this: *Do I have to get up at 5:00?*

The answer is simple...I don't know. Maybe. It depends on your circumstances. Most importantly, the time you set your alarm to go off is between you and God. I have found in my life that when I spend a lot of time justifying my decision, I am oftentimes denying what God wants me to do. In return for getting up earlier, you will probably have to go to bed earlier. It is normal for our lights to be out by 9:00 each night.

What about weekends?

Most exercise programs call for four to five sweat sessions per week with two to three days of rest in between. My devotional schedule resembled this. Somehow I reasoned that waking up early on the weekends wasn't really necessary. Everyone deserves to sleep in, right? But what I have found is that while I might have gained some more shuteye, my family needs me at my best. The only way that this will happen is when I spend quality time with my Father. So, I encourage you not to stray too far from your set wake-up time simply because the day of the week begins with the letter "S."

***Now is the only
moment that we
know for sure
will be available.***

By beginning my day with the Lord, I am inviting the Lord to rule the day. Just like a shower is a physical prep for the day, devo time is a spiritual preparedness for all of the tasks and challenges that lie ahead. I am asking the Holy Spirit to guide me.

Rising at 5:00 allows me approximately 20-30 minutes for devo time each morning. Beyond that, I have to seize opportunities as they arise. My smart phone has been a wonderful tool to carry my quiet time throughout the day. Free Bible apps, my favorite is [YouVersion](#), allow me to have the Bible and a concordance at my finger tips without lugging around a plethora of books. This means that I can study God's word while waiting in pick-up lines, at doctor appointments, and in the grocery store checkout line.

I also like to put Scripture in prominent places around our home where I can reflect and meditate on passages. Above my kitchen sink, on the refrigerator door, and on the vehicle dashboard are just a few spots. Now that I am personally learning the benefits of exercise, I use that time as well to pray, read, and meditate.

Sadly I can't count on undisturbed moments being available throughout the day. This is why I encourage everyone to take a few minutes first thing in the morning to invite the Lord to take the reins, pray about the activities of the day, and surrender our will. Unfortunately, "now" is the only moment that we know for sure will be available.

With all that said, God understands our situation and the season of life we are in. He is also a gracious God. Lamentations 3:22-23 says, "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." If today doesn't go as you hope, pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and try again tomorrow. God's welcoming arms don't close.

Where Should I Have Quiet Time?

Let's use a cooking example to make this point. Pretend you are making a loaf of bread. You follow the recipe measuring each ingredient to perfection. Kneading like a mom living in the 1800's, you prepare the dough to rise to a beautiful height. Then you leave it on the counter for several days hoping it will magically morph into fresh bread.

It won't work. The dough must be placed in a warm oven in order to become bread.

A quality quiet time is more than finding the right study book and clocking in at the correct time. A quiet place where you can focus is imperative for a quality quiet time.

Places that may not work:

- In front of a TV. *Ladies don't fool yourselves. It won't work.*
- In your laundry room or kitchen while surrounded by dirty laundry and dishes. It may be hard for you to focus with a mess reminding you of what the day holds.
- Outside. Cars going by may pull your focus down the road.
- In bed. Warm, cozy beds may cause eyelids to droop.
- Places where children can see you. *Enough said.*
- At a computer or on a smart phone. If you are tempted to look at the computer and check your friends' Twitter status then don't be near or use anything with internet connection.

***A quiet place
where you can
focus is
imperative
to have a quality
quiet time.***

Places to consider:

- Closet. It's quiet and peaceful. Plus kiddos may be less likely to check for you in a closet.
- Garage. It isn't as cozy but you would be more apt to stay awake!
- Outside. Where you can focus on God and His creation of nature.

- Bathroom. My Grandma had her quiet time in the bathroom. This was the only place that she would have uninterrupted time! *She was a saint.*

We all dream of sitting in a comfy chair or overlooking a lake with a warm cup of coffee or tea for quiet time. But, the real world doesn't allow for this all of the time so adjustments have to be made. Do what you can to find a place that will limit distractions. Make sure that the family knows that mom is off limits when she is in this place with her Bible!

🔗 The “Why?”

My friend and I were discussing the importance of morning quiet time when my husband interjected a very interesting comment.

He said, "God took Heidi to the point that she *had* to have quiet time in order to make it through the day."

My first instinct was shock. Hurt.

With some time, I realized he was correct. The chaos, frustration, and exhaustion that came with being the mother of four had brought me to the point that I realized I *had* to read the Bible, soak up God's peace, and rest in His arms each morning. Otherwise, I was setting up myself and my family for a yucky day.

Understand, a quiet time is not the magic pill to an easy day. Things will go wrong with or without the time. Tammy Moyle shared this point in a guest post on the [Parenting to Impress](#) blog:

**“How I am
handling
everything has
changed because
God is changing
me.” - Tammy**

[Through beginning a consistent quiet time,] I learned to pray more for my children. I learned to speak more softly with my husband. I learned to handle conflict better when it appeared. I found I had more patience with my kids. I found it enriched my marriage; my husband would get up after me, make us a cup of coffee and we'd talk about what I had read that morning and how it applies to our lives.

The thing is my everyday life hasn't changed. My kids can still be crabby, I can still be exhausted, I can still get into disagreements with my husband, and be saddened by a friend. However, how I am handling everything has changed because God is changing me. He is changing my heart, giving me wisdom and knowledge, and a renewed hope. All because I have chosen to lay down my own selfish desires in turn to know Him more. Because I decided to "Draw Deeper" into His Word.

Second, the more time I spend with God, the more I know Him. And as I grow deeper in my relationship with Him I see more of His glory. This makes me long for more time in His presence. I'm telling you, quality devo time can be very addictive! Once you begin to see the benefits of spending time with your Daddy each morning, you will want more. You crave the Word! The Bible and prayer will begin to be your go-to place for encouragement, comfort, and strength.

But, sleep is limited...my kids are young...I am tired...I am too busy.

I justified every excuse in the book when it came to devotion time. Phrases like, "I don't have time today," and "that was good enough," and the famous "God will understand" justifications bounced through my brain. But, the more I study what quiet time should be and can become, the more I am convinced that I cannot live without this daily time with God.

(At the end of this ebook, read tips and suggestions in Appendix B: What about My Young Children)

Ready to Jump?

My prayer is that the majority of you are super excited to read on. But I realize that a few of you are skeptical of what I have shared so far. If you have never been taught how to have quiet time or if the process hasn't been modeled for you, it may be hard to know where to begin. Or you may be debating reading on because you have tried devos and it failed miserably.

Sweet friend, if I could meet one-on-one with you right now, I would give you a hug and tell you, "I get it!" My quiet-time history has been a roller coaster of good, bad, and profoundly non-existent. But, I can tell you I look forward to each morning with my Savior now. Not because I have it all together but because I am learning. Slowly but surely, God is teaching me how incredibly sweet the living water is.

If you still have doubts, I am going to ask you to trust me. Trust me because these ideas are not mine. What I am sharing is what the Holy Spirit has taught me. Keep reading and I believe that you will see that what I have learned can change your quiet time thus transform your spiritual life.

In order to have a quiet time, only two things are needed: Scripture and an open heart. It has taken a while to find a method that works for me. And it may take you a while as well. But, that is okay because God sees a willing heart and He will bless you for it.

Today is the day. It's time to stop ignoring and justifying. It is time to move from good to godly. It's time to sit at our Savior's feet each morning to glean wisdom and strength to face the day. It's time to make quiet time a priority so that we can move from *wanting* to *being* image bearers of a God who deeply wants us to know Him.

Grab my hand and let's jump!

Journaling Jots: Finish these sentences.

God I want to jump but....

Please give me the strength that I need to...

Prayer: God, You have made my need for You clear. I realize now the importance of growing my relationship with You. This will only happen if I stop and sit at Your feet each morning to worship, listen, and seek Your wisdom. I now see the importance. But Lord, while my spirit is willing, my flesh is so weak. Lord, make me strong. In Jesus' name...

My Devo Necessities

I am prayerful that from reading thus far, your eyes have been opened to the ocean of opportunity that awaits you if you choose to spend daily time with God. But we all know that while the ocean looks breathtaking on the beach, it can be a terrifying place away from shore. I'm not going to deceive you into believe that the water is always calm and warm. It's not. The last thing that the enemy wants you to do is grow in your relationship with the King of Kings! What I will say is that over time it gets much easier and so much sweeter.

For the last half of this ebook, I am going to share what I have learned along my morning marathon thus far. Understand that each person's devotional plan will look different. There are no two devotions alike, and your devotional plan will mature as you grow in your relationship with God. My devo time has altered even since the first writing of this ebook last year! Pick and choose from the ideas that I am going to share with you as a guide to get started. Then tweak them along the way to match your needs. Remember that as long as your quiet time consists of prayer, the Bible, and a willing heart, you are on the right track.

Let's go through some questions that I hear frequently when discussing this topic.

What Supplies Do I Need to Begin?

Since the focus is on the Bible and prayer, all you actually need is a Bible. For those of us who need more structure, I might suggest a devotional study book, journal (*we will get to this a little later*), notecards, and a pen. Some studies (including inductive lessons by Kay Arthur) suggest several colored pencils.

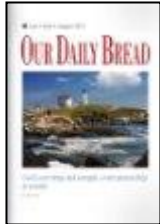
If praise music helps you focus and worship, gather some praise CD's to place in your favorite devo spot. The Pandora app can provide you with ongoing music. I find instrumental music is better for me as I tend to sing along if words are supplied!


No matter what supplemental materials you use, don't waste your precious morning time gathering supplies. In a specific spot, lay out everything you need to use in the morning. For example, if you have your quiet time on the front porch, have the chair and blanket laid out. Some suggest having a devo basket that contains all of the supplies you need. This would especially work well if you must frequently change spots.


What Do I Study?

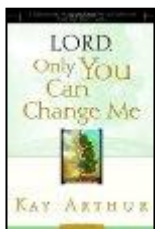
If you decide to run a marathon you wouldn't begin your first day running 15 miles. Likewise, if you have never had a quiet time or have gotten out of practice, start small. Don't plan to read a doctoral thesis on the Trinity as your first study. This would discourage the most determined person.


Especially if you are just beginning, a devotional book can be very helpful to guide your time. Here are a few studies that I have done or that my friends highly suggest.

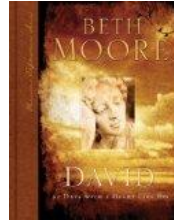



 This devotional guide has been in homes for several generations. If this is the first time that you have done daily devotions, the [Our Daily Bread](#) devotions by RBC Ministry may be a good place to start. You can have these booklets [sent quarterly to your home](#), read them online, on your [Kindle](#), or [even download an app](#). This devotional includes a short passage of Scripture to read and then a synopsis of a story or an analogy.

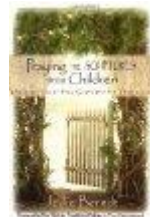
 The free [YouVersion](#) app contains several “plans” to utilize as well.





 Fabulous topical, inductive studies are available by [Kay Arthur](#). I especially enjoyed Kay's [Lord, Only You Can Change Me: A Devotional Study on Growing in Character from the Beatitudes](#).

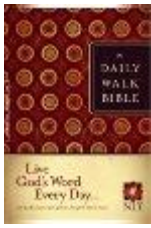


 [Beth Moore 90 Days Personal Reflections](#) - My cousin suggested this set of studies by Beth Moore. Each day contains Scripture reading, questions, a reading passage, and time of prayer. It is in the format of a journal with area provided for you to write. Beth Moore has written many other best-selling studies, some of which are best done with the videos, but can be done separately as well.



 [Praying the Scriptures for Your Children](#) by Jodie Berndt is a great option to guide your prayer time for your children.

 The free [YouVersion](#) app contains several “plans” to utilize as well.



I cannot encourage you

enough to read through the whole Bible using [The Daily Walk Bible NLT](#). Truly an amazing experience! Background is given to guide you through each reading.

This is just a drop in the bucket of options. Run an internet search for “women's online devotions” and you will find several that are free and can be delivered to you through RSS feed or email.

**“How tragic that we
in this dark day have
had our seeking
done for us by our
teachers.”**

A.W. Tozer

While there are fabulous devotional guides and podcasts available, I want to caution you. Speaker and author A.W. Tozer wrote, “How tragic that we in this dark day have had our seeking done for us by our teachers.” When my pastor shared this quote, I knew I had to pass it on to you. We read *teacher’s* thoughts and listen to *teacher’s* podcasts and then call them *our* personal devotion time. How “tragic” that we substitute what other people have learned for digging deep into the Scriptures on our own.

If you choose to use a devotional, make sure that the author’s words are grounded in Scripture. When Scripture is provided within the text, take the time to look up the passages and read the verses around the text to make sure that the context of the verse is appropriate for the author’s point. Second, if you find yourself spending more time reading the author’s opinion than reading God’s Word, perhaps you should read this devotional outside of your quiet time.

No matter how intimidated you are, I can’t encourage you enough to start in the Bible. Just you, your quiet time journal, and the Holy Spirit. I would suggest starting with the Characters of God. You can see a list of them in Appendix C at the end of this ebook. If you would prefer to study a complete book, John, James, or Paul’s epistles (*i.e. Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, or Colossians*) are fabulous books to begin. Another idea is to read a chapter in Psalms or Proverbs a day. In the past few months, I have been doing word studies on issues that I am challenged by (*i.e. grace, mothering, anger, love, control*). Using the search guide on my Bible app, I look for verses that contain the chosen word. Then in my quiet time Journal I write the applicable verses inserting my name or making them personal to my situation (*more on this later*).

Don’t be overwhelmed with the options. Pick one and get started. If the first one you pick doesn’t

seem to be working, try another one. With time you will find which materials fit your learning style and personality and those that don't.

🔗 Creating a Quiet Time Journal

For the remainder of this ebook, we will focus on what I call a "Quiet Time Journal." I capitalize each word not to prove my poor writing skills but to help you see the relationship between having a quiet time and journaling through the process.

Some people find journaling to be second nature. For others like me, my hand can't keep up with my brain and so journaling is a frustrating experience. But I've learned that journaling forces me to *stay focused* on the object at hand. In all honesty, the process of journaling has transformed my quiet time and has truly made my quiet times worth getting up. I look forward to rising early and seek truth!

Second, journaling provides a *record of the past*. In looking back through my journal, I am reminded of my spiritual journey. I love to see those *faith steps* along the way where it was obvious that God's hand was intimately involved in my life.

In a way, my Quiet Time Journal has been an *accountability tool*. In my life, I have found quiet times when I don't write in my journal to be shallow and impersonal. For me, journaling forces me to move beyond the surface.

The process of journaling has transformed my quiet time and has truly made my quiet times worth getting up.

If you Google "quiet time journal" you will find many links to purchase a spiral or string bound, pre-printed book. You will also find suggestions of what to write in your journal: prayers, sermon notes, requests, etc. Each time I purchased a prayer or quiet time journal, I got really excited thinking it would suddenly transform my quiet time.

But after a couple of weeks, the newness wore off and I was back to being frustrated and desiring something more. I found the pre-bound book to be restraining and hard to use with my Type A personality, which adds another level of difficulty in having quiet times!

About a year ago, in desperation, I began searching again. This time I stumbled upon, by the Holy Spirit's leading, the words "prayer notebook." I discovered ideas to create a journal using a 3-ring binder which appeases my perfectionist personality. With time, I have completely revamped the ideas I originally found to not only incorporate prayer but also every aspect of my quiet time.

Building a “Quiet Time Journal”



[5.5 x 8.5 Inch Binder](#) - I like this size because it is easy to hold in my lap and is about the size of my Bible. In the clear cover pocket I can place a note card, memory verse, or picture as a reminder. Or for those of you who are creative, you can create a pretty slip-in cover. A friend of mine prefers the larger binder size as she places papers like Christmas letters in her journal to help her remember prayer requests. Pick a size that will work best for you.



[5.5 x 8.5 Inches Filler Paper](#) or paper to fit your chosen binder - This is the only product that will need to be replenished.



[Gel Pens](#) - Pick your favorite pens or writing utensil. I write more when I have a pen that feels good in my hand. *(Same concept as workout clothes when you are running. LOL!)* Several different colors may be helpful in journaling.



[5.5 x 8.5 Inches Dividers](#) – This helps divide the sections for easy flipping.

Do I have to go out and buy these products?

Definitely not! Just like a spiral bound book isn't for everyone, neither is a 3-ring binder. My desire is to provide you with an option that I like. From there, tweak it however you desire. In reality, all you need is paper and a writing utensil. The exact product and how you organize it is entirely up to you.

Journaling Jots:

My daily devotional time, seven days a week, will be

To do this, I need to set my alarm for _____

I need to go to bed at _____

Materials Needed

***Prayer:** Daddy, so many emotions are going through my mind right now: excitement, apprehension, and fear. But You welcome me with open arms each time I come to You no matter how I feel. Tear down any walls and obstacles so that I can know You better. Thank You for the promise in John 14:26 that You will give me the Holy Spirit to teach me. In Jesus' name...*

Accountability

With a plan in place, it is time to find someone who can hold you accountable because as soon as you decide to make quiet time a priority, the enemy is going to attack. Your alarm won't go off. The kids will get sick or their wake-up time will change. Unless you have someone to pick you up off the floor, there is a strong possibility that your desires will give way to defeat.

Second, accountability provides us an opportunity to share what God is teaching us. After healing a demon-possessed man, Jesus told him, "Return home and tell how much God has done for you" (Luke 8:39). We need to do the same thing as we begin to grasp all God is doing in our lives.

Find someone who isn't afraid to ask the hard, challenging questions. A good accountability partner is willing to get personal asking, "Did you have quiet time this morning? What is God teaching you in your quiet time?" You may need them to text you at 5:00 in the morning to see if you are awake. It may be that you need to get your husband on board to help keep the children out of sight for a few minutes. Basically, find someone who is willing to do whatever is needed to make sure you stay true to your conviction.

Another option for accountability is our [SISTERS @ ABCJLM](#) group on Facebook. Here you will meet over 500 women who sincerely desire to grow spiritually. Each morning, members have the opportunity to share what God taught them in their quiet time or ask questions. We would love to have you join us.

If you don't have someone in your life who fits the bill or Facebook isn't an option for you, pray that God will provide a person who can hold you accountable. Trust me. If you sincerely desire to build your relationship with Jesus, He will provide someone to help you along the way. In my experience, if the Holy Spirit brings someone to my mind and I immediately begin dismissing the person because I believe they are too busy, that is probably the person I need to ask to hold me accountable. You never know what a person will say until you ask.

Journaling Jots: Ask the Holy Spirit to provide you with the name of a person. Write that person's name down and what you will be asking them to do. In other words, what do you need this person to do to hold you accountable? If the [SISTERS](#) Facebook Group is an option, take a moment to join and introduce

yourself to all of us.

Prayer Time: Lord, I hear what You are saying. Please, help me come up with a plan that will fulfill the goal I have to grow in my personal relationship with You. Lord, lead me to take the next step in faith knowing that You desire to stretch me. In Jesus' name...

Making Devotional Time Worth It

🔒 A Quiet Time...

Come near to God and He will come near to you. James 4:8

I will be the first to admit that I find the Bible difficult to read. And I am convinced that Paul slept through grammar school. All of the commas confuse the fire out of me. I stink at translating David's metaphors. To make matters worse, my brain travels at speeds of 728 miles per hour darting from my to-do list, to a conversation with a friend, to wondering what the weather will be in five days. My brain becomes a mush of thoughts causing me to skim through the Scriptures and rush through prayer time. But once I realized my need and dove in, the Holy Spirit opened my eyes and created in me a thirst for the Word.

I don't say this pridefully or nonchalantly. If I could talk face-to-face with you about this change, you would realize that this is not about me. This is 100% God and I give Him the praise and glory for opening my eyes to how precious His Word is. It is the Holy Spirit who gave me a plan and an outline to stay focused.

I call it "D-R-A-W Deep." With a double implication, read John 4:7-15 to glean the initial meaning.

⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" ⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) ⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) ¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." ¹¹ "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?" ¹³ Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." ¹⁵ The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

Did you catch it?

Each time we come to Jesus we are drawing the living water from Him; water that He says will become in us "a spring of water welling up to eternal life." I want...I crave...I require this living water. During my quiet time, I am coming to the Bible and prayer with a bucket asking God to fill it up so that I can *draw* it up from the source.

The second meaning of “D-R-A-W Deep” is literal and is an activity in the “Reflection” section of the plan.

Here are the four sections.

- Devotion – Who God is.
- Reflection – What God wants me to learn.
- Acknowledge – What God has done.
- Will of God – Praying God’s will over my request.

Now, let’s break down each piece of this outline.

D-R-A-W Deep #1: Devotion

*For great is the Lord, and most worthy of praise;
he is to be feared above all gods. 1 Chronicles 16:25*

Whether you are using a 3-ring binder or a notebook, this is the first section of your quiet time and Quiet Time Journal. Label the first section of pages “Devotion: Who God is... .”

Reading and adding Scripture, songs, and quotes in this section remind me of who God is and the promises He has given me. I see God for who He is as Creator, Provider, Source of Peace, Forgiver, and ultimately “I AM” (Exodus 3:14). Jesus gave us this example in the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:9. “Our Father in heaven, hallowed {holy} be your name.” As soon as I begin reading over the list, my heart softens to the amazing God I serve. I am reminded of who I am in Christ, and how great God is. This is the time for me to declare my devotion to my Abba, Daddy.

When you first begin using a Quiet Time Journal, this section of your journal will be blank. But as you find verses (from your quiet time, church, etc.) pertaining to God’s character write them in this section. A topical study of “The Characteristics of God” makes a wonderful study in itself. To get you started, an extensive list is available at the end of this ebook in Appendix C. Psalm 145 is a great place to begin. A list of verses is also available under the category “God is...” on [Parenting to Impress](#).

Unlike the other sections where I begin each writing with the date, each set of text in this section is headed by the characteristic of God.

Here are some examples:

...Powerful

*He gives strength to the weary
and increases the power of the weak.
Even youths grow tired and weary,
and young men stumble and fall;
but those who hope in the Lord
will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.*

- Isaiah 40:29-31

... Good

*You, Lord, are forgiving and good,
abounding in love to all who call to you.*

- Psalm 86:5

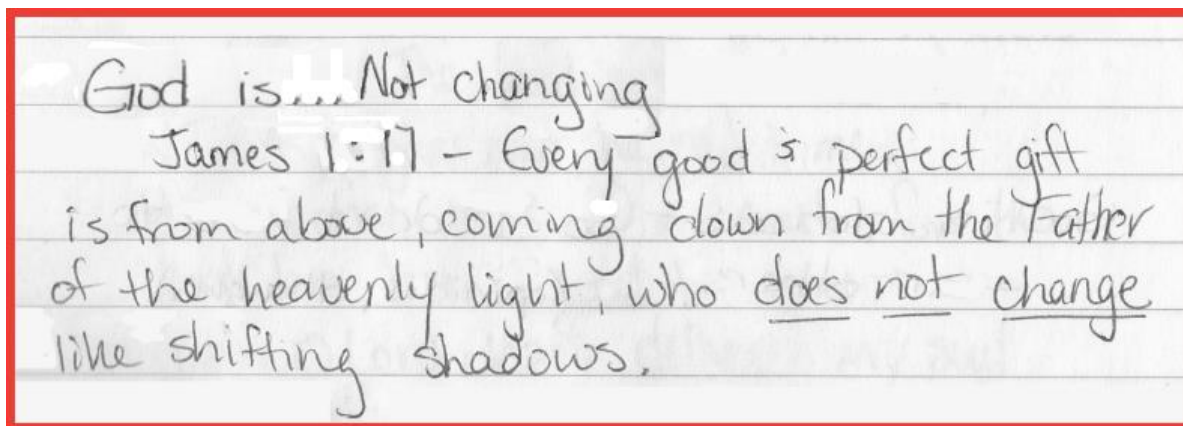
...Not Changing

*Every good and perfect gift is from
above, coming down from the Father of
the heavenly light, who does not
change like shifting shadows.*

- James 1:17

By adding the headings, I can easily find the verses that I need on a particular day. On days that I need encouragement about the power God holds over the universe, I can immediately find this verse according to the heading. If I am being blown around by life's storms, I can instantly find a verse about God's unchanging character.

Here is an example taken from my journal. Notice that my journal is raw and messy. There is nothing neat about my book. These thoughts are for me and I have learned to rid myself of the notion that I have to write with the precision of a first-grade teacher.



After writing the verse or in reading what I have already recorded, I turn the characteristics into a prayer. While I don't typically write the prayer down, you certainly could in this same section.

Here is an example prayer using James 1:17.

God, thank you for the peace You provide Your children which reminds us that You don't change. You aren't moved about like shifting shadows. Because You don't change, I know that everything in Your Word is true. What You said in Genesis is just as true as what Jesus said in Matthew. Prepare my heart for what you desire me to learn in these next few moments. Open my heart to expose sin that needs to be dealt with. Speak to me loud and clear so that I may be molded by Your hands.

Journaling Jots: In the Devotion part of your Quiet Time Journal, write a verse about God's character and finish with a prayer. If you don't have a journal yet, use the space provided.

D-R-A-W Deep #2: Reflection

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. Psalm 119:105

After preparing our hearts for devos by defining characteristics of God, it is time to begin reading Scripture so that we can learn more about who God is, decipher truth, and observe what God has offered to His children. After reading, we will *reflect* to draw out what God wants us to learn.

“Reflection” can be broken into four parts which includes the second meaning of the title “D-R-A-W Deep.”

1. Dive in
2. Drawing to Discover
3. Dig Deep
4. Dialogue

--Dive In

To begin the Bible reading portion of your quiet time, read through the chosen section of Scripture. This may come from a devotional, the list of characteristics of God, or be the next verses in a book or

topical study you are doing. On average I look at 3-5 verses at a time.

During this step, focus on each word in the selected verses and read for meaning. For me, the key is to

slow down and dive deep into the significance of the words to understand the full meaning the author is conveying. Sometimes reading aloud is helpful. Over emphasize the punctuation and exaggerate pauses indicated by commas and semi-colons. Also look for transition words like therefore, because, and if/then. Oftentimes I will read the same text from several different versions of the Bible. I like to read The Message to get a poetic and broad perspective (*The YouVersion app allows you to do this effortlessly*).

I encourage you to make the Scriptures the focal point of this step of the process. Allow the Holy Spirit to be your guide instead of an author or speaker. It sounds scary, but I promise it gets easier and easier with a willing heart.

-- **Drawing to Discover**

After reading the chosen Scripture, I choose a key verse or point to focus on. Typically this is a verse or phrase that the Holy Spirit has brought to my mind. As only God could, this oftentimes focuses on an issue that I am dealing with in my life.

Sometimes the key verse isn't clear and I have to read the Scripture several times before choosing it. Other times I choose the entire Scripture. No matter, there is no right answer. The key point will vary from person to person depending on your current circumstances. Be sure to ask the Holy Spirit for guidance.

This is the second part of the Quiet Time Journal. Grab your journal once again and label the second section "Reflection."

Once the key verse(s) is chosen, I rewrite the verse in my Quiet Time Journal. But instead of just using letters to rewrite the words, the Holy Spirit leads me to begin drawing my verses. Drawing the words presents so much depth to the Scriptures. Drawing the verses forces me to look for the key words and to think about their meaning. Drawing doesn't allow me to kick into "rote" writing as I have to translate the word into a picture.

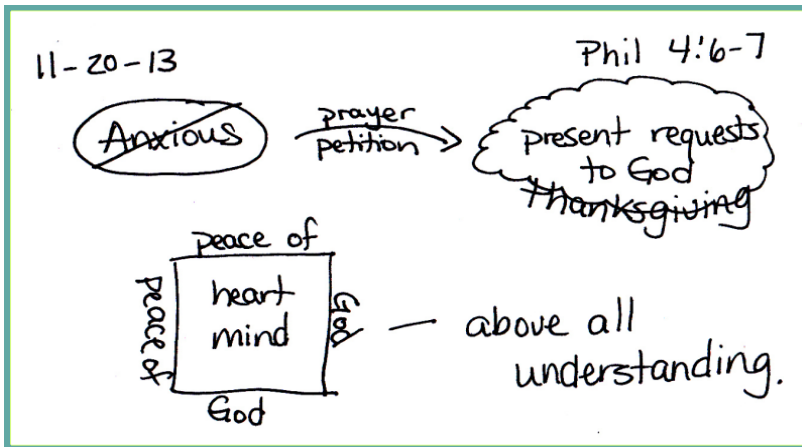
Once again, here are a few examples taken from my journal. I have added the actual text to help you decipher my drawings.

The first example comes from John 4:13-14 that we discussed a couple of pages back where Jesus explains to the Samaritan woman her need for living water.

2-5-14 John 4:13-14
 Jesus answered:
~~Everyone~~ Everyone who ~~drinks~~ drinks this
 water will be thirsty again,
 But whoever ~~drinks~~ drinks ~~the~~ the
 water ~~I~~ give them will never thirst.
 Indeed the water ~~I~~ give them will
 become in them a ~~spring~~ spring of water
 welling up to eternal ~~as~~ life.

Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

In my mind, Philippians 4:6-7 lent itself well to a flow chart. You will notice that I use a lot of arrows, crossing out words for "no," and boxes.



Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

For John 1:1-4, I used drawings around words or to represent the words. For example, on the word "in" I placed an arrow to show "in." Pronouns for God are always capitalized. The word "life" was made with a tree as the "l." The word "people" was a stick person.

12-4-13 John 1:1-4
 In the beginning was the WORD,
 and the WORD was with God. He was
 with God in the beginning. Through
 Him all things were made, ~~in~~ nothing
 was made that has been made. In Him
 was life, ~~in~~ that life was the light
 of all ~~people~~.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

I try to keep the drawings consistent between verses but am stilling discovering what I want to use. (i.e. love is always a heart; Jesus is always drawn with a cross) As you begin this process you will add more drawings to your repertoire. Some of my symbols overlap. For example, I use boxes to highlight key words or sometimes to emphasize "God."

Before nightmares from your elementary art class come forth, let me put some fears to rest. I use the word "draw" rather loosely. Sketch, scribble, chicken scratches would classify as synonyms. The point is to help you not only "hear" the word but "see" the word. You may look at these examples and see nothing but nonsense, and that is okay. Most important is that the drawing in your journal makes sense to you. The goal is to help you dissect the verse(s) to better understand who God is and what He wants to do in and through you.

--Dig Deep

Continuing in the second section of your Quiet Time Journal, it is time to look for a point of application. This is where the verse becomes personal and is applied to a situation in my life.

I answer questions such as these:

- How does this apply to my life now?
- What changes do I need to allow God to make according to these verses?
- How could I use what I read to bless someone else?

After drawing the verse(s), I write out the person application. Many times this is what I share on our [SISTERS](#) group as part of the accountability process. Other times it is too personal or overwhelming to summarize. Depending on what the Holy Spirit is telling me, I may need to take a break and ponder the point only to return to it later.

--Dialogue

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just
to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9*

I finish the "Reflection" time in confession of sin that the Holy Spirit has pointed out to me through the reading of the Word or at different times of my morning.

Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

If nothing comes to mind, Psalm 139:23-24 is a great place to begin each morning:

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Here are a few more verses to use during this time:

Psalm 119:18 Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.

Psalm 25:4-5 Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.

James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

We only have to be willing to ask! In a loving and gracious manner, God will point out what areas in our life that are holding us back from following Him.

To recap: during the “Reflection” section I read a Scripture passage, draw out the verses, apply the key points to my own life, and seek forgiveness and direction for areas in which I need God to move.

Journaling Jots: In the Reflection section of your journal, draw a verse, find the points of application, and have a time of honest confession.

D-R-A-W Deep #3: Acknowledge

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. Psalm 118:1

Just as “Devotion” helps me understand who God is, “Acknowledge” reminds me all that God has done and is doing. Pick up your Quiet Time Journal again and label the third section “Acknowledge.” Think of this portion as a continuous tally of blessings. Before I begin my grocery-list of requests for God, I

need to take a moment to remember all that He has done in and through my life. Suddenly my list appears different because my eyes see God for who He is instead of as Santa Claus.

Journaling Jots: In the "Acknowledge" section of your journal, acknowledge what God has done in your life and provided for you.

D-R-A-W Deep #4: Will of God

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation,
by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving,
present your requests to God. Philippians 4:6*

I will be honest. This fourth step is the most challenging for me and if I skimp anywhere, it will be in this section. My prayer life is anything *but* a model to follow. And if focus and concentration aren't difficult enough, I am reminded in Matthew 6:10 of the Lord's Prayer. Jesus asked for God's will to be done "on earth as it is in heaven." So when I pray for a specific item with the agreement that I desire God's will above all, I am acknowledging the fact that what is best for me might be the rain.

Mercy Me's song "Bring the Rain" shares how trials and tribulation come. If through them we learn joy, peace, and freedom then God will be glorified and we can honestly sing "Jesus bring the rain."

*Bring me joy, bring me peace
Bring the chance to be free
Bring me anything that brings You glory
And I know there'll be days
When this life brings me pain
But if that's what it takes to praise You
Jesus, bring the rain*

So, just as the Holy Spirit is making the Word come alive, I have faith that one day I will be able to share how God transformed my prayer life. How I have learned to have true conversation with my

sovereign God. Until then, I am going to keep showing up every morning knowing He will answer my prayer to teach me to pray.

The final step of Draw Deep is what I call “Will of God” because as I bring about requests for my family, friends, church, community and nation along with the desires of my heart, I desire above all God’s will to be done.

For the last time in this ebook, pull out your Quiet Time Journal. Label the final section “Will of God.” Each day, I begin a new page with the date at the top. I begin by writing the names of my husband and children. As God the Holy Spirit prompts me, I pray for specific things in their lives. I write down one word descriptions of the request to help keep my focus. Then I move to my extended family, close friends, those on my heart for heaven, etc. I end with the label “Today” and write what I feel God wants me to focus on based upon the Scripture I read and my time with Him.

Here is a partial example:

2-10-14

Daddy: wisdom, leadership

Bubs: empathy

Sweet Pea: friendships, Holy Spirit speaking

Little Man: be a leader for good

Peanut: discipline, salvation

Mary: wisdom, house

June: marriage

Lori: season of life

Micah & Julie: job, house

Nora: salvation

Today: Strength, peace Love Holy Spirit’s direction

As I see God answer these requests, I go back and add a date along with how He answered them. So often, I see God answering our prayers with “yes.” Sometimes the answer doesn’t come quickly so I know that God wants me to wait. Other times I see that God’s will didn’t match what I desired. This can be crushing. Let me share with you a blog post that I wrote last year on [Parenting to Impress](#) concerning God’s will done.

It was a popular country song when I was in high school. To tell the truth, I still like the song by Garth. The lyrics have caused me to think back to some of my own prayers and the answers I have received. But it was an [Adventures in Odyssey](#) episode that gave me a new perspective on thanksgiving for “Unanswered Prayers.”

The storyline of this AIO episode takes a character named Digger back in time to Jesus’ death and resurrection. He is immersed into the historical happenings and even becomes a voice in the

crowd. Being in the situation, Digger forgets the outcome of the events and fights to protect Jesus from an unfair fate. He joins the disciples and followers of Jesus as they fear for Jesus' life.

I have listened to the episode and have read the Easter story several times but suddenly it took on new meaning. Looking at the story through the eyes of Jesus' friends, I began wondering how they handled the situation and how they would have felt watching the situation play out. I imagined them praying, pleading with God, and begging for the truth to be known for their friend Jesus.

I imagine conversations going something like this:

Did you hear the latest?

Yes! It doesn't sound good! Can you believe it?

No! He needs a miracle! Please tell everyone you know and ask them to pray!

Sound familiar to a conversation that you have had lately? Maybe concerning someone who is sick or a situation where justice needs to occur?

Thinking through these possible conversations, I realized that the very thing that Jesus' friends were praying for would have been the exact opposite of what they needed! See, if God would have answered their prayers, Jesus would have never died, been buried, and risen again.

Let that sink in.

With this in mind, think about your last unanswered prayer.

For me, this is an easy question. I immediately think of my sister whom God decided not to heal on this side of Heaven. Her death is an "unanswered prayer" in my life. But in light of what God showed me by way of a children's radio drama, I have to trust that our "no" was the best answer to our prayers. Trusting that once God allows me to see the whole picture, I will truly be able to sing "I thank God for unanswered prayers."

Concentration. Communication. Focus. Unanswered Prayers. Prayer is a lot to wrap our brains around. But you are not alone, as I have never met anyone who claimed to have mastered it. I John 5:14 encourages us, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us."

In closing, read what Barbara posted on our [ABC Jesus Loves Me Facebook Group](#):

Praying is communion with God. ... Praying is kneeling before God without your mind already made up. It's a time of reflecting on who He really is. When you pray to God, go seeking His face. Close your eyes and crawl in His lap.

Journaling Jots: In the Will of God section of your journal, record your prayer request.

Using a Quiet Time Journal

In discussing how to have a quiet time, I explained what to write in your Quiet Time Journal. Let's take a moment to review each of four the sections.

D-R-A-W Deep is an outline to help you grow in your walk with God through Scripture reading, application, and prayer. It also divides your journal into four parts.

1) Devotion – Who God Is

In Step 1, focus on the characteristics of God: who God is and what He does for you. During the "Devotion" time, read through verses which you have added to this section. By focusing on these verses, you will be reminded of what an amazing God you serve.

2) Reflection – What God Wants Me to Learn

I spend the majority of my quiet time on this section. Breaking this into four steps, begin by "Diving in" to the Scripture. Rewrite the key verse(s) by "Drawing to Discover" what the verse(s) means. "Dig Deep" to make the verse(s) applicable. Lastly "Dialogue" with God about sin and areas He wants to move in and through.

3) Acknowledge – What God Has Done

Keep a running list of God's blessings. This allows you to acknowledge God as a personal God.

4) Will of God – Praying God's Will Over My Request

Laying the outcome in God's hands, present your request to Him for your family, friends, and yourselves.

5) Optional Section: Sermon Notes

I write all my sermon notes in my Bible alongside the passage. It makes for a mess in my Bible, but I like having the notes available when I come back to the verses. I have several friends who keep notes in their Quiet Time Journal. This could easily be added to the end of your journal/notebook.

Remember that having a Quiet Time Journal is not a magic pill to perfect communion with God. It doesn't mean that your quiet time is going to improve tenfold. Unfortunately, just creating a journal and holding it in your lap is not going to lead to a spectacular prayer life and understanding of God's will. My prayer is that it will help you focus, dig deep into the word, draw from the source of life, and understand that there is a God who loves you very much.

Additions to a Quiet Time

There are two more points that I want to share as optional additions to your quiet time: Note cards and Memory Verse.

--Note card

To help carry the quiet time learning into the day, I encourage you to write on a 3x5" note card a key verse or point. Then place this card in a prominent place in your home or vehicle where you will be reminded of it throughout the day.

Here are a few things that I have written in the past:

- "Laugh" – to remind me not to take things too seriously or personally
- "Balance"
- "I don't have to stress...because God!"
- "Pause"
- A Bible verse - this may be a memory verse or a key verse read during the time
- Love – this is the key focus of my year

It amazes me how many times the Holy Spirit affixes my eyes on that notecard just when I need it.

--Memory Verse

The Sword of the Spirit is the only weapon mentioned in the Armor of God. All other pieces are for protection and shielding attack. And what is the sword? The Bible. I cannot fight, no matter how much protection I have, unless I know the Scripture well enough to use it. Without the sword, I am simply dodging one assault after another. "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." This popular verse from Psalm 119:11, as well as the reference to the sword in the Armor of God illustration from Ephesians 6, declare the importance of memorizing Scripture.

Adding this to quiet time and daily life will transform your day.

Hold it right there...Are you telling me to add one more thing to my to-do list? I am on overload!

I am with you on this one. In my own life, memorizing Scripture can be pushed pretty low on the totem pole. But over and over, God reminds me that there is power and wisdom in His Word.

So, give yourself grace and start with short verses that apply to your current situation. During quiet time, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to a verse to memorize. Use the [ABC Jesus Loves Me Memory Verse Cards](#) and learn key memory verses with your child. We work on these verses in the car. Music is another fabulous way to learn verses. The [Seed Family Worship CDs](#) are amazing and perfect for the whole family.

By placing a memory verse on a note card, post-it, or phone app, you can easily work on the verse while fixing supper, at a stop light, or getting ready in the morning. Involve your kids as well! Then, when you are tempted, fearful, or in need of encouragement, allow the Holy Spirit to bring the Scripture to mind. Again, there is power in the Word!

Extending the Learning into the Day

What I have shared so far is how to begin your morning. But what about the rest of your day?

Remember that prayer is open communication that should occur “continually” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Pray while doing the dishes. Pray while driving. As you fix a meal for another family, pray for them. While wrapping Christmas presents for someone, pray for that person.

When I was in college, taped to all of the shower doors was a “Pray Naked” list. Inside a zip top bag was a list of prayer needs of those on our hall. What better way to use your few minutes of peace in the shower than to lift up the request of your family and those around you! (You can also place memory verse cards in the zip top bags.)

I love to pray out loud in front of my children. Call it training or shock factor; it is amazing to see the looks on their faces when mommy breaks into prayer. This is especially true during a frustrating situation! Sometimes my prayers sound like this, “Dear Lord, help me! Mommy is going to blow!” At other times, I praise God with my children; while watching the beautiful snow float to the ground, “Thank you, God for the snow!”; or when I *almost* drop a casserole dish with supper inside, “Thank you, Jesus!” How much our children learn about God when we break into prayer at random times!

Post note cards of Scripture around your house and the key points God is teaching you. Fill your home

with praise music from Pandora, CD's, or a Christian radio station. These ideas keep God first and foremost in your mind.

While having a quality quiet time is important, so is attendance and involvement in a Bible-based church. Hebrews 10:25 reminds us to "not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another-and all the more as you see the Day approaching." It is my time at church, with my accountability girls, and in Bible study that I receive the encouragement to keep drawing deep in the Word.

Ending the Day

Campus Crusade for Christ founder, Bill Bright said:

In my devotional life, I have found it meaningful to begin every morning in prayer and end the day in prayer worshiping our Lord. ...I ask Him to think with my mind, to love with my heart, and to speak with my lips. As I get out of bed each morning, I worship Him saying, *"Lord, I bow before you and acknowledge you as my Master."*

Throughout the day, I focus my thoughts on the Lord, and praise and worship Him for His goodness. I tell the Lord that I love Him, and I thank Him for living in me. Then, I ask Him to think with my mind, to love with my heart, and to speak with my lips. Since He came to seek and to save the lost, I ask Him to seek and to save the lost through me.

In the evening, I ask, *"Lord, is there anything in me that is displeasing to you, anything that I need to confess?"* ...so that my subconscious thoughts are on the Lord Jesus all night long.

Notice how he begins and ends each day with Christ as his focus? I love this!

I encourage you to pull out your Quiet Time Journal and/or Bible each night before your head hits the pillow. Maybe you want to add to your "Acknowledge" section with blessings God has provided throughout the day. A friend of mine reads through the Bible in the evenings. She reads until she gets too tired to read any further. This may mean reading a verse, chapter, or an entire book. The point is that she begins and ends her days focusing on God.

...Worth the Time

Are you still with me? I know that we have covered a lot in this ebook. But, I promise that if you begin even one aspect of this ebook, you will be changed. So much so that when you don't have a personal time, you will realize that something is missing in your day. You will crave more. And in that, you will be driven to *draw deep* in your personal relationship with God.

Quiet time isn't about a list of rules to follow. What I have given you are just ideas that have worked for me. The time is not something to check off, nor is "D-R-A-W Deep" a checklist. Most importantly, having a quiet time is not about *doing* more. Growing in our relationship with Jesus is about releasing our will to do God's will through the wisdom of prayer and reading the Bible. It's about focusing on who God is and what He is doing.

Want to know the best news? We are not alone on this journey. The Holy Spirit will give us the wisdom to know what to do, the strength to get up when we want to sleep in, and the ability to do things we never thought possible.

Sisters, the time is now. Draw down deep to the living water for you will never thirst again.

Journaling Jots: Write a prayer to God expressing your fears and the apprehensions that you hold concerning beginning a quiet time. Ask for His guidance and wisdom to personalize what you have learned in this ebook.

Prayer: Jesus, this is a lot of information. The enemy wants me to be overwhelmed. He wants me to think that this is too much and I will fail. But, I know that the Holy Spirit has been given to me to help me succeed. Jesus, I desire to know You more. I ask that You remove obstacles that come in my way to prevent our times together. Please call out the lies that I justify to limit our time together. I smile just thinking about all that You long to teach me. In Jesus' name...

In Closing

My prayer for this ebook is that you will step into the water. It is warm and refreshing. It is okay to start small. If need be, pick one point that I have shared, because one point is better than nothing. Soon, you will find that you can't simply put your big toe in the ocean. You will desire to dive in head first.

Remember that the last thing the enemy wants you to do is spend time each morning with God. Issues will come up. You very well may be discouraged during the process, but remember who is placing the obstacles in your way and don't let them trip you up.

To help you along this journey, we welcome you to join our Facebook Group – [SISTERS at ABCJLM](#). The acronym means: we **S**upport each other in our Christian lives; we **I**nspire those around us to dig deeper in the Word; we **S**eek the Lord each morning; we **T**rain each other in what God has taught us; we **E**ncourage our sisters to keep running the race before them; we **R**ely on each other when we feel weak; and we **S**erve each other as sisters in the body of Christ.

This is a group that will encourage you in your time with your Savior and in your Christian life as you learn to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and then to love those around you. We invite you to share in this closed group what God is teaching you, ask questions, and encourage other ladies.

As I stated at the beginning of this ebook, I don't have it all figured out. My quiet time is far from perfect and my prayer life is far from exemplary. But, God is beginning to open my eyes to what it can be and I am excited.

It has been my honor to be God's vessel in writing this ebook. He has shared with me the ideas to develop a quiet time that is worth the time. I hope that you will share with me your ideas and questions.

God bless you in your journey.

--Heidi

ParentingtoImpress.com

ABCJesusLovesMe.com

Appendix A: ABC's of Salvation

Salvation means to be saved from something. Biblically this salvation means to be saved from death. Acts 4:12 – “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

A – Admit

Admit what you have done wrong and ask forgiveness.

Romans 3:23 *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

Romans 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death.*

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

B – Believe

Believe that Jesus died on the cross and rose again as a payment for your sins.

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

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 *Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, that he raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.*

Romans 5:8 *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

C - Confess and Choose

Confess and choose to allow God to be in charge of your life

Matthew 16:24 *Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.*

Romans 10:9 *If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

Romans 10:13 *Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*

If you decide to accept Jesus' free gift of eternal life, please let me know. I would love to rejoice in your salvation as my new brother or sister in Christ.

Appendix B: What about My Young Children?

You like what you have read. You may have even purchased a Quiet Time Journal. But there is one huge obstacle...children.

Moms of young children struggle with children interrupting their quiet times. Trips to the potty, early risers, and unexpected situations can be huge hurdles to overcome. I will try to answer some of the most common asked questions that I receive.

My kids get up early.

Your kids wake up way before you are ready to greet their smiley faces. I understand. "Momm-mmmmy" used to be my wake-up call. But not too quickly (unfortunately), I learned that this did not work. It made for a hurried and crabby mommy. While sleeping in meant I was getting more sleep, I was neglecting my spiritual health which meant I was neglecting my marriage and my children.

Our children are not allowed out of their bedrooms until 7:00. At a very young age, we trained them to play in their rooms or cribs until we came to get them. It wasn't easy, but it was so worth the effort. Training is the key word. *(Keep reading to learn more on this.)*

What about little ones needing to use the potty?

Help the child use the potty and then return the child to his/her room with a few toys or books until 7:00 or your set time. Make morning wakeup time sacred like you make bedtime. Have a routine and stick to it. If you are blessed to have your husband home in the mornings, ask him to help guard your time by helping with little surprises.

But my kiddo needs me?

Which will be more beneficial to your child: a mommy who has spent time with God or a mommy who has not? Secondly, are you living a greater example by placing priority on the time spent with God or answering to every whim your child has?

My baby is still nursing.

Still getting up several times a night to nurse? The early morning feedings provide a great time to read and pray.

My kiddos wake up at different times each morning?

Mine did to. Again, we trained them to play in their rooms or cribs until we came to get them. This makes early wakeup time less appealing for them.

But, I need sleep.

Sleep is very important for kids and adults. But God showed me that my priorities had to change. I realized that I was placing physical needs over spiritual. Also, I learned in order to get up this early, I had to go to bed earlier. This meant I had to close the book, turn off the TV, or put the smartphone down no matter how tempting it was to view one more page, episode, or Pinterest pin.

Please understand, that I am not advocating neglect of your child. That would be going against biblical principles. What I am encouraging you to do is wake up early enough to provide you with adequate time to read the Bible and pray. Also, I recommend that you train your child to safely entertain himself in the mornings if he should rise early.

I am living proof that early morning quiet times can be successful even with several young children. But it has to be a priority in your life which means you have to be willing to train your children to respect it as well.

My child consistently gets up at 5:30. How do I train my child to sleep in?

If you have young children, you have been there - or are still there. The morning wake-up time is so difficult until you can train your children to sleep or stay in their rooms. For us, it worked out to be a six step process.

Step 1: Purchase a Visual Clue and Decide Times

By instinct a child will not know what time it is. Giving the child a visual clue will help her know what to do when she wakes - either get up or go back to sleep. Purchase a timed light, toddler alarm clock, or alarm clock with easy-to-read numbers to place in your child's room so that they know when to wake up.



We used a night light plugged into a timer to help our child know what time it was. When the light turned off, he could get out of bed.



The Kid'Sleep Classic toddler alarm clock with its easy to understand display may be a simple solution. This "clock" will help the child know when it is time to go to bed and when he can get up.



Once our children got closer to three years of age, they learned to watch for the "7" on their alarm clocks. Beside the alarm clock is a post-it note with a seven written on it to help them remember.

Decide on a reasonable time that your child can get up. Our children are in their beds from 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. I encourage you to involve your husband in this decision.

Step 2: Give the Child the Best Possible Scenario

Think through reasons that the child is waking early.

- Does the child's room face east and allow the sun to shine in? Simple window treatments may help.
- Does the child hear early morning noises due to outside activities or other household members? A sound box or music may help drown out these extra noises.
- Is bedtime routine a nightmare? If the night hours are a nightmare for your family, begin by working on the bedtime routine. Keep it consistent and don't fall into the drink-of-water trick. Once everyone is going to bed without issue, then focus on the middle of night expectations. Finally, work on the morning wake-up time. Work on one aspect of night at a time. In most cases, once the bedtime routine and middle of the night expectations are in place only a little training will be required to ward off the early morning waking.
- Is your child too tired? When Bubs got up early I thought it was because he was sleeping too much during the day or because he went to bed too early. While this may be true of infants, I found it not true with toddlers (unless of course your toddler takes four or five hour naps). I found that without a good nap, he was too tired to sleep at night. Once I stretched his nap time to two or three hours, Bubs began sleeping longer at night. Also, earlier to bed helps the child sleep better at night. Backwards thinking, but it works like a charm.

Step 3: Introduce the Child to the Visual Clue

Find a time to introduce the child to the visual clue. (When the child is hungry, tired, or grumpy is not a good time.) Choose a day that you can implement the new expectations for several days. To make it fun and exciting, wrap the clock and give it to the child as a "big boy/girl" gift. Explain to the child (tailor to the child's age and your situation):

Henry, you are becoming a big boy. And because you are a big boy, it is time to give you a big boy gift. This light/clock is going to help you decide when to come out of your room each morning. Let me show you how it works....

This morning, you came into Mommy and Daddy's room really early. But now that you have this big boy light/clock, you will know when it is okay to get up.

Let's practice...

I want you to know that if you leave your room before the light is off or the clock says "7," then Mommy will take your hand and walk you back to your room. The time before your light goes off is the time that Mommy is going to be spending with God. It is very important for Mommy to read her Bible and talk to God, isn't it? So, I want you to respect my time.

If you wake up before the light turns off or the clock says "7" then you may sit quietly on the floor and play with your _____ or read your books. If you need to use the bathroom do so and then return to your bedroom (or follow the plan your family has designed for this situation).

Do you have any questions?

Step 4: The First Night

That night while putting the child to bed, remind the child what will happen in the morning.

Step 5: The First Morning

Depending on your child's personality, the first morning may be simple or not so simple. Understand that training is not fun but it is necessary. The rewards will outweigh the frustration tenfold. Most likely, you will not have a peaceful quiet time on the first morning. But with consistent discipline, you will soon!

The key is to treat the early morning risings just as you would middle of the night awakenings.

Angel Child: This child will not move until the light turns off or the clock says "7." Right at 7:00, greet this child with a huge hug and praise for obedience.

Textbook Child: This child will forget the new expectations or may check to make sure the boundaries are firm. As soon as you realize the child has left his room, immediately return him. Do not talk to the child except when you return to his bedroom and remind the child of the light or clock. Each time after that the child leaves the bedroom, return the child to his bedroom without reminding or conversation. The no-talking policy is very important.

Spirited Child: I wish that I had an easy answer. These kiddos are hard to train - but not impossible. Do exactly as I have suggested with the Textbook Child except know that you will have many, many times where she pushes the boundaries. Be consistent and do not give in. Yielding once will lead to even longer struggles. If possible, include your husband for reinforcement. A [behavior chart](#) may help as it promotes positive behavior.

Step 6: Each Morning After

Keep the expectations firm as the child wants to see that boundaries do not waiver. For those children

who struggle with the new expectations, remember to pray with them each night. Then together celebrate and praise God for success. Don't talk yourself out of this training process. It confuses the child and shows them that you will give up on future things if it gets bad enough. No, it will not be fun but remember that it is short lived. This is key: If you don't plan to finish the race, don't start it.

Quality quiet times are in your future if you make it a priority. While the enemy will try to create obstacles, God is stronger!

Appendix C: The Character of God

- God is kind.
Joel 2:13 Ephesians 2:4-7 Titus 3:4-5 Jeremiah 9:23-24
Psalm 36:7 Jeremiah 31:3 Psalm 103:8-14
- God is omnipresent (always present).
Hebrews 13:5 Deuteronomy 31:6 Psalm 139:7
- God is good.
Psalm 107:1 Psalm 119:68 John 10:11-15 Psalm 86:5
Psalm 100:1-5
- God is compassionate towards me.
Psalm 103:13 Psalm 111:4 Matthew 9:36 Mark 1:40-42
- God is strong and unchanging.
Psalm 91:1-4 Psalm 125:1-2 Psalm 46:7 Ecclesiastes 7:13
Hebrews 13:8 James 1:17 Malachi 3:6 Psalm 33:11 Mark 13:31
- God can be fully trusted.
Psalm 12:5 Psalm 91:1-4 Psalm 37:3-5 Psalm 28:6-7
1 Samuel 15:29 Numbers 23:19
- God forgives me completely.
Psalm 32:1-2 Psalm 130:1-8 Romans 8:28-29 Hebrews 12:5-11
- God does not lie.
Numbers 23:19 John 3:33 Psalm 118:6 Psalm 56:9 Romans 8:31
- God is near.
Psalm 119:151 Psalm 34:18 Isaiah 50:8 Psalm 139:7-12 Psalm 16:11
- God is patient and slow to anger.
Exodus 34:6 2 Peter 3:9 Psalm 86:15
- God is omnipotent (all powerful)
Jeremiah 32:27
- God is omniscient (knows all).
1 John 3:20
- God is loving.
John 3:16 1 John 3:16
- God rejoices over us.
Zephaniah 3:17
- God is gracious.
Psalm 145:17
- God is everlasting.
Isaiah 26:4

About the Author

Heidi Franz is a wife and momma striving to be intentional with each moment God has given her. Using her education background and classroom experience, she created the popular Preschool Bible Curriculum and website [ABCJesusLovesMe](http://ABCJesusLovesMe.com). She also blogs and podcasts at [ParentingtoImpress](http://ParentingtoImpress.com). Sharing her personal journey, Heidi has a passion to encourage and empower others at conferences and through social media.

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