

# THE IMPORTANCE OF A PERSONAL DEVOTIONAL TIME WITH GOD

(By Deb Lindsey)

We hear the words, “daily devotions” in the world of Christianity. Just what does this mean and how do I establish this discipline in my life? The word “devotion” means, “love, loyalty, or enthusiasm for a person, activity, or cause.” If there is anything or anyone that a believer should be truly devoted to, it is Jesus Christ! Let’s be honest; we show our love, loyalty, and enthusiasm for many different things in our world. From sports to politics, to hobbies, and careers. And too often, our Lord and Savior gets the short end of our affections. The purpose of this article is not to make you feel guilty so that you will read your Bible. It is to encourage you to seek the wonderful blessings that come with being devoted to God’s Word.

The Bible gives us very good reasons to have a personal devotional time. Do you want to be equipped for every good work? *“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, **equipped for every good work**”* (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Word of God alone **teaches us, rebukes us, corrects us, and trains us to be more like Christ**. Why is this important? Because God desires for us to be confident and competent in our knowledge and understanding so we can do the good work He has for us to do.

As disciples of Christ, He has chosen us to bear fruit. Jesus tells us in John 15: 16, *“you did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.”* God has chosen us, as believers, to do His work on this earth. We will not be equipped, or be able to bear eternal fruit for His kingdom, unless we continue to grow in our spiritual lives. In John 15, the word “remain” appears 11 times. This is obviously an important truth Christ wanted his disciples to grasp. *“Remain in me, abide in me.”* Jesus tells His people that *“You are the branches, I am the vine. No branch can bear fruit by itself: it must **remain and abide** in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me”* (verse 4). The only way we can bear the good fruit that we have been appointed to bear is to personally take time to read, study, pray, and meditate on the Word of God. We abide and remain in the vine by spending quality time with God. We study His Word and meditate on it until it sinks into our spirit and becomes real to us. It is planted on the good soil of our heart and yields a good harvest.

Peter also teaches us the importance of spiritual growth. 2 Peter 3:18 says, *“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen.”*

Notice, this is a command. Peter isn’t saying that this is an option. As believers,

we are commanded to **grow** in grace and knowledge. In 1 Peter 2:2 he also says, "*As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the Word that you may grow by it.*" Peter began and ended his very practical teachings with a command for Christians to grow. Spiritual growth is basic to the life of a believer, just as physical growth is basic to the life of any person. God commands Christians to grow. Just as our physical bodies need bread and water to live, our spiritual body (soul) needs bread and water. Jesus called himself the "Bread of life" and "Living water." If we don't feed and water our soul daily, it will wither up and be of no good use to the kingdom of God.

How can we establish this very important discipline in our life? Many people view the Christian life as a long list of "do's" and "don'ts." They haven't yet discovered that spending time with God is a privilege that we **get to** do and not a chore or obligation that we **have to** do.

Getting started with daily devotions takes only a bit of planning. There's no set standard of what your regular devotional time should look like, that's why it can be called "personal".

#### **Decide On a Time.**

If you view your time spent alone with God as an appointment to be kept in your daily calendar, you will be less apt to miss or skip it. There is no right or wrong time of day. Set a time that is best for you.

#### **Decide On a Place.**

Finding the right place is key to your success. Find a place that is quiet, a place with less distractions.

#### **Decide On a Time Frame.**

Once again, there is no standard time frame for personal devotions. You have to decide how much time you can realistically commit to each day. Getting started with 15 minutes a day can quickly develop into more. Some people can commit to 30 minutes, others an hour or more a day. Start with a realistic goal that you feel you can meet.

#### **Choose a Bible Reading Plan or Bible Study.**

This may take some time, but choosing a **Bible reading plan** or **study guide** will help you have a more focused time of reading and study. If you pick up your Bible and start reading randomly each day, you may have a difficult time understanding or applying what you've read to your daily life. However, reading what someone else has written about the Bible must never replace reading the Bible itself!

#### **Spend Some Time in Prayer.**

Prayer is simply two-way communication between you and God. Talk to Him,

tell Him about your struggles and cares, and then listen to His voice. Some Christians don't realize that prayer includes listening. God often speaks to our hearts through His Word. As you read His Word, listen to God and then talk back to Him.

### **Spend Some Time in Worship.**

God created us to praise him. 1 Peter 2:9 says, "*But you are a chosen people ... belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*" You can express your praises silently or declare them in a loud voice. There is no right or wrong way. You may even want to sing a song!

If you do not have a personal devotional time with the Lord, begin to pray for God to give you the desire and the discipline to spend time with him each day. It will truly be worth it!

### **A Quote by John Piper:**

A godly life is lived out of a heart astonished at grace. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. We go to the Bible to be astonished. We go to the Bible to be amazed at God, and amazed at Christ, and amazed at the cross, and amazed at grace, and amazed at the gospel. And when we are stunned and amazed and humbled we walk out of our study or out of our chair, wherever we are having devotions, and there's a spirit and a flavor about us that makes us a better person at the kitchen table and when we go to work.