

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

Lesson 39

Psalms and Your Daily Quiet Time

(Guest Speaker: Dr. Stephen Trammell, Executive Pastor)

It's my uncle's fault. It was his idea. He talked my mom into it. Uncle Cliff convinced my mom that my brother and I needed to move into the adrenaline pumping, fear escalating, and life-threatening arena of motocross. My brother, Alan, was eight, and I was on the sunrise of five years of age when we launched our career of racing dirt bikes. Wonderful memories were fashioned, trophies were acquired, and crash related scars were engraved. Those delightful years of racing formed inside of me a perpetual need for speed and germinated into leaving the surface of dirt to engage the surface of water through Jet Ski racing. As only God could orchestrate, my life was dramatically reoriented when I was involved in a Jet Ski accident on Sunday, February 23, 1986, at 2:20pm on Buhlow Lake in Pineville, Louisiana. My brother and I were enjoying less than three minutes of Jet Skiing when we accidentally collided at a speed of sixty miles per hour. I was sixteen and spent several days on artificial life support in ICU. Through that experience, God not only miraculously restored my health, but He also reoriented my entire life by calling me to preach. By God's grace, I have been preaching God's Word for over twenty-five years now.

Recently, my need for speed and my appetite for adrenaline resurfaced which prompted me to experiment with mountain biking. Joey Mouton, who serves as a Team Leader on our staff here at Champion Forest Baptist Church, paved the way for me to enter the exhilarating terrain of mountain biking. This new outlet for aggressive fitness has been contagious and our Senior Pastor, Dr. David Fleming, our Spanish Pastor, Ramon Medina, and our Pastor of Pastoral Care and Counseling, Louis Miori, have joined the accelerating excitement. We each have scars to showcase our obsession!

Being a pastor involves hours of sitting to study and hours of sitting in meetings which fuels a sedentary lifestyle. Staying physically fit is a challenge and necessitates discipline to catapult out of the gravitational pull of the sedentary proclivity.

God rewards motion. We are made to move. We are made to grow. God expects us to embrace a lifestyle of physical fitness to take care of His temple, namely, our bodies (1 Cor. 6:19-20). God also expects us to embrace a lifestyle of spiritual fitness. In his letter to Timothy, Paul reminds Timothy of the value of growing in godliness:

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⁷Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; ⁸for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come (1 Timothy 4:7-8 ESV).

Embracing a lifestyle of spiritual fitness is a mark of spiritual maturity and a vital component to living in the center of God's will. It is God's will for you to be saved and to grow spiritually. When did you respond to God's offer of salvation by turning from your sin and trusting in Jesus alone for salvation? Since that moment of conversion, have you been growing spiritually? Just as physical fitness takes initiative and commitment, spiritual growth requires discipline and consistency.

READ THE PSALMS SYSTEMATICALLY

God's Word is "a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105). As you read and feed on God's Word, you build spiritual muscles and strengthen your faith. God reveals Himself and His plan through His Word. One way to effectively encounter God's Word in a meaningful way is by reading through the Psalms.

The Psalms are not simply expressions of the heart and mind, but they are also tools of teaching. They will inspire as they increase one's understanding of God and man. The insights that can come from deliberative chewing on the messages within the simplest of verses, heightens the appreciation that God has used many different literary tools to present his revelation to humanity.¹

Here is a plan for reading through the entire book of Psalms each month by reading five specific Psalms per day. For example, use today's date to identify the first Psalm to read. If today's date is July 17th, then you turn in your Bible to Psalm 17. Read through the entire chapter and then add the number 30 to that chapter number and it will lead you to Psalm 47. Read through the entire chapter and then add the number 30 to that chapter number and it will lead you to Psalm 77. Read that chapter and then add the number 30 again to get to Psalm 107. After reading Psalm 107, add 30 to get to your final chapter for the day, Psalm 137. On July 18th, you would read Psalm 18, 48, 78, 108, and 138. Keep reading five chapters each day and in one month you will read through each of the 150 Psalms.

HAVE A DAILY QUIET TIME

One of the main features in having a growing relationship with Jesus Christ is the spiritual discipline of a daily quiet time. "O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land

¹ Lanier, W. Mark, *Introduction to Psalms* (Lesson 30), 8.

where there is no water” (Psalm 63:1 ESV). A daily quiet time is an intentional time each day that you prepare for and that you guard in order to nurture your love relationship with Christ.

Select a Time

As a morning person, I have discovered that what I do first each day is what I do best. Therefore, I reserve the first part of each morning for my time alone with God. If you are not a morning person, then consider having your quiet time later in the day or in the evening. Select a time when you can enjoy unhurried time alone with the Lord. Try to choose a time when distractions will be minimal and your attention can be fully focused on growing your love relationship with the Lord.

Select a Place

Seek to locate a place of solitude. There is a difference between isolation and solitude. Isolation is when you feel overwhelmed by life and by people and you choose to go into your personal cave and shut down. Isolation is one of Satan’s most effective tools to discourage and to deceive Christians. Solitude, on the other hand, is a deliberate choice to eliminate distractions and mute the noise of the world in order to amplify the voice of God. Practicing solitude is a spiritual discipline that enables you to tune in to God’s agenda and to obtain God’s perspective on life.

Jesus enjoyed having His daily quiet time early in the morning and outside. “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” (Mark 1:35 NIV). Sometimes Jesus would get in a boat and find a place of solitude to spend time in prayer.

In his book, *Sacred Pathways*, Gary Thomas identifies nine specific ways people best relate to God and draw near to Him. Each person has a pre-dominate spiritual temperament:

- *Naturalists*: Loving God Out of Doors
- *Sensates*: Loving God with the Senses
- *Traditionalists*: Loving God Through Ritual and Symbol
- *Ascetics*: Loving God in Solitude and Simplicity
- *Activists*: Loving God Through Confrontation
- *Caregivers*: Loving God by Loving Others
- *Enthusiasts*: Loving God with Mystery and Celebration

- *Contemplatives*: Loving God Through Adoration
- *Intellectuals*: Loving God with the Mind²

Find a place that will enhance your daily quiet time and that will enable you to encounter God in a meaningful way. Experiment with different options as you enjoy unbroken fellowship with the Lord.

SET THE P.A.C.E.

How do you begin each day of your life? Do you jump right out of bed and hit the floor running or do you slowly drag yourself from beneath the sheets and gradually wake up to the approaching day? Either way, let me share with you a wonderful way to PACE yourself for each day that Dr. Adrian Rogers taught me years ago.³

Praise

Let's consider using PACE as an acrostic to get our day moving in the right direction with the Lord. The "**P**" stands for "**Praise!**" The psalmist models this attitude and action by saying, "I will praise you, O Lord, with all my heart" (Psalm 9:1 NIV). To praise God is to give Him honor for who He is. To praise God is to acknowledge His sovereignty, His power, and His holiness.

Step number one: When you awaken each morning, lift your hands toward heaven and say, "Lord, I **praise** You!" As soon as your feet hit the ground lift your hands and speak it with sincerity and with passion. You may even choose to look up toward heaven as you say those precious words to our Living Lord.

Pace yourself by starting your day with a verbal expression of your awareness of God's abiding presence. He is worthy. We are so blessed to have the privilege of connecting with the Creator of the universe in such a personal way.

Acceptance

Have you accepted God's acceptance of you? That's step number two in order to **PACE** yourself for the day. Remember, you start your day off by lifting your hands toward heaven and saying, "Lord, I **praise** you." Then as you keep your hands lifted you turn the palm of your hands toward each other and say, "I accept Your **acceptance** of me."

² Thomas, Gary, *Sacred Pathways* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 21-29.

³ Dr. Adrian Rogers served as Pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, TN, from 1972 to 2005 and served as a two-term president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Who made us acceptable? Jesus! What should our response be to His acceptance of us? Accepting others! *“Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God”* (Romans 15:7 NIV). If you have a difficult time accepting someone, then think for a moment about Jesus’ acceptance of you. As you accept others, you are extending to them what you have received from Jesus.

Let’s practice: Lift of your hands and say, “Lord, I **praise** You.” Now, turn your uplifted hands toward each other and say, “I accept Your **acceptance** of me.”

Now, live in fullness everyday by accepting His acceptance of you. There’s nothing you can do to cause Jesus to love you more and there’s nothing you can do to cause Him to love you less. Jesus accepts you!

Control

Who’s your boss? To whom are you yielding allegiance? I hope your answer is Jesus. His desire is not only to be the Savior of your life, but to also be the Lord of your life. In the language of the New Testament, “Lord” means one who has control over. Thus to make Jesus Lord of your life is to yield to His control. The Lordship of Christ denotes submitting to His authority and embracing His agenda.

Let’s continue to unfold our **PACE** acrostic. The letter “C” is for **control**. Include this in your daily routine: Lift your hands toward heaven and turn your palms upward and say, “I surrender to Your **control**.”

Now it is time to practice: Lift your hands toward heaven and say, ”Lord, I **praise** You. I accept Your **acceptance** of me. I surrender to Your **control**.”

Enthroned Jesus as the Lord of your life. Yield every fiber of your being to His Lordship and leadership in your life. Allow Jesus to have His way to mold you and to shape you into the vessel of honor He has created you to be.

Expectation

When anxious thoughts race through your mind, uneasiness permeates your emotions. You begin to fear the unknown. Indecision imprisons you. Questions linger. That’s exactly the kind of season the Israelites experienced when they were exiled to Babylon from their homeland of Jerusalem. They were displaced, discouraged, and confused. Yet, in just the right moment, God met them at their point of need.

We serve an “on time” God! He is never late and He always knows exactly what you need. Therefore, you can trust Him to accomplish His perfect plan in you

and through you. He knows you by name and even the hairs upon your head are numbered. Wow!

Are you ready for the final letter in our **PACE** acrostic? The “**E**” is for **expectation**. At this point, you pray with your hands outstretched parallel to the ground (as though you are trying to fly) with the palm of your hands facing upward. Then you say, “**I expect** great things to happen today!”

Recognize God’s sufficiency and **PACE** yourself each day by embracing this spiritual discipline. Lift your hands toward heaven and say, “Lord, I **praise** You. I accept Your **acceptance** of me. I surrender to Your **control**. I **expect** great things to happen today!”

Pace yourself for the day God has for you. Maintain a vertical focus by keeping your focus on God’s will. Make His smile the goal of your life. Passionately pursue Him each day and allow Him to accomplish His plan through you.

USE THE A.C.T.S. MODEL

One of the most popular acrostics that Christians use to guide their daily prayer time is A.C.T.S. Each letter represents a special focus for concentrated prayer.

Adoration

Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD! (Psalm 150:6 ESV)

You begin your prayer time by simply adoring God for who He is. Acknowledge His holiness, purity, perfection, omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, immutability, and His eternal nature. Recognize and affirm through prayer God’s display of compassion, generosity, faithfulness, grace, and mercy. Spend time esteeming God by expressing your appreciation to Him for all that He is in your life and all that He has done to reveal Himself to you and to others.

Confession

⁷Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. ⁸Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. ⁹Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. ¹⁰Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me (Psalm 51:7-10 ESV).

As you continue your time of prayer, move into an intentional time of confessing known sin. Be willing to ask God to reveal any fraction of sin in your life. You may want to pray Psalm 139:23-24, “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try

me and know my thoughts! ²⁴And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!”

Always confess sin instantly and specifically and then receive God’s provision of forgiveness gratefully. Sometimes the Holy Spirit will bring something to your mind that you said or did that brought dishonor to God and you come under deep conviction. Immediately confess that sin to God in brokenness and humility. Remember, whatever you cover, God will uncover and whatever you uncover, God will cover.

Thanksgiving

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever (Psalm 136:1 ESV).

Spend time listing specific people and specific blessings that your are grateful to God for and express your gratitude to God in heartfelt prayer. Articulate your appreciation to God for your salvation, for His abiding presence, for His abundant peace, and His daily provision. Give thanks to God for the your faith, your family, and your friends.

Supplication

One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple (Psalm 27:4 ESV).

As you pray, move into a time of placing specific requests before the Lord. Intercede for those in need. You may want to write down the names of people you are praying for and place a date next to the specific items you are praying over. When God answers that particular prayer, be sure to identify how God answered the prayer and give thanks to Him.

PRAY THROUGH THE TABERNACLE

When you think about relationships, there are different levels of intimacy. Some relationships are emotionally distant and surfaced whereas some relationships have the capacity to be more consistent and feature an element of closeness. Then there are those relationships where the interaction is meaningful, transparent, and magnetic.

The Encarta Dictionary defines the word *intimacy* as a close personal relationship; a detailed knowledge resulting from a close or long association. One of my favorite definitions of intimacy is: “in to me you see.”

God desires intimacy with you. In the Old Testament, the portrait of intimacy was the formation and utilization of the Tabernacle. God made a way for His people to experience intimacy with Him through a religious relationship.

Altar of Burnt Offering

¹“You shall make the altar of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits broad. The altar shall be square, and its height shall be three cubits. ²And you shall make horns for it on its four corners; its horns shall be of one piece with it, and you shall overlay it with bronze” (Ex. 27:1-2 ESV).

As you enter the Tabernacle, the first item you encounter is the altar of burnt offering. The New Testament equivalent is the cross of Jesus Christ. Jesus became the ultimate sacrifice for your sin. As you pray through the Tabernacle, spend some time at the “altar of burnt offering” to praise God for His ultimate love gift and for Jesus being willing to pay the penalty for your sin.

You determine the level of intimacy with God. As you draw near to God, He will draw near to you (James 4:8). God took the initiative to provide the way for you to enjoy an intimate love relationship with Him through faith in Jesus. What are you doing with the relationship God has made available to you?

Basin of Water

¹⁷The LORD said to Moses, ¹⁸“You shall also make a basin of bronze, with its stand of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it, ¹⁹with which Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet” (Ex. 30:17-19 ESV).

The second step to intimacy with God involves “the basin of water” found in the Old Testament Tabernacle. We are touring the furnishings within the Tabernacle. After acknowledging God’s gift of salvation through the atoning work of Jesus on the cross as symbolized by the altar of burnt offering, we now move to the basin of water.

The basin of water represents our cleansing provided by the shed blood of Jesus. In our prayer time, we move from praising God for His salvation gift to confessing sin and receiving His forgiveness.

How can a Christ follower stay clean while living in a dirty world? You stay clean by consecrating your life before the Lord daily. Being conscious of your sin is not enough to obtain cleansing. Confess your sin specifically and say the same thing

about your sin that God says about it. “For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me” (Psalm 51:3 ESV).

Confess sin specifically and confess sin instantly (1 John 1:9). As soon as the Holy Spirit convicts you of specific sin in your life, confess it without hesitation. Don’t give the devil a club to hit you with. Choose to stay close and clean by practicing instant confession of sin. Don’t allow sin to linger. Receive God’s forgiveness and walk victoriously in the strength Christ provides. You are a new creation.

Table of the Bread of the Presence

²³“You shall make a table of acacia wood. Two cubits shall be its length, a cubit its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height. ²⁴You shall overlay it with pure gold and make a molding of gold around it...³⁰And you shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before me regularly” (Ex. 25:23-24, 30 ESV).

Where do you go for nourishment? How do you refuel your soul after you have depleted your emotional love tank? Is there a place to receive nourishment?

As we tour the Old Testament Tabernacle, we find the place for nourishment is the Table of the Bread of the Presence. It speaks of communion, fellowship, and nourishment.

As clarified in the New Testament, we don’t go to a *place* for nourishment. Instead, we go to a *person*. Jesus! He is our Manna from Heaven! He is our daily bread! “Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst’” (John 6:35 ESV). Jesus is our source!

Close your eyes and begin visualizing Jesus as the bread of life. Begin acknowledging His daily provision in your life. Think about seasons when you did not know how you would make it another day and Jesus showed up with abundant resources. Reflect on the transitions in your life where Jesus provided a way for you when there seemed to be no way. Jesus is the ultimate way-maker! He is all you need! Surrender to His tender care. He will see you through. He has already been where you are going.

Spend some time in prayer acknowledging your dependency upon Jesus as the bread of your life. He is your “daily” bread. Present your fears and your frustrations to the Lord in prayer and receive nourishment for your soul. Jesus is your life!

Golden Lampstand

³¹“You shall make a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand shall be made of hammered work: its base, its stem, its cups, its calyxes, and its flowers shall be of one piece with it...³⁷You shall make seven lamps for it. And the lamps shall be set up so as to give light on the space in front of it. ³⁸Its tongs and their trays shall be of pure gold. ³⁹It shall be made, with all these utensils, out of a talent of pure gold. ⁴⁰And see that you make them after the pattern for them, which is being shown you on the mountain” (Ex. 25:31, 37-40 ESV).

Have you ever driven through a neighborhood in December to behold the captivating path of luminaries? It is so moving to capture the sight of the streets outlined with paper bags illuminated with candles flickering in the night.

The Golden Lampstand illuminated the Holy Place of the Tabernacle. It provided light to the table of the Bread of the Presence and the Altar of Burning Incense. The lampstand had seven oil lamps that provided light for the priest to serve.

A candle consumes itself whereas an oil lamp consumes the oil. Jesus has positioned us to be His light in this dark world. The Holy Spirit is the oil that fuels our gracious illumination.

You have been saved by the grace of God and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be a luminary for the Lord. Is your neighborhood a brighter place because of your influence? Is your school or workplace different as a result of the light of Jesus shining through your life?

Jesus has made you the light of the world. Don't hide His light. Allow His light to shine through you today in the interactions you embrace as well as the interruptions you face. Is the light of Jesus shining through you? You are a luminary for the Lord.

Altar of Burning Incense

¹“You shall make an altar on which to burn incense; you shall make it of acacia wood. ²A cubit shall be its length, and a cubit its breadth. It shall be square, and two cubits shall be its height. Its horns shall be of one piece with it. ³You shall overlay it with pure gold, its top and around its sides and its horns. And you shall make a molding of gold around it...⁶And you shall put it in front of the veil that is above the ark of the testimony, in front of

the mercy seat that is above the testimony, where I will meet with you” (Ex. 30:1-3, 6 ESV).

Invest a few moments of time in taking an inventory of your life. What are you offering up to God? How are you allocating your time and your energy? Are you living to bring glory to God in all things?

In the Holy Place of the Tabernacle, we have identified the Table of the Bread of the Presence and the Golden Lampstand. The next item is the Altar of Burning Incense. As you come to this feature in praying through the Tabernacle, begin to worship God and to intercede for others. Present specific requests to God and pray with passion for those God places on your heart. “Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice!” (Psalm 141:2 ESV).

As you pray, your prayers rise like burning incense. As you live out your faith in Christ, your life becomes an aroma pleasing to God. As you offer your body to God for His glory, you are expressing worship to God. Obedience to God demonstrates your passion to please Him and to honor Him with your life and your lips. Does your conversation honor God? Does your conduct move God’s heart?

The Curtain

³¹“And you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. It shall be made with cherubim skillfully worked into it. ³²And you shall hang it on four pillars of acacia overlaid with gold, with hooks of gold, on four bases of silver. ³³And you shall hang the veil from the clasps, and bring the ark of the testimony in there within the veil. And the veil shall separate for you the Holy Place from the Most Holy” (Ex. 26:31-33 ESV).

In the Old Testament Tabernacle, only the High Priest could enter the Most Holy Place. He would enter through the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. The High Priest was granted access.

The wonderful news is that God has given every believer access into His Presence. How did He provide the way?

⁵⁰“And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. ⁵¹And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split” (Matt. 27:50-51 ESV).

Notice how the sacrificial death of Christ granted access for every child of God. God initiated the process to bring us into position to be reconciled.

¹⁹Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water (Heb. 10:19-22 ESV).

God has granted us access to His presence. How will you respond to God's provision? What will be different about your daily pursuit? Establish a standing meeting with God each day and grow in your daily intimacy with Him.

Most Holy Place

³Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, ⁴having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant (Heb. 9:3-4 ESV).

Being "in Christ" changes everything. Your position in Christ gives you direct access to God. In the Old Testament Tabernacle, only the High Priest was granted access into the Most Holy Place, which contained the Ark of the Covenant (Ex 25:10-11, 22).

Now every child of God has the privilege of approaching God with freedom and confidence. What makes that possible? Our position in Christ gives us direct access to our Heavenly Father.

When I pray through the Tabernacle each morning I choose to stop speaking to God and simply wait before Him as I enter the Most Holy Place. I often quote Samuel by saying, "Speak, LORD, your servant is listening." It is at this time that God begins to place people on my heart that He wants me to intercede for. Also, this is the specific time that God will bring truths from His Word to my attention that He wants me to focus on for the day.

Carve out some time to spend unhurried time alone with God. Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is to simply be still before God and wait for Him to speak. How long should you wait before the Lord? Wait long enough for Him to reveal His thoughts to you. As you obey, God will show you the way. Walk in the light God gives you and enjoy daily intimacy with Him.

JOURNAL YOUR JOURNEY WITH GOD

Keep a record of your journey with God. As you have your daily quiet time, record what God says to you. Indicate the spiritual markers that God places in your life along the way. You may want to use a legal pad, a journal, or a computer to write down the key components of your quiet time.

Reflect On Yesterday

One way to journal each day is to begin your opening sentence with the word, “Yesterday.” Then reflect on the events of yesterday and record special moments you had or identify where you saw God at work. Pause to remember how God used you and how He met your needs. Reflect on the interactions you had and the meaningful conversations you engaged in. Write whatever comes to mind as you journal your journey with God.

Use S.O.A.P.⁴

Scripture

After you read the five chapters in the book of Psalms for the day, review each chapter to select one or two verses that God used to connect with you personally. Write that verse or verses down in your journal. If you choose to type, then you can cut and paste the verse or verses from www.biblegateway.com rather efficiently.

Observation

Write general observations that come to mind as you read through the verse or verses that you have selected for your journal entry. Consider writing about three to five sentences that represent an overview of the meaning of the selected scripture.

Application

Put action to the verse or verses you selected by writing a specific application that will enable you to respond to God’s Word. Is there a promise to claim? Is there a behavior to embrace? Is there a confession to make? Is there something you need to stop doing, continue doing, or start doing? Interact with the selected verses and

⁴ Cordeiro, Wayne, *The Divine Mentor* (Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2007), 101-110.

ask God to show you some specific steps to take in response to what He has revealed to you.

Prayer

Have you ever written out your prayers? Consider writing out your prayer or typing your prayer and then reading it aloud to God. Bill Hybels embraced this daily discipline to help him slow down and focus on his walk with God. “Just trying building a marriage on the run. You can’t build a relationship that way, with God or with another person. To get to know someone, you have to slow down and spend time together.”⁵ Writing or typing your prayer will help eliminate the tendency to become preoccupied with other tugs on your life and help reduce the tendency to lose your focus. Over a period of time, you will build a content library of the prayers you have expressed to God. This will give you the opportunity to review specific requests that have been answered through prayer.

CONCLUSION

You determine the level of intimacy with God. If you are currently having a daily quiet time, consider enhancing your time alone with God by reading through the Psalms systematically, praying through the Tabernacle, and using the S.O.A.P. acrostic. Be creative and plan for your daily time alone with the Lord. Embrace spiritual fitness and watch what God does to bring you to a new level in your love relationship with Him.

POINTS FOR HOME

1. *“Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD. And who shall stand in his holy place? ⁴He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully”* (Psalm 24:3-4 ESV).

God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. Satan hates you and has a devious plan for your life. Your decision determines the direction of your life and the destination of your life as well. Choose to walk with God and to practice instant obedience. In Christ, you are no longer a slave to sin, but a slave to righteousness. Maintain clean hands and a pure heart by running from sin and running to Jesus.

⁵ Hybels, Bill, *Too Busy Not To Pray* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 131.

2. *“As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God”* (Psalm 42:1 ESV).

You make room for what you value. What does your soul long for? What quenches the thirst of your soul? Make room for the Living Water that only Christ can provide. Make room in your schedule to ensure a growing relationship with Jesus that will enable to you reach your God-given potential. Establish priorities that will protect your daily quiet time and remove anything that would cause you to drift from intimate fellowship with the Lord.

3. *“I will lift up my hands toward your commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on your statutes.”* (Psalm 119:48 ESV).

God has graciously provided us with the treasure of His Word. Commit to read the Bible daily. Choose a Bible reading plan that will help you grow in your understanding of God’s revelation. Deepen your faith and enrich your prayer life by memorizing Bible verses and by claiming God’s promises. Make necessary adjustments in your life to be in alignment with God’s agenda. Seek to love God and treasure His Word as you feast upon His manna and put feet to your faith.