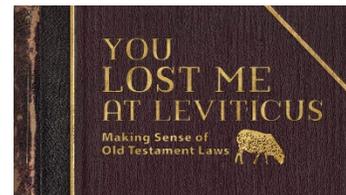


DAILY QUIET TIME GUIDE

BREVARD COMMUNITY CHURCH

WEEK 1: YOU LOST ME AT LEVITICUS - PRIDE

ADAPTED FROM: LETTING GO OF PRIDE BY PETE BRISCOE



HOW TO HAVE A DAILY QUIET TIME

The QT Guide is designed to help you MOVE with God through Bible Reading, reflection and prayer. It can be completed in a about 7 mins.

½ Minutes Preparing Your Heart: Invest the first 30 seconds preparing your heart. You might pray, “Lord, cleanse my heart so You can speak to me through the Scriptures. Make my mind alert, my soul active, and my heart responsive. Surround me with Your presence during this time.

4 Minutes Listening To God: Take the next four minutes to read the Bible. Your greatest need is to hear a word from God. Allow the Word to strike fire in your heart. Meet the Author!

2 1/2 Talking To God (Prayer): After God has spoken through His Book, then speak to Him in prayer.

DAY 1

The Spirit of Competition

There was quite a lot of competitiveness about it, with everybody wanting to beat not only cancer itself, but also the other people in the room... when they tell you that you have, say, a 20 percent chance of living five years, the math kicks in and... you look around and think, as any healthy person would: I gotta outlast four of these [guys]. – Hazel, The Fault in Our Stars by John Green

Some people might describe me as competitive. Why does that have to be a negative thing? I subscribe to the idea that winning is more fun than losing. Whether it’s a game of horseshoes, Ping-Pong, or pick-up basketball, I enjoy winning.

What invokes your spirit of competition? Did you compete to be at the top of your class, or maybe a partner in your firm? Perhaps you secretly compare the square footage of your home or the success of your children to that of a friend?

We’ve got this competitive gene in us. What do we want to be when we grow up? The best!

The desire to win in life is founded upon a mind-set that’s taught to us at a very young age. It’s a deplorable strategy, and it’s the way our society trains us. I’m going to call it “Elevation by Association.”

How does one move up in the world? By associating with the people who can get us there. We divide the world’s population into two categories: positive status people, and negative status people. If we surround ourselves with positive status people, then we believe that we too will become positive status people.

It’s an ancient strategy. We even see it play out in the Gospels: “*Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons [James and John] came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him... ‘Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom’*” (Matthew 20:20-21).

What was at the core of this mother's request? She wanted her sons to have the highest places in Jesus' kingdom—elevation by association.

You'll be glad to know this isn't the way of Jesus.

Prayer: Jesus, what have I gained by being associated with You? What do I hope to gain? This week, I invite Your Spirit to examine my motives and mind-set. Recalibrate the way I see the world, so I see people as You see them. Amen.

DAY 2

Status Dispute

I wish to descend in the social scale. High society is low society. I am a social climber, climbing downward, and the descent is difficult. – Lawrence Ferlinghetti

“Elevation by Association.” We all know it. We've all thought it. It's the mind-set that says, If I surround myself with positive status people, then I'll be elevated to a higher status in the minds of others as well.

We've been doing this since the earliest days of our social climbing. In middle school, some of us tried fitting into the “in crowd.” In college, we called it pledging. Some of us dropped out of youth group because we perceived it to be filled with negative status people. Some of us joined the football team hoping it might increase our status. And somewhere there is a doctor reading this who's really an artist but, of course, medical school was a positive status move.

No matter what season of life we are living in, it's not too late to break this toxic mentality and redefine what it means to be the best.

In Luke 22, Jesus is having dinner with the disciples. It's their last meal together, and He tells them that someone at the table will betray Him. His disciples are in disbelief. Who would be so foolish? And then... Luke 22:24 tells us *“a dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest.”*

A status dispute during the Last Supper? We can't make this stuff up.

It's too bad the disciples couldn't thumb a few pages back to Luke 9, where Jesus refined what it means to win at life. Again, the disciples are found arguing over who was the greatest: *“Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside [Him]”* (v. 47).

When reading this verse, it's important to know that Jesus' society wasn't child-centric the way ours is. In the Greek world, children were to be seen and not heard—and preferably not even seen.

What's really happening here is Jesus grabbed someone from the bottom of the status ladder and said, *“Whoever welcomes this little child in my name, welcomes me...”* (Luke 9:48).

Winning isn't associating with those above us, but welcoming those below us.

Prayer: Lord, I can think of three people whom I consider to be below me, and I don't know if I've welcomed any of them this week. But it's not too late. May this new way of winning become as natural to me as breathing. Amen.

DAY 3

Reaching Downward

In the kingdom of love there is no competition; there is no possessiveness or control. The more love you give away, the more love you will have. – John O'Donohue, *Anam Cara: A Book of Celtic Wisdom*

Thirty-some years ago, while on a mission trip in the Philippines with my basketball team, I was given a visual lesson in loving those I considered to be a social strata below me.

We were traveling from town to town, sharing the Gospel, and playing basketball. As an American team, we usually won; so, we got some great press time. I soaked up this fame because back in the States, I was kind of a scrub. But in the Philippines, I was one of the leading scorers! To be honest, I was getting a bit full of myself.

In the village of Boholon, there was a boy with leprosy. It was quite grotesque—parts of his body and face were missing. And as he walked down the street, everyone ran away from him. He was an untouchable.

One morning as I was having my quiet time, I heard my buddy Randy whisper to the boy, "Come, come." And the boy, uncertain, walked toward him. When he was near enough, Randy reached out and grabbed the stubs that once were the boy's hands, pulled the boy onto his lap, and gently rocked him back and forth.

"Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me.... For it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest."(Luke 9:48)

Winning is not associating with those above us in social standing. It's not getting a bunch of press time for our success. It's not running in the "right" social circles. Winning is welcoming those whom we consider to be below us.

It puts us in an awkward position of admitting that we categorize people as being above or below us. What a ridiculous way to distract ourselves from what Jesus wants to do through us.

Prayer: Lord, am I the person who embraces the leper, or the person who embraces the spotlight? Can I be honest with myself? Either way, I thank You, for I know You love me regardless and You want to do something new and life-giving through me. You've welcomed me; now welcome others through me. Amen.

DAY 4

Welcome

Playdate. (n) A date arranged by adults in which young children are brought together.... A feature of contemporary American upscale suburban life in which "neighborhoods" have ceased to exist ... A "playdate" is never initiated by the players (i.e., children), but only by their mothers. ... For those readers... with an avid

interest in American-suburban social climbing through playdating, this is the chapter you've been awaiting. – Joyce Carol Oates, My Sister, My Love

Nate should have been playing on the school's sports teams. He was the best athlete in our high school, but some of his choices disqualified him. So instead, he joined the intramural teams, and his teams always won.

I was walking down the hall one day when Nate stopped me and said, "I have 9 of the 10 spots filled on my basketball team. I want you to be number 10. Okay?"

"Okay," I said.

I scored two points—one basket—during the entire season, and it was accidental. But because the #1 athlete invited me into the #10 position, I was exposed to a game that became a lifelong love. I played in high school and college, and I traveled the world through athletic mission trips. And all because someone reached down into my world and invited me into his. Jesus' definition of winning.

When we welcome those we consider to be below us, our eyes are opened to the stories of those we meet. It's such a simple way to love—one that changes our life and the lives of those around us.

In humility, value others above yourselves.... (Philippians 2:3b)

Here's something to consider: "above" and "below"—or "positive status people" versus "negative status people"—aren't real categories. To classify people in this way is to forget that we're all created in the image of God.

Just as Jesus welcomed all people then, He will welcome all people now. And because His Spirit lives in us and through us, we will find ourselves less concerned with Elevation by Association and more concerned with Invitation Without Discrimination.

Prayer: Jesus, slow me down so I really see people. Open my mouth to ask about their story. Open my ears to listen. And may I be less concerned with what they might do for me, and more concerned with what You want to do through me. Amen.

Reflection:

1. Do I see people the way Jesus sees them?
2. Am I more concerned about "Elevation by Association" or "Invitation Without Discrimination?"
3. Jesus, whom do you want to love through me?