

DAILY QUIET TIME GUIDE - WOMEN

BREVARD COMMUNITY CHURCH

ASKING FOR A FRIEND, WEEK 2, FOR WOMEN

DEVOTIONAL ADAPTED FROM: SILENCING INSECURITY



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 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

1 John 3:20

Identity Thieves

If you have ever struggled with thoughts such as, *If only I were smarter, younger, prettier, or, I feel inadequate and worthless*, then you have been the target of identity theft. The identity theft I am talking about is the theft of our purpose, our joy, our stability, and our very being.

You are not alone. Women at every stage and circumstance in life can be its victim, often feeling just as conflicted as they did in adolescence. Many of us look to various people or things to affirm our value like our appearance or our success, our background or our life experiences, our relationships or our church involvement, all possibly positive ways to affirm our value. Sometimes the things that influence our perceived value are not good things and instead are painful experiences of rejection or even previous trauma.

When our sense of self, our perceived worth, is overly attached or perhaps dependent on these external things, they can become thieves that steal from us, robbing us of joy and contentment. The things that influence how we feel are in and of themselves not problematic. Being pretty or successful, for instance, are not problems unless our security depends too much on our appearance or performance.

If you struggle with insecurities, have hope. You don't have to live the rest of your life feeling that you don't measure up. You don't have to settle for living as if you aren't enough. You don't have to settle for living with the emotional instability that results from insecurities. You don't have to settle for the relational chaos, indecisiveness, and unnecessary suffering invited by an inaccurate belief system regarding yourself. It's time to stop the theft of your identity and gain stability through rescuing the significance of the person you were created to be.

How have you overly identified yourself with your successes? How have you overly identified yourself with your failures? What emotions do you experience related to your successes and failures?

DAY 2

Zephaniah 3:17

Approval and Rejection

We are wired for relationships. Our fellowship with others is crucial to our emotional and spiritual health. Perhaps the fact that we don't function well outside of relationships with others is what makes the subject of today so tricky.

You see, there's nothing wrong with receiving the approval of people you care about. In fact, it's hoped and expected that you will have at least some form of approval from them. It's also expected that some people will reject us, as it is impossible to make everyone happy. Approval and rejection in and of themselves are not the problem. The problem lies when they are given control in our lives. Being overly attached to the approval or rejection of others brings destruction and opens the door for a thief.

Surely this topic of approval and rejection is a tender one for our Lord. You see, Scripture tells us that Jesus was "despised and rejected by men...He was despised, and we esteemed Him not" (Isaiah 53:3). Jesus knows what it's like to be rejected, to have others disapprove of Him. Remember, Jesus was, and continues to be, rejected by those He gave His life to save.

In case you aren't aware of just how safe this relationship is, let me share with you how your Creator feels about you. For those who acknowledge Jesus as Savior and Lord, He refers to you as His "handiwork" (Ephesians 2:10). He says you are adopted, "chosen," and "included in Christ" (Ephesians 1:5, 11, 13). Look to Zephaniah 3:17 for a refreshing image of God's tenderness toward you, as His child: "The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing." What an incredible image. He rejoices over you in song. Rejoice in your Father's approval of you. His love for you will never cease!

From which particular people in your life do you most feel you need approval? What is your emotional reaction when you receive this approval? When you don't receive this approval? God speaks often through His Word about His tender love for you as well as His promise never to abandon you. What is your reaction to these words?

DAY 3

Romans 8:31-39

Life Experiences and Trauma

“My life will never be the same again.”

All kinds of experiences can shape our identity, if given the power to do so. Unfortunately, the unthinkable encounters are often the ones with the most influence. We don't realize they are defining us. All the while, they are subtly, but powerfully, changing how we think. How we respond to situations. How we see ourselves. Trauma is a powerful thief.

So, take a deep breath, and be honest with yourself. Why do that? Because you really want to be whole. For years, secular researchers have validated the effect of trauma in negatively impacting a person's self-esteem. Now they're also confirming the influence of religiosity on diminishing that impact.

When we invite God into our lives and into our pain, His healing stabilizes the negative effects of trauma. In other words, His defining of us is more powerful than the negative impact of our life experiences. God constructs your resilience—not only in your daily functioning but also in your self-worth.

Perhaps you are one of a handful of people reading today who has been sheltered and buffered from some of the challenging struggles you have seen others experience or had the privilege of encountering certain positive experiences in life that others have not. Thank God for the protection you've experienced and some of the special opportunities you've been privileged to have. But please be careful, my friend. Judging your worth by anything temporal will eventually prove to be a stumbling block in your wholeness.

One day you will encounter trials and struggles. Maybe even tragedy. If your security is based on the wonderful experiences you've encountered in life, you will be set up to be immobilized by the inevitable struggles you will face. Remember, resist giving these life experiences the power to define you. So, enjoy the peace and protection you have experienced, but don't let them define you any more than you would expect a tragedy should define another sister in Christ.

We've established that life experiences can't be allowed to bring a charge against you. Can you imagine separating these experiences from your inherent worth? If so, think about the following: What impact might that separation have on your thoughts about yourself? What impact might it have on your emotional stability? What impact might it have on your future choices?

DAY 4

Romans 12:4-5

Understanding Your Role and Responsibility

We all have roles in life. Roles define what we do with our time and how we use our strengths and abilities. These responsibilities are important. We may be a child, a parent, a spouse, a friend, an employee, a member of a church, an athlete on a team, or a student. God has plans for our lives, and therefore has appointed various roles to each of us. Nothing is innately wrong with roles or responsibilities in life. But when we are overly attached to those roles, when our identity is overly connected to our responsibilities, then we are positioned for an emotional roller coaster. Maybe even an identity crisis.

Our roles and responsibilities will change. We will experience positive adjustments, such as a new baby, a wedding, a promotion, or a new friendship. We may also experience painful changes, such as a divorce, a layoff, infertility, the death of a family member, a geographical move that distances us from our friends and church family, or an injury. If we are overly attached to a role or responsibility prior to a transition, then we enter into the makings of a perfect storm—the onslaught of an identity crisis.

Remember, however, our roles or responsibilities in life are not the problem. *Our inadvertent idolizing of those roles and attachment to those responsibilities bring destruction and open the door for a thief. This distinction is vitally important.* If you feel anxiety about maintaining your roles or potentially transitioning from your responsibilities, then you have been distracted and conned by an unworthy thief.

Our roles in life are strictly vessels for accomplishing God’s will. We go outside His will when we allow those roles to define. Responsibilities in life will adjust with time and circumstance, but our identity is to be unchanging and stable. Immovable. Though our roles may differ, our measure of value and responsibility to the body is the same. God sees the value of our roles differently than we do. And, during a transition, rather than pouring out condemnation, He pours out compassion and restoration (Isaiah 54:4).

How would you answer the question, Who am I? What do you notice about how you answered? Is your answer heavily associated with your roles and responsibilities in life? If so, what is your attachment to those tasks? How do your attachments to those tasks impact your self-worth?

DAY 5

Ephesians 6:12-18

Who Is the Chief Thief?

It is important for us to acknowledge that we face a thief. Our thief, Satan, is not some random robber who is looking for a quick fix. He is a personal enemy, and we are his strategic targets. And unlike the occasional thief who regrets their behavior, Satan has no remorse regarding his attempts to steal. He was kicked out of heaven because he wanted to be God. And, if you are one of God’s children, he also hates you. He wants nothing more than to destroy you. This is warfare.

So how does the enemy wage war? He targets our minds. He uses manipulation and deception to lead us to either doubt God or doubt ourselves. Satan fuels his mission with the weapon of comparison and commonly feeds on our feelings of inadequacy. Much like the piece of fruit he used to deceive Eve, he dangles in front of our faces things such as our appearance, our success, our need for approval, and our experiences in life. He swings these traps in front of us with the false promise that they define us.

The first step in fighting this thief is realizing only with God’s help can we take a stand. We have to put on the protective armor described in Ephesians 6. We have the truth through God’s Word, which provides us with discernment and direction. We have the righteousness of Christ, which covers us and allows God to see us as holy and blameless. We have the shoes of peace, which assure us that we belong to God as we step forward against the enemy. We take up faith, which gives us confidence as we face an unknown and unsettling attack. We pick up God’s Word—we study it, meditate on it, and sometimes memorize it. And we pray.

But perhaps the most significant protection we must use in the face of insecurity is the helmet of salvation. It is the confidence of our salvation and the assurance we are God's children. Scripture says that the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. God's Word is the spiritual weapon for a spiritual war. And it will not leave you empty-handed when you are up against a powerful accuser.

How has the enemy caused you to doubt God? How has Satan used the weapon of comparison to cause you to feel inadequate?

DAY 6

2 Timothy 1:7

Our Amazing Brain

Neuroplasticity means the brain is adaptable and changing. The bad news is that the brain can be harmed and physiologically impacted by our toxic thinking, particularly by thoughts of a repetitive nature. The good news is that the brain can heal as a result of consistently healthy and truthful thinking, suggesting that we have some power in changing our brains. Neuroplasticity takes our discussion regarding our negative thoughts to a new level of importance. If we want to be whole, we must be conscious and disciplined in our thought life. We must submit not only our lives to Christ but also our thoughts about ourselves, allowing the Holy Spirit to direct our ideas and choices. This submission results in the rewiring of our brains and the renewal of our minds.

2 Corinthians 10:5 says to demolish anything that sets itself against the knowledge of God. I know you are thinking, *I am weak. How can I demolish anything?* Remember, God desires your freedom, and He will supply you with the power and discernment to demolish a false belief. God knows you. He knows your true identity. He knows who you really are. So, with His help, prepare to destroy anything that is contrary to His knowledge of you. How do you do this?

First, you aggressively reject the identified lie. This rejection is often a concrete and repetitive exercise. For example, imagine putting your destructive thoughts in a prison cell, never to be released or heard from again. Or perhaps imagine them being erased from a chalkboard and replaced with a word of truth about yourself. Use any and every image that works for you, and allow God to aggressively eliminate the repetitious cycle of negative thinking. It is never too late to become whole.

Take back the identity that never should have been stolen from you and gain the "sound mind" that comes with the mind of Christ (2 Timothy 1:7). He can revive your identity and make you secure, but it must be on His terms. Terms of truth. You *can* think differently.

What are your familiar, destructive thoughts (your negative thoughts and ruminations)? How does the knowledge that your brain is made to be adaptable and changing encourage you? How does God nudge you concerning the toxicity or health of your thoughts and mind?

Ephesians 1:3-14

Transformation and Freedom

Why do we wrestle with self-worth? Because we each yearn to know that there is a reason for our existence. That we're not just on this earth to take up space. That there is something significant about us that explains and defines our presence in this thing called life. God's descriptors of you are your true identity.

God, your Audience of One, rescues you with His truth. And when you are His child, you are forgiven, justified, redeemed, no longer condemned, completely accepted by Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, a new creature in Christ, set free, chosen holy and blameless in His sight, His masterpiece, brought near to God and bought with a price, cared for, and complete in Christ. This is just a short list of the descriptions God uses in reference to you. God rescues you with His truth. And this is who He says you are.

Since you desire freedom from your insecurity, it's time to have an honest conversation about submitting your thoughts to God. Agreeing with Him about your true identity stabilizes our emotions and brings purpose to our actions. This formula for wholeness involves a transformation to dependence upon God for our complete identity. The Apostle Paul was a living demonstration of a transformation in dependence.

Did you know that Paul's name meant "little"? But he never let his name define him. Though Paul clearly thought little of his needs, he thought much of God and accepted who God defined him as being. He was not an arrogant person, but he did not hesitate to boast loudly about God. Instead of being little, Paul was a living light because he was free to live purposefully without the shackles of a broken self-worth.

Wholeness invites relationships and we are designed to be in relationships with others. But not just any kind of relationship. With healing, we no longer need to avoid others for fear of rejection. We no longer feel desperate for relationships. We no longer settle for destructive relationships. Wholeness allows us the freedom to live within meaningful relationships

What description that God uses for you resonates most clearly? Take a moment and pray, asking God to see yourself through the eyes that He sees you with.