



# Daily Quiet Time Guide Viral, Week 3

**Devotional Adapted From: Your God is Too Glorious**

## 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 minutes.

**½ Minute 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!

**2.5 Minutes Talking To God:** After God has spoken through His Book, then speak to Him in prayer.

## DAY 1

1 Thessalonians 4:11

*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. (Acts 4:13).*

### **The Joys of an Unaccomplished Life**

Most of us were watching cartoons or tracing the ABCs in our kindergarten class the first time we heard that we would do great

things. As we grew up, this mindset molded our perception of what matters. We were told to be all that we can be. Each chapter in our biography should be something to boast about: “When I Graduated with Honors,” “How I Landed a Job with a Fortune 500 Company,” “My Promotion to Management.”

These big dreams do come true for some people, but for most of us, they don’t. We, along with our dreams, careen off the highway and end up stuck in a ditch along the road to glory.

It’s perfectly fine to dream, as a matter of fact, God wants us to dream, but we need to make sure our dreams mesh with our calling in life. Paul urges us in Thessalonians 4:11 to “Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life.” This is arguably one of the most un-American verses in the Bible. We must say these words over and over to silence the lifelong indoctrination we have received from a culture that idolizes those who do big things. We must make it our ambition not to let “awesome” define our relationships, tell us who we are, or guide us in discerning how and where God is found.

To lead a quiet life doesn’t mean that you lower your expectations as much as you lower your gaze. Instead of looking up to the next accomplishment, the next rung on the ladder, you look around at the daily life you live, the children God has given you, the spouse by your side, your aging parents, your dear friends, the poor and needy, those who don’t know Jesus—all those “little things” you miss when you’re always looking up to the “next big thing” in your life. God chose to use “unaccomplished” folks to build his kingdom. If it’s good enough for God, it ought to be good enough for us.

*What would a “quiet life” look like on a practical level for you right now?*

## DAY 2

Isaiah 53:2

*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. (Acts 4:13).*

### **God's Qualifications**

Things don't turn out the way we imagined they would. Dream jobs can be a nightmare at times. Even Love Boat marriages can go the way of the Titanic. No one in Hollywood or Nashville knows our name. We never bask in our fifteen minutes of fame. Instead, we settle into a decidedly predictable life that is sometimes happy, often hard, and occasionally quite brutal.

In other words, our lives are exactly the kind of lives that God gets excited about. The more unimpressive our jobs are, the more lack-luster our bio, the more we feel like we're just a name on a list or a face in the crowd, the more we are the perfect venues for God's ongoing work in this world. If God is anything, he is a God who has a thing for the normal. He is a God who turns our every expectation inside out.

The Scriptures are packed with illustrations of this tendency. To begin with, God goes out of his way to handpick the wrong people for his most important missions. The Bible is like the HR Handbook from Hell. Here's everything you should not do when looking for the perfect candidate for a position.

Need a woman to become the mother of a promised son? Instead of choosing a robust twenty-five-year-old, the Lord taps a post-menopausal, wrinkled, ninety-year-old named Sarah for the job.

Need someone to lead the emancipation of slaves from the most powerful nation on earth, as well as to serve as the spokesperson

for these oppressed people? Rather than choosing the ancient equivalent of a Navy SEAL or a quick-tongued Secretary of State, God handpicks a stuttering eighty-year-old shepherd named Moses who's been on the lam for forty years after beating a man to death.

Book after book, from Genesis to Revelation, the Lord sends men and women on errands they are ill-qualified to fulfill. And nothing has changed in today's world. He continues to buck our manmade religious systems by inserting men and women into them who don't meet our qualifications. But they meet God's. He's delighted to use them in his kingdom to show all of us that it's not by brainpower or brawn but by the Spirit of love that the Father gets things done.

*When have you seen God do great things through someone who seemed entirely unqualified?*

## DAY 3

Isaiah 35:6

*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. (Acts 4:13).*

### **Incognito**

God hides in plain sight. In the back alleys and warehouses and boardrooms that look nothing like God's hangouts. He's dressed up as the misfits who embarrass us and the tollbooth workers we pass by.

And He's beneath our skin too. He has sunk himself into our unglamorous lives that there He might do what He does best: give, love, serve, help, and pray. The little things we do—like pouring cereal for our sleepy children before school, driving a delivery truck to

keep businesses rolling, visiting a friend who's laid up in the hospital—these seemingly little things are divine deeds over which angels rejoice.

The Lord's incognito way of infiltrating the commonalities of life and infusing them with a divine purpose is not limited to our humanity. He's active not only in lackluster people but also in lackluster things and places. Sometimes, in fact, these things and places are not only lacking in glory but are positively bizarre. They're the last place one would suppose the Lord of heaven would be found on earth.

The Scriptures, especially the Old Testament, parade before us example after example of how God chooses godforsaken places as the venues in which to teach his people that He won't forsake them. For instance, in the desert wilderness of the Sinai peninsula, for four long decades, Yahweh taught his people how to live by faith in His Word of promise. The five foundational books of the Bible—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—were all written by Moses here. The covenant of the law was enacted here. The priesthood, the tabernacle, and many promises of the Messiah all originated in this place where death was everywhere.

Later, God would compel David, Elijah, and even Jesus into the wilderness in order that there they might live by faith in the Word of their Father. In the desert, not in a garden, God did His best work among His people. It's no different today. When it feels like we're in a place forsaken by God, when it seems our lives are a barren wilderness full of nothing but disappointments, as we drag ourselves from one oasis to the next—precisely in that wilderness of suffering, when it feels like God is most absent, He is most present in our lives. Embracing that God is with us and sharing His presence with others is what He calls us to do.

*Where do you see God in the ordinary or wilderness parts of your life today?*

## DAY 4

2 Corinthians 12:10

*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. (Acts 4:13).*

### **The Best News of All**

One of the most important lessons God teaches us through the labyrinth of life is that what we deem as our greatest strengths are usually our greatest weaknesses. And what we think are our greatest weaknesses are the raw material God uses to demonstrate his strength. He uses our losses, struggles, and deficiencies—the very aspects of ourselves we associate with failure—as the vehicles for His kind of success in our life.

So we wrestle with weaknesses. So our closets have enough skeletons to populate a graveyard. So we weren't voted Most Likely to Succeed or we didn't march home from Sunday school with ribbons for Bible memorization. This is not about us. Neither how good we think we are or how bad we know we are constitute our identity or empower us for the missions on which God sends us. Our trust is in Christ, whose cross and identity we share. Our crucified King chooses the last and the least over the first and the greatest.

We write our story in a way that draws upon our strengths, our hopes, our plans and dreams. But He writes our story in a way that highlights our weaknesses, our fears, our deficiencies. Why? Because in so doing He showcases the areas of our lives where He does His best work. Yes, God can and does use our unique talents and abilities, but most often He uses whatever is going to spotlight our nothingness and His everything.

His story in our lives is most obvious when the narrative has taken a turn toward the cross.

The self-image we cultivate tends to work on the false assumption that God desires us to grow more independent. To become better and stronger so that we need Him less. We imagine ourselves growing when we lean less on God and more on our own gifts and talents. As if the Lord is waiting for us to spread our wings and make our own way through this life.

But Christian maturity is not marked by independence but dependence. A growing awareness of our incessant need for Christ. The less we are, the more Christ is. Far from being bad news, this is the best news of all. For the more Christ is, the more we are the very people God has created us to be. And the very people God created us to be are ambassadors for Christ.

*Describe a time when God used your weakness to show his strength.*

## DAY 5

1 Corinthians 1:27

*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. (Acts 4:13).*

### **God's Friends**

There's no shortage of loud voices at the center of the religious establishment. Among Christians, these men and women are household names. We listen to their podcasts, ask them to autograph their books, hear them quoted in sermons. And there's nothing wrong with this. There's often wisdom in their words.

The problem is this: our ears can grow so accustomed to these loud voices that we become deaf to the quiet voices whispering profound wisdom on the fringes. God's friends in the convenience stores and soup kitchens of the world. Because the teachers who have the greatest impact on our lives are not always standing at the front of a church. They've written no books, earned no degrees, wouldn't be invited to lecture at a Christian university. They are strangers to the religious system. They lack the credentials to garner interest among churchgoing people. They don't speak Christianese.

We assume that if the Lord has friends, it wouldn't be these people. And yet they are. God has friends in low places. He gives wisdom to those the world deems fools. He grants faith to people wrestling with twisted lives and scarred pasts. He puts prophets under interstate bridges and preachers on forklifts.

It may take a while to break down our prejudices, but that's part of the work of the Spirit in our lives. He is reconfiguring our vision to see that to which we are usually blind. He's teaching us to reevaluate our perception of what kind of people God might use to speak His Word to us. The Spirit opens our eyes to the fact that every day, in every encounter, the person in front of us may be the Lord's mouthpiece. In this unexpected place, in this humble person, in this seemingly unspiritual setting, the Lord may be hiding. Are you willing to be one of the quiet voices God uses to help build His kingdom?

*What is one thing you could do this week to push yourself outside of your Christian comfort zone?*