



Daily Quiet Time Guide

The Art of Being Unordinary, Week 5

Devotional Adapted From: Follow Jesus



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

Matthew 16:26, Matthew 7:13-14, 21-23

The Gate Is Narrow

Is it possible to profess to be a Christian and yet not know Christ? Absolutely. In fact, according to Jesus, it's probable.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says to His disciples:

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to Me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.” (Matthew 7:21-23).

We're all prone to spiritual deception—every single one of us. Jesus isn't talking about irreligious atheists, pagans, and heretics here. He's talking about good, religious people—men and women associated with Him who assume their eternity is safe but who will be shocked one day to find out it's not. Though they professed belief in Jesus and even did all kinds of work in His name, they never truly knew Him.

This is why Jesus's words are so critical for us to hear. When He says, “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few,” he is exposing our dangerous tendency to gravitate toward that which is easy and popular.

But this is not the way of Jesus. He beckons us down a hard road, and the word He uses for “hard” is associated in other parts of the Bible with pain, pressure, tribulation, and persecution. The way of Jesus is hard to follow, and it's hated by many. But those who do follow in His footsteps will discover that there is far more pleasure to be experienced in Him, indescribably greater power to be realized with Him, and a much higher purpose to be accomplished for Him than anything else this world has to offer.

Pray to God to help you see that the narrow road that leads to life is worth following, because Christ himself is worth it.

DAY 2

2 Corinthians 5:15, Luke 14:26-27, 33

Give Up Everything

In *My Utmost for His Highest*, Oswald Chambers writes,

“Suppose God tells you to do something that is an enormous test of your common sense, totally going against it. What will you do? Will you hold back? If you get into the habit of doing something physically, you will do it every time you are tested until you break the habit through sheer determination. And the same is true spiritually. Again and again you will come right up to what Jesus wants, but every time you will turn back at the true point of testing, until you are determined to abandon yourself to God in total surrender.”

Chambers’s words challenge us to consider the seeming madness of Jesus’s proclamation in Luke 14:26-27: “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.” And in verse 33, “Any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.”

To everyone else in the world, Jesus Christ’s proclamation that we must hate our parents, siblings, spouse, children, and ourselves in order to follow Him may seem mad, but to every Christian, these words are life.

Jesus Christ demands the same unrestrained, adventurous spirit in those who have placed their trust in Him. If a person is ever going to do anything worthwhile, there will be times when he must risk everything by his leap in the dark. In the spiritual realm, Jesus Christ demands that you risk everything you hold on to or believe through common sense, and leap by faith into what He says.

For the few who choose to abandon themselves to the will of God and put their trust in His character, following Jesus wherever He leads—no matter the cost—is the only thing that makes sense.

Confess your need for God’s wisdom and ask Him to give you the grace to entrust your entire life to Him.

DAY 3

Romans 10:10

Believe and Confess

In John’s Gospel, Jesus tells Nicodemus, “God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16).

In the book of Acts, Paul and Silas tell the Philippian jailer, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.” (Acts 16:31).

And according to Romans 10:9, “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Based on these passages, you might conclude that believing in Jesus is all that’s involved in becoming or being a Christian. This is absolutely true, but we must consider context to understand what the Bible

means by belief. When Jesus called Nicodemus to believe in Him, he was calling him to be born again—to begin an entirely new life devoted to following Him.

Likewise, when the Philippian jailer believed in Christ, he knew he was joining a community of Christians who were being beaten, flogged, and imprisoned for their faith. The cost of following Christ was clear. In the same way, Paul told the Roman Christians that to believe in the saving resurrection of Jesus from the dead was to confess Jesus's sovereign lordship over their lives.

In each of these verses (and scores of others like them), belief in Jesus for salvation involves far more than mere intellectual assent. After all, even the demons believe that Jesus is the crucified and resurrected Son of God. (James 2:19). Such "belief" clearly doesn't save anyone. We all can publicly profess beliefs we don't hold, but only those who are obedient to the words of Christ will enter His Kingdom. If our lives do not reflect the fruit of following Jesus, then we are foolish to think we are His followers.

Thank God that His salvation is all a work of grace. Ask Him to continue to produce spiritual fruit in you by His Spirit.

DAY 4

2 Peter 3:9

Repent and Change

Repent is the very first word out of Jesus's mouth in His ministry in the New Testament. Repentance is a rich biblical term that signifies an elemental transformation in someone's mind, heart, and life. When people repent, they turn from walking in one direction to running in the opposite direction. From that point forward, they think differently, believe differently, feel differently, love differently, and live differently.

When Jesus said, "Repent," He was speaking to people who were rebelling against God in their sin and relying on themselves for their salvation. Jesus's predominantly Jewish audience believed that their family heritage, social status, knowledge of specific rules, and obedience to certain regulations were sufficient to make them right before God.

Jesus's call to repentance, then, was a summons for people to renounce sin and all dependence on self for salvation. Only by turning from their sin—away from themselves and toward Jesus—could they be saved. Fundamentally, then, repentance involves renouncing a former way of life in favor of a new way of life.

This doesn't mean that when we become Christians, we suddenly become perfect. It means that we make a decided break with an old way of living and take a decisive turn to a new way of life as followers of our Lord Jesus. We literally die to our sin and to ourselves—our self-centeredness, self-consumption, self-righteousness, self-indulgence, self-effort, and self-exaltation. In the words of the apostle Paul, we can say, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." (Galatians 2:20).

As Christ begins to live in us, everything about us begins to change. Our minds change. Our desires change. Our wills change. Our relationships change. Ultimately, our reason for living changes. Possessions and position are no longer our priorities. Comfort and security are no longer our concerns. Safety is no longer our goal, because self is no longer our god. We now want God's glory more than we want our own lives.

The more we glorify God, the more we enjoy Him and realize that this is what it means biblically to be a Christian.

Ask God to give you an increasing hatred of sin and an increasing reliance on him as you seek to walk in obedience.

DAY 5

1 John 4:10

Pursued by Christ

For far too long, we have convinced one another that we are basically good people who have simply made some bad decisions. Whether we've lied or cheated or stolen or taken God's name in vain, we've all made mistakes. We just need to invite Jesus to come into our hearts, and He will forgive us of all these things.

But the reality of the gospel is that we do not become God's children as a result of our own initiative. Nor does He provide salvation primarily because of an invitation from us.

The truth is, before we were ever born, God was working to adopt us. While we were lying alone in the depths of our sin, God was planning to save us. And the only way we can become a part of the family of God is through a love entirely beyond our imagination and completely out of our control.

This is at the core of Christianity, yet we are prone to miss it when we describe becoming a follower of Jesus as "inviting Him into our heart." Christianity does not begin with our pursuit of Jesus, but with His pursuit of us. Likewise, Christianity doesn't begin with an invitation we offer to Jesus, but with an invitation He offers to us. We have done nothing to warrant this invitation. Not only has Jesus initiated a relationship with us, He also allows us to be recipients of his grace.

When we realize that Jesus is the one who invites us to follow Him, everything changes. Our souls are struck by the greatness of the One who has called us. We are overwhelmed by the magnitude of the words "Follow Me" because we are awed by the majesty of the "Me" who says them. He is worthy of more than church attendance and casual association. He is worthy of total abandonment and supreme adoration.

Everyone who has ever been saved from their sins knows that they have been pursued by Jesus—and their lives haven't been the same since.

Thank God for His mercy in saving you by sending Christ to die for your sins.