



# Daily Quiet Time Guide

## Ascent, Week 1

### Devotional Adapted From: God of Tomorrow



#### 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

Psalms 27:1

### Someone Greater Than Our Fears

You may have heard the phrase, “We don’t know what tomorrow holds, but we know who holds tomorrow.” No matter what we read in the headlines, let’s live out the truth that God is still in control, has a plan, and is working out His plan in the midst of what’s happening today and what’s coming tomorrow.

Such faith in God does more than calm our fears. It helps us focus on the mission God has given us as His representatives in the world. After all, how we view tomorrow affects how we live today. In other words, we don’t have to be dragged into tomorrow kicking and screaming. If we trust that God holds tomorrow, we can better invest in society by engaging people, no matter who they are, where they’re from, or what they believe.

Why emphasize relationships? Because relationships are where you and I live. Our relationships are the context of our lives. No matter how introverted or extroverted we might be, we’re still relational beings. God created us to relate to one another all the days of our lives. We should boldly and graciously engage and invest our faith in our relationships, regardless of whether we disagree with someone else on politics, ethics, or who should have won the award for best picture.

I can guarantee you this: if the way we invest in the people around us improves, it won’t be long before we start changing the world, one relationship at a time. However, that will never happen if we allow fear to compromise the difference we could make.

It’s time we turn our attention to something more powerful than our fears of tomorrow. We need a perspective that’s greater than any anxiety we may face. The good news for us is that there is something more powerful than the worst fears that linger in our heads. Actually, let me say that differently: there is *someone* greater than our worst fears, and that someone deserves the priority in our perspectives.

God has tomorrow under control because He's the wisest and most capable being in existence. He is fully loving, gracious, and merciful, and He is personally involved in the lives of His followers. His unequalled power has important ramifications not only for our lives but also for our interaction with society.

*How might your fears be keeping you from engaging with others?*

## DAY 2

Matthew 5:10-12

### **The More Things Change**

Every day we see Christians of all political and theological persuasions who fear tomorrow because of what they see transpiring in society. But nowhere in the Bible do we read that God wants us to fear the future. Instead, the Bible gives us many examples of living with bold love in a changing world.

The truth is, while society is always shifting, the core foundational issues we struggle with as a society are not new. There is nothing any present-day society is processing that societies of the past did not work through.

Every trend or event that has occurred in our day is based on a more fundamental human issue that Jesus, Paul, Peter, and other biblical leaders had to address in a different way. In fact, although our society has some major moral and ethical gaps, we don't face the degree of danger that was prevalent in the first century. While their society and ours have both experienced crumbling marriages, human trafficking, slavery, and so on, the way the early Christians experienced such societal movements was harsher and resulted in the deaths of many Christians.

In the first century, a majority of Christians lived in the Roman Empire, which was led by a succession of dictators, some of whom were so narcissistic that they believed they were divine. Meanwhile, the superstition of other religions inside the empire was unbelievable. The ethics and values that Christians held contrasted starkly to those of the Greco-Roman world. This frequently led to misunderstanding, slander, persecution, exile, and death.

Now, what was it you saw posted on social media that you thought was an outrage? There's no comparison between society for first-century Christians, societies in the Old Testament era, and our American society. (The closest similarity in today's world might be the society of some countries in the Middle East.)

Yet when Jesus, Peter, and Paul interacted with people far from God, they didn't get mad at them. They had strong biblical beliefs and strong friendships with various people, even those far from God. Perhaps we should do the same, knowing that since tomorrow belongs to God, we can graciously offer hope to people today.

*What changes do you see in society that cause you fear? Why do they make you fearful?*

## DAY 3

1 John 4:18

## Fight, Surrender, or Invest

Even though the concerns in our society may not be as new or extreme as we have assumed, they are present. So, how should we approach a broken society?

One option would be to fight back. The Bible is filled with examples of God sending His people to not only speak firmly but also stand in opposition to the injustice in the world. Yet while many Christians have taken brave stands against the marginalization of people, there are also examples of Christians who, in their efforts to stand up for truth, have actually hurt society.

Anytime we find ourselves putting down a community, it really means that we have a problem with people, because communities are made up of people. Any hateful feelings you may have toward these people are opposite of the feelings God has for them. Combativeness without compassion is always going to be counterproductive.

Another response would be to surrender to society. But because society is always in flux, it's impossible to have a consistent worldview when we're eager to go along with society. We should never change our orthodox beliefs to line up with a culture that is constantly changing.

A third option is to invest in society with empathy and conviction. As opposed to words such as *fight* and *surrender*, the word *invest* paints a picture of people giving of themselves to improve the world around them. It means that we don't just write blogs or talk boldly *about* cultural problems; we sacrifice and invest *in* the lives of others in society.

*Invest* is another way of saying the word *engage*. Engagement encompasses learning about a certain context or group of people to better understand them. Developing relationships with people not like us or people who might intimidate us is so necessary. Our differences with people should drive us *to* them, not *from* them.

Think about it. The third way is the option that makes the most sense. When we're afraid of what tomorrow holds for society and respond by fighting against people, surrendering to misguided ideas, or simply showing indifference to growing causes around the world, we're choosing to mistreat and devalue others. Not only is dismissing people never a valid option, but it isn't pleasing to God.

*Considering the above three options, which way do you tend to interact with society? Why?*

## DAY 4

Isaiah 46:9-10

### Who Is Really in Control?

While we might theologically believe that God is in control, that same belief may not have taken up residence in our hearts. Why? Too often, our fears take precedence over our trust in God. So how do we begin to move past our fears? What will it take for us to look beyond the instability of today and pessimism of tomorrow? That comes down to a choice we must make. We need to make the decision to either surrender to our fear or continually trust God.

When you think of power, what comes to mind? Who or what are you assuming is going to be responsible for how tomorrow turns out? Politicians? Corporations? Advertisers? A foreign dictator? Or \_\_\_\_\_? (You fill in the blank.)

Our view of what power is and who has it is a determining factor for how we live and think about society. It will dictate how we respond in difficult situations. The Gospels give us an example of this from the day when Jesus was crucified. Jesus stood on trial before Pontius Pilate, who was the Roman governor at that time. Pilate asked Jesus, “Don’t you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?” Jesus answered boldly, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above.” (See John 19:10–11.)

In saying this, Jesus wasn’t proclaiming anything different from what the rest of Scripture tells us: God has all the power and calls the shots. Because God alone is divine and eternal, His will encompasses everything that has ever happened, is happening, or will happen. He could tell us in detail “the end from the beginning,” the past from the future, yesterday from tomorrow. Nothing surprises Him. Nothing is outside the scope of His might and control.

Life seems chaotic? The world appears to be spinning out of control? A leader who stands for everything you disagree with was elected to office? Well, God is still unhindered and has complete jurisdiction over all things. He is molding the events in society to serve a purpose that’s greater than any one person, greater than any one society, greater than any one generation. Sooner or later, everyone will discover what Jesus spoke about to Pilate: *true power comes from above*.

*How does it change your perspective to remember that true power comes only from God?*

## DAY 5

Romans 5:5

### **Called to Hope**

The biggest implication God’s sovereignty has for our lives today is *hope*. When we talk about the word *hope*, we usually equate it to wishful thinking. But the authors of the Bible understood the word *hope* to be the expectancy of a promised outcome or the waiting period before a promise was carried out.

The hope that society longs for is found in God, who walks with us in life. The hope He offers will counter our fear and worry about the future. Our expectant hope is that God has the path laid out before us, will journey with us, and already knows what tomorrow holds.

When war appears unending, God will one day give us peace.

When Christians are bullied for their values, God will be their defense.

When families split apart, God offers a family that will never divide.

When society undergoes changes, God will remain unchanging.

When you feel powerless in the face of a societal change, remember that *even there* you can have hope—not because an elected official or a boycott or a social crusade might reverse the situation, but because God is working out what is best in His time. He has promised the restoration of all things according to what is right, and He will do it.

Just because the trends of society seem to move away from God's values, He doesn't move away from us. God isn't going anywhere. Our hope transcends what is today and trusts in what God will do tomorrow.

God is with you no matter what happens in society. He has always been with you! In Matthew 1:23, the angel Gabriel told Joseph that Jesus's name, Immanuel, meant "God with us." At the end of the same book in 28:20, Jesus promised His followers, "I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

The Bible promises that God came to be with us and that He is always with us.

God was working in your life before you were ever born. He is present and active in our world, even when you don't see it. And that's the greatest hope of all.

*In what part of your life do you most need hope right now? In what ways is fear robbing you of that hope? How can you speak hope to a changing society?*