



Daily Quiet Time Guide

Talking Points, Week 2

Devotional Adapted From:
How to Love People You Disagree With



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

John 13:34-35, Romans 12:9-19, 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Called to Love

We'll never completely agree with another person on everything, not even our spouse or best friend. Of the nearly eight billion people in the world right now, there's not a single person like you. That means there won't be anyone with your exact viewpoint on life, politics, money, relationships, or religion. You are uniquely you, and so is the person next to you.

Even though we're all different, we can still love others. Why is it important to love people when we clearly don't see eye to eye? Because Jesus said so. He said, “*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.*” (John 13:34 NIV). When Jesus commanded us to love others, He didn't say that we had to agree with them first.

So, what does love look like?

Love considers others first.

Love looks for the best.

Love shows respect.

Love seeks unity.

Love isn't selfish.

Love offers the best.

Love displays patience.

Loving others involves pain. Love means giving of yourself. Love means putting your heart out for someone to potentially wound. Love means being selfless and thinking about the needs of others before we think of our own. We'll never love someone without discomfort accompanying it. It isn't easy and is sometimes unnatural, but loving others is something we're called to do as followers of Jesus. Even with those we don't agree.

There will always be things we have to "*agree to disagree*" on. It could be the way we do our finances—*some of us choose to live debt free, others don't*. It could be when we decide to start or end our day—*some of us are early to bed, while others stay up late*. Or we may disagree on more serious differences like politics, social issues, or current events. But...loving others while disagreeing with them at the same time is possible.

Prayer: Father, help me to love like you do. Help me to have unity with other believers, even when we don't see eye to eye on everything. And those who are unbelievers, help them to see You in me. Amen.

DAY 2

Romans 12:9-10, Philippians 2:3-4

Be Respectful

To show respect to someone means that we esteem them. Even if we don't agree with someone's stance, we can still treat them respectfully. It's not about *feeling* respect for them, but *showing* it to them.

If you want to learn how to show respect to others, try spending time with someone who doesn't agree with you. Showing respect when we think someone else's viewpoint or belief system is completely wrong, can be challenging. Let's examine some things we can do as we interact with others who don't share our worldview and beliefs.

First, ask questions respectfully. When we ask questions respectfully, we open a doorway to learn why someone believes what they do. It gives us a peek inside their hearts and minds and allows us to really see them. Instead of making condescending statements when someone shares their opinion, try asking, "*How did you come to that belief?*" We respect others by actually *showing* respect in the way we ask and answer questions.

Second, show others respect by keeping your cool. Disagreeing with someone isn't a huge deal, and is easy to deal with if the situation doesn't get heated. Unfortunately, we get bothered when someone doesn't see a situation the way we see it or has a different viewpoint than us. When that happens, we lash out with our words and display an equal annoyance with our facial expressions. This can wound to the point that restoration may not be impossible, but might be unlikely. So, before saying anything,

consider how you want to be treated and what words you'd like to hear. Then act and speak based on those considerations. Let's leave meanness out of the disagreement equation.

Lastly, let's avoid arguments because most arguments are pointless. We only have so much energy each day and to give it to wasteful and time-zapping arguments, including ones on social media, means we have nothing left in our relational reserves for those closest to us. You might think, "*But I need them to hear my point!*" Why? To win the argument? To sound smarter?

We can't change people. We can only change ourselves and be in control of how we respond. Don't let argument-prone people dictate your actions. If the other person just wants to argue, then asking questions isn't worth your time. If someone in your life, whether they're a family member or acquaintance, is trying to annoy you, consider walking away. Those kinds of interactions do nothing to build a bridge in a relationship. They only strain it more.

As followers of Jesus, we should set the standard for respect because of who Jesus is in our lives. He doesn't force us to follow Him but died on the cross so we would. Let's represent Him well as we come into contact with people who know Him and those who don't. Let's lovingly discuss things with our fellow believers and not expect non-Christians to act like Christians. As we show people respect in how we treat them, we can trust that God is working in the situation.

Prayer: Father, help me to remember to treat others the way I want to be treated. Thank you for showing me what respecting someone looks like. Amen.

DAY 3

John 8:1-11

Show Empathy

According to Merriam Webster Dictionary, "*sympathy* and *empathy* are closely related words, yet they are not synonymous. *Sympathy* may refer to 'feelings of loyalty' or 'unity or harmony in action or effect,' meanings not shared by *empathy*. In the contexts where the two words overlap, *sympathy* implies sharing (or having the capacity to share) the feelings of another, while *empathy* tends to be used to mean imagining, or having the capacity to imagine, feelings that one does not actually have."

It's easy to sympathize with someone because we've walked through the same thing, but empathy requires a bit of work on our part. It's definitely not something most people grasp or do. But, in order to navigate relationships with others with whom we don't see eye to eye, we have to work at this important quality.

First, listen with purpose. When we take the time to hear other people out, we value them by showing love and respect. As we truly listen to them, we can learn why they believe what they do. This helps us get a glimpse into their lives. As we're listening, it's unwise and shows immaturity to come up with our rebuttal while they're talking. It's important to truly listen and hear what the other person is saying. Drafting our response while they're still talking is like preparing to debate them. The thing we want to look for in this kind of scenario is that the two people coming together value each other more than they care about being right.

Second, consider their stance. Learning someone's reasons behind their beliefs will help us see their view and keep us from judging too quickly. We must consider the background from which they're sharing. People often land on their worldviews and stances because of their upbringing, which includes both positive and negative experiences. Maybe the two of you don't see eye to eye on government aid to the less fortunate or share the same ideals in politics, but you can still unify as believers. You can still love unconditionally just as Christ loves us unconditionally. When we allow ourselves to step into their world, we're less likely to be annoyed and show judgment.

Empathy is a key component to a healthy relationship. Expressing it allows us to see the person for who they are, to understand a different point of view, and to ultimately represent Jesus well to those who don't know Him.

Prayer: Father God, help me to listen with purpose and to be empathetic towards others, even when I disagree with their beliefs. I want to have healthy relationships with others, to love them unconditionally. Please help me to see others the way you see them. Amen.

DAY 4

Romans 8:5-15, Galatians 5:22-23

Grace and Truth

Some of us have endured traumatic events in our lives and because of God's grace, we have survived, been redeemed, and made completely new in Christ! This isn't the case for everyone. The very pain and turmoil some have experienced is what led them to turn *from* God. Because of that, their viewpoint will look quite differently from ours as followers of Jesus. Count it a blessing to be taught by the experiences of others.

When we encounter people with a belief that is contrary to ours, we must understand that we're representing Jesus, and we might be the catalyst God uses to change their lives. This is where truth, covered in grace, comes in. Often, when people disagree with us, our anger rises and we want to defend our beliefs and even our God. It's in these moments where we can, and should, speak the truth, but simultaneously allow the Holy Spirit to lead us so that we won't cave into our sinful desires. When we walk according to the Spirit's leading, we'll exhibit His fruit: *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control*.

If we find ourselves in a discussion with someone who clearly has different beliefs than us, it's okay to admit that we don't have all the answers. As followers of Jesus, we don't know everything about God. If we did, we'd be Him. But, as Pastor Andy Stanley said, "*You don't have to understand everything to believe in something.*" So, be honest and let them know that you're still learning and growing in your faith.

Ultimately, having people in our lives we don't agree with, actually makes us stronger. If we only surround ourselves with people we always agree with, we'll never be stretched. And as we learn from others, it's okay if our viewpoints change. Maybe we hear someone's viewpoint about a political issue that differs from ours, and we decide that we actually agree with them. But, as followers of Christ, we have to remember that adopting our own version of the truth is not what God has called us to. We always line up our views with a godly perspective. We are to live according to His truth.

As followers of Jesus, have we become more passionate about our beliefs on certain hot topics that we've forgotten we're here to love others? If we're more concerned with our stance than we are with loving the people God sent His Son to die for, then we have truly missed the mark. These desires can never outweigh our spiritual calling. If they do, we're glorifying earthly issues instead of glorifying our Heavenly Father.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to love others unconditionally. Help me to speak in truth and offer grace instead of judgement. Amen.

DAY 5

Romans 8:9-18, Hebrews 12:14

Let's Choose the Big Picture

It's no secret that our world seems more divided than ever. Whether it's political parties that can't agree on a nation's budget or religious groups that spew hatred toward each other, there always seems to be tension in the relational, spiritual, and political climate of our world.

This past week, we've been introduced to several different things to incorporate into our relationships with people we don't agree with. Loving people because Jesus calls us to, showing respect by managing our demeanor, avoiding fruitless arguments, and empathizing with others to see life from their perspectives are all wise and helpful approaches. It seems a difficult task to put differences aside, but it's doable.

We could *pre-decide* that we're going to choose people over policies and relationships over rules.

What if...

we exhibited patience?

we choose not to be offended?

we quit taking everything so personally?

we change the degrading way we talk to others?

we focus on what we do have in common?

we choose the big picture?

Let's not forget that God so loved...*the world*. Every single soul on this planet, past, present, and future, He loves. And He calls us to love others. We are shown how to do this by taking our cues from Jesus. We can represent Jesus by showing love, respect, and empathy, all covered with equal parts truth and grace. At the end of the day, the point of loving people we disagree with is unity. Whether the issue is petty or prominent, we can choose people first. Because if we, as followers of Jesus,

want people to know our Savior and Lord the way we do, that's where we have to start. Let's represent Jesus well so that others want to know Him. And when they do, the Holy Spirit is quite capable of leading them to adjust any viewpoints that are inconsistent with His truth.