



Daily Quiet Time Guide

Talking Points, Week 3

Devotional Adapted From: Fighting for Unity in A Divided World



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

Mark 1:14-15, Luke 4:18-19, Matthew 22:37-40, Zechariah 14:9

First Things First

We live in an increasingly divided world. There’s a line that’s been drawn in the sand. It seems like half of us are on one side, and half of us are on the other. Except now that line has become more like a canyon. And the canyon keeps getting wider because every year we become more divided. It’s to the point where finding common ground seems almost impossible. And this breaks the heart of God.

So, how should we respond to this division as disciples of Jesus?

First, we have to remember to **keep the main thing the main thing**. The main thing is the Good News of Jesus. The Gospel. So, what is the Gospel and how does it affect how we think about the things which divide us, including even politics?

The Gospel is the Good News of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Why is this Good News? Because our God is a much different and much better King than the rulers and leaders of our world. And because *everyone* is invited to be a part of His Kingdom.

You’re invited. They’re invited. Even the people who support that person you don’t like, are invited.

And when we choose to believe the Good News of Jesus and pledge our allegiance to our heavenly King, it changes everything. The Gospel is not just a “get out of jail free” card. The Gospel is an invitation to be rescued from sin and restore creation.

Because Jesus has been Good News for us, we are called to become Good News for others.

Even in political conversations. Even with people we disagree with. Even with people we don’t particularly like.

When we remember to keep the main thing the main thing, it changes how we do everything. When we both believe and become Good News, we can't help but be different.

Why? Because we know that no matter who sits in government leadership, our God is still King.

Pray: *God, help me to keep the main thing the main thing. Remind me how good You are. Help me to follow the example of Jesus and become Good News for others in the same way that He has been Good News for me. Amen.*

DAY 2

Mark 3:24-25, Proverbs 27:17, 1 Corinthians 12:4-27

Necessary Differences

Did you know that every nation/business/team/organization needs people who think differently to be the best they can be? This is the power of diversity—people with diverse thoughts, opinions, and perspectives coming together to build something better.

Jim Collins, in his book, *Built to Last*, says this about necessary differences:

Enduring great organizations exhibit a dynamic duality. On the one hand, they have a set of timeless core values and purpose that remain constant over time. On the other hand, they have a relentless drive for progress—change, improvement, innovation, and renewal. Great organizations keep clear the difference between their core values (which never change), and operating strategies and cultural practices (which endlessly adapt to a changing world).

He calls this dynamic duality the way to both “preserve the core” and “stimulate progress.” Using this terminology can help us better understand and appreciate the different dynamics at play in politics.

Depending on the context, one side may place a higher value on “preserving the core,” while the other side may place a higher value on “stimulating progress.” These differences can be challenging because they will create disagreement, but these differences can also make us better.

Without people fighting to stimulate progress, no group would ever make the changes needed to respond to a changing world. Without people fighting to preserve the core, groups would lose the core values and purpose that hold them together.

These disagreements can make it easy to become so divided that it is hard to value the necessary differences the other side brings to the table. We've moved so far away from each other that we've stopped *talking to each other* and mostly just *yell at each other*.

Guess what? The people we disagree with are human beings trying to do the best they can with what they know. Are they right about everything? Nope. And neither are we. And that's okay. In fact, it's necessary.

Diversity will create disagreement, but it doesn't have to create division. Unity requires diversity. Without diversity, we're stuck with uniformity.

The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Church in Corinth beautifully illustrated the power of necessary differences. He used the image of a human body to describe the way the Church is intended to function. A foot is different from a shoulder, and an ear is different from a knee. The different body parts are what allow a body to function. If every part were an ear, you wouldn't be able to walk, talk, eat, smell, or see. The different body parts are needed for the body to function properly.

Differences are necessary. Differences make us better. Differences make us stronger.

Understanding the necessary differences that we bring to the table is an important step toward unity and away from division.

Pray: *God, help me to see the necessary differences we all bring to the table. Help me to be open to the perspectives and ideas of others. Help me to move toward unity and away from division. Amen.*

DAY 3

Genesis 1:26-27, Ephesians 2:10, Mark 2:16-17, Romans 3:23, John 5:6, Romans 5:8, Romans 1:16

Common Ground

Yesterday, we took a look at our differences. Today, we're looking at what we all have in common.

- We're all **images**.
- We're all **infected**.
- We're all **invited**.

We're all images. Every single one of us is a human being. To be human means to be made in the image and likeness of God. This is the beauty of the Christian story. The first page of the Bible answers the questions, "Do I matter? Is my life valuable? Does my life have a purpose?" with a resounding, "Yes!" In the very beginning, we are told that God created human beings in His image with dignity, value, and purpose. This means that no matter what you look like, what you've done, what you believe, or who you vote for, your life matters because you are made in the image of God.

This is true of all of us. Even when we don't act like it. All of us are made in God's image.

We're all infected. Here's the not-so-fun part. We're all infected by sin. Sin is a disease of self-centeredness that causes us to see ourselves as greater and others as less than. Our sin wants to blind us to the image of God in others, *and* the image of God in ourselves. Seeing other people as "less-than" because they have different opinions on the things we care about or even disagree with us politically is just one of the many ways our sin blinds us to the image of God in others.

The disease of sin makes us forget who we are, and it makes us forget whose we are. If we are unaware of the danger of sin, it can be really easy to see *them* as the problem. **But they are never problems to be solved. They are always people to be loved.**

Don't worry, though. There is good news.

We're all invited. “Do you want to be made well?” This was the question Jesus asked a man who had been sick for many years. This is the question Jesus is asking all of us. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus made a way for us to be healed from the disease of sin and invited us to be a part of God’s plan to make all things new. Paul told us in his letter to the Roman church that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. This is how God demonstrated His love. He didn’t shout it from Heaven. He showed it in person. That person is Jesus. And now, we’re all invited to be a part of His family.

The people who drive you crazy on Facebook? Jesus died for them, too.

How can we be Christians and disagree on politics? By valuing our differences and finding common ground.

Pray: *God, help me to find common ground with the people I disagree with. Remind me that we are all images of You, we’re all infected by sin, and we’re all invited to follow Jesus. Amen.*

DAY 4

Galatians 5:16-26, John 13:34-35, Hebrews 4:12-13, Jeremiah 17:9, Proverbs 18:2, Matthew 5:43-44, Romans 12:18

A New Command

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:34-35 NIV

Jesus was telling us, His followers, *the world will know who **He** is by the way **we** love*. So, if we can’t *respectfully* disagree with someone about politics, then that is an indicator that we need to check our hearts. Jesus died for the person we disagree with. And He commanded us to love them. So, let’s look at some practical tips to help us love the people we don’t see eye-to-eye with.

Acknowledge your own *bias*. Biases are the inclinations of your thoughts and feelings. They’re personal judgements on a matter or a person, often in a negative or prejudicial way. And biases affect everyone whether or not we realize it. We tend to think only *others* have bias issues. Ego and pride distort our thinking in dangerous and subtle ways. But before we can expect someone else to acknowledge their biases, we have to acknowledge our own. Here’s an example. Where do you get your news from? Chances are, you’re following your confirmation biases—even if it’s subconsciously. We like to read or watch something that allows us to say to ourselves, “See? I was right!” Strive to seek teaching and correction from the Word of God as the ultimate source of wisdom, truth, and knowledge more than seeking your favorite content provider as a source of ego-stroking.

Learn to see the good (and the not-so-good) on *both* sides. If you come to a place where you see the people you agree with as “good” and the people you disagree with as “bad,” then that is an indicator we’ve stopped seeing the other side as human beings made in the image of God. Why? If you can’t learn to see the good and the not-so-good on both sides, then you can become convinced that *they* are your enemy. Remember, *they* are never an enemy to be conquered; they are always a person to be loved.

Seek to understand *before* seeking to be understood. If you find yourself saying, “I can’t understand why they _____” then pause, and see that as an opportunity to better understand the people you disagree with. Start a conversation. Ask questions. Listen. See things from their point of view. You don’t have to agree with someone to understand them.

Remember, you’re not as smart as you *think* you are. Just because you think you’re right, doesn’t mean you’re right. Even if you feel *very passionately* that you’re right, that still doesn’t make you right. This truth helps us to enter into conversations with the posture of wanting to learn from and understand the other person. If our goal is to win an argument, then we will never have real conversations. Instead, our goal should be to build connections and find common ground so that we can move forward.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to represent Him to the world in everything we do. This includes how we engage in politics and how we may disagree about politics.

Do people see Jesus in you when you talk about politics?

Pray: *God, help me to represent You well in every conversation. Help me to live in such a way that people see You in me. Amen.*

DAY 5

John 17:20-23, Micah 6:8, Matthew 5:9, Matthew 5:14-16, James 1:19-20, Ephesians 6:10-13, Revelation 21:1-7

Fighting for Unity

Today, let’s talk specifically about politics. The gravitational pull toward political extreme is strong—to the point where it has become frighteningly easy to let our politics inform our faith more than we let our faith inform our politics.

You’ve probably heard people say something like, “How can anyone be a Christian and support *them*?” It’s not hard to come up with a list of Bible verses that support our political preferences. It’s easy to become convinced that Jesus would have supported the same people we support. But there isn’t a single political party that is fully in line with Jesus’s vision of Heaven on Earth.

If we believe that Heaven on Earth has more to do with a political election than Jesus’s resurrection, then we don’t understand the Good News. Our hope doesn’t come from who sits at the top of our government. Our hope comes from who sits on Heaven’s throne. Regardless of who leads our nations, God is still our King.

Are you solely relying on your government or elected officials to bring hope to your community? Then you’re missing out on your God-given role to be a light in a dark world. Does your sense of peace or joy rise and fall on who’s in power? Then you’re missing a chance to rely on God as the provider of every good thing you need.

Do you lovingly listen to opposing views in an effort to understand where those viewpoints came from? Do you meet the needs of your neighbors when you’re able? And are you striving for justice, mercy, and humility in yourself, your home, your workplace, and your community just as passionately

as you'd like your government leaders to? Then you're living the kind of life our heavenly Father has asked us to live.

A wise pastor once said, *"Every time we take a side, we divide."* This doesn't mean we don't do our civil duty and choose a side to support or stand up for what we believe in. Of course we do! As Christians, we should use every resource we have available to serve the people in our communities. It does mean, as Christians, we don't reduce our neighbors to "this side" or "that side." Our personal identity doesn't come from our political ideas. Our identity is as a child of God. Our neighbors are made in the image of God, too. We're all sinners in need of salvation. In that regard, there can be no side, no division. And we must fight to keep that truth sealed in our hearts and minds. We must engage and stand differently. Instead of settling for division, we must listen, learn and love. People first. Politics second.

Pray: *God, help us, your followers, to be one. Help us to refuse to settle for division. Give us the wisdom and strength to fight for unity. Remind us of our role as Your people to represent Jesus and the Good News to our divided world. Amen.*