

The Devotional Life of the Individual

Sabbath Afternoon

Inspiration:

“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.” Matthew 6:6.

“Jesus was wholly dependent upon God, and in the secret place of prayer He sought divine strength, that He might go forth braced for duty and trial. In a world of sin Jesus endured struggles and torture of soul. In communion with God He could unburden the sorrows that were crushing Him. Here He found comfort and joy.” Desire of Ages, 362.

Observation:

Studies have determined that New Year’s resolutions last approximately five days. Whenever we wish to put something new into our lives, we must take something else out to make room for it. A decision to spend quality time alone with God each day will mean having to take something of less importance out of our schedule. There is no such thing as not having time to spend alone with God. We spend time on the things we consider to be priority.

Application:

1. Choose a **time** for your private devotions - when you are least likely to be interrupted.
2. Choose a **place** for your private devotions - a comfortable, quiet place as free as possible from distractions.
3. You won’t need to tell others that you have developed the habit of personal devotions. They will be able to see the difference in your life.

The Devotional Life of the Individual

Sunday

Inspiration:

“And it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray.’” Luke 11:1.

“Prayer is the breath of the soul. It is the secret of spiritual power. No other means of grace can be substituted and the health of the soul be preserved. Prayer brings the heart into immediate contact with the Wellspring of life, and strengthens the sinew and muscle of the religious experience. Neglect the exercise of prayer, or engage in prayer spasmodically, now and then, as seems convenient, and you lose your hold on God.” Messages to Young People, 249.

Observation:

- We don’t breathe to get, we breathe to be. Since prayer is the breath of the soul, the focus of our prayers should be to bring the Fruit of the Spirit into our lives—righteousness, peace, joy, etc. (read Romans 14:17).
- What do you usually pray about? Are you praying about what Jesus said not to worry about (read Matthew 6:25-33)?
- When we seek first the kingdom of God in our prayers, we will discover that indeed “all things work together for good to them that love God and to those who are called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28.

Application:

1. Make a list of the things you have been praying about. Be sure that you put praying to be above praying to get.
2. Plan your prayers so that spiritual objectives (i.e., joy, patience, self-control) are included in every request.

The Devotional Life of the Individual

Monday

Inspiration:

“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy name, O Lord God of hosts.” Jeremiah 15:16.

“As our physical life is sustained by food, so our spiritual life is sustained by the word of God. And every soul is to receive life from God’s word for himself.” Desire of Ages, 390.

Observation:

Potlucks are fine, family picnics are fine, dinner with a friend is fine. But whether you’re in the company of one or many, your nourishment depends upon what you yourself put into your mouth. Just so, there is no substitute for personal devotions. During the week you will be introduced to many suggestions and ideas to enhance your personal devotional life. Use the ones that work the best for you.

Application:

1. Don’t wait until you feel “inspired” to spend time with the Lord. Be faithful in meeting Him regularly.
2. Come to the Lord’s banquet table hungry for real truth. The world has an abundance of junk that may make you feel full, but it won’t help you grow spiritually.
3. Before you begin your time of devotion, say a prayer for guidance.
4. Read a short passage of Scripture and then stop and let your mind turn it over and over until you have understood what it means to your life.
5. An organized way to approach your devotional time is to follow the daily Sabbath school lessons in the Quarterly.

The Devotional Life of the Individual

Tuesday

Inspiration:

“O how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day.” Psalm 119:97.

“The food we eat at one meal does not satisfy us forever. We must daily partake of food. So we must daily eat the Word of God that the life of the soul may be renewed. In those who feed constantly upon the Word, Christ is formed, the hope of glory. A neglect to read and study the Bible brings spiritual starvation.” Our High Calling, 209.

Observation:

Many people have the idea that they can maintain a satisfactory devotional life by combining it with whatever they are doing at the time. They say they talk with the Lord while they are walking, while they are driving, while they are working, etc. It is true, and wonderful, that we may have access to the heavenly throne room at any time; but it is also important that we give the Lord quality, one-on-one time. How deep would your relationship with a friend be if you talked with them only when you were doing something else?

Application:

1. Write a paragraph in which you express adoration to God. Writing will give you the opportunity to think about how you will express yourself in a prayer.
2. Remember that sinful acts are the result of sinful attitudes. Identify a sinful attitude that you have and think how and when it expresses itself. Ask God to forgive you and give you the Fruit of the Spirit in its place.
3. Thank God for something good that came out of a negative experience in your life.

The Devotional Life of the Individual

Wednesday

Inspiration:

“Now in the morning, having risen a long while before day light, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.” Mark 1:35.

Dwight L. Moody said, “The Scriptures were not given to increase our knowledge, but to change our lives.” We must determine that, “All that the lord has said we will do and be obedient.”

Studies have determined that New Year’s resolutions last approximately five days. Whenever we wish to put something new into our lives, we must take something else out to make room for it. A decision to spend quality time alone with God each day will mean having to take something of less importance out of our schedule. There is no such thing as not having time to spend alone with God. We spend time on the things we consider to be priority.

Observation:

- Is it your custom to spend quiet time with God each day?
- Do you find it easier to talk with your friends than with God?
- Though there are exceptions, generally people find that the best time to be alone with God is in the morning.

Application:

1. Make a list of your daily priorities. Write down how much time you occupy in each activity.
2. What would you have to take out of your life in order to spend special time with God each day? (Remember, when a glass is full, you can’t put anything into it. You have to pour out some of the contents first.)

The Devotional Life of the Individual

Thursday

Inspiration:

“But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” Isaiah 40:31.

“If we would study the Bible diligently and prayerfully every day, we should every day see some beautiful truth in a new, clear, and forcible light.” Review and Herald, March 4, 1884.

Observation:

Great men and women of God throughout history have always had one thing in common—they have always had a personal devotional life. The following is a list of tools which may make your time alone with God more meaningful. You will soon find that your devotional time will fly by quicker than you wish.

Application:

1. **Bible.** The Bible is God’s letter to us and is an indispensable ingredient of the devotional life. Don’t feel you must read it through from Genesis to Revelation. Read it *a la carte*, wherever you wish.
2. **Hymnal.** A hymnal is a blessing in the devotional time, not that a person must necessarily sing out loud. But the great hymns of faith are poems to the power and majesty of God. Other hymns are poetic testimonies of personal commitment and faith. Reading the words will inspire you.
3. **Journal.** A journal is a wonderful tool for the devotional life.
4. **Sabbath School Quarterly.** The Quarterly provides a systematic method of learning the great Biblical themes.
5. **Notebook.** Write prayers to God. Where would we be if David had not written his prayers to God?

The Devotional Life of the Individual

Friday

Inspiration:

“I have considered my ways and have turned my step to Your statutes. I will haste and not delay to obey Your commands.”
Psalm 119:59-60.

Satan well knows that all whom he can lead to neglect prayer and the searching of the Scriptures, will be overcome by his attacks. Therefore he invents every possible device to engross the mind.”
Great Controversy, 519.

Observation:

The enemy of our souls is not troubled so much when we do good works or attend church services. But He trembles when God's saints spend time in prayer and Bible study. Therefore, you can expect that he will use his tools of distraction and interruption. If, during your devotions, you feel unusually sleepy, if your mind seems to wander, if you are interrupted by the telephone—rejoice! It means he recognizes that you are a child of God.

Application:

The following are some suggestions to help combat the weapons of the devil that would distract you from your personal time with God:

1. If you feel sleep about to overtake you, stand to your feet and continue your devotions.
2. Conduct your devotions out loud, as though you were teaching a class.
3. Change the venue. Move to another room temporarily.
4. Sip on a glass of ice water.
5. Sing a hymn. “Give Me the Bible” is a good choice. Sing all stanzas. Sing out loud, if possible.

