



Make Quiet Time with God Part of Every Day

By Rick Warren

Having a quiet time is like many other activities you might do in life — in at least one respect. To be successful, it helps to have a plan.

The Bible says, *“The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty”* (Proverbs 21:5 ESV).

If you've never had a quiet time before, you may not have a good, simple plan for doing one. Simplicity is important with any plan you develop. If you make it complicated, you're more likely to get off track. All you really need for an effective quiet time is a Bible, notebook, and maybe a hymn or songbook.

So what does a daily quiet time look like?

First, be quiet before the Lord. The Bible calls it waiting on God. You start by simply sitting down and shutting up. As you do this, you'll find yourself revving your engine down and calming yourself.

Second, pray briefly. Start off with a short opening prayer. Ask God to open your mind and guide you. Ask him to cleanse your mind.

Read a portion of Scripture slowly. This is where your conversation with God begins. He starts speaking to you through his Word, and then you speak back to him through prayer. Read the Bible slowly. Don't try to read too quickly or too much. The more slowly you read Scripture, the more you're forced to think about what you're reading.

Meditate on the Word. Spend some time chewing on what God is saying. Chew on the Word like cows chew on cud. Ponder and wrestle with it in your mind. There are lots of great methods for meditating on the Word. You can find specific ideas on how to meditate on the Bible in my book *“Rick Warren's Bible Study Methods.”*

Write down what you discover. When God speaks to you through his Word, care enough about what he is saying to write it down. Writing enables us to remember what God has said to us and record our discoveries.

Pray again. Be quiet. Ask God to show you his Word. Talk to God about what he has said to you. Tell him what you're thinking about what he is saying. Talk to him about anything else that's on your mind.

There's not just one way to have a quiet time, but following a plan similar to this can get you started on a rewarding devotional journey.

Talk It Over

- Have you ever thought about your quiet time as an intimate conversation with God?
- What distractions do you need to eliminate in order to “be quiet”?



What If You Don't Feel Like It?

By John Gray

What if a man doesn't feel like it?

If a man's testosterone is depleted, he feels too stressed to plan a date night or much of anything. He just does not feel like it. He does not realize that if he planned a date, much of his stress would go away. Planning dates will actually bring his testosterone level up again.

At work, a man doesn't think twice about doing things that he doesn't feel like doing. He does them because it is necessary to get the job done.

His thought process is as follows: "I don't want to do it, but if it is necessary, then I am happy to do it."

He could also apply this approach to his relationship with his wife once he becomes aware of what is necessary.

If he wants to keep the passion and attraction alive, he needs to do certain things even if he doesn't feel it.

To keep the passion alive, we must do what works even if we don't feel like it.

What if a woman doesn't feel like it?

For a woman with depleted oxytocin, she often feels too overwhelmed to go out on a date. If, however, she allows a man to plan it for her, even if the date is not exactly what she would have wanted to do, she will find that she begins to relax and be happy.

When she allows him to take care of her, her stress is reduced, and she begins to smile again. She may not completely like the movie or restaurant, but she will appreciate his taking the initiative to make the plan and take care of her needs.

Again, to keep the passion alive both men and women must do what works even if they don't feel like it.



Ten Worst Discipline Mistakes Parents Make... and What To Do Instead

by James Windell

(This week will be mistakes 1 to 5, next week 6 to 10)

Most good parents realize that there is always much more for them to learn about being good parents.

In a perfect world, parents would all have boundless energy, patience, tolerance, understanding and flexibility. But no one is perfect. So it also helps to have a wide variety of practical skills.

Here is a list of common mistakes parents make when disciplining their children and some alternatives for what to do instead:

1. Yelling

Yelling may be an effective way to vent frustration, but most children of "frequent yellers" soon learn to tune it out.

Result: Their behavior does not change and kids grow hostile.

Better: Stop. Ask yourself how you would like being yelled at.

You may have to delay action until your anger is under control. Most children respond better to a calm, reasonable request or command. Save yelling for emergency situations when you really need to

get your child's attention: Look out for that car!

2. Demanding Immediate Compliance

People don't respond well to demands to, "Do it now!" because it shows disrespect. Commands to, "Come here right now!" or, "Stop that this second!" are often ignored and tuned out.

Better: Make a respectful or firm request... and praise and reward good behavior.

Example: When your child gets ready for bed without a fuss, tell him/her, "You got into your pajamas so nicely, I'm going to read you an extra story tonight."

3. Nagging

Nagging is often a problem for parents who try to be lenient or permissive. They don't want to get angry but are constantly asking, "Did you clean your room yet?" until they explode.

Better: Get the child's full attention.

Example: Stand in front of the TV screen rather than calling from another room. Make firm, consistent requests with clear limit.

Helpful: Praise and reward a first-time response. If needed, give a warning... Lunch is in 20 minutes. Impose a negative consequence if the task is not completed. "If the garbage is still here, there will be no TV before your homework."

4. Lecturing And Advice-Giving

Lecturing is fruitless. People have a limited attention span for monologues that involve no interaction. And lectures often do not address the problem.

Example: Lecturing a child whose homework is chronically late about the value of an education does not address the homework issue.

Better: Ask questions. "What happens when you do your homework?" "What do you do first?" "Is there a part that you don't understand?"

Advice is not fruitless, but it is often given when it is not wanted or at the wrong time.

Example: An anxious child who has brought home a poor report card will not be receptive to advice.

Strategy: Reduce the anxiety. "I see you're upset by this. Let's both think of some ways to help your grades, and we'll talk about it after dinner."

Other alternatives: Role-playing. "I'll be you, and you'll be your teacher." Teach a coping strategy. "Would you like to know a good way to handle that?" Learn to use informal opportunities to teach a lesson or make a point.

5. Taking Anger Out On Kids

Overreaction and inappropriate anger are extremely common in our high-stress society.

Tip-off: Similar incidents in the past did not previously provoke the same angry response.

Problem: You may say things that stick with your kids for a long time.

Effect: Kids are hurt, confused.

If you overreact: Offer your kids a heartfelt apology, along with an explanation.

Result: Kids learn to talk about feelings and understand human fallibility.

Recommended: If you blow up at your kids often, tend to your own needs. Go to the gym, or for a walk, before coming home. Take quiet time, find a support network.

*Reprinted from **Bottom Line/Personal**, Vol. 13, No. 22, Nov. 30, 1992, Pp 1-2. James Windell is a psychotherapist specializing in family problems, and a clinical psychologist for the Oakland County, Michigan, juvenile court's psychological clinic. He is the author of **Discipline: A Sourcebook of 50 Failsafe Techniques for Parents***

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