



GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THE *QUIET TIME BIBLE GUIDE*

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Quiet time can seem like an impossible dream to many of us. We face so many demands each day—work, family, friends, home, school, church—that we have little time left for peaceful reflection. Yet this can be one of the most renewing and vitalizing experiences of our Christian lives.

Whether you call it quiet time, devotions or Bible study and prayer, what we are talking about is a portion of your day set aside for you to connect with God and hear what he has to say to you, to study Scripture, to apply the Word to your life, to offer praise and worship to God, and pray. This may also be a time when you record in a spiritual journal what you are learning.

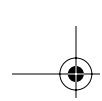
God is calling us to be with him. We cannot neglect this honor.

WHY A QUIET TIME BIBLE GUIDE?

The *Quiet Time Bible Guide* puts us in touch with God's Word. It leads us to discover what the Bible says rather than simply telling us what it says. In the same way, this guide does not tell us how to apply the Word to our life; rather it guides us with God's help to apply the Scripture ourselves. It uncovers questions we have, issues we face and challenges that lie ahead. In this way, God's Word becomes as current as this morning's breakfast conversations.

How does the *Quiet Time Bible Guide* accomplish all this? Not by giving you study notes, extensive background material or cross-references. Instead it helps you discover for yourself the meaning of Scripture by asking thought-





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provoking questions. This question format is known as *inductive Bible study*.

We tend to remember very little of what others tell us. But we remember a large percentage of what we discover ourselves. As it has been said, “Tell me, and I will forget. Show me, and I may remember. Involve me, and I will understand.” This is why inductive study works so well. Even if other sources of spiritual nourishment are hard to find, if we learn how to feed ourselves from the Word of God, we will never go hungry.

The quiet times in this study are personal. The questions expose us to the promises, assurances, exhortations and challenges of God’s Word. They are designed to allow the Scriptures to renew our minds so that the Spirit of God can transform us. Our goal as Christians is not just to know *about* God, but actually to know him as one person knows another. He is our Friend, our Father, our Comforter, our Helper, our Guide and our Lord. Knowing him in this way, talking with him in this way, calls for responses of joy, of worship, of repentance and sorrow, of hope and expectation. Loving God more—that’s what this guide is all about.

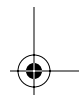
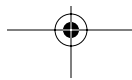
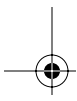
HOW TO USE THE QUIET TIME BIBLE GUIDE

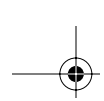
Because you will be making discoveries about yourself and about God as you work through this Bible guide, you may want to record what you are learning each day. You may want to note commitments that you make and keep a list of prayer concerns so you can look back and discover how God has been working in your life.

At the beginning of each book of the Bible, you will find important information on who wrote the book, who it was written to and why it was written. This introduction will also include historical background. All of this is important to understanding each book.

Each quiet time has several components:

Warming Up to God. Sometimes a question that draws you into the theme for the day, sometimes a topic to reflect on or pray about, this portion is designed to help you prepare your heart and mind for what you will be learning from Scripture.





Getting the Most Out of the Quiet Time Bible Guide

Daily Scripture Reading. Read and reread the assigned Bible passage to familiarize yourself with what the author is saying. When you begin a new section, you may want to read the entire book along with the introduction to that book. This will give you a helpful overview of its contents. It might be good to have a Bible dictionary handy. You could use it to look up any unfamiliar words, names or places.

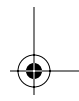
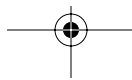
Discovering the Word. The studies ask three different kinds of questions: *Observation* questions help us to understand the content of the passage by asking about the basic facts: who, what, when, where and how. *Interpretation* questions delve into the meaning of the passage. *Application* questions help us to discover its implications for growing in Christ. These three keys unlock the treasures of the biblical writings and help us live them out.

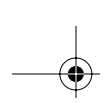
Applying the Word. This is your opportunity to make the study personal. How has God's Word spoken to you? What actions do you need to take as a result of what you have learned?

Responding in Prayer. The suggestion here is to help you begin to seek God's wisdom in the area you've studied. You will also want to pray about your daily concerns, for family and friends, and about national and world events.

The studies are designed to take fifteen or twenty minutes. You'll want to set aside additional time for prayer. Feel free to work at your own pace. Sometimes you may want to spend two days on one quiet time; other times you may want to do two in one day (one psalm and one New Testament study, for example). There are a total of 365 quiet times, which will allow you to read all of the New Testament and eighty-three psalms in one year. However, this schedule should not be something you feel bound to. Go at your own pace and as the Spirit leads you. Use the checklist found on pages 11-14 to keep track of what you've read.

A reading plan follows to give you an idea of how to spread out the Gospel reading, mixing in psalms and Letters. A topical list of reading is provided on page 16. If something is weighing on your mind as you approach your quiet time, turn there to find a reading that meets your need. A more





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complete index of topics can be found at the end of the book.

Generally you'll find that you gain the best grasp of each New Testament book if you work through the book from beginning to end, rather than skipping around. Therefore, quiet times are organized into books of the Bible, with an introduction to the book followed by daily readings through the book. Reading through Matthew, for example, will take twenty-two days; Mark begins again with "day one."

If you are in a Bible study group, you may be interested in knowing that the InterVarsity Press LifeGuide® Bible Study Series includes companion guides on each New Testament book and Psalms. You may want to double up on your learning by using those guides, which provide studies forty-five to sixty minutes long and include leader's notes for use in a group context.

It is our hope that these quiet times will be an encouragement and a source of growth for your life with Christ. May the Holy Spirit be with you as you meet God each day.

