

# Reinvigorating Your Devotional Life

Revelation 2:1-7

We'll continue a series of lessons intended to prepare us for the new year and challenging us to improve our leadership, ministry, and **devotion** to God.

Today we focus on your devotional time – primarily your prayer and Bible time. My intent is that we will be non-legalistic, non-judgmental, and very practical.

2:1-7 - <sup>1</sup>“To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this: <sup>2</sup>**I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance**, and that you cannot endure evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them *to be false*; <sup>3</sup>and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. <sup>4</sup>But I have *this* against you, that **you have left your first love**. <sup>5</sup>Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and **do the deeds you did at first**; or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place--unless you repent. <sup>6</sup>Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. <sup>7</sup>He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.’

This verse seems to hit home with me, and may for you as well. We are certainly a bunch of diligent, hard workers. But is it possible that in the midst of that work our devotion has slipped?

It's interesting that Jesus mentions that he knows their deeds (and seems to commend them) and then goes on to tell them to return to the deeds they did at first. What might the first deeds have been that were different from the current?

Might He be suggesting more Mary time instead of just Martha time? (Luke 10:38-42)

How are you doing these days in the area of your quiet time?

## I. Prayer Time

### Why?

Col. 4:2 **Devote yourselves to prayer**, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving;

Lu 18:1 Now He was telling them a parable to show that **at all times they ought to pray** and not to lose heart,

1Th 5:17 pray without ceasing;

Dan. 6:10 Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued

kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously.

Lu 6:12 And it was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.

Phil. 4:6-7 - <sup>6</sup>Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Heb 4:15-16 - <sup>15</sup>For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup>Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that **we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need**.

Why? God commands it, the greatest people in the Bible did it, and there is great help in prayer.

### Best Practices:

Mr 1:35 And **in the early morning**, while it was still dark, He arose and went out and departed to a lonely place, and was praying there.

Ps 5:3 **In the morning**, O LORD, Thou wilt hear my voice; In the morning I will order my prayer to Thee and eagerly watch.

Mt 6:6 “But you, when you pray, go into your **inner room**, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

What have been your most successful ideas for prayer time? \_\_\_\_\_

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## II. Bible Time

### Why?

2 Tim. 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.

Heb 4:12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and **piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart**.

Ps. 119:105 Thy word is a lamp to my feet, And a light to my path.

John 6:63 "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."

Joshua 1:8 - "Th is book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success."

1 Tim. 3:16-17 - <sup>16</sup>All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; <sup>17</sup>that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Why? God says to, and it illuminates our heart and our feet.

### Quantity or Quality? YES!

"The Bible has long been one of **the world's least-read bestsellers**. According to pollster George Barna's January 2005 survey of more than 1,000 adults, 45 percent said they read the Bible during a typical week. But publisher Zondervan said that while 91 percent of Americans own at least one Bible, **only 22 percent have read through the entire text.**" Zondervan

So what is it, Bible study or Bible reading? It should be both. My tack is to read as much as possible and whenever I have a question or insight then I dive in deep to discover God's truth that He is revealing to me.

### Best Practices:

You may need a change from your current plan. A Sunday School leader I read a lot says that he has to change his method about every nine months. Here are some of the different ideas he has tried:

Reading on his computer.

Then he tried The One Year Bible.

Then he started reading on his PDA.

Then he purchased a study Bible for him and his son and they read through together.

Then he started listening to the NIV Audio Bible (Dramatized) on his iPod.

What have been your most successful ideas for Bible time? **1 Chapter + 1 verse. Get some helps. Get in a group with accountability. Read with your kids. Have a daily study with your kids.**

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### Conclusion:

They should be both natural outgrowths of our love for Jesus and disciplines that we build into our Christian walk.

"If I miss one day, I notice it; if I miss two days, the conductor notices; if I miss three days, the audience notices."

Whatever we do, we must find a time, method, location, and plan for our prayer and Bible study. There are lots of right ways to do this. The only wrong way is not to do it at all.