

The
Quiet Time
Principle

ROBERT WEST

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DEDICATION

To my beloved children,
Daniel and Lana.

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CHAPTER THREE

The Secret of a Real Christian Life

“Here lies the whole secret of a real Christian life,
a life of liberty and joy and power and fullness.
To have as one’s ever-present friend, and to be conscious
that one has as his ever-present friend, the Holy Spirit
and to surrender one’s life in all its departments entirely
to his control – this is true Christian living.”¹

— R.A. Torrey

The Lord’s Prayer

As a little boy growing up in South Los Angeles in the early 1970s, I wasn’t reared in a “traditional” Christian home. My relatives were what some would call “God-fearing” people. We believed in God and had great respect for the Holy Bible. But we did not attend church.

I have no recollection of ever hearing or seeing my father praying. However, I do remember him frequently reading and studying the Bible and teaching me about God and the Bible through illustrated sermons.

I can remember one evening my dad taking me outside into our gravel-covered backyard on Florence Avenue and giving me an amateur astronomy lesson. Through the haze of the

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marine layer and the glare of the city lights, he pointed out stars most visible to the naked eye in the heavens: the Big Dipper, the Little Dipper and the North Star. We talked about how far the moon and the stars were from the earth and where Heaven was.

My dad told me how Jesus said, "...I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Luke 10:18). He also told me when Jesus returns to the earth, the same sky into which we were looking will one day open to reveal Him in His glory (Revelation 19:11-16).

I remember going to bed thinking about these things and praying the only prayer I knew how to pray before falling asleep:

"Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen" (Matthew 6:9-13).

When I got to the "forever" part of the prayer, I would meditate on it by repeating "forever, and ever, and ever, and ever and ever" over, and over again. As I did, I would become so overwhelmed by the greatness and awesomeness of God that I would get scared. My eight-year-old mind could not handle thinking too much about timeless eternity, but I wanted to connect with the God my dad told me about who "lived on the other side of the stars."

After I grew up and became a Christian, I continued to have a desire to connect with God and experience a deeper

walk with Him. While I was in recovery, I had the time and opportunity to abide in His presence and establish that connection through quiet time, Bible reading, worship and prayer.

The Purpose of Prayer

In my early days of recovery, I learned something fascinating about praying to God that I never knew growing up and didn't understand when I became a Christian. I learned that the purpose of prayer was for me to hear from God! I knew and understood intellectually that "prayer changes things," but I had never experienced God "sharing things."

My primary view of prayer consisted of my monologuing with God or presenting a list of needs to Him. Neither approach suggested I wait to hear what He had to say after I said, "Amen."

Waiting on the Lord

My new paradigm for prayer, that included hearing from the Lord, was constructed from Isaiah 40:31, "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."

The Lord showed me that if I wanted His power to touch my life, there are things I needed to do while I "waited on Him."

R_x for Recovery

The process He showed me was similar to the process I went through to regain my physical health. For example, before I could see my doctor, I first had to schedule an

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appointment. Next, I had to go to the doctor's office and wait in the examining room for the doctor to see me.

While waiting for the doctor, I had to surrender myself to the process of removing my clothes and sitting on the examining table. In some cases, there were magazines to read or there was soft background music to hear. But in most cases, all I did while waiting was sit quietly.

When the doctor came in, he had my chart and knew my history, so I didn't need to rehearse it. The major purpose of the appointment was for me to confess what was wrong with me, be quiet and listen to receive information from him pertaining to my assignment for improving my health.

In a similar way, there were things I needed to do while waiting on the Great Physician. They had to do with humbling myself to appear before Him, waiting for the manifestation of His peace and presence and receiving my assignment.

The Eight Keys of Effective Quiet Time Management

"The Eight Keys of Effective Quiet Time Management" represent what I have learned about how to wait on the Lord. These elements were compiled from a survey of Christian literature on the subject of effective Christian living and effective prayer. (See Quiet Time References in the bibliography.)

1. Welcome
2. Surrender
3. Scripture
4. Meditation
5. Worship
6. Confession
7. Quiet
8. Intercession

These principles have revolutionized my daily devotion time because they help me keep my mind focused on the Lord by quieting the “left brain” from busyness and distractions so that I can hear from the Lord during my time alone with Him.²

The Eight Keys in Action

1. **Welcome.** Welcome the presence of the Lord. Invite Him to speak into your life today.
2. **Surrender.** Surrender your mind, will, emotions, intellect and imagination to Him.
3. **Scripture.** Listen to hear what Scripture reading objective He will speak into your spirit to pursue.
4. **Meditation.** Read the Scriptures aloud (or listen to an audio version of the Bible). Meditate on verses that touch or have an impact on you (e.g., repeat, memorize or transcribe verses; make notations in a journal or the margins of your Bible of ways the Lord is calling you to personal application of the verses).
5. **Worship.** Express gratitude to the Lord for revealing Himself and His word to you.
6. **Confession.** Confess your weakness, God’s strength, your need for forgiveness, and faith in the sacrifice of Christ.
7. **Quiet.** Stop talking. Be quiet in the presence of the Lord. Listen to hear what He will speak into your spirit.
8. **Intercession.** Conclude your time together by speaking or writing a closing prayer thanking the Lord for His presence, His word, and His heart toward you. Intercede on behalf of those whom the Spirit brings to mind and accomplish what He instructs you to do.

Whether I find my rhythm by focusing on all eight points in linear order to facilitate “left brain” thinking or by

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concentrating on two or three points to facilitate “right brain” thinking, I have experienced life-changing results in the eight priority areas of life from using these keys as action steps for managing daily quiet time with the Lord. Here are a few examples.

Work Life

In my professional life, I purposed to not rearrange my spiritual and family life priorities and schedule to accommodate early morning breakfast meetings, or late-night networking dinners or “business opportunity” briefings. Instead, I elected to trust the Lord of Hosts (Malachi 3:10-11) to be my coach, mentor and provider.

As a result of prioritizing worship ahead of advancement, the Lord blessed me with employment and career development opportunities where my personality, vocational skills and natural abilities could flourish. He also led me to the human, financial, educational and material resources I needed in ways I know would not have been possible without His intervention.

Personal Life

In my personal life as a Christ-follower, the Lord has set me in the Body of Christ (the Church) where it pleases Him and has equipped me with the grace, fruit and gifts of the Spirit I need to serve as a “minister of reconciliation” and an “ambassador for Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:17-21). He is showing me how to represent Him by living a holy, non-religious lifestyle and teaching me how to articulate the importance of having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ when explaining the Gospel Message to friends, co-workers, neighbors and people I have met for the first time.

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As a result, I am able to serve the Lord with gladness (and without becoming stressed out) and see Him perform the greatest miracle that can take place in a person's life: the forgiveness of sins and being born again (1 John 1:8; John 3:3-8).

One such story of a person who was led to the Lord during this season of revival is my son Daniel. His story is recorded in chapter four.