Great Expectations for Your Quiet Times

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Are you a list person like me? Do you ever make to-do lists and include items you’ve already completed just so you can check them off? I hate to admit it, but I’ve done that more times than I care to count.

There’s no denying that our schedules are packed and time is at a premium, so unfortunately, our quiet times with the Lord sometimes become just another item to fit into the schedule. They may start to feel obligatory or stale. And when we’re doing good just to have a quiet time, there’s probably not a lot of thought put into how we’ll actually spend that time. We settle into the same old routine or try to do our best to accomplish what we think a quiet time should look like. What results is a lack of expectation that the Lord will meet us in our quiet time or speak to us through His Word.

The Word is one of the primary ways the Lord speaks to us, and He desires to meet us every day on the pages of His Word. Hebrews 4:12 gives the basis in approaching this critical element with expectation: “For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating as far as to divide soul, spirit, joints, and marrow; it is a judge of the ideas and thoughts of the heart” (HCSB).

If the Word is alive, then why don’t we expect the words on the page to jump right into our hearts? If your quiet times have become predictable, then it’s time for some rejuvenation. Here are a few ideas that might help rekindle the passion and expectation in your time alone with the Savior.

**1. Hit the road and take a walk with the Lord.** Leave your iPod® at home and focus on talking to the Lord. Then be quiet and listen to God’s response. Experience the Lord in creation and spend time praising Him. Try to walk at a park or in an area where you’re less likely to see someone you know.

**2. Listen to a sermon or a Bible teacher.** Oneplace.com has a wide variety of options that range from radio shows to sermons from some of America’s finest communicators. Listen with discernment and take notes. The Lord will often challenge us when we listen to a fresh voice teach His Word.

**3. Sing your favorite worship songs to the Lord.** Focus on the lyrics and allow yourself to really sing from your heart. If you can’t honestly sing the words, talk to the Lord and make the necessary adjustments. Take time to reflect on any Scriptures that come to mind while you worship. The Lord promises to inhabit the praise of His people, so sit back and enjoy His presence.

**4. Focus on a book or character in the Bible.** Bringing some focus to our quiet times can help us make sure we hear from the Lord. Start with one of Paul’s letters in the New Testament or an Old Testament character. Pay close attention to the themes or major events as you read.

**5. Review your notes from Sunday’s sermon.** Take careful notes during your church’s teaching time, making sure to write down your questions or any cross references that are given. Then use the following week to review your notes, follow the cross references, and seek the Lord for answers to your questions. Allow the Holy Spirit to reinforce what you learned on Sunday and bring to light new truths.

**6. Make it a true quiet time and enjoy some silence.** This is a great way to get our minds and bodies still enough to be able to really hear what the Lord is saying to us. If you have trouble with your mind wandering during the silence, pick one name or characteristic of the Lord—Savior, Creator, Healer, Friend, Jehovah, Abba—and focus your mind on that.

No matter what you do during your time with the Lord, begin with prayer and expect Him to speak. The Lord promises us in Deuteronomy and Jeremiah that He will not disappoint us when we seek Him. May the Word of the Lord dwell in you richly!