



CONNECTED

DEVELOPING A RICH PERSONAL TIME WITH GOD

The key to a rich and connected relationship with God lies in spending personal time with Him. This plan was designed to help you connect with God each day.

Pray

Start each time with prayer - thanking God for what He has done for you, asking Him to help you connect with Him and His Word. It might look something like this:

God, thank you so much that you are with me today and have blessed me in more ways than I even know. I ask that You help me connect with You right now through Your Word, and speak to me what I need to hear. Amen.

Bible Reading

Read the selected passage listed each day and ask yourself what God might be speaking to you through it.

Devotion

Read the daily devotion for deeper insight.

Reflect

Reflect on the question(s) presented for each day.

Pray

A sample closing prayer is provided for each day.

Day 1: Meditate on the Word

Pray: Open your time in prayer. See the gray box for ideas.

Read: Psalm 1

The best way to connect with God and hear His voice is by reading our Bible. David describes the person who delights in God's law (the Bible) and meditates on it as a tree planted by water whose leaves don't wither. Meditating on God's word does that for us — it keeps us growing, helps us stay strong when life gets tough, and brings wholeness into our lives. We prosper when we not just read God's word, but continually think about it, talk about it, and try to apply it to our lives.

Reflect:

- What would stop withering in your life if you meditated on God's word every day?
- How can you start meditating on (thinking about, talking about, applying to your life) what you read in Psalm 1?

Pray: God, help me to meditate on your Word every day. Bring what I read to my mind throughout the day and challenge me to life it out. Amen.

Day 2: Pray Without Ceasing

Pray: Open your time in prayer. See the gray box for ideas.

Read: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

In one of the shortest verses in the Bible, Paul tells us to pray continually (without ceasing). The original word translated as continually means consistently — to pray regularly, not just when we feel like it. And it doesn't need to be a formal prayer, but simply a conversation you have with God throughout your day. When we get in the habit of praying regularly, we begin to hear God's voice and see our prayers answered. It is vital to our relationship with Christ to pray consistently.

Reflect:

- Why do you find it difficult to pray regularly?
- How can you begin to pray more regularly?
- Every time you find yourself getting on Facebook this week, stop and take two minutes to talk to God.

Pray: God, help me to become consistent in my prayer life. Nudge my heart periodically throughout the day to take a few minutes and talk to you. Amen.

Day 3: Think on These Things

Pray: Open your time in prayer. See the gray box for ideas.

Read: Philippians 4:4-9

What you think about affects you deeply. If you regularly think impure thoughts, angry thoughts, or thoughts that put you down and tell you aren't worth anything, you will begin to believe it. Paul tells us what we should think on — true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, praiseworthy, and excellent thoughts. Doing so will bring peace and wholeness into our lives, and cancel out the lies we believe about ourselves.

Reflect:

- What kind of thoughts do you allow in your mind everyday - thoughts that line up with Paul's list or thoughts that put you down?
- Write down the main thoughts you think about yourself everyday. Do they line up with what God says about you?
- Every time you find yourself allowing a thought in your head that doesn't match the list in Philippians 4, make a conscious effort to change your thought.

Pray: God, help me to become consistent in my prayer life. Nudge my heart periodically throughout the day to take a few minutes and talk to you. Amen.

Day 4: Present Your Requests

Pray: Open your time in prayer. See the gray box for ideas.

Read: Philippians 4:6

Many of us struggle with worry and anxiety. We worry about our school work. We worry about our jobs. We worry about how we will pay bills. We worry about family members, our health, how people view us, if others will like us — the list goes on and on. Worry and anxiety can harm us physically, emotionally, and relationally. It's why Paul tells us to present our requests (our anxious thoughts) to God. He cares about everything in our lives — and we discover peace when we take every aspect of our lives to Him.

Reflect:

- What are you anxious or worried about right now?
- How has your anxiety or worry affected your life?
- Take time right now to present your requests and needs to God — and trust Him to resolve them in His timing.

Pray: God, help me to stop worrying about what is happening in my life and trust that You are in control. Remind me every moment to present my anxious thoughts and needs to you. Amen.

Day 5: Rejoice Always

Pray: Open your time in prayer. See the gray box for ideas.

Read: Philippians 4:4

We all go through seasons in life that are difficult — be it a single bad day or an entirely bad year. Troubles come, it's just a fact of life. We don't like those seasons or what we go through. But Paul tells us here to rejoice always. That doesn't mean we go around pretending our life is great when it's not. It doesn't mean we ignore the facts or circumstances. It means no matter what we go through, there is always reason to rejoice and be thankful for what God is doing and has done in our lives. When we learn to rejoice always, we begin to see God in every aspect of our lives.

Reflect:

- What are some things you can rejoice about in your life?
- How has God come through in difficult seasons in your past?
- Take time right now to rejoice — and thank God for all He has done for you!

Pray: God, thank you for everything you have done in my life — both in the good times and in the bad times. I rejoice in the fact that you are always with me, and love me no matter what. Help me to rejoice in you no matter the circumstances. Amen.

Day 6: Confess Your Sins

Pray: Open your time in prayer. See the gray box for ideas.

Read: Proverbs 28:13

We all sin. But how we respond in our sin helps us grow closer to God or pushes us further away. Our natural tendency when we sin is to run — stop reading our Bibles, praying, and seeking God. Confessing our sins — telling God what we did and asking Him to forgive us — brings healing and restoration to our lives. We experience it even more when we confess to others as well, so we can be accountable and get help where needed. Confession is our way of running TO God when we sin.

Reflect:

- What do you need to confess to God today?
- Why is it so hard to confess our sins to God and to other people?
- Take time this week to confess (tell) your sins to God and to a trusted friend.

Pray: God, I have fallen short of the life you want me to live. Forgive me for the ways I have disobeyed you and tried to hide from You. Give me the courage to confess my sins to you and to others. Amen.

Day 7: Forgive Others

Pray: Open your time in prayer. See the gray box for ideas.

Read: Ephesians 3:12-14

Forgiveness is a tough topic for many people. We often see it as approving or saying what someone did to us was okay. We avoid people, talk bad about them, and let the feelings of hurt continue in our lives. But that is not how God wants us to live. In this passage, we are told to forgive others just as Christ forgave us — completely, wholly, and without condition. In Matthew and Luke, Jesus even says if we don't forgive others, we won't be forgiven. Forgiveness sets us free from the hurt and pain, and allows us to experience God's forgiveness in greater measure.

Reflect:

- Who do you need to forgive in your life and why?
- Why is it so hard to forgive that person?
- Write down just a few of the things God has forgiven you of in the past. Are they similar to what other people have done to you?
- Make the decision to work through the pain and choose to forgive those who hurt you.

Pray: God, help me to forgive others the way you have forgiven me. Remind me that, even though it might be difficult and hurt a lot, it is worth forgiving that person in order to connect with you even deeper. Amen.