

I'm Quitting ...

I'm going to quit having a Quiet Time.

I'm tired of struggling to do my 'Christian duty' and set aside some time in the early morning hours to spend in Bible study & prayer. I know I'm supposed to do it. I know that's "what Jesus would do" if he were in my shoes. But I'm simply tired of failing and feeling guilty.

I used to spend great amounts of time each morning with God. At one point in my life these times were the highlight of my day & I found my relationship with the Almighty blossoming. Then life set back in, our first children arrived, and that time started to become crowded with the necessities of taking care of others and with life in general. I tried to squeeze God into the schedule between breakfast & driving my oldest to preschool, but such successes were only 'hit & miss' and I would invariably find myself in a sort of spiritual depression because I was failing God and not living up to my Christian duties.

Before I took the plunge and quit altogether, though, I felt like I should make one last attempt to search God's Word, to challenge myself and realize that having these segregated spiritual minutes each day was really God's will for my life. And what I found was not what I had expected.

I went to the 'foundational verses' that I had always heard used to teach people why they should have a Quiet Time. Good verses like Mark 1:35 ("The next morning Jesus awoke long before daybreak and went out alone into the wilderness to pray.") and Psalm 5:3 ("Listen to my voice in the morning, LORD. Each morning I bring my requests to you and wait expectantly."). But then I began to discover other verses that clouded my understanding (or opened my eyes) ...

- Psalm 22:2 ... "*Every day* I call to you, my God, but you do not answer. *Every night* you hear my voice, but I find no relief."
- Psalm 25:5 ... "Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me. *All day long* I put my hope in you."
- Psalm 44:8 ... "O God, we give glory to you *all day long* and *constantly* praise your name."
- Psalm 55:17 ... "*Morning, noon, and night* I plead aloud in my distress, and the LORD hears my voice."
- Luke 6:12 ... "*One day* soon afterward Jesus went to a mountain to pray, and he *prayed to God all night*." (emphasis mine)

What I found was that God wishes to envelop my life, not be sectioned off to a few moments in time. He wants my heart to long for Him, commune with Him, seek after Him – morning, noon & night ... not just in the morning. In short – He wants it all, not just a portion. So rather than trying to fit Him into a time slot I decided to take Him with me. I began to look for Him in the relationships I had with other people, in the playful actions of my three children, in the secular song that I was listening to on the radio, or the movie that my wife and I had watched the night before. I talked to Him, listening for His voice, & meditated on the things that He had been showing me about Himself as I mowed the lawn, drove to the store, or (dare I say) listened to a sermon on Sunday morning. I began to find God all around me and invited Him into every facet of my mundane, everyday life. I haven't had a segregated "Quiet Time" in two weeks – and I've felt closer to God than I have in a long time.

Perhaps He's calling you to quit as well and allow Him to envelop your life as a whole. Don't rob yourself of the joy of knowing Him completely and loving Him with "all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." (Matthew 22:37)