

Time Alone With God (TAWG)

QT in the Real World

I spent a few summers during my college years at a 9 week discipleship project growing in my faith. A key component that became habitual during those summers was spending time alone with God (aka: TAWG). Each morning I would spend hours reading my Bible, praying, and memorizing scripture. It was a fruitful time and quickly became something that I cherished and would rarely miss. Those summers were some of the most refreshing times of my life.

Yet, it never failed that the summer would come to an end and I would head back to my college campus, which meant that “real” life would begin again. Classes, work, social events, campus involvement, and a list of other distractions would flood my schedule and before I knew it, the time I had treasured with the Lord during the summers became a distant memory. Now I was lucky to spend 30 minutes with God two or three mornings a week and when I did the busyness of college life would suck out any potential refreshment I hoped to experience. I began to wonder if it was possible to walk with God in the “real” world?

I was quickly reminded by a close friend that God desired to know and be in relationship with me. God’s greatest command is to love Him with my entire heart, mind, soul, and strength (**Matthew 22:37**). This reminder gave me the motivation I needed to begin fighting for the time with God I once had, which meant I was going to have to go head to head with the “real” world. I began to think back to the summers of vibrant time alone with God, and I was able to identify a few things I committed to that aided my passion for pursuing TAWG.

Having a Reading Plan

It seems simple right? If you were putting together an entertainment system or getting ready for a wedding you would never think to begin without a plan. Why would we think our TAWG is any different? Proverbs 21:5 says, “The plans of the diligent lead to profit, as surely as haste leads to poverty.” When we plan well, God promises that it will lead to a more profitable life. Take thirty minutes to sit down and plan out your TAWG for the upcoming months. What will you read? How much will you read? How much time will you allot for reading, prayer, and scripture memory? With today’s resources there are an endless amount of plans you could choose from (resources: YouBible app, stumo.org). The problem is not the lack of plans, rather Christians who fail to choose a plan and stick to it!

Develop a Prayer System

Jesus often withdrew to a quiet place to pray. One day his disciples approached him with a simple request. “Lord, teach us to pray...” Jesus quickly responded by giving his disciples a simple yet effective system (see Luke 11:2-4). He did not tell them to sit quietly and pray whatever came to mind, although there are times when this is necessary, but instead he encouraged them to pray in a specific way for specific things.

There are many systems of prayer that you can implement, the trick is choosing one and starting. Create prayer cards and have a different topic that you pray for each day. Write out your prayers in a journal. Pray through the different scriptures that you are reading that morning. Regardless of the system you choose, make sure you know the direction of your prayer life before you sit down to meet with the Lord. Just like a soldier would never go to war without a strategy, Christians should never approach the spiritual battlefield without a system of prayer.

Pick a Location

When I sit down for dinner I typically choose the dining room table. If I am going to watch football then I enjoy doing it from the living room sofa. Both of these places are ideal locations to eat and watch sports. It is natural

for us to seek out locations that are most suitable for the activities we desire to do and this is no different with TAWG. Where is your place? From experience, I believe the ideal location should be quiet, separated from distraction, and easily accessible. If you are anything like me, it only takes one tiny distraction to shift my entire direction of thought. This is probably why Jesus often sought out secluded places to spend time with God (Mark 1:35).

Once you discover your location, stick to it! Make it YOUR spot. Hudson Taylor, the famous missionary, prayed on his knees in the same location so many days in a row that he left kneecap indentions in the wood! Where will you leave your TAWG indention?

Spend Your TAWG with Others

This may seem contradictory at first. How can I spend time “alone” with God while also being around others? In Luke 9:18 Jesus was described as being in a private time of prayer while his disciples were with him. The author of Hebrews reminds us to “not give up meeting together” and to “encourage one another daily.” Our walks with God are designed to be accomplished in community. The benefits of this are tremendous. You will be encouraged and they will be encouraged...where I come from that is known as a WIN-WIN situation! Remember earlier when I mentioned the disciples discussing prayer with Jesus? That conversation happened because Jesus was spending time with God in front of them. What an incredibly way to spur one another on toward pursuing Christ.

By committing to the steps above you will be on your way to having fruitful TAWG in the “real” world. God never meant for our time with Him to be dependent on the busyness of our schedule, rather the opposite is true. Our TAWG will dictate our lives. It will redirect us toward a life of truth and fulfillment and will cause us to have the things of God on our hearts and minds more regularly. I pray you will commit to the suggestions above and join me in fighting for your TAWG!

Discussion:

1. What are the 4 aspect of getting Time Alone w/ God?
2. What are the 2 that you need the most help with right now?