



ENCOURAGER

Vol. 2

“He comes alongside us when we go through hard times, and before you know it, he brings us alongside someone else who is going through hard times so that we can be there for that person just as God was there for us.” 2 Cor. 1:4 (The Message)

QUIET TIME

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Quiet Time	1
A Time for Change	1
Hook-up	2
Getting It Done	2
Modus Operandi	3
Bible Reading Plan	3
Deciding What to Read	3
Resources	3
The Challenge:	4

I had just checked into the hospital the day before to have my ring finger surgically drained. Four months earlier, a splinter of wood had gotten stuck under my wedding ring. When the swelling failed to go down, I had the ring cut off at the fire station. After seeing my General Practitioner, I was then referred to an Orthopedist. I completed a few more scans before it was determined that the cyst needed to be drained.

As I sat on the hospital bed listening to the surgeon explain that they had successfully drained the cyst; I thought, “Great, now I can

get out of here. Then he delivered the horrible news that the cyst had been very close to the vein and said I was going to need to be on strong antibiotics. It was a preventive measure, just in case the infection had somehow gotten into my blood stream. *I thought, Ok. No big deal. I'd just have to take a few pills.* Wrong again. The next day I had to see an Infectious Disease Physician, who started me on IV antibiotics. That was an even more interesting experience, seeing an Infectious Disease Specialist. As I sat in the waiting room I was afraid to touch anything. I know it's silly now but at the time the HIV pictures made me feel odd. I began to look at the

other patients with fear of what they might have or be spreading.

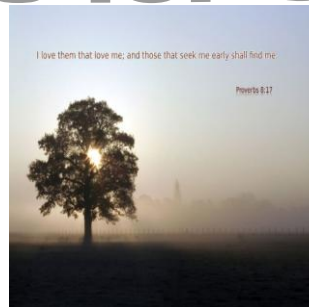
I was coming to terms with the idea that for the next month; I was going to be hooked up to an IV pole for two and a half hours, four times a day.



“I would be hooked up to an IV pole for two and a half hours, four times a day.”

A Time for Change

Needless to say my schedule began to change in a big way. In order to work six to eight hours a day, I had to start my first IV session at 4 am! Yes AM. Needless to say I wasn't a happy camper for that month. I faithfully got up every morning at 4 am and ran my antibiotic fluids until 6:30. Then I detached, dressed and worked for five hours. At noon time I came home and hooked back up for another two hours of antibiotics. I would then would detach myself again and work until 4:30 pm. I ate dinner (often cooking it) attached to that dumb pole. I couldn't afford to be late because I needed to hook up again at 9 pm and run the solution till 11pm. I know what you're thinking. When did I sleep? On the run!



During that very long month, the doctors had convinced me that if I didn't hook up four times a day and take the antibiotics I could die. So every morning at 4 am I was up letting that medicine drip into my vein.

After the first couple of mornings I decided if I had to get up that early I may as well make the time count. Perhaps it was the brush with death that put the fear of God in me, but I knew I had to get serious. So I began reading scriptures and keeping a prayer journal. Looking back, that experience deepened my relationship with God. I was now almost forced to spend quality and quantity time with Him



HOOK-UP: Making The Connection



Knowing that I had two and a half hours for a quiet time each morning gave me the opportunity to be extravagant with God. Why is it that we wait until it's a matter of life and death, before we are willing to connect with the God of the Universe on a regular basis? Do we think He's too busy to deal with our problems, when He has every one of

Perhaps you're like me and don't want to burden Him with little piddle stuff. Duh... it's all small stuff for Him! Either He's all powerful or He's not. I pray you never have to be hooked up to some machine or life sustaining IV, for God to corner you into getting your attention. In Matthew 11:28 (NIV), Jesus invites us to a connection with

Him. He says, "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest." Although I would never want to be hooked up to an IV again, the process did help me form a daily habit of "hooking up with God." In your daily time with Jesus, you'll find the strength and comfort you need and a true rest that only He can provide.

Getting It Done!

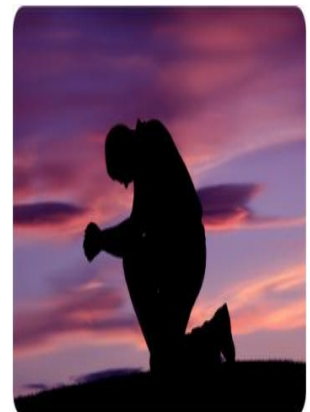
" Just because He made us and allows me to take my next breath shouldn't obligate me to build a relationship with Him? Should it?"

Do you have a special time each day to pray and read the Bible? If not don't feel bad. Most Christians have a hard time developing this discipline. After all, why should we take fifteen or ten minutes out of our packed day to communicate with the creator and sustainer of the universe? Just because He made us and allows me to take my next breath shouldn't obligate me, to build a relationship with Him? Should it?

Seriously, if your feeling guilty, don't. God doesn't want us coming to Him out of a sense of guilt. Instead, He wants a love

relationship with us where our needs can be met out of a passionate desperation for Him. For years I tried to and establish a set time each morning for a quiet time. I'd promise to pray but fall asleep. I vowed to read a chapter of the Bible and then forget what I had read. In spite of my best intentions, life would soon crowd out those appointments with God before the end of my first week.

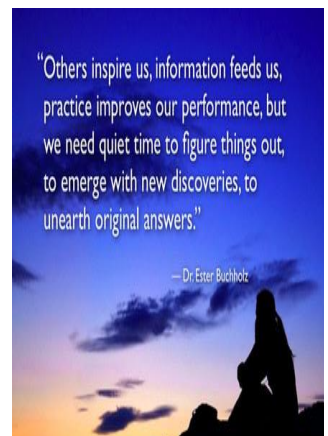
These days I may not get up at 4 am and spend two hours with God, but I still try to have at least a short quiet time with Him each morning praying and reading His word.



MODUS OPERANDI!



The number of techniques and methods you use to begin establishing your own personal time with God are limited only by your time and imagination. Most people find it helpful to have a special time and location for a "date" with God. The setting is up to you. If you're an antsy person perhaps you'd prefer a prayer walk. Those with healthy knees may desire to bend them. Our Pastor likes to stretch out on his couch and promises that he doesn't fall asleep. I like to pray and read the Bible at my desk, so I can make use of internet tools. Sometimes I use instrumental music to make dry parts of the Bible more palatable.



"Others inspire us, information feeds us, practice improves our performance, but we need quiet time to figure things out, to emerge with new discoveries, to unearth original answers."

— Dr. Ester Buchholz

Bible Reading Plan

I find it helpful when reading the Bible to really think about what I'm reading. This amazing book is really a book of 66 books; written over a period of 1500 years by forty different authors, all inspired by God. 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us that ALL scripture is inspired by God. The Greek word for inspired is theopneustos which literally means God-Breathed. Our Bible is God's primary means of communicating with us. In Matthew 24:35 we're told, "Heaven and earth will pass away but My words will not pass away." For other cool information about God's Word, check out GOD WROTE A BOOK, by James MacDonald.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Date: _____ Scripture I Read: _____

My Thoughts: _____

My Favorite Verse: _____

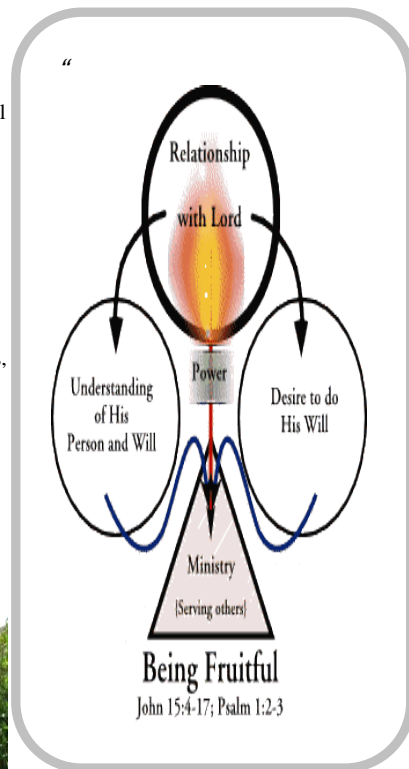
Why I Liked it: _____

How I Will Apply God's Word Today: _____

Today's #1 Prayer Request: _____

www.LearnToStudyTheBible.com

Keeping a record of what I've read each day helps me stay on track. The documentation of what I've been learning is something I can refer back to. Christian bookstores have handy Bible journals. A spiral note book also works well. If you use Microsoft Word, when you create a new document they have beautiful journal background templates to help spice up your logs and journals. Personally I like reading the Bible online so I keep my Quiet Time Journal in a Word document. A handy little format I picked up from NAV Press includes, date, scriptures read, and three topics: 1.) What I Marked, 2.) Thoughts, and 3.) What Inspired Me. Some prefer a hard copy template similar to the one to the left.



Deciding What To Read:



I love reading the Psalms and tend to gravitate to them for comfort and inspiration. However, we have to be careful that we aren't simply choosing the desserts and ignoring the vegetables; which may sometimes seem bland or convicting. Some Christians avoid this temptation by attempting a plan of reading through the entire Bible. If you're like me, this may be a lofty goal. I'm often bogged down before I get out of Genesis. And, if that book doesn't put me to sleep the next three will definitely nail the coffin shut. I'm not saying we shouldn't read the whole Bible but let's get real. It helps to break things up.



Resources:

The ministry Haven Today produces a one page short devotional called Anchor Devotional that I use each day as part of my Bible Reading plan. Check it out at: <http://www.haventoday.org/anchor-devotional.php>. This devotional gives a couple of Old Testament chapters, a Psalm, and a New Testament chapter to read each day. Since I do my devotions online, I've saved the link in my favorites section; and with a few points and

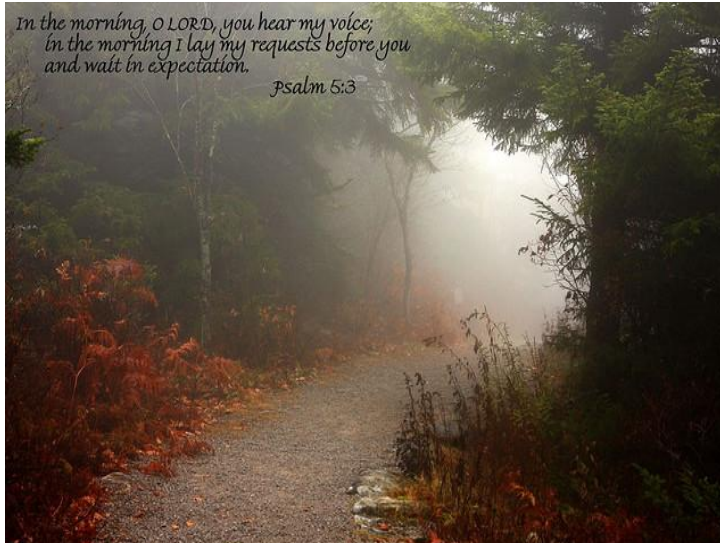
clicks I cut and paste those bible references into the biblegateway.com link. Then I'm reading online in no time. I love Bible Gateway because it allows me to switch between different versions of the Bible. Personally I like the New Living Translation for reading. If I want an even more modern version I choose The Message paraphrase. When I want more depth, I look to the Amplified version

While reading online I'm able to cut and paste portions of scriptures which speak to me into my Quiet Time Journal Word document.

Again, if computers aren't your thing, Christian book stores have a variety of plans and methods you could try. Don't miss out on your most important appointment of the day. Your time with the creator and sustainer of the universe!

The CHALLENGE

“ When the Word dwells as a familiar friend in the heart to direct, counsel and comfort us, then it is a sign it abides there. The devil knows good and hates it, therefore knowledge alone is nothing; but when the promise alters the temper of the heart itself, then it is engrafted there.” Richard Sibbes



*In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice;
in the morning I lay my requests before you
and wait in expectation.*
Psalm 5:3