



Bestselling author Nancy
DeMoss Wolgemuth
demystifies the process
of coming to know God
intimately. For over 20
years A Place of Quiet
Rest has spoken to
readers, helping them to
a deeper relationship with
Christ. Includes personal
reflections by Kay Arthur,
Barbara Rainey, and Joni
Eareckson Tada.

Interested in the whole book? Select your preferred book seller:

MOODY PUBLISHERS (AMAZON (AMAZON () APPLE BOOKS () BARNES & NOBLE () CHRISTIANBOOK.COM () TARGET ()

CONTENTS

Preface to the 25th Anniversary Edition	9
Foreword: Before You Begin (by Joni Eareckson Tada)	11
From My Heart to Yours	13
Part One	
The Priority of a Devotional Life	
Chapter 1 A Day in the Life of the Lord	23
Chapter 2 Made for Intimacy	35
Part Two	
The Purpose of a Devotional Life	
Chapter 3 The Inner Life	51
Chapter 4 The Outer Walk	69
Part Three	
The Pattern of a Devotional Life	
Chapter 5 Getting Started	91
Part Four	
57 5 5	
The Problems of a Devotional Life	
Chapter 6 "The Hard Thing for Me Is"	111

Part Five

The Practice of a Devotional Life

SECTION 1: Receiving His Word	
Chapter 7 The Wonder of the Word	137
Chapter 8 Getting into the Word	157
Chapter 9 Getting the Word into You	179
SECTION 2: Responding to His Word	
Chapter 10 The Perfume of Praise	209
Chapter 11 The Privilege of Prayer	235
Part Six	
The Product of a Devotional Life	
Chapter 12 Cultivating the Garden of the Heart	257
Where to from Here? A 30-Day Challenge	273
Appendix: Recommended Devotional Books	277
Notes	279
Thank You	285
About the Author	287



The Priority of a Devotional Life

One thing I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek.

PS. 27:4 NKIV

The more I think of and pray about the state of religion in this country, and all over the world, the deeper my conviction becomes that the low state of the spiritual life of Christians is due to the fact that they do not realize that the aim and object of conversion is to bring the soul even here on earth to a daily fellowship with the Father in heaven.

When once this truth has been accepted, the believer will perceive how indispensable it is to the spiritual life of a Christian to take time each day with God's Word and in prayer, to wait upon God for His presence and love to be revealed.

ANDREW MURRAY



CHAPTER I

A Day in the Life of the Lord

Often, while leading a women's conference, I have invited the attendees to write down why they've come and what they hope God will do in their lives during our time together. "Where does God find you as we start this weekend?" I ask.

In one instance, as I read the responses, I was amazed at how many of them sounded alike. Here's a sampling of what those women expressed:

- "I feel I'm out of control sometimes with so many pressures."
- "I face too much stress and responsibility."
- "I need God to show me how to cope with the stresses at this moment."
- "I feel like I'm torn in all directions. I want God to show me how to manage my different 'hats' of teacher, mother, wife, and daughter successfully and still have time for church work and 'me."

A Place of Quiet Rest

- "I need to stop worrying about everything. I try not to, and I know I shouldn't, but worries that I conjure up even disturb my sleep and dreams."
- "I've given myself up to service for about twenty-four months, and I feel a need to slow myself down and renew myself, but life gets real hectic."
- "With a new baby, I need to find the Lord's peace and rest physically and emotionally."
- "I often get overly busy and find my day gone without having done the things I most wanted to do."
- "I am a single person by divorce, and I really am tired."
- "I've left a whirlwind at home and need a renewed spirit to face all that these coming weeks will hold."
- "I want to slow down. I feel as if I'm on a speeding treadmill, and if I try to jump off I will stumble and fall."
- "I need help with my frazzled, frenzied state."
- "My busyness has robbed me of my joy."

Why do we live such hectic, harried lives? Is this what God intended for us? These kinds of responses are not unusual among the women I talk with. I could have written some of them myself—one or more of them may describe the way you're feeling today. So, why do we live such hectic, harried lives? Is this what God intended for us? And is there

a way to get off that speeding treadmill without hurting ourselves (and others) in the process?

BUSY DAYS

The first chapter of the Gospel of Mark gives us a glimpse into a day in the life of the Lord Jesus. In some respects, this day was not unlike many of the days that you and I experience.

We pick up the account in verse 21:

They went into Capernaum, and right away he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath and began to teach. [The people] were astonished at his teaching because he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not like the scribes. (Mark 1:21–22 CSB)

If you've ever taught a Bible study or a Sunday school class or led a small group, you know there's a lot more behind these words than what appears on the surface.

You know that you don't just get up before a group and teach the Word of God with power and effectiveness without time spent in preparation—not just preparation of the notes and the material, but preparation of your heart and life.

I love teaching the Scripture; to me there is nothing quite like seeing the Word of God penetrate and transform lives. But the process of preparing to speak is an intense one for me. I labor to determine what the Lord wants me to teach. I wrestle with the passages involved, seeking to understand what the Scripture means and to organize the material in a way that will be understandable and meaningful to the listener.

Then, while I'm actually teaching, I expend still more energy—physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. And when I've finished speaking, the battle is still not over—that's often when the enemy seeks to discourage me with feelings of inadequacy or to tempt me with seeking the praise of others for my efforts. By the time it's all over, I'm

often depleted and in need of restoration.

So, when I read that Jesus began this particular day by teaching in the synagogue, I know this was not just a non-chalant effort on His part. The people listened attentively to Him because they could tell this was not your normal, run-of-the-mill Sabbath message. Unlike the teachers they were accustomed to hearing, Jesus spoke with authority and power. We know that in order for this to be possible, He had spent concentrated time with His heavenly Father in preparation. As He ministered, He was being expended on behalf of others.

The apostle Paul later wrote, "I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls" (2 Cor. 12:15). That's part of what is involved in ministering to others, whether in a synagogue in his day, or in our case, a small group study, a discipling setting, or a house full of little ones.

CONFRONTING EVIL

Speaking in the synagogue was just the beginning of Jesus' day, though. His work was not nearly over. Before He even had a chance to finish His message, there was an interruption in the service. Let's continue reading in Mark 1:

Just then a man with an unclean spirit was in their synagogue. He cried out, "What do you have to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"

Jesus rebuked him saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" And the unclean spirit threw [the man] into convulsions, shouted with a loud voice, and came out of him.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE LORD

[The people] were all amazed, and so they began to ask each other: "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." (Mark I:23–27 CSB)

Here we see Jesus engaged in a battle between heaven and hell. This happened often during His years of earthly ministry because He lived and spoke and ministered in the power and the authority of God, which tended to stir the demons up. And this particular encounter with the enemy was not a casual, relaxed one. This was all-out warfare.

Now, I've never had an audible or visible encounter with a demon. Chances are, you haven't either. But that doesn't mean we are immune from spiritual battles. God's Word teaches that at this very moment there is cosmic warfare being waged between heaven and hell, that we are in the midst of a battle against "principalities and powers" (Eph. 3:10 NKJV) and sometimes God sends us right into the front lines of that battle. In the middle of our everyday lives, we sometimes find ourselves in difficult, demanding situations where we have to be alert to the schemes of Satan and skilled in using the sword of the Spirit to ward off his attacks.

There's a natural drain that is a part of being God's servant in these situations. And Jesus certainly experienced such a drain after His moments of confrontation with the powers of darkness.

Scripture tells us that as a result of this encounter with the demonized man, "at once the news about [Jesus] spread throughout the entire vicinity of Galilee" (v. 28). Imagine how that must have complicated Jesus' life. All of a sudden, people all over the area wanted Him to come speak at their synagogues and banquets, wanted to interview Him for

their publications, wanted Him to heal their sick and cast out their demons. They all wanted a piece of Him. Later in this passage we learn that the time finally came when Jesus couldn't even stay in the cities. He had to seek out quiet, remote places in the countryside, where the crowds couldn't find Him, to get time alone with His Father.

Perhaps you've had the experience of ministering to someone in need—lending a listening ear to a discouraged young mother, helping out in your child's classroom, preparing a meal for a family in a crisis, being a youth sponsor on a mission trip, ministering to a friend's troubled teenager, or offering biblical counsel to a woman in a shaky marriage. The word spread that you were available to help people in need—and all of a sudden, your phone was lit up with texts from people wanting your time and help. If that's ever happened to you, then you may have an inkling of what Jesus felt as hurting people clamored for his time and attention.

EVERYBODY NEEDS ME!

Once the service at the synagogue was finally over, Jesus left the place and hurried "into Simon and Andrew's house with James and John" (Mark 1:29 csb).

Whew! Jesus had spent hours giving out and expending Himself for others. Finally He has a chance to get away with His friends, away from all the needy people. Now he could go home, kick up His feet, and relax—maybe even take a nap. Right?

Wrong!

Read on: "Simon's mother-in-law was lying in bed with a fever, and they told [Jesus] about her at once" (v. 30 csb).

Jesus was finally out of the public eye, back in the safe haven of a friend's home, and even there, someone needed Him.

No doubt you feel on occasion that there is no time, no place where you can totally escape the demands of other people. If it's not the people at work, it's your husband; if it's not your husband, it's your children; if it's not your children, it's the neighbor's children; if it's not someone else's children, it's your mother-in-law; if it's not your mother-in-law, it's . . .

But as we would expect, the serving heart of Jesus came out, and He made Himself available to meet the need. He took her hand, helped her up. "The fever left her, and she began to serve them" (v. 31 csb).

With that, Jesus could finally settle in for a nice quiet evening alone with his friends. But then came the knocking at the door . . .

When evening came, after the sun had set, [the people] brought to him all those who were sick and demon-possessed. The whole town was assembled at the door. (Mark 1:32–33 CSB)

I don't know how many people came to see Jesus that evening, but it sounds like a lot! Remember, this was still the same day. He had started early that morning—teaching, casting out demons, and healing the sick—and now it seems the whole city was lined up at His door wanting help.

Do you ever feel like the whole town is gathered at your door? Maybe it's your bathroom door, and you're just trying to get three minutes alone without having to answer any questions—but somebody's knocking on the door, the doorbell is ringing, notifications are popping up on your phone, the

oven timer is buzzing, your three children seem like thirty-three, you feel like half the world is sick, and everybody needs you—all at the same time. You panic: "There's just not enough of me to go around!"

And yet Jesus didn't panic when He saw the needy outside the door. Instead, He

healed many who were sick with various diseases and drove out many demons. (Mark 1:34 CSB)

HOW DID HE DO IT?

How did He do it? How did He stay sane? How did He keep His sense of equilibrium? How did He keep meeting the needs of so many people without falling apart Himself?

Yes, Jesus was God. But He was also human, which means He got tired; He got hungry; He felt the pressure of crowds constantly pressing around Him and having His privacy invaded. But He kept right on letting the crowds into His life. He kept on teaching, healing, confronting the powers of hell—and never a cross or impatient word. How did He do it?

Plus, Jesus was only given three years on this earth to accomplish the whole eternal plan of redemption. Talk about a long to-do list! Yet He never seemed hurried, harried, or overwhelmed with all there was to do in a day. Why not? How did He handle all the stress, strain, and responsibility without losing it?

I believe verse 35 gives us the key—not only to Jesus' life, but also to your life and mine, whatever our specific responsibilities and circumstances may be. That verse begins, "Very early in the morning ..." (CSB).

I don't know about you, but when I've had a long, draining day, I know exactly what I want to do very early the next morning. *Nothing—except sleep!* Now, let me be clear: there's nothing wrong with sleeping when our bodies need it.

But Jesus knew there was something He needed that next morning even more than an extra hour of sleep. He had poured Himself out for countless needy individuals, and His spirit needed to be replenished. He knew it would never happen once the crowd woke up. So what did He do?

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he got up ... (CSB)

He got up! The Scripture says that Jesus was tempted "in every respect" as we are (Heb. 4:15), so I have no doubt that He was tempted to sleep in. But He made a choice to say no to His body and yes to His Father. He got up. Then He "went out, and made his way to a deserted place; and there he was praying" (v. 35 csb).

And it was none too soon. For it wasn't long before "Simon and his companions searched for him, and when they found him they said, 'Everyone is looking for you!'" (vv. 36–37 csb). Yet, having just been in touch with His heavenly Father, Jesus knew exactly how He was to respond to the demands of the new day. He said,

"Let's go on to the neighboring villages so that I may preach there too. This is why I have come." (v. 38 CSB)

Why were such morning appointments with His Father so crucial to Jesus' earthly ministry? Jesus knew that any power or ability He had to minister to others came from being one with the Father (John 10:30). He knew it was

essential for Him to stay connected to His Source of life, joy, power, peace, and fruitfulness. He knew He had to walk in union and communion with His Father if He was to know and do His Father's will, which was His sole purpose for being on this earth. Nothing mattered more to Him than to live in intimate fellowship with His Father, so that He might fulfill what He had been sent to do.

For Jesus, time alone with God was essential. It was not something He tacked on to an overcrowded schedule. It was His lifeline to the Father, the highest priority of His life—more important than being with His disciples, more important than preaching the gospel, more important than time with His mother and brothers, more important than responding to the demands and needs of the crowds, more important than anything else.

The Gospel of Luke tells us that Jesus "would withdraw to desolate places and pray" (Luke 5:16). This was the pattern of His life. This is where He got His marching orders for each day, where He discovered the will of God for His life, where He got renewed and restored when "power went out from him" (Luke 6:19) as He ministered to the crowds. This is where He gained the resources to do battle against Satan—and win! It's where He stepped back from the corruption, clutter, and clamor of life on this earth and was given the ability to see the world from God's point of view. It's where He received grace to love the unlovable and power to do the impossible.

And this is precisely where you and I so often miss out on all that God has for us. We attempt to live life in our own energy. We think we can keep giving out without getting replenished. Then, wearied and weakened by the demands

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE LORD

of life and ministry, we become impatient and annoyed with the very ones God has sent us to serve. Rather than exhibiting a gracious, calm, joyous spirit, we become uptight, frazzled, and frenzied, resenting rather than welcoming the people and opportunities God brings into our lives. I know. I've been there again and again.

Is it really possible for us to manifest the same spirit Jesus did when facing pressure? That all depends on whether we are willing to make the same choice He made, to adopt His number one priority as the number one priority of our lives:

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he got up, went out, and made his way to a deserted place; and there he was praying. (Mark 1:35 CSB)

MAKE IT PERSONAL

- 1. Which of the following best describes the condition of your personal devotional life these days?
 - For all practical purposes, I have no devotional life.
 - My devotional life is inconsistent and sporadic.
 - I'm spending time in the Word and prayer on a consistent basis, but I often feel that I'm just going through the motions. My devotions are more a matter of duty than delight.

- I'm meeting alone with the Lord on a daily basis and am cultivating a meaningful, intimate relationship with Him through His Word, prayer, and praise.
- 2. What are three or four words that would typically describe your spirit when your schedule is full or you're in the midst of pressured circumstances (for example: calm, prayerful, frenzied, demanding)?
- 3. Based on the account we've just read in Mark 1, how would you describe the way Jesus responded to pressure?
- 4. What do you think accounted for His ability to respond to interruptions, demands, and the incessant needs of those around Him?
- 5. Take a few moments to pray and ask God to speak to you through this study. Ask Him to make you like Jesus in your response to the circumstances of life and to give you a deeper desire to make your relationship with Him the most important priority of your life.



Interested in the whole book? Select your preferred book seller:

