

Leader's Guide: Quiet Time

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Quiet Time

Setting our Heart on God

These leader's guides are designed to help stimulate our thinking in terms of how we can get the most out of the material and help others to fish out insights that perhaps are not so apparent to them. These documents are living papers and will be updated regularly. Feel free to add your own discussion topics!

We will list the section and page number(s) from *The Ezra 7¹⁰ Plan Book 1– First Love: A Heart to Understand* for easy referencing.

Our Father: Experiencing God

Pages 9 – 14

❶ This section contains definitive descriptions about the Lord that show His character. How we view the character of a person often determines whether we value pursuing that relationship. Discuss the following statements about God mentioned in the book to discover why we should be motivated to spend time with the Lord.

- *He never gives up on people*
- *He cares about us*
- *It is clear that the Lord cherishes communing with us and blessing us*
- *Since God has gone to great lengths for us, we should go to great lengths with Him.*

Our Father: Experiencing God continued

Pages 9 – 14

❷ This section also contains questions we may need to ask ourselves with respect to our current spiritual state. Where we are right now in our walk with God may need to change. Discuss the following questions mentioned in the book to see if any students have been motivated to make some spiritual course corrections.

- *Do we need to break away from the hustle and bustle and rejuvenate our relationship with our heavenly Father?*
- *Do we need to remind ourselves again of the deep love God has for us?*
- *Do we need to give God back the reins of leadership we may have subtly taken back?*
- *Do we need to remind ourselves that God is our source of total supply?*

❸ Our primary knowledge of God comes from the Bible, but where else can we discern God's character? Ask the group if anyone has read the Book of Job or the Psalms. Discuss the ways Job and David discovered God's amazing qualities apart from the written Word.

❹ This section closes with a great question which can be asked to the group.

- *As each year passes, we should keep asking ourselves whether or not our actions and activities are drawing us closer to God or farther away.*

Our Failures: Extinguishing God

Pages 15 – 17

❶ Discuss how a healthy diversion can be refreshing and how we can make sure we are in control of our amusement time and not vice versa.

Our Failures: Extinguishing God continued

Pages 15 – 17

❷ Ask the group if they have ever felt that their time with God was getting stale or dull. See if there is any merit in the statements:

- *If God seems far away guess who moved?*
- *If our time with God is not exciting, we may not be just living in the world, but we may be living like the world.*

❸ Ask the group to explain how amusement and entertainment can increase our desire for worldly things while at the same time causing our love for God to grow cold.

Our Fruit: Ever-increasing in God

Pages 18 – 34

There is quite a bit of material here. Feel free to use less discussion questions if time is a factor.

❶ (Pages 20-21) From a practical standpoint how can we prevent the Word from being snatched away from someone who may not initially understand it?

❷ (Pages 22-24) Discuss the statement made in the book:

- *The long haul cannot be fueled just by emotion, but by devotion.*

❸ (Pages 22-24) Ask the students if it is possible to receive the Word with joy and still have the Word become rooted in our hearts over time.

❹ (Pages 22-24) What are the subtle differences between one who is *unwilling* to stand up to persecution, versus the one who thinks they are *unable* to stand up to persecution? Who is more likely to succeed in the long run and what actions may ensure his or her success?

Our Fruit: Ever-increasing in God continued

Pages 18 – 34

⑤ (Pages 22-24) Discuss the questions in the book:

- *Is temporary belief, really belief at all?*
- *If we will follow the Word when it is convenient and not embarrassing, are we really a follower of the Word and a true disciple?*

⑥ (Pages 25-28) Look at the list of Actions and Effects on page 26 and then discuss the question in the book:

- *What do entertainment, amusement, worry, pursuit of wealth and pleasure, and the desire for other things have in common?*

⑦ (Pages 25-28) Discuss the difference between a believer with mature fruit versus a believer with immature or no fruit.

- *Is the believer with immature or no fruit really a believer?*
- *How can we tell the difference between a young struggling believer and a non-believer?*

⑧ (Pages 29-34) Study the Summary of the Parable of the Sower on page 31. Discuss any additional insights gleaned from reviewing the Summary.

⑨ (Pages 29-34) Pruning is the process where branches of a plant that are dead or are not yielding fruit are removed in order that the branches with fruit will bear even more fruit. Discuss how this process is administered by God in our lives.

- *How do we recognize when this is happening?*
- *What should our response be?*
- *What are the consequences?*
- *What steps can we take to make sure that we will not be fueling branches that are not bearing fruit?*

⑩ (Pages 29-34) Discuss situations where we may not fully understand or trust what God has been saying to us; but to grow and bear fruit, we must follow Him in faith alone initially.

Our Focus: Every Day with God

Pages 35 – 44

❶ Discuss how knowing the ways God deals with others as described in the Bible will help us discern how He is dealing with us.

❷ Ask the group if they have started to recognize when the Lord is talking to them uniquely and personally.

❸ Discuss the actions of this fictitious person: A person decides that it is too confusing to figure out what God may be telling them, so they are just going to decide themselves and if God does not want them to do something He will stop them.

- *What is wrong with this attitude?*
- *What may be the unintended consequences?*

❹ We tend to have a much higher and sometimes a much lower opinion of ourselves. Discuss some ways in which we can honestly assess our progress as a maturing believer.

❺ Pick out a favorite *Brother Lawrence* quote and discuss.

❻ Building consistency with goals and structure:

- *Why is some structure beneficial in ensuring that we consistently spend time with God?*
- *How can an overly rigid structure actually prevent us from our goals of knowing God and following His lead?*

❼ Ask the group how they have their Quiet Times.

❽ Ask the group if they believe that Quiet Time is the number one priority in their lives.

Our Field: Explaining God

Pages 45 – 50

❶ Ask the group if they have already developed and used some good, short, pass-on-able instructions or teachings about Quiet Time.

❷ Discuss ways we can communicate the following about Quiet Time.

- How to have a Quiet Time
- Motivating others to have consistent Quiet Times
- Why it is not a good thing to skip our Quiet Time

Disciple Skills