

SESSION 5: Making It Stick

*You need a plan,
you need to know how to deal with failure,
and you need to know how to deal with legalism.*

I. A Plan

A. Decide, realistically, how much time can you give to a Quiet Time?

1. Start small
2. Increase as the habit takes hold
3. Try for at least 15 minutes a day
4. Remember: something else must give. This time does not simply materialize out of thin air.

B. Decide, realistically, what time of day you will have your Quiet Time.

1. Pick a time when you will be alert and able to stay awake.
2. Pick a time that will have minimal interruptions
3. Remember: this will require discipline. You must make choices that will wind up taking something else out of your life.

C. Decide where you will have your Quiet Time.

1. Pick a place where your mind won't wander.
2. Pick a place where you won't feel self-conscious.
3. Pick a place where you won't be conveniently available for others to interrupt you.

D. Decide on your format.

1. Decide how to divide up your time between reading and prayer.
2. What reading strategy?

3. What will you read?
 4. How will you divide up your prayer list?
 5. What verses will you memorize first?
- E. Get your journal, and commit to writing your plans.
- F. Set a goal. Get your notebook, and write out your plan today, start tomorrow.
- G. Otherwise, you might not start at all.

II. Dealing with failure

- A. You are going to fail
- B. That's actually not a problem.
- C. Quitting is the problem.
- D. Understand that forming new habits of discipline takes time.
- E. Don't be overly concerned about inconsistency, especially for the first month or so.
- F. Do not ever – **ever** - play catch-up. It is Satan's way of getting you to quit, and it also falls prey to a legalistic heart.
- G. If you miss your QT, it's no big deal. You missed. God still loves you and is pleased with you in Christ.
- H. Just climb back in the saddle, and try to do better tomorrow.
- I. That's part of what your journal is for. Just pick up your reading where you left off. Don't try to double up!
- J. God does not need your QT. You do. It is for your benefit and growth. God is not bummed when you fail.

III. Dealing with legalism

- A. A legalistic view of QT means that either:

1. You think God is pleased or displeased with you based on whether you had your devotions, or
 2. YOU are pleased or displeased with yourself based on whether or not you had your devotions, or
 3. YOU consider yourself better than other believers based upon your QT disciplines.
- B. A legalist's spirituality inevitably tends toward a checklist spirituality.
- C. Legalism finds some other basis for God's favor apart from the perfect sacrifice of Christ.
1. Galatians 3:1-5
 - a. Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?
 - b. Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?
 - c. Does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?
 2. We are not going to improve on what God has done for us through a QT (or anything else)!
- D. The legalist has an inadequate view of grace, and an insufficient view of the depth of their own sin.
1. The legalist does not grasp 1 Timothy 1:15 or Ephesians 3:8
 2. In his heart, he sees these verses as
 - a. religious rhetoric
 - b. He does not feel the profound weight of them as applicable to himself
 3. Because his view of his own sinfulness is so small, his view of the greatness of God's grace is correspondingly small.
- E. In essence, the legalist has denied the Gospel of grace and replaced it with works.

- F. The Gospel of grace teaches us that God is pleased with us only on the basis of the fact that Christ's blood has paid for our sins.
1. Romans 3:21-25a
 - a. There is a *righteousness of God* that is apart from the Law
 - b. It is a righteousness *available only by faith* in Jesus Christ
 - c. We are justified [declared righteous] *as a gift by His grace* through redemption in Christ.
 - d. God publicly displayed Christ and His shed blood as the *only satisfaction* of His righteous wrath against sin.
 2. We are not going to improve on this through a QT!
- G. God freely – graciously – forgives us based on what Jesus accomplished on the Cross.
- H. We add nothing to that. Ever.
- I. Our QT disciplines grow out of our grateful response to the Cross, our love for our Savior, and our pursuit of Him
- J. We must never imagine that our QT somehow alters God's disposition toward us.
- K. So confess the sin of legalism as the sin of a proud heart, and ask God to continually reveal your own sinfulness, and with it, His great grace.
- L. Understand that you need the Gospel for daily living as a believer just as much as you needed it for salvation as a sinner.
- M. Daily thank Him for His daily, preserving, sin-covering grace, available through the blood of Christ!

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