



HOW TO S.O.A.P.

Jesus said in John 15:5, *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit”*. The most important principle regarding our personal relationship with Jesus is to stay connected to *“the vine”* (Jesus) by having a regular Quiet Time.

A Quiet Time is a prioritized time during the day when we get alone where it is quiet and free from distractions in order to spend time with Jesus through bible reading and prayer. As one pastor said, *“When the bible speaks God speaks”*. Quiet Times are where we cultivate our relationship with God and it is so important that even Jesus himself *“often withdrew to lonely places and prayed”*, Luke 5:16.

During your Quiet Time God will speak to your heart and reveal things to you that are extremely important. Sometimes it is something regarding the present and sometimes it is something regarding the future. Either way, it is paramount that we not forget what the Lord says to us during our Quiet Time and that we stay tuned in to God’s activity in our lives. The most common way Christ-followers do this is by what is called “journaling”. Journaling is where a person writes down and documents important items during their daily Quiet Time such as important scripture verses, notes from studying a passage of scripture, personal insights, instructions received from the Lord, or specific prayer requests. It is easy to forget what the Lord has spoken into our lives and journaling is a method or practice that helps us remember and identify what the Lord is doing in our lives. Someone once said, “a dull pencil is better than a sharp mind”.

It is important to understand that journaling is not a biblical mandate nor a requirement of the Lord. It is simply a tool that many have found helpful in their walk with Jesus by helping them stay focused during their Quiet Time and gives them a simple pattern to follow as they spend time with the Lord. There are many benefits to journaling but the purpose of this document is to introduce you to the S.O.A.P. method of journaling. The S.O.A.P. method is one of many effective journaling methods that gives you a framework to having a fruitful Quiet Time and journaling.

S.O.A.P. is an acronym for Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer. When each of these components are a part of your daily Quiet Time, you will begin to have more clarity in your relationship with Jesus and experience spiritual growth. Here is a description of each of these components.

The “S” stands for “Scripture”. Each Quiet Time should first consist of reading God’s Word, the Bible. It is recommended to have a reading plan or book of the bible you are reading through so that when your Quiet Time begins you are not spending time trying to figure out what you are going to read. If this is planned out ahead of time then it will maximize your time with the Lord. Scripture reading is the most important component of your Quiet Time.

The “O” stands for “Observations”. Observations are important insights or biblical truths the Lord reveals to you as you read scripture. These are the verses that really jump out to you and the Lord draws to your attention. It could be the central truth of the passage or it could be an obscure verse in the passage that the Lord wants you to pay attention to. Writing out these verses and your comments about these verses will help you grasp them more clearly and clarify what God is speaking into your life. This is a critical part of your journaling.

The “A” stands for “Application”. Application is when we write down very specific and personal action steps we need to take as a result of our observations. If we are not careful, we will read an important biblical truth or insightful passage of scripture but not do anything with it. It is absolutely critical to understand that the purpose of reading Scripture is to apply it and live it. If all we do is gain more information then we have missed the whole point. James 1:22, *“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”*

The “P” stands for “Prayer”. The “Prayer” part of journaling is when we respond to what we have read by praying about it. Writing out our prayer helps us to be intentional and focused when we pray, and reminds us in the future of what we prayed for in the past. Sometimes prayer requests are answered in the future and we forgot we even prayed about it. But please note, you do not have to limit your prayer time to just what you write down. In fact, we hope your verbal prayer response will be more than your written prayer response.

As you begin journaling, please remember that your journaling will not be graded! This is not a book report! This is simply a tool that many have found helpful to growing closer to Jesus and having an effective Quiet Time. Here is a sample S.O.A.P Journal Entry:

September 28, 2020

S - *Philippians 4:10-13*

O - *“I Can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Verse 13. No matter the situation in Paul’s life, he realized that Christ was all he needed, and Christ was the one who strengthened him to persevere through difficult times.*

A - *In my life, I will experience many ups and downs. My contentment is not found in circumstances. Rather, it is based on my relationship with Jesus Christ. Only Jesus gives me the strength I need to be content in every circumstance of life.*

P - *Lord Jesus, please help me as I strive to be content in You. Through Your strength, I can make it through any situation I must face.*