

How to Go on a DATE with God



What does a perfect date look like to you? A romantic stroll on the beach? A hike through the mountains? A long chat by a fireplace? You've probably envisioned your dream "date" with that girl who sits in front of you in English class or the guy who plays the drums in youth group... but have you ever imagined going on a date with God? God already knows you inside and out, but He wants *you* to know *Him* intimately as well. The following paragraphs will explain how to go on a date with God. We're not just talking about merely reading your Bible. We're referring to an extended time you spend with God, passionately seeking to hear from Him and respond to Him.

This type of undertaking will not be easy. Our lives become so busy at times that we often do not leave room for God. As Hudson Taylor once said, "Satan will always find something for you to do." We fill up our schedules with so many 'good' activities, that the most important activities (Bible study, prayer, fellowship with believers, self-reflection, etc.) don't seem to fit. It's like filling up a bucket with rocks. You have to put the big rocks in first, and then fill in the cracks with the pebbles. If you first fill the bucket with small pebbles, there will be no room left for the big rocks! So it is with our busy lives. If we don't put the 'big rocks' in first, there won't be any room for them in the end.



Another barrier to our spending extended time with God is that sometimes we just don't feel like it. Have you ever been invited to go out with friends and you've thought, "I just want to stay home and be by myself tonight." But when you end up going after all, you have a great time! Often our time with God starts out the same way. When we choose to spend time with God, even when



we don't feel like it, we find that God blesses our time with Him and we come away feeling refreshed. So go ahead – take the challenge of going on a date with God. You won't regret it!

What Does the Bible Say ?

Fellowship with God is a command given many times throughout the Bible. Many godly men and women have grown in their faith by spending personal, intimate times alone with God. The Bible mentions at least three different types of time spent with God. The first kind is found in I Thess. 5:17, where we are commanded to pray without ceasing. This doesn't mean that we should have a "24-7" prayer meeting. Rather we should strive to have continuous communication with God throughout the day. As a song by Steven Curtis Chapman recommends, "like breathing out and breathing in, let us pray." This kind of prayer should be as frequent as the breaths we take and as vital to our lives as the air we breathe.

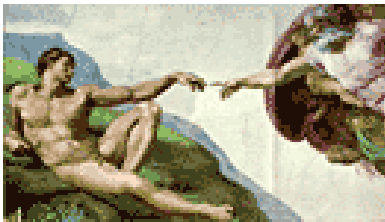


The second type of fellowship found in the Bible is what we refer to as "D.I.G." (Developing Intimacy with God). This time with God is a solitary "quiet time" and should be a critical part of your daily schedule. We see it in the life of Daniel (Daniel 6:10), David (Psalm 5:3) and Jesus (Mark 1:35). Take a minute to read the verses and find out how these men developed intimacy with God in their daily lives.



Lastly, we see people spending extended times of communion with God. In Luke 6, Jesus spent an entire night in fellowship with His Father. On various occasions, Moses spent 40 days and nights alone with the Lord. Upon hearing of the plight of Jerusalem, the prophet Nehemiah actually prayed for several days.

So what about you? Do you feel like you're up for a few days of prayer? It's possible that you are not yet at that point. In order to spend extended quality time with God, you must start with spending shorter quality times with God. You must "D.I.G." God before you can DATE God!



**Draw Near to God
and
He will Draw Near to You.
James 4:8**

Practically Speaking...



Let's take a minute to examine what a DATE with God looks like. Try to set aside an entire day to spend alone with God. If you don't have a whole day, start out with an afternoon, or a few hours. Take a back-pack full of supplies that you will need for your DATE: a Bible, a journal, a n inspirational book you are currently reading, a copy of Operation World, a newspaper (to pray through current events), a lunch, a water bottle, and a walkman with several worship CD's. It's important to shape your date with God to fit your personality. If you are an artist, bring a sketch pad. If you are an athlete, bring some running shoes. Maybe you want to find a secluded spot in the woods. Maybe you want to sit on a park bench. Maybe you just want to stay in your room (when you're family's out of the house). Wherever you go, it is important that you are alone without any distractions. (Satan will always find something for you to do!)

The goal of your DATE is to spend relaxed, uninterrupted time with God. Don't rush through a format just so you can get done. Allow God to guide you in setting the schedule for your DATE. Here are a few guidelines: Make sure you tackle the most important things first. These are the 'big rocks' that won't fit if you leave them until the end. Perhaps you could start your DATE by journaling and setting up a tentative schedule for your time with God. The **following chart** gives some suggestions on how to spend your time. There are also some resources attached to this article that may add some structure to your DATE. Use them as you feel led.



Personal worship through song. There is the test of if you are alone. You will want to really belt out songs to God, but if you are not alone, you will be inhibited. Take as long as you want.

Approaching the Lord (Psalm 27, 46, 61-63). Read some of these Psalms and respond to the Lord from what you read. Praise God for His blessings, wait on God, confess sins.

Making Requests of the Lord (Psalm 1). Learn to pray Biblical prayers for others, yourself and those around the world. Here are some passages that you can go to and repeat them back to the Lord (Phil 1:9-11, Col. 4:2-4, I Tim 2:8, I Pet 3:12, Phil 4:6-7, Eph 6:8-10, Acts 4:29)

Responding to the Lord (Psalm 95). T.A.L.K.S **Thanksgiving**: it is an attitude of the heart. **Adoration**: praise God for Who He is. **Listen**: absorb everything the Lord wants to say to you. **Konfession**: evaluate your life as it is now before the Lord. **Supplication**: You previously made requests for others; now's the time to pray for yourself.

Why DATE God?

We need to Develop Attitudes To Envision (DATE) what God has in store for us! Two examples from the Bible of men who did this are Jesus and Moses. The night before Jesus chose the twelve men who would change the world by their teaching, He spent extended time in prayer with His Father. Moses also needed extended time with God as he Developed Attitudes to Envision how God would lead the Israelites through the desert for 40 years. We too need to spend quality time with God in order to hear His heart and share His vision for our lives.



If you take the time to DIG daily, as well as go on monthly DATES with God, you will develop a new perspective of your life from God's view point. You will begin to develop an attitude of passion for God and His word. Your convictions will be renewed and you will have a greater sense of God's direction in your life. You will develop an attitude of unyielding confidence to submit to God's will for you and walk boldly through the doors that He opens. During this time your sensitivity to the Lord will increase. Be aware of how God is working in the lives of others' around you and how He wants you to be part of that. Take the time to envision how God sees the people you come in contact with. Lastly, be prepared to envision your life as a battle ground. We spend so much effort trying to make our lives more comfortable and less confusing that we forget that we

are at war. Satan is out to get us and we need to be prepared for battle! Spending extended time with God will help you to envision His power in your life to face daily struggles. Without a constant outpouring of God's power into our lives, we will be weak and helpless to fight against the enemy.



So go grab your Sword of the Spirit (the Bible), your journal, an inspirational book, and a blanket, and go out on a DATE with God. It will be a memorable experience that you will look back to as a time of refreshment and renewed vision. You will Develop Attitudes To Envision how God wants to glorify Himself through your life!

