

The Cross Training Quiet Time

30-Minute Daily Quiet Time

1. **Visualization** (5 minutes)
2. **Thankfulness** (5 minutes)
3. **Repentance** (5 minutes)
4. **Scripture** (15 minutes)

Visualization. Start the quiet time with 5 minutes of visualization that deepens your sense of God’s love for you. For doers this may be challenging initially as it is less concrete and task-like than we are used to. Visualization requires you select a mental image or two that will convey God’s loves for you—that you can trust God. *“As a father has compassion on his children so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him”*—Psalm 103:13. This verse prompted me to select the image of my two-year old Isaac who once tenderly asked me to forgive him (for what I can’t even recall). I do recall strapping him in his car seat when he said, “Daddy, please forgive me”. In visualization I picture his face and how I felt—a surge of compassion and delight for my son. I use this image to visualize and remind myself that I am even more loved by my Father in Heaven than Isaac is loved by me! A second image I visualize in this opening 5 minutes is holding my older son Clark’s hand while walking through Fort Snelling Cemetery on Memorial Day several years ago. I reflect on the color contrast of the bleached-stone grave markers and the bright green grass. I recall how soft and trusting Clark’s little hand was in mine—how he had no fear of death or even knowledge of things like war and great suffering. I see, in my mind’s eye, how happy he was to simply *be with* his dad no matter what we were doing. I let these images lean on my heart and mind while taking deep breaths in and out slowly. This initial five minutes brings my inner being to a place of poise. I am now more at peace than when I began.

Thankfulness. Continue by praising God for what He has done for 5 minutes. This can be writing in a gratitude journal for 5 minutes—listing out the specific ways God has blessed your life. It can be saying out loud prayers like, “God, thank you for _____ and _____ and how You _____.” It can be a silent prayer of gratitude (God perceives our thought life just as clearly as what we write or speak aloud). However it is done, make sure that you begin on a larger scale and work down to the more specific things that God has done or given to

and for you. By this I suggest starting by thanking God for the huge stuff at first...how He adopted you into His eternal family, how through the cross and empty tomb, He made a way for your sin to be removed and welcoming you into everlasting life in a new heavens and new earth in a magnificent new body! From there direct your thankfulness to your loved ones, gifts, assignment in ministry and so on. Towards the end of the 5 minutes be creative. Thank God for the small things—you know those things we tend to take for granted. Don't forget to thank God for what He, in His wisdom, allowed you to experience even though it was painful. Remember the Garth Brooks prayer — *"I thank God for unanswered prayed...just because he doesn't answer doesn't mean he don't care, some of God's greatest gifts are unanswered prayers."*

Repentance. The next 5 minutes is your time to identify sin in your life, bring it to God asking for forgiveness and redirection. Martin Luther said all of life, for the Christian, is continual repentance. This is your daily time to remember that it is God's great kindness that leads us to repentance—hence why visualization of His love and deliberate thankfulness of His blessings is helpful in preparation for repentance. Repentance is simply turning away from sin—doing it my way—and turning towards God—receiving forgiveness and power to begin doing it His way. Again, format is not mandated here. You can write, speak, think, kneel, stand, walk or sit! What matters is that you invite God's Holy Spirit to make you aware of where you put something or someone before God. Lord, I acknowledge that I have sinned in things I've done and said, and things I left undone and unsaid.

Specifically, I ask that you forgive me for _____, for the way I _____, and for how I treated _____ yesterday. Forgive me for letting my own desire to be well thought of by others keep me from _____ yesterday. Lord, please forgive me for the sin that I am not even aware is sin—for the mixed motives behind the act of generosity yesterday that I'm only partially aware of.

Remember, as you repent, the enemy of your soul will be all too eager to use

shame to his advantage. The point is not to beat yourself up but rather be realistic in your observations of how you have lived before the presence of a Holy God. Acknowledge how you have not trusted and obeyed, believe you are forgiven and joyfully move on trusting God will finish the good work He started in you—even when you stumble. Continual progress, not instant perfection is the idea as we grow in Christ.

Scripture. For the remainder of this quiet time, (about 15 minutes), spend it digesting God's Word. When beginning this new format of quiet time with God it was recommended to me that I start out going through Psalm 103 at whatever pace I so desire. Some days I reflect on only one verse of it. Other days I read it through many times. This Psalm has wonderful content that will inform and reinforce your visualization, thankfulness, and repentance sessions. It is full of the attributes of God and how we are to think about Him in our daily life. The SOAPS method is very useful when one only has about 15 minutes to study and meditate on Scripture. That is simply an acronym implying we can select a **Scripture**, give **Observation** to what it is saying, consider the real-life **Applications** of the text, and then commit some **Prayer** asking God to empower the living out and recall of this text. For more on this click: <http://soapstudy.com/>