

*15  
Minutes  
Alone  
with God*

Emilie Barnes



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## 15 MINUTES ALONE WITH GOD

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*Our grandchildren are a source of love and joy to me—*

*I dedicate this book to Christine, Chad, Bevan, Bradley Joe II, Weston, and those yet to come.*

*“Father God, thank You for all You do for our grandchildren. I pray that they will grow up to love You, serve You, honor and devour Your Word. I pray that they will be filled with knowledge, spiritual understanding, and wisdom, and that they might live a life worthy of You, Lord, and may please You from the top of their beautiful heads to the tip of their fingers to the bottom of their feet. May they walk in Your steps. In the name of Jesus, Amen.”*

*Hugs,*

*Grammy Em*



# Fifteen Minutes Alone with God

Traveling across America twenty-plus times a year speaking to women has given me a real heart for their hurting hearts. “No time, no time,” they cry. “I have no time left for family, friends, housework, meals—let alone time to spend a quiet moment with God.”

I’ve written this devotional book for every busy woman who wants to get in touch with her Lord and her life. Each quiet time is designed to take 15 minutes or less. That’s not a huge commitment, but it’s an important one. You’ll spend some time in God’s Word, and you’ll find helps and direction for your everyday life.

Another unique feature is that you don’t have to start at the beginning and go chapter by chapter. You can skip around if you would like. In the upper right-hand corner of each devotion, you will see three boxes. Put a checkmark in one of the boxes each time you read it. In this way, you can keep track of those devotions which have been read previously.

The 15-minute concept works! You just have to be willing to give it a try. Fifteen minutes a day for 21 days and you are on your way to devotions every day.

Allow God to hold your hand and lead you today to many quiet times with Him.

The only hope to the busy woman’s cry is God Almighty Himself!

God the Father  
God the Son  
and  
God the Holy Spirit

I love you all. May the Lord touch each quiet time with Him.

—Emilie



## Power of Prayer

*I got up early one morning and rushed into the day;  
I had so much to accomplish that I didn't have time  
to pray.*

*Problems just tumbled about me, and heavier came  
each task.*

*"Why doesn't God help me?" I wondered. He  
answered, "You didn't ask."*

*I wanted to see joy and beauty, but the day toiled  
on, gray and bleak;  
I wondered why God didn't show me. He said,  
"But you didn't seek."*

*I tried to come into God's presence; I used all my  
keys at the lock.  
God gently and lovingly chided, "My child, you  
didn't knock."*

*I woke up early this morning, and paused before  
entering the day;  
I had so much to accomplish that I had to take time  
to pray.*

—Author Unknown





## *Stand by Your God*

**Scripture Reading:** Psalm 116:1-2

**Key Verse:** Psalm 116:2b

*I will call on him as long as I live.*



Consider the fruit that comes from spending time with your heavenly Father. In Galatians 5, Paul writes that “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (verses 22-23). Think about each item in that list. Which of us doesn’t need a touch of God’s love, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control in our life? Those are the things—as well as guidance, wisdom, hope, and a deeper knowledge of Him—that He wants to give to us as His children.

“But,” you say, “who has time? My ‘To Do’ list is always longer than my day. I run from the time the alarm goes off in the morning until I fall into bed at night. How can I possibly find time to do one more thing? When could I find even a few minutes to read the Bible or pray?”

I answer your questions with a question: Are you doing what’s *important* in your day—or only what is *urgent*?

People do what they want to do. All of us make choices, and when we don’t make time for God in our day, when we don’t make time for the most important relationship in our life, we are probably not making the best choices.

God greatly desires to spend time alone with you. After all, you are His child (John 1:12; Galatians 3:26). He created you,



He loves you, and He gave His only Son for your salvation. Your heavenly Father wants to know you, and He wants you to know Him. The Creator of the universe wants to meet with you alone daily. How can you say no to such an opportunity?

So make it your priority to spend time with God daily. There's not a single right time or one correct place. The only requirement for a right time with God is your willing heart. Your meeting time with God will vary according to the season of your life and the schedules you are juggling. Jesus often slipped away to be alone in prayer (Luke 5:16), but even His prayer times varied. He prayed in the morning and late at night, on a hill and in the upper room (Mark 1:35; Luke 22:41-45; Matthew 14:23; John 17).

I know people who spend hours commuting on the California freeways who use that time to be with God. I used to get up earlier than the rest of the family for a quiet time of reading the Scripture and praying. Now that the children are raised and the home is quiet, I find morning is still best for me, before the telephone starts to ring or I get involved in the day's schedule. And maybe I'm one of the oddballs, but I love getting to church early and having 10 or 15 minutes to open my Bible and think upon God's thoughts. Despite the distracting talk that is often going on around me, I use this block of time to prepare my heart for worship. (In fact, I believe if more members of the congregation devoted time to reading Scripture and praying for the service before the service, church would be more meaningful for every worshiper.)

Again, the times and places where we meet God will vary, but the fact that we meet alone with God each day should be a constant in our life. After all, God has made it clear that He is interested in us who are His children (1 Peter 5:7).

What should you do in your time alone with God? After you've read and meditated on God's Word for a while, spend some time with Him in prayer. Talk to Him as you would to your earthly parent or a special friend who loves you, desires the best for you, and wants to help you in every way possible.





Are you wondering what to talk to God about when you pray? Here are a few suggestions:

- *Praise* God for who He is, the Creator and Sustainer of the whole universe who is interested in each of us who are in His family (Psalm 150; Matthew 10:30).
- *Thank* God for all He has done for you...for all He is doing for you...and for all that He will do for you in the future (Philippians 4:6).
- *Confess* your sins. Tell God about the things you have done and said and thought for which you are sorry. He tells us in 1 John 1:9 that He is “faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins.”
- *Pray* for your family...and for friends or neighbors who have needs, physical or spiritual. Ask God to work in the heart of someone you hope will come to know Jesus as Savior. Pray for our government officials, for your minister and church officers, for missionaries and other Christian servants (Philippians 2:4).
- *Pray*, too, for yourself. Ask for guidance for the day ahead. Ask God to help you do His will...and ask Him to arrange opportunities to serve Him throughout the day (Philippians 4:6).

Time with your heavenly Father is never wasted. If you spend time alone with God in the morning, you’ll start your day refreshed and ready for whatever comes your way. If you spend time alone with Him in the evening, you’ll go to sleep relaxed, resting in His care and ready for a new day to serve Him.

Remember, too, that you can talk to Him anytime, anywhere—in school, at work, on the freeway, at home—about anything. You don’t have to make an appointment to ask Him



for something you need or to thank Him for something you have received from Him. God is interested in everything that happens to you.

*Father God, may I never forget to call on You in every situation. I want to call on You every day of my life and bring before You my adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication. Thank You for being within the sound of my voice and only a thought's distance away. Amen.*

### ***Thoughts for Action***

- ♥ If you are not already spending time with God each day, decide today that you will give it a try for one month.
- ♥ Tell someone of your commitment and ask him or her to hold you accountable for that discipline.

### ***Additional Scripture Reading***

1 Peter 5:7  
Matthew 6:6-13  
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18



## *A Prayer for All Seasons*

**Scripture Reading:** Colossians 1:9-12

**Key Verse:** Colossians 1:9

*Since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.*



Time has a way of defining true friends. I have discovered that passing years and growing distance are ineffective obstacles to the mutual love between my friends and me. Perhaps it is because of our common walk with the Lord that we can just pick up where we left off whenever we are together. And these are the dear ones I will spend eternity loving!

Of course, prayer is an important part of continuing that bond. Colossians 1:3-14 is an eloquent description of a Christian's prayer for her friends. Even though Paul had not even visited the Christians at Colosse (Colossians 1:7), his love for them through Christ was strong and ardent. (Taken from *The Women's Devotional Bible*. Copyright © 1990 by The Zondervan Corporation. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House.)



As we spend time with God, we open ourselves to His work in our hearts and in our lives. Then, as we see Him working, we will want to know Him even more. We will want our prayer life to be all that it can be. What does that mean? How should we be praying?

In the Scripture, we find many models of prayer, and probably foremost is the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13). This wonderful example of a prayer includes important elements of prayer. We find words of adoration, of submission to God's will, of petition, and in closing, of praise. We can learn much from the model our Lord gave when His disciples said, "Teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

As meaningful as the Lord's Prayer is to me, I have also found Colossians 1:9-12 to be a powerful guide in my prayer life. If you aren't in the habit of praying or if you want to renew your time with God, I challenge you to read this passage of Scripture every day for 30 days. Look at it in small pieces, dwell on its message each day, take action upon what it says, and you'll become a new person.

Read today's Scripture passage again and think about what a wonderful prayer it is for you to pray for your friend. Knowing that a friend is praying for me is a real source of encouragement and support. If you aren't praying for your friends daily, let me suggest that Colossians 1:9-12 be your model. Look at what you'll be asking God:

- That your friend will have the spiritual wisdom and understanding she needs to know God's will.
- That she will "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please him, in all respects" (verse 10).
- That your friend will be bearing "fruit in all good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (verse 10).
- That she will be "strengthened with all power...for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience" (verse 11).



You would then end your prayer by joyously giving thanks to God for all that He has given you—your friend being one of those gifts (verse 12).

Did you hear those words? What an armor of protection and growth you can give your friend with a prayer like that! With these powerful words and the Lord at her side, your friend will be able to deal with the challenges she faces. I also encourage you to tell your friend that you are praying for her each day, and if she is receptive, tell her the specifics of your prayers for her. Let me assure you that it is a real comfort to have a friend praying for me, asking God to give me wisdom and understanding, to enable me to honor Him in all I do, to help me bear fruit for His kingdom, and to grant me strength, steadfastness, and patience.

Know, too, that these verses from Colossians are a good model for your prayers for your husband, other members of your family, your neighbors, and yourself. After all, all of God's people need to know His will, honor Him in everything they do, grow in the knowledge of the Lord, and be strong, steadfast, and patient as we serve Him.

### ***Thoughts for Actions***

- ♥ In your journal, write down the names of one to three friends that you want to pray for each day. Under each name list several specific areas which you want to pray for them.
- ♥ Read Colossians 1:9-12 for 30 straight days. Think specifically of the friends you listed in your journal.

### ***Additional Scripture Reading***

Ephesians 3:14-19

Philemon 4-7



*Prayer pushes the light and hope  
into little dark corners of your life.*



## *I Didn't Believe It*

**Scripture Reading:** John 6:35-40

**Key Verse:** John 6:40

*For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.*



Bob and I arrived to our hotel late after flying from California to Hartford, Connecticut. It was our first holiday seminar for the season, and the church put us up at a beautiful Ramada Inn. We were anxious to see the turning of the leaves for the first time, and they were at their peak in early October.

We registered at the hotel, went directly to our room, took a hot bath, and crawled into bed. It felt so good after the waits, plane layovers, airport terminal delays, crowded cramped seating, and heavy luggage. We both fell into a much-needed sleep about 9:30 P.M.

Two and a half hours later we were wakened by what we thought was a smoke alarm. My Bob rolled to the phone to call the front desk while I peeked out the peephole in the door. I couldn't see any smoke, but Bob was not getting an answer from the front desk. He let the phone ring and ring as the alarm got stronger and louder. I peeked out the peephole again, only to see a man running down the hall pulling his pants and jacket on. "Bob, it's a fire!" I yelled. "People are evacuating the building."



Bob quickly hung up, and we put some clothes on—not much and I’m not sure what. We grabbed our briefcases and swiftly left the room. By now many other guests were doing the same. The alarm was still blasting, and we heard the sirens of the fire trucks headed for the hotel. As we walked toward the stairs to hurry down six flights, we ran into people pushing through to get ahead. One lady kept yelling, “Hurry, Ruth! Hurry, Ruth!” as she passed us. Poor Ruth! Her legs just couldn’t move as fast as the others. We finally made it out into the very chilly, 34° midnight air. The whole hotel had been evacuated onto the street, and firefighters were all over—only to find it was a false alarm. People calmly headed back to their rooms.

As we got off the elevator on our floor, a little lady peeped out her door in her nightgown and asked, “Was it a fire?”

“False alarm,” we answered.

“Well, I didn’t believe it anyway.”

Crawling back into bed Bob and I both thought how that woman’s words echoed the sentiment of so many at Jesus’ first coming. “I didn’t believe it anyway.” How many had heard the message, saw the messenger Jesus, saw His miracles—and still didn’t believe?

Today the message is clear: Jesus is here. The Bible tells us the truth, the life, the love, and the message of salvation. Today’s Scripture reading tells us to believe and we will receive eternal life. However, it’s as true today as it was 2000 years ago—many say, “I didn’t believe it.” One day we will find that His Word is truth, and for some it will be too late.

*Father God, never let me get to the point of unbelief. I have seen hardened hearts, and I don't want that to be me. I have found You to be believable in the past—and I know You will be in the future, too. Amen.*



### ***Thoughts for Action***

- ♥ Share with a friend how you came to believe in Christ.
- ♥ Begin today to read the Bible, believing that it is God's inspired Word.
- ♥ I conclude my holiday seminar with this poem. As a thought for action, read it and expect a tear or two. Let your heart be touched.

### ***'Twas the Night Before Jesus Came***

'Twas the night before Jesus came and all through the house  
Not a creature was praying, not one in the house.  
Their Bibles were lain on the shelf without care  
In hopes that Jesus would not come there.

The children were dressing to crawl into bed,  
Not once ever kneeling or bowing a head.  
And Mom in her rocker and baby on her lap  
Was watching the Late Show while I took a nap.

When out of the East there arose such a clatter,  
I sprang to my feet to see what was the matter.  
Away to the window I flew like a flash  
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash!

When what to my wondering eyes should appear  
But angels proclaiming that Jesus was here.  
With a light like the sun sending forth a bright ray  
I knew in a moment this must be THE DAY!

The light of His face made me cover my head.  
It was Jesus! Returning just like He had said.  
And though I possessed worldly wisdom and wealth,  
I cried when I saw Him in spite of myself.  
In the Book of Life which He held in His hand,





Was written the name of every saved man.  
He spoke not a word as He searched for my name;  
When He said, "It's not here," my head hung in shame.

The people whose names had been written with love  
He gathered to take to His Father above.  
With those who were ready He rose without a sound  
While all the rest were left standing around.

I fell to my knees, but it was too late;  
I had waited too long and thus sealed my fate.  
I stood and I cried as they rose out of sight;  
Oh, if only I had been ready tonight.

In the words of this poem the meaning is clear;  
The coming of Jesus is drawing near.  
There's only one life and when comes the last call  
We'll find that the Bible was true after all!<sup>1</sup>

***Additional Scripture Reading***

2 Timothy 3:16

Acts 13:38-39



## *Be Content in Everything*

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Timothy 6:1-10

**Key Verse:** 1 Timothy 6:6

*But godliness with contentment is great gain.*



One of the Barnes' famous sayings is, "If you're not happy with what you have, you'll never be satisfied with what you want." I meet so many people who are always looking to the future—the next paycheck, the next home, the next church, the next month, the next school, and, in some cases, the next marriage partner. We are a country characterized by discontent. Do you find yourself being drawn into this mindset?

Recently I was visiting our newest grandchild, Bradley Joe Barnes II. As I was holding him, rubbing my hands through his hair, tracing the shape of his toes and fingers, my mind went to thinking about what he was going to be as he grew to manhood. Was he going to have good grades and go to college? Would he be a fireman, a pastor, a teacher, a coach, a salesman? Suddenly I realized that I was thinking about *what* he could be rather than focusing my thoughts and prayers on *who* he would be.

In today's culture we are all drawn away from spiritual pursuits to putting our hope into wealth (1 Timothy 6:17) and to



building our lives around ways to accomplish this ambition. As I sat there in Bradley Joe's room, I began praying that all of his extended family might teach him higher values than money, career, and fame. Not that these are evil, but the value we place on them can lead to our downfall (1 Timothy 6:9).

In today's passage Paul states, "Godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Timothy 6:6). When we find ourselves looking to the future because we aren't content with today, may God give us a peace of mind that lets us rest where He has placed us. Be content in today!

*Father God, You know that my heart's desire is to be content in whatever state I'm in. I want to be like Paul in that regard. You have given me so much and I want to graciously thank You for those blessings. Amen.*

### **Thoughts for Action**

- ♥ Instead of being preoccupied with your station in life, start praising God for where you are.
- ♥ Pray to God asking Him to reveal to you what you are to learn in your present situation.
- ♥ Write a letter to God thanking Him for all your blessings. Name them individually.

### **Additional Scripture Reading**

1 Timothy 6:11-21

Proverbs 22:1-2

Mark 10:17-25



## *What a Friend!*

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Timothy 1:16-18

**Key Verse:** 2 Timothy 1:18b

*You know very well in how many ways he helped me  
in Ephesus.*



Oh, how our heart yearns to have friends! In today's Scripture reading we find the ways in which Onesiphorus helped Paul: 1) He often refreshed him, 2) he was not ashamed of Paul's chains, and 3) he searched hard for Paul until he found him.

I'd like to share a story with you about another friendship:

Damon was sentenced to die on a certain day, and sought permission of Dionysius of Syracuse to visit his family in the interim. It was granted, on condition of securing a hostage for himself. Pythias heard of it, and volunteered to stand in his friend's place. The king visited him in prison, and conversed with him about the motive of his conduct; affirming his disbelief in the influence of friendship. Pythias expressed his wish to die that his friend's honor might be vindicated. He prayed the gods to delay the return of Damon till after his own execution in his stead.

The fatal day arrived. Dionysius sat on a moving throne, drawn by six white horses. Pythias mounted the



scaffold, and calmly addressed the spectators: "My prayer is heard: the gods are propitious; for the winds have been contrary till yesterday. Damon could not come; he could not conquer impossibilities; he will be here tomorrow, and the blood which is shed today shall have ransomed the life of my friend. Oh! could I erase from your bosoms every mean suspicion of the honor of Damon, I should go to my death as I would to my bridal. My friend will be found noble, his truth unimpeachable; he will speedily prove it; he is now on his way, accusing himself, the adverse elements, and the gods: but I haste to prevent his speed. Executioner, do your office."

As he closed, a voice in the distance cried, "Stop the execution!" which was repeated by the whole assembly. A man rode up at full speed, mounted the scaffold, and embraced Pythias, crying, "You are safe, my beloved friend! I now have nothing but death to suffer, and am delivered from reproaches for having endangered a life so much dearer than my own."

Pythias replied, "Fatal haste, cruel impatience! What envious powers have wrought impossibilities in your favor? But I will not be wholly disappointed. Since I cannot die to save, I will not survive you."

The king heard, and was moved to tears. Ascending the scaffold he cried, "Live, live, ye incomparable pair! Ye have borne unquestionable testimony to the existence of virtue; and that virtue equally evinces the existence of a God to reward it. Live happy, live renowned, and oh! form me by your precepts, as ye have invited me by your example, to be worthy of the participation of so sacred a friendship."

If heathenism had such friendships, what may be expected of Christianity?<sup>2</sup>



If the world is to pay attention to us as Christians and to our lifestyle, we must reflect true friendship with those people we contact each day.

*Father God, thank You for my many friends who stand beside me in all situations. They are always there when I need them to listen, laugh, and cry. They are so special to my life. May they realize what their friendship means to me. Amen.*

### **Thoughts for Action**

- ♥ Go out today and refreshen someone's life through a kind word or action.
- ♥ Ask the Lord to give you a heart that is not ashamed of another person's "chains"—those things that put him or her in a different status of life than your own.
- ♥ Seek out a friend you haven't seen for a while.

### **Additional Scripture Reading**

Proverbs 18:24

Luke 10:33-34

Proverbs 27:17