

6 Ways to Prevent Spiritual Laziness During Summer

Ahhh ... summertime! School is out. The sun is shining. No more homework, early morning bus rides, tests or reading assignments. It is time to take a break! Summer activities have replaced school routines in students' lives. Even if summer jobs are a part of the equation, they are looking for "down time" not "discipline."

This mindset is understandable, but it can also foster an unbalanced attitude resulting in spiritually anemic students. Parents and leaders can counteract this by helping students realize that godly habits, such as daily devotions, don't take vacations. Meeting with God every day as we grow in our faith should be a lifestyle, not an event.

We need to help students realize that making that divine appointment to pray, read God's Word and prepare their hearts for the pressures, trials, and opportunities they face daily is critical. This time of preparation will fortify them, giving them insight that will help with needed direction.

Your students will need help developing a personal Bible study or Quiet Time. Here are six practical steps that can serve as guidelines for exercising these godly habits:

1. Make it a priority in your daily schedule. There will always be something trying to steal your time with God, so make sure you allow time for Him and His Word in your schedule. This may mean going to bed later, getting up a little earlier or saying no to some activities.

2. Determine a specific time. Consistency is vital, so I recommend meeting approximately the same time each day. The time is up to you, but make sure you give God your best time not your leftover time.

3. Establish a special place. If possible find a place out of the normal traffic pattern where you can sit quietly without being interrupted. It should be a place where you can think to yourself, *"This is where I meet with God."*

4. Gather the necessary tools. Students need a Bible, pen/pencil and a journal for recording their thoughts. There are many journals and diaries available today for students: Word of Life Fellowship provides an excellent tool called the Quiet Time Diary in both a print and online format. Recording what God is teaching you day-by-day is an important way to measure your spiritual growth.

5. Clear the clutter from your heart and mind. Focus on God and His Word as you mentally shut the door to the outside world. Do not approach God with your mind cluttered with the day's activities. You are meeting with your best friend and He deserves your complete attention.

6. Personalize the Scriptures for your life. In order to make this time most effective, make personal application. Think through real-life situations where these verses can be influential in your choices and activities. The Word of God should affect who we are and what we do.

Equipping students to have a vibrant relationship with Christ should be a major priority for us as parents, pastors and youth leaders. We want to help young people stay in communication with God. That will mean providing them with encouragement, instruction and tools for the process. It is personally energizing watching your students develop an intimate relationship with their Savior!

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