

**QUIET TIME GUIDE
FOR Friday 6/13/08
FROM JACK MILLWOOD**

Greeting:

When I lived in Mobile, Alabama we had an event for teenagers that involved having the teenagers split up into groups of approximately 12 and spend the weekend in homes throughout our church. We would bring in a youth pastor for each set of 12 kids. That Youth Pastor would invest in their lives for three straight days. I made it a habit to visit each home during the weekend. I walked into one home and was immediately curious about what I saw. There were the 12 kids and about four adults sitting in a circle on the floor. The youth leader was talking to them. However, what caught my attention was the fact that everyone in the room had on a home made mask over their face. Each one of them had made a mask that symbolized their public persona or image. As they sat there with their masks on the youth leader was talking to them about being honest and transparent. He was challenging them to not wear those masks for the weekend. Of course he was not talking about the physical masks but the cover ups that so many people wear to try and impress people around them. He said something like, *“For once, this weekend, I am going to challenge you to be honest, to strip away all your pretense and be real.”* I have often thought back to that event. Far too many of us spend our lives behind some mask. We have this image we want to portray to people. It hides our flaws and the real person that we are. We are afraid to be transparent and genuine. There are a lot of reasons why we do that and some of those reasons are often legitimate like, who can I really trust. However, that is no way to live. As a matter of fact, if you study the word “hypocrite,” back to its origins it comes from a term that paints the picture of wearing a mask. Ever know a hypocrite? Most of us mean a person who claims to be one thing at times and then lives completely different at other times. Today I want to challenge you to take off your mask and be honest with yourself. What is really behind the mask? Who is really behind the mask? So many of the Psalms that we have been reading talk about singing. Psalms is after all a hymn book basically. In Psalm 101 the Psalmist says he will sing but then he talks about singing with integrity. As you read through this Psalm, ask yourself if you are being genuine when you sing to the Lord. Does your “walk match your talk?” Does your life match the song you are singing?

Scripture for today:

Psalm 101: “1 I will sing of your love and justice, LORD. I will praise you with songs.2 I will be careful to live a blameless life—when will you come to help me? I will lead a life of integrity in my own home.3 I will refuse to look at anything vile and vulgar. I hate all who deal crookedly; I will have nothing to do with them. 4 I will reject perverse ideas and stay away from every evil. 5 I will not tolerate people who slander their neighbors. I will not endure conceit and pride. 6 I will search for faithful people to be my companions. Only those who are above reproach will be allowed to serve me. 7 I will not allow deceivers to serve in my house, and liars will not stay in my presence. 8 My daily task will be to ferret out the wicked and free the city of the LORD from their grip.”

Life Application:

It is good to sing praises to God. Throughout our devotions I have encouraged us all to be consistent in our praise to the Lord and sing regardless of the circumstances of life. However, in this psalm we are reading about a man who wanted his life to match his song. How about you? Ask yourself some questions that are raised in this Psalm. He said, ***“I will lead a life of integrity in my own home.”*** At home, not just at church or in the office or in public, does your walk match your talk? One of the toughest places to be authentic is at home. At home we feel the safest. It is where we are “ourselves.” I know you have heard that we often treat those we love the best, the worst. We know them so well we are no longer trying to impress them. We tend to speak our minds a little more quickly at home than any where else. There are not a lot of pretences or masks at the house. Well let’s start there then. Are you real at home? In your relationship with your mate, your kids or your parents do you flesh out a Christian life? It has to work at home guys. Do you treat those you live with like a Christian should or do we take them for granted? I will admit it is often difficult to do but it is here that we have the laboratory of life where we learn the real principles of the Christian life. Even if they get on your nerves or exhaust your patience, are you willing to treat them like the Bible says you are supposed to? Be Christian at home first! That is right; you have to treat your brother like a Christian should! Oh my goodness, you have to treat your husband like the Bible says you should treat a believer! He says in this Psalm, ***“I will be careful to live a blameless life.”*** He is not saying that we try to be perfect. None of us are and none of us will be. Blameless means that we do not give people cause to question our faith. It is trying to live above reproach. Do people see you as a person who is real and authentic and striving to be consistent? He says, ***I will refuse to look at anything vile and vulgar.”*** In the world we live in, this is a constant challenge. Every day before our eyes we have information put before us that can cripple us spiritually. Are you careful what you look at or read? Since you are reading this on a computer are you careful about what you look at and read on line? He goes on to say, ***“I hate all who deal crookedly; I will have nothing to do with them. 4 I will reject perverse ideas and stay away from every evil.”*** Is your word your word? Do you tell the truth or stretch it out of proportion? Can your business partners count on you to be honest and have integrity. It is missing in so many places in the market place? Are you an honest person? Here is a tough question for many of us. ***“I will not tolerate people who slander their neighbors. I will not endure conceit and pride.”*** He not only implies that he will not talk behind peoples back but he will not even hang around others that do. Do you stay away from gossip and backbiting? Do you sing to the Lord one minute and then the next cut up your class mate or partner? The Psalmist also knows that we tend to become like those we associate with the most. He says he will be careful about the crowd he runs with or the company he keeps. He says, ***“I will search for faithful people to be my companions. Only those who are above reproach will be allowed to serve me. I will not allow deceivers to serve in my house, and liars will not stay in my presence.”*** Who do you let in your inner circle of influence? Are there associations that are pulling you down? Who is having the most influence on you and your choices? The psalmist says all of this is a ***“daily task.”*** Every day we have to struggle with our consistency.

Spiritual exercise:

How consistent is your spiritual life? God is so ready to forgive any mistake we have made. Tell him today about your inconsistencies and ask for his help. Ask him to help you match your talk with a solid walk.

Thought for the day.

I want my walk to match my talk!