

Who has a watch with a second hand? Or else who has a stopwatch on their watch. I need you to time something. Ready? OK. Go!

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

OK. Stop. How long was that? 8 seconds? 10 seconds? Let's take an average – 9 seconds. Remember that, 9 seconds.

When I was in the Navy flying in southeast Asia, I lived in northern Japan. My squadron would fly a lot of early morning flights. We would report to the flight line at 3 am and our aircraft took off at 5 am.

The mission flights were 13 hours, and the work afterwards took from 4 to 8 hours. If you do the math, that can add up to 23 hours. So, you can only imagine that I was a little bit on the busy side, and that time off was something I really looked forward to getting.

One day, I heard that the base chapel was looking for someone with an international driver's license, who could read Japanese, and was Catholic to be the driver for a week-long retreat. Since I met all three requirements, I volunteered. The idea of a week off was very appealing.

So, I picked up the van from the motor pool and came back to the office. There was a message from the chapel asking me to come talk to the priest who was leading the retreat. I figured he wanted to go over the maps and directions or give me gas money or something related to travel. So when I went to see him I didn't expect his question.

“How do you pray?” he asked.

I told him I went to church on weekends and confession monthly. I thought that was pretty good. His response was less enthusiastic than my answer. In fact he seemed a bit disappointed.

He then asked me to pray one Glory Be each morning and evening during the retreat. My first thought was, “Do I have time for that?” But in retrospect, I realize that all he was asking me to do was to pray for about 9 seconds twice a day.

And so, I'd like to extend the same 'challenge' to you. Take 9 seconds and talk to God (pray) twice a day. Do it consistently for a week, and see how it goes.

I guarantee you that once you've invited God into your life, even in a small way – even in only 18 seconds a day, you'll be surprised at what happens. So, give it a try.

Take the 18 second challenge.