**TIME ALONE WITH GOD**

Ingredients:

* Half an hour, every day.
* Quiet, so you focus on yourself and on God;
* Prayer, worship, thanksgiving, as your response to God
* Word, so you can ponder His truth
* Life, people and events, so you are aware of Him in these situations

Method:

* Time – a fixed time when you are unlikely to be interrupted is best but more important is to actually start having such a time with God.
* Quiet – A simple method is to be quiet until you are aware you are in God’s presence before you start to respond to Him.
* Word – Read and be familiar with what is said. Meditate on the Word: “What does it say?” “What does it mean?” “How should I respond?” You may use the questions to help you or set them aside.
* Life – Use the time to also be aware of the things that are happening, inside you and around you. Bring these before God and speak to Him.

# Monday and Tuesday

[**PSALM 11**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2011&version=NIV)

Remember this is your time alone with God. It is a time to tell God what is on your mind (thinking back over the past day), listen to him speak to you (reading and meditating on a bible passage), and finally, to respond to him (prayer). The questions are there to help you do this. Ignore them if they do not help. If your time is limited, I suggest that you don’t do everything in one go but spread them over the two days.

1. Take time to be quiet so you can focus on your time alone with God. Recall and briefly write down any significant things that happened or occupied you the past day. Share with God what you thought or felt. Pray also for those he has laid on your heart.
2. Read [PSALM 11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2011&version=NIV). Write down what you think the passage is about and what it says to you. Feel free to use the questions in “Further Thoughts” to help you think over the text.
3. What is God saying to you? Write down a prayer in response.

**Further Thoughts**

1. *“In the Lord I take refuge. How then can you say to me: “Flee like a bird to your mountain. For look, the wicked bend their bows; they set their arrows against the strings to shoot from the shadows at the upright in heart.”* Who is “you” here: God? A friend or companion? David, the Psalmist, himself? Why does this person ask David to flee?
2. “*When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?*” This is a statement of desperation. People have abandoned their fundamental values: decency, justice, truth, love. Do you think your own society is in such dire straits? Should then Christians abandon their adherence to these fundamental values and fight fire with fire?
3. *“The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord is on his heavenly throne.”* Is this your vision of your reality, or the powerful enemies of God that are bent on imposing their will on you and your society? What is the vision that the Psalmist has of God?
4. *“For the Lord is righteous, he loves justice; the upright will see his face.”* This is the Psalmist’s statement of faith in God. Say it often today and in the week, and let it’s truth give you perspective to the reality that you are experiencing.

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**PSALM 12**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2012&version=NIV)

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1. Take time to be quiet so you can focus on your time alone with God. Recall and briefly write down any significant things that happened or occupied you the past day. Share with God what you thought or felt. Pray also for those he has laid on your heart.
2. Read [PSALM 12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2012&version=NIV). Write down what you think the passage is about and what it says to you. Feel free to use the questions in “Further Thoughts” to help you think over the text.
3. What is God saying to you? Write down a prayer in response.

**Further Thoughts**

1. *“Help, Lord, for no one is faithful anymore; those who are loyal have vanished from the human race. Everyone lies to their neighbor; they flatter with their lips but harbor deception in their hearts.”* What is the problem that the Psalmist is facing? Do you have dependable people in your own life? Are you one yourself?
2. *“May the Lord silence all flattering lips and every boastful tongue—those who say, ‘By our tongues we will prevail; our own lips will defend us—who is lord over us?’”* These people are both “all talk and no action” but also “will say anything to get what they want”. Truth is not important; only the outcome that they want. What happens when such people dominate the conversation or discussion (in church, in family, in society, in politics)? What does the Psalmist seek from God?
3. *“Because the poor are plundered and the needy groan, I will now arise,” says the Lord. “I will protect them from those who malign them.” And the words of the Lord are flawless, like silver purified in a crucible, like gold refined seven times.* The Psalmist is contrasting the words of God and the words of these people who are unfaithful, untruthful, saying words that people want to hear but not backing them up with action. How do you view the promises of God?
4. *“You, Lord, will keep the needy safe and will protect us forever from the wicked, who freely strut about when what is vile is honored by the human race.”* In reality we often see the wicked strutting about and the vile are honoured by society. Yet the Psalmist continues to believe that God will vindicate and protect the needy, the powerless and those who belong to him and keep his ways. Is he being honest? How can he justify the disparity? What does his statement of faith mean and imply?

# Friday and Saturday

[**PSALM 13**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2013&version=NIV)

Remember this is your time alone with God. It is a time to tell God what is on your mind (thinking back over the past day), listen to him speak to you (reading and meditating on a bible passage), and finally, to respond to him (prayer). The questions are there to help you do this. Ignore them if they do not help. If your time is limited, I suggest that you don’t do everything in one go but spread them over the two days.

1. Take time to be quiet so you can focus on your time alone with God. Recall and briefly write down any significant things that happened or occupied you the past day. Share with God what you thought or felt. Pray also for those he has laid on your heart.
2. Read [PSALM 13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2013&version=NIV). Write down what you think the passage is about and what it says to you. Feel free to use the questions in “Further Thoughts” to help you think over the text.
3. What is God saying to you? Write down a prayer in response.

**Further Thoughts**

1. *“How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me?”* At this point, the faith of the Psalmist and the reality of the Psalmist’s experience collide. What is the Psalmist’s response to his dilemma? Do you think he should, as suggested in Psalm 11, flee and abandon his faith and hope? After all, “*When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?*”
2. *“Look on me and answer, Lord my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death, and my enemy will say, ‘I have overcome him,’ and my foes will rejoice when I fall.”* The Psalmist did not abandon his faith but continued to seek God’s response, pleading with God that his own demise will only make people think that they are greater than God (or God does not exist). Are you facing such a dilemma? What can you do? What will you do?
3. *“But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing the Lord’s praise, for he has been good to me.”* The Psalmist does not abandon God because he knows of God’s past deeds in his own life. The wealth of God’s actions must not be set aside just because the Psalmist is in a prolonged difficult situation. *“I will sing the Lord’s praise, for he has been good to me.”* Take time to meditate on the truth of God’s hand, from Creation in Genesis, to Israel in the Pentateuch, to Jesus in the Gospels, to the Church in Acts and the Letters, to Revelation. Take time to recall God’s direct hand upon your life and help yourself to trust, to rejoice, to sing, because God is indeed good, and good to you.

# Sunday

**WHAT CAN THE RIGHTEOUS DO?**

*When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?”*

It is possible to read Psalm 11 as an inner dialogue. The wicked are mowing down the righteous and the temptation is to not only flee but also to abandon. The righteous have no weapon except God. When there is nothing that the righteous can appeal to, no shred of decency left in society, what can the righteous do?

The Psalmist protests to his soul, “In the Lord I take refuge”. If I abandon my refuge, where else can I flee? Herein is the dilemma of the righteous. They have abandoned the weapons of hatred and evil for righteousness’ sake because they believe that God will stand by their side. If God does not act, then all is lost.

In truth, if God is not behind his words, then there is no God, and all is lost anyway because there is no truth, no justice, no love—only raw power. Righteousness is then a foolish way to live life.

This then is the challenge of Psalm 12. Everybody talks and promises what others want to hear but only to accomplish their will. There is no compulsion to walk their talk or fulfil their promises. The power of lies is illusory and only deceives and manipulates. Is this also the power of God? Is he all empty words and empty promises that only mislead his followers? No! God must act and silence all his detractors who are arrogant because they believe (or not believe, as it were) that God is also like them—all smoke and wind. “The words of the Lord are flawless, like silver purified in a crucible, like gold refined seven times,” the Psalmist declares. You can count on him!

Yet the lonely plea of Psalm 13 is very often our experience as well. The Psalmist does not ask why, he only asks for a swift response. In the same way, we cannot explain God’s actions (or inaction). We are creatures and he is the Creator. Like the Psalmist, we can only plead our cause and seek his salvation, knowing that our vindication will surely come because God is not a faithless, flattering liar. We cannot set aside the reality of the one true God in our lives.

*“But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing the Lord’s praise, for he has been good to me.”*

1. Review the answers/thoughts you wrote down in the past week. Read the short sharing above. Does it add anything to your own thoughts?
2. What is God saying to you? Write down a prayer in response.