**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 18:1-2**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2018&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 18:1-2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2018&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. *“I love you, Lord, my strength.”* It seems that “love” is mentioned 168 times in the English Standard Version of the Book of Psalms yet it is rare to read of the Psalmist directly proclaiming his love for God. Much of the use of the word “love” in the Psalms is focused on God’s love instead. Looking at Jesus’ summary of the Law (first command and second command), how do you think God wants us to express our love for him?
2. *“I love you, Lord, my strength.”* In this Psalm, however, as David wrote, his feelings for God bubbled up to the top. What happened to cause David to be so emotional? Do you have experiences where your love for him just overflowed?
3. *“The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.”* Strength, rock, fortress, deliverer, refuge, shield, salvation, stronghold—how would you sum up who God was to David on this occasion? In your own experiences (from question 2), what was at the core of who God was to you at the time? Do you think it is important to have such personal experiences of God?

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**PSALM 18:3-19**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2018&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 18:3-19](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2018&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 my distress I called to the Lord; I cried to my God for help.”* When he was in distress, David called to the Lord, his God. This was a very natural response for David, as attested to in many of his psalms. In a sense, what causes you to turn to God reveals who God is to you. David unabashedly tells us that God is his “strength, rock, fortress, deliverer, refuge, shield, salvation, stronghold” and responds appropriately. Who is God to you and what would cause you to turn to him?
2. *“From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears.”* This is also a constant refrain in David’s psalms although there are also occasions when he wonders whether God hears him at all. Do you think God hears you? How can you tell?
3. In vv7-15, David describes a violent storm and likens it to God responding to his cry for help. Do you think God cares when you are in distress and responds to your need or are you just another drop in the ocean of needs that he is surrounded by? How do you envision God hearing your cry for help and responding to it?
4. *“He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me.”* Space, freedom, safety, comfort—that was David’s experience of God. Would you say this is what it means for you to be a Christian? What was the reason David gave for the way God responded to him?

# Friday and Saturday

[**PSALM 18:20-30**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2018&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 18:20-30](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2018&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. *“The Lord has dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me.”* David has just claimed that God had rescued him because “he delighted in me” and now he lets us know that this was because he is righteous. In vv20-24, how did David describe his righteousness? How do you reconcile this to Paul’s claim that “no one will be declared righteous in God’s sight by the works of the law” (Romans 3:20)?
2. *“The Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.”* On the other hand, David is not wrong in saying that God responds to the righteous man (see Romans 2:7-10). How does this assure us of God’s partiality to us and our prayers (because we are righteous in Christ)?
3. *“To the faithful you show yourself faithful, to the blameless you show yourself blameless, to the pure you show yourself pure, but to the devious you show yourself shrewd. You save the humble but bring low those whose eyes are haughty.”* Who are the ones who enjoy God’s favour and who would experience God’s opposition? Would this remain true in the experience of a Christian?
4. *“As for God, his way is perfect: The Lord’s word is flawless;”* In all your experience of him, would you say this of God?

# Sunday

##### HE DELIGHTED IN ME

*“The Lord has dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me. For I have kept the ways of the Lord; I am not guilty of turning from my God. All his laws are before me; I have not turned away from his decrees. I have been blameless before him and have kept myself from sin.”*

I don’t know about you, but I have problems saying what David said above. I have been brought up conscious of my sinful nature, conscious that I have nothing to boast about, conscious that my righteousness is like “filthy rags”.

Yet here is David, led by the Spirit of God, writing as if he is this pure and righteous person, keeping God’s laws perfectly, blameless and sinless.

We know that this was not the case. His sin with Bathsheba and the subsequent murder of her husband just to cover up his predatory actions tipped him into the category of evil in my eyes.

What David was inspired to say here challenges my notion of what it means to be forgiven, what it means to be credited with righteousness of Christ, what it means to be a child of God by the grace of the sacrifice of our Lord and Saviour.

God would never delight in evil David. But when David was forgiven, credited righteous by the future sacrifice of Jesus (after all, God is not bound by time), David became indeed clean and righteous, because of the righteousness of Christ. And so his feeble attempts at righteous behaviour now elicit God’s loving response.

It boggles the mind, but God truly loves me because I am righteous with the righteousness of my Lord and Saviour, and he responds to me as I obey him, follow him and stay close to him.

*“You, Lord, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light.”*

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.