**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 18:31-36**](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 18:31-36](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. *“It is God who arms me with strength and keeps my way secure. He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he causes me to stand on the heights. He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze.”* From the picture of God coming to his rescue, David now paints another picture of God: the one who arms him, giving him abilities to overcome obstacles, strength to do mighty deeds. David is not meant to be the weak and helpless king always turning to God for rescue. He also turns to God for strength, for the resources to deal with the obstacles and difficulties that are a part of life. Do you think this is true for the modern Christian as well, that God desires and equips us to fight and overcome?
2. *“You make your saving help my shield, and your right hand sustains me; your help has made me great. You provide a broad path for my feet, so that my ankles do not give way.”* At the same time David can depend on God to shield him, to sustain him and to keep him well balanced. How can you make sure that this is a part of your experience as you face the challenges of being a Christian living in a godless world?
3. With God's resources to fight battles and God’s defences to protect and sustain you, it means that in time and experience we will grow and mature to be a seasoned warrior for God, a servant to do his will and an effective instrument for him to use to help others. What do you think of this picture of the life journey of a Christian?

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**PSALM 18:37-45**](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 18:37-45](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 pursued my enemies and overtook them; I did not turn back till they were destroyed. I crushed them so that they could not rise; they fell beneath my feet.”* Obviously in David’s mind there are real enemies who threaten him and his kingdom. What would you say are the enemies of a modern Christian that we can take the battle to?
2. *“You armed me with strength for battle; you humbled my adversaries before me. You made my enemies turn their backs in flight, and I destroyed my foes. They cried for help, but there was no one to save them—to the Lord, but he did not answer. I beat them as fine as windblown dust; I trampled them like mud in the streets. You have delivered me from the attacks of the people; you have made me the head of nations.”* At the end of the day, David acknowledges that God is the source of his victory. If that is so, how should a Christian prepare as he faces the world each day?
3. *“People I did not know now serve me, foreigners cower before me; as soon as they hear of me, they obey me. They all lose heart; they come trembling from their strongholds.”* Often we are the ones who are in fear, the ones who anticipate defeat as we face the challenges of the world, whether it is to stand firm in the face of corruption, face up to the bully in the office or in school, or deal with a world that is antagonistic towards Christians. Yet David tells us that the shoe is on the other foot and it is the world that should be in fear, because God stands with us. Does this make sense?

# Friday and Saturday

[**PSALM 18:46-50**](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 18:46-50](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 lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God my Savior!”* All that we have meditated upon earlier, of how we are stronger and the world is weaker, is based on the truth that our God is alive. He is not a concept, an idol, or a God who is capricious. Do you believe and celebrate this truth?
2. *“He is the God who avenges me, who subdues nations under me, who saves me from my enemies. You exalted me above my foes; from a violent man you rescued me.”* Can this be true for you as well? Does this give you courage to walk in his ways?
3. *“Therefore I will praise you, Lord, among the nations; I will sing the praises of your name. He gives his king great victories; he shows unfailing love to his anointed, to David and to his descendants forever.”* Spend some time to share with him your challenges and your fears and then praise and worship him as David did.

# Sunday

##### THE CHRISTIAN WARRIOR

*“He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze.”*

These days, in Christian circles, there is a lot of focus on power. “Through You I can do anything, I can do all things” goes the song “Nothing is Impossible”. “There is power in the name of Jesus”, proclaims the song “Break Every Chain”. “Shout Jesus from the mountains; Jesus in the streets; Jesus in the darkness over every enemy; Jesus for my family; I speak the holy name Jesus; Cause Your name is power; Your name is healing; Your name is life; Break every stronghold; Shine through the shadows; Burn like a fire.”

On the other hand other songs proclaim our weakness. “I am weak but Thou art strong; Jesus, keep me from all wrong; I'll be satisfied as long as I walk, let me walk close to Thee. When my feeble life is o'er, time for me will be no more; Guide me gently, safely o'er to Thy kingdom shore, to Thy shore.”

The first cluster of songs talks about wielding the power of God for their cause while the second portrays weakness and feebleness in the context of Christ’s strength. They have their place in describing the Christian journey but I want to point out that David’s idea is different.

In the earlier part of Psalm 18 he is the helpless man in need of rescue, not because he is weak but because the enemy is powerful. God comes in power not only to “reach down from on high and take hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters. He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me” but also to “scattered the enemy”. Here then is the power of God to defeat the foe and rescue the people of God. Note however that it is not us wielding the power of God; it is God coming to our rescue in power.

In this second half of Psalm 18, David focuses on the picture of the Warrior, trained by God and strengthened by him. His strength stems from the fact that he is righteous and God delights in him.

“I pursued my enemies and overtook them; I did not turn back till they were destroyed. I crushed them so that they could not rise; they fell beneath my feet.” to the extent that now “People I did not know now serve me, foreigners cower before me; as soon as they hear of me, they obey me. They all lose heart; they come trembling from their strongholds.”

This is no picture of weakness and feebleness but neither is it a picture of someone claiming to be able to do anything through Christ, or wielding Christ’s name like a weapon. It is a picture of someone who works hard and trains hard in righteousness, knowing that God delights in him and stands with him. He is one who is faithful, pure and humble before his God. And with confidence he faces his foes.

*“For who is God besides the Lord? And who is the Rock except our God? It is God who arms me with strength and keeps my way secure. He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he causes me to stand on the heights.”*

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.