**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

[**JOHN 3:16**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%203&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 [JOHN 3:16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%203&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. *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son …”* We are so familiar with the verse that we rarely take the time to understand what it is saying and to savour the truth that it reveals. What is the primary source/cause of God’s action? What did he do in response? Note that at this point, “the world” or “you” contributed nothing to the decision and action; “He loved and he gave” did not depend on any outside influence. What would that mean?
2. *“ … that whoever believes in him …”* Note that “believe” is not believing that certain statements (the Gospel as a formula or a message) are true but in a person (Jesus, as the one and only Son). What are the implications of our believing in Jesus as the one and only Son given to us by God? Are there any restrictions as to who can take up God’s loving offer?
3. *“ … shall not perish but have eternal life.”* The implication is that “the world” is already on the trajectory to death and destruction. God’s action created an alternate fate for “whoever believes in him”. How would this answer those who say that the Christian message is unfair because it allows for only one way to be saved? Why would you choose the life God offers rather than the death that will end it all?
4. Do you think this act of God validates the fact that he indeed loves the world? Do you think that having done so, God now adopts a “take it or leave it” attitude? How do you think God feels about the sheep that are not in the safety of the sheep pen? How should this affect the way you pray for those who have yet to respond to God’s initiative?

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**JOHN 3:17-18**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%203&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 [JOHN 3:17-18](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%203&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. *“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”* This means that the focus at this time is not judgement but salvation, not on condemning the sin but on saving the sinner. Would this truth change the way you look at people and how you pray for them? Would this mean that God does not require repentance, only belief and faith?
2. *“Whoever believes in him is not condemned …”* Do you think “not condemned” means you are in a neutral zone (not bad, and that is what is good) or is “not condemned” positive (not only not bad but actually good — that is, we fall under the positive gaze of God)?
3. *“ … but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”* Once again John clearly tells us that “the world” is already on the path to death and destruction. Why is this condemnation because “they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son”? Doesn’t that mean that the coming of Jesus not only saves but condemns?
4. What does it mean to you to learn that God’s intention at this time is not to condemn (technically we are already condemned but the presence of Jesus is not in order to bring that condemnation to fruition) but to save? What about sin in the world, sin in society, sin in our neighbours, sin in our loved ones and sin in us—is God focused on sin (to deal with it), or is he focused on giving us life, or both? Is he focused on removing the sin in us or restoring his image in us (love, justice, mercy, compassion, truth, integrity, and the fruit of the Holy Spirit), or both?

# Friday and Saturday

[**JOHN 3:19-21**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%203&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 [JOHN 3:19-21](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%203&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. *“This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.”* This is probably a play on the words “light and darkness”, in that light exposes while darkness hides. Yet at the same time “light has come into the world” speaks of hope and the possibility of escape. Looking at this in a general sense, do you think people avoid the message of the Gospel because they are ashamed or because they do not wish to change?
2. *“But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.”* Once again, a similar play on the word “light”. Entering the light would be what we understand to be “believing in Jesus” and would be “living by the truth” but also doing so is to be completely honest and “naked” in the sight of God. How can “coming into the light” shape your relationship with God so as to deepen your walk with him?
3. The natural tendency is for people to avoid entering into situations where they are exposed because it will usually reveal them to be less or worse than what they have led those around them to believe. But God requires all who wish to change their fate to stop the pretence and live honestly in his sight. What would cause or encourage a person to overcome their natural tendency and embrace life in the light?

# Sunday

##### INTO THE LIGHT

*“Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.”*

Light has come into the world, but for people to be saved, they have to come into the light.

However, we are all sinful and being in this state causes us to hate being in the light. Not only are we ashamed of the sinful state of our core being, but we fear the pain that light brings as our deeds are exposed. The tragedy of man is that we have grown to love the darkness, both in and around us.

John does not tell us how people who loved darkness instead of light would ever choose to come into the light but in later chapters he would tell us of the Holy Spirit, sent by God, who would “convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgement” (John 16). He is the Spirit of Truth.

When a person responds and chooses to live by the truth, he then comes into the light and in doing so enters into this relationship with God, exposed, yet forgiven and loved.

God so loved the world that he was willing to sacrifice his Son to be the light of the world. The world was already completely dark, and loves darkness instead of light. God, in his mercy and compassion, gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

To believe in him is to come into the light, to let light expose you, to be guided by truth, and to be completely seen by God. Those who do so will not perish but have eternal life.

*“But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.”*

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.