**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

[**EPHESIANS 2:1-10**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%202&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 [EPHESIANS 2:1-10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%202&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. *“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.”* Have you ever thought about the reality of our position? We all accept death as our destiny, but do we understand that that is because we are sinful beings, all cursed under God’s wrath? Do you think of your being in such a situation as hedonistic pleasure until death ends it all or it means soul crippling existence and emptiness, with death not necessarily a merciful end?
2. *“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.”* Why do you think God chose to save us from our fate? Did he choose to sacrifice his Son to snatch us from a life of sinful pleasure to an eternity of lowly and humble servitude, or was it to infuse life into us who were dead in our transgressions? Paul tells us that it was out of love and grace, meaning that we must be in a horrible position. What do you think it means to be saved?
3. *“And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.”* We are not told what it means to be seated with Christ but Paul described it as “incomparable riches” expressed in kindness. In other words, God went far beyond just saving us from our sinful state, but transformed us from being objects of his wrath, to being objects of his kindness and grace. Do you think this is an incomparable opportunity, to escape the emptiness and darkness of sin into the light of God and to be seated with his Son in the heavenly realms? Do you think the promises of our sinful life are worth letting go for the promises of God?
4. *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”* Here is the clincher: it is not like we bring anything valuable to the table. We have nothing that God wants; in fact, we are cursed under his wrath. Yet he offers us this gift. Think through what Paul is saying to you in these verses and take some time to talk to God and share with him your thoughts.

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**EPHESIANS 2:11-18**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%202&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 [EPHESIANS 2:11-18](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%202&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 vv11-13, Paul calls on his readers to remember who they were and where they were—outside God’s promises to the Jews, without hope and without God. But now, by the blood of Christ, we “who once were far away have been brought near.” In the bible, we are often called to remember. How would you describe your own circumstances, who you were and who you are now?
2. *“For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.”* Paul’s focus here was the division between the Gentiles and the Jews and the fact that Jesus’ sacrifice made no distinction between the two groups and also made the Law inconsequential. But the deeper value of Jesus as our peace is his accomplishment to reconcile all of us to God. What it means is that whenever a doubt creeps in, an issue arises as to where we stand in God’s eyes, all we need to remember is the cross of Jesus Christ. HE himself is our peace, our badge, security clearance that will open all the doors. *“For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.”* Take some time to work through the fact that Jesus gave us himself to accomplish this new humanity and the even greater truth that we have a claim on him.

# Friday and Saturday

[**EPHESIANS 2:19-22**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%202&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 [EPHESIANS 2:19-22](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%202&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. *“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household …”* We now come to the culmination of what Paul is trying to tell us: we have moved from being outsiders to citizens, and finally, family. Paul had reminded us to remember where we came from so we can appreciate how far we have come, through the sacrifice of Jesus. What is the thing that is most significant to you to have become a member of the household of God? Is it the power that is at your disposal, the opportunities that are open in front of you, or just the sheer wonder that a person like you, with your history and experiences, can sit at the same table with Jesus (or something else)?
2. *“ … built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.*” The point to appreciate is that this is a solid foundation, not just because the work of the prophets and apostles have stood the test of time till today, but, foremost, because Christ himself is the one who holds it all together. This will come to pass, and will stand the test of time because Christ guarantees it. Do you believe it, that you will one day be, not just in theory or in principle but in actuality, a member of God’s household?
3. *“In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.”* What do you imagine is the role of such a temple?
4. *“And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.”* The key is in the phrase “being built together”: it starts now and will be complete in due course. Do you think Paul is focused on the individual Christian here (each one of us is being built to become God’s dwelling place) or he is focused on the local church (the universal church would likely be that “whole building” mentioned earlier and so when he says “you too” it is likely something else)? In any case, whether the individual or the local church, what does it imply that the intention of Christ is to build a people, or assemblies of people, in whom the Spirit of God dwells? How will this impact the way you view your own Christian life?

# Sunday

**GOD’S HANDIWORK, CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS**

*“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.”*

At the top of the chapter, we were “dead in your transgressions and sins”. By the end we have become “a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.” Here, in this chapter, is God’s grand design, laid out clearly for us to understand and appreciate. The intention in helping us understand what God is doing through the Gospel of Jesus Christ is in Paul’s appeal to us in chapter 4: “As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.”

The mechanics are all there for us to read and understand: we were all cursed to die but God in his love and mercy agreed to remove the deadly grip of sin in us and made us alive with Christ. In doing so, he elevated our status to be family alongside Christ. All this is done by grace and faith, when we choose to carry the name of Jesus and follow him as King.

When we understand this, everything else becomes crystal clear: becoming a Christian is not about enjoying a good life as a Christian, being blessed with material wealth and comfort, or even gaining the power to accomplish our own will and purposes.

Jesus, through his sacrifice, has broken down the walls that separate us from God so that “through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit”. Therefore, when we become a Christian by choosing to accept Jesus as Saviour and Lord, God, in his mercy and grace, sends his Holy Spirit to dwell in us, initiating the process by which in due time we will become “a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.”

Being a Christian is about being God’s holy temple (and its priest): a place where the Holy Spirit dwells; a place where people can find God, know and learn to recognise him as we ourselves grow in holy and righteous living; a place where people can experience the love, mercy and grace of God; a place where people are prayed for; a place where people can pray and know God hears; a place where people can find shelter and sanctuary from evil and the evil one. In this temple there is power and authority, but only as wielded by Christ himself, in humble service and sacrifice.

*“In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.”*

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.