**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 24:1-2**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2024&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 24:1-2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2024&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 earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;”* Psalm 24 is a liturgy probably used to accompany a procession into the Temple; as the king, priests and the people stream into the Temple in a procession, this psalm is read out loud. What do you think the whole ceremony expresses—the nation, represented by the king, the priests and the people, entering into the house of God to these words being proclaimed?
2. *“ … for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters.”* This is a reference to Genesis 1 and the waters then was formless, empty, dark and deep. God established order—he shaped all existence—and thus God has ownership of all the earth, the world, and all who live in it. As the people enter into the house of God to these words, what truth is the ceremony proclaiming and affirming?
3. Do you think it is important to be aware of this truth—that as humans we inhabit the domain of God and enjoy his providence—and be reminded of it regularly? How can your participation in worship in your church help you to do so?

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**PSALM 24:3-6**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2024&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 24:3-6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2024&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. *“Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place?”* As the procession moves towards the Temple, this question is asked. How would you have answered the question?
2. *“The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god.”* This is a good description of the person who keeps the 10 commandments. What do you think of the Psalmist’s answer here to the question above? Do you think it is about ceremonial cleanliness and purity (cleansed through the ceremonial sacrifices under the Law, or even cleansed through the sacrifice of the Christ) or actual, that is, by the power of the Holy Spirit there is true transformation?
3. *“They will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God their Savior.”* In worldly communities there are all manner of gifts and achievements and the one who stands out in God’s eyes is not the one who stands out in the world’s eyes. But those who commit themselves to be the people that God seeks, will ultimately come to experience his blessing and vindication. Do you think this blessing and vindication is in the future, when Christ comes, or that we can taste his blessing and vindication even in this life?

# Friday and Saturday

[**PSALM 24:7-10**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2024&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 24:7-10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2024&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. *“Lift up your heads, you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.”* The phrase “lift up your heads” usually is a call to take courage. Unusually, the “gates” are to lift up their heads so the King of glory may come in. This is a call to faith, rather than drawing faith from experience—in faith be courageous and God will respond, rather than, find faith and courage from your experience of God in your life. With so much of Christian theology founded on grace as undeserved mercy, do you think this is something we should consider? What does faith do for you, especially in trying times?
2. *“Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.*” Following from the call to the courage of faith, comes this picture of God: The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Take some time to ponder on this picture of God. It is not a common picture of him in our minds, yet this is the immediate answer to the question posed. What does it mean to you that your God is “The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle”? In your mind, what is the war? What is the battle?
3. *“Who is he, this King of glory? The Lord Almighty—he is the King of glory.”* The call is repeated and the answer now is more comprehensive: The Lord Almighty—he is the King of glory. Our minds are occupied with the trivial and mundane and we rarely contemplate our God as the King of glory, much less the Lord Almighty. If this King of glory enters into your domain, how should you then view your life?
4. This psalm has mirror image events: mere humans entering into the realm of the divine, and the divine entering into the realm of us, mere mortals; think Jacob’s dream. This is the reality that God brought about through our Lord Jesus Christ. What does it mean to you that through Christ you can readily enter into the presence of God, and in the Holy Spirit God enters into your being, your reality and your life?

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# Sunday

**WHO IS THIS KING OF GLORY?**

*“The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.”*

As the Creator of the cosmos, God has every right to set the rules, but the question, “Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord?” also implies worthiness—what is the kind of person who is worthy to stand before God? The answer is an answer to the eternal question, what has true and intrinsic value?

If we understand the question as above, that it is about intrinsic value and worth, then we must not understand “The one who has clean hands and a pure heart” as merely ceremonial; clean and pure must be ethical terms reflecting the outer lifestyle and the inner life of a person. Coupled with the clause about false gods, one is reminded of the thrust of the 10 commandments. In God’s universe, true worth and value lie in God himself. Who may ascend and stand in God’s holy place? Only God himself and those who reflect the essence of who he is.

To a world that is obsessed with power, and the use of external garments to cover flaws and project beauty and superiority, “clean hands and pure hearts” are mundane and trivial compared to more exotic possibilities. But in due time, these are the ones who “will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God their Savior.”

As the herald’s voice resound throughout the chamber, asking “Who is this King of glory?”, the congregation responds “The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.” Again, “Who is this King of glory?” and the congregation replies, “The Lord Almighty—he is the King of glory.”

God is no doting grandfather, obsessing over the little details of our lives, caring that we are well-fed, well-equipped and well-protected. We need to get our minds off ourselves and onto him who is Lord of all that exists. Nothing we have or can do can ever match the majesty of the Lord Almighty. And so true worth is found in him and the true value of our lives is measured by how we reflect him and serve his purposes.

In the light of who he is then, we are called to lift up our heads, both to see Him as well as to draw strength and purpose from Him, to let him enter into our realm so that our actions and our hearts have significance beyond the temporal nature of our existence, in the eternal realm of the divine.

*“Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Who is he, this King of glory? The Lord Almighty—he is the King of glory.”*

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.