**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 25:12-14**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2025&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 25:12-14](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2025&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, then, are those who fear the Lord? He will instruct them in the ways they should choose.”* In the earlier section (week 49), the Psalmist shared that God is trustworthy, standing by his people so they will never be put to shame, teacher and guide, saviour, good and upright, merciful and loving to forgive those who seek him. Now he asks, “Who, then, are those who fear the Lord?” In the context, these are the ones who seek his forgiveness. What will God do with those whom he forgives?
2. *“They will spend their days in prosperity, and their descendants will inherit the land.”* In Old Testament theology, blessing is tied to the land and is expressed in the “shalom”, as explained in this wikipedia article, “In the Bible, shalom means universal flourishing, wholeness and delight – a rich state of affairs in which natural needs are satisfied and natural gifts fruitfully employed, a state of affairs that inspires joyful wonder as its Creator and Savior opens doors and welcomes the creatures in whom he delights. Shalom, in other words, is the way things ought to be.” Do you think God’s shalom is here and now or future?
3. *“The Lord confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them.”* Here is an interesting twist. The ESV interprets this as “The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant.” The picture is of God drawing near to those who fear him (remember, they are the forgiven ones) and sharing himself with them. Remember Jesus telling his disciples, “You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.” (John 15:14-15) How do you feel about this?

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**PSALM 25:15-20**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2025&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 25:15-20](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2025&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. *“My eyes are ever on the Lord, for only he will release my feet from the snare.”* As he draws near the end of the Psalm, the Psalmist becomes more personal. He understands that his only salvation is in the Lord. In our age where science, technology, medicine and the power of human ingenuity is behind so many solutions to the problems we face, how would you understand the sentiment that the Psalmist expresses? Is God’s domain reduced to the spiritual or is he still relevant in the physical world?
2. *“Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted.”* Earlier we are told (and reminded) that God extends his friendship to those who fear him (and seek his forgiveness). The Psalmist picks this up and in turn asks for God’s friendship and companionship. Do you think such friendship and companionship is possible and real, or that God would either be so far above as to be unreachable, or so near as to be no longer “God almighty”? Is it possible for friendship and companionship to exist between mortal man and God almighty (think Abraham and the exchange prior to Sodom and Gomorrah)?
3. *“Relieve the troubles of my heart and free me from my anguish. Look on my affliction and my distress and take away all my sins.”* We are often drawn to books that teach us to find healing and restoration of the soul (for example “Chicken Soup for the Soul”) yet surely God is the best healer of all our afflictions, distress and sin. Does God have this place in your life, and if not, how can you make sure that he does?

# Friday and Saturday

[**PSALM 25:21-22**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2025&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 25:21-22](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2025&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. *“May integrity and uprightness protect me, because my hope, Lord, is in you.”* In modern theology where there is so much effort to break the link between our works and God’s response, we are reminded once again that we cannot be unmindful of our integrity and righteous lifestyle. If our hope is God then we must subscribe to Godly values and ways. How does this truth affect your relationship with God?
2. *“Deliver Israel, O God, from all their troubles!*” Right at the end of his meditation, the Psalmist brings the nation to God’s attention. It has been personal all along; is there a reason why the Psalmist broadens the scope to his nation?
3. *“Deliver Israel, O God, from all their troubles!”* Do you think this is relevant only because Israel is God’s creation and he is committed to it or we can substitute “Israel” for our own country?
4. Psalm 25 is an acrostic psalm, meaning that the letters of the Hebrew alphabet are used to build the verses. The intention is to give a sense of completeness, and comprehensive coverage, in what is said, as we would say, “from A to Z”. From this point of view, how does the psalm reflect the comprehensive nature of God’s relationship with us, and how does the psalm reflect our comprehensive response to God?

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# Sunday

**WHO, THEN, ARE THOSE WHO FEAR THE LORD?**

*“The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant.” (ESV)*

As we have seen, those who fear God are those who walk in integrity and uprightness because these are godly qualities. Since none of us can ever hope to do so perfectly, our fear of him should lead us to seek his forgiveness for our sinful ways.

God responds to these people who fear him, offering his friendship and sharing his concerns. It is unimaginable that such a relationship can ever take place between mortal man and immortal God yet God makes it possible. The question is whether we understand what it means to be invited into such a position and whether we embrace (and not abuse or debase) the privilege accorded to us.

The Psalmist has no such problem. He shares with God his loneliness and affliction and distress. He shares with him the troubles he is facing. He shares with him his insecurities, and he shares with him his concern for his nation.

The joy of the fear of the Lord is the fact that he embraces us. Of course this is only made possible by the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross but what we need to understand is that a relationship requires the input of two parties. The modern Christian often misunderstands this and assumes that once we get on the programme everything should work; all that is needed then is maintenance: weekly church attendance, baptism and communion and perhaps some degree of participation in church activities. This, of course, is a mistake. The most important relationship is the Christian’s relationship with God; everything else must serve this.

*“My eyes are ever on the Lord, for only he will release my feet from the snare.”*

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.