**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 145:1-13**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%20145&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 during the past day. Share with God what you thought or felt. Pray also for those he has laid on your heart.
2. Read [PSALM 145:1-13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%20145&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**

*This is an acrostic psalm, meaning that every verse begins with a new letter from the Hebrew alphabet, moving from the first letter to the last. This gives a sense of completeness, like going from A to Z. It is a psalm of worship to a God who is everything. There is much to explore and you should feel free to go where the psalm leads you. These questions will focus on the verses that tell us about God.*

1. *“Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts. They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—and I will meditate on your wonderful works. They tell of the power of your awesome works—and I will proclaim your great deeds.”* How does the Psalmist express the greatness of God? What is it about God that impressed him? What about you—what is it about God that will cause you to exclaim that God indeed is great and most worthy of praise?
2. *“They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.”* To the Psalmist, a major aspect of God’s greatness is his “abundant goodness and his righteousness”. Do you agree, or do you think that God’s greatness has more to do with his “power and awesome works”? In what way can we consider that goodness and righteousness contributes greatly to God’s greatness? Would you prefer worshipping a God who displays power and awesome works, or a God who demonstrates in abundance goodness and righteousness?
3. *“The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.”* As you read through the psalm you will realise that the Psalmist dwells at length on the goodness and righteousness of God. A major aspect of his goodness is his compassion, that prefers restraint when it comes to anger, and generosity when it comes to love. Do you believe that God is like this—gracious and compassionate? In your own dealings with him, would this aspect of his character be something you are acutely aware of?
4. *“All your works praise you, Lord; your faithful people extol you. They tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, so that all people may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.”* Creation can only point to God’s power and splendour, but God’s people can testify to God’s character, principles and values, because, being made in the image of God, they have the awareness to see and appreciate. Do the people who know you know the God you worship? How can you encourage this?

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**PSALM 145:13-16**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%20145&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 145:13-16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%20145&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 is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does.”* It is interesting to look at this from the point of view that this is the Word of God. In the revelation of himself, God wants us to know this about him, that he is a God of his Word (as in he is a man of his word). This is important to him. What would this mean to you?
2. *“The Lord upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down.”* It would be a mistake to read “all” to mean everyone, in all situations, regardless. These would be all who rely on his trustworthiness and stand on his promises, as this thought flows from the previous line. Would you regard yourself as one such person? Do you think you can rely on God even though your predicament is your own doing?
3. *“The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time.”* This set of “all” surely covers all creation, in that God sustains his Creation. This perspective is made clear from the next line that speaks of “every living thing”. Once again we cannot take it too far, as to mean that no living being ever goes hungry because that is not the reality we know. But it describes how Creation, and we, depend on him for our life. The point here is that he takes responsibility to sustain all, even those who do not acknowledge him. How does this deepen your understanding about God’s trustworthiness and faithfulness?
4. *“You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.”* Finally, “every living thing” has to mean every living thing and the idea here is that only God, as Creator of every living thing, can satisfy the desire of every living thing. Just as he has created life to hunger and he ensures that life has food to satisfy, he has also created life to desire and he is the one who can truly satisfy. To seek our destiny and rest, our sustenance and our support elsewhere would be foolish. At the end of the day, when you are no longer in any danger or calamity, when you have the food you need, what do you seek? Do you believe that only your Creator has the answer?

# Friday and Saturday

[**PSALM 145:17-21**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%20145&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 145:17-21](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%20145&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 is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all he does.”* Interestingly, this is the same structure as v13b, except there it is “The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does.” This suggests that being trustworthy in keeping all promises is an expression of righteousness. Is being trustworthy and faithful a major component of your righteousness? Is this reputation something you seek to uphold whatever the cost or would you choose to discard these values when dealing with those who fail to uphold their righteousness?
2. *“The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them.”* This time round, the Psalmist is explicit about those who will experience the righteous response of God: those who call on him in truth. What do you think “in truth” implies—sincerity, or in the context of righteous values?
3. *“The Lord watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.”* The wicked—those who eschew righteousness—will know his enmity and his wrath. God’s righteousness cuts both ways because this is God’s Creation; he will ensure the integrity of his creation. There is a toughness to God’s righteousness. Do you think we are called to be tough on the wicked as well, or is righteousness something we seek for ourselves and leave other people to be dealt with by God?
4. *“My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord. Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever.”* The picture of praising God with words of praise is scattered across the verses of this psalm, but they are words of deep emotion and meaning: exalt, extol, commends, meditate, proclaim, celebrate, joyfully sing. When you speak of God, how do you feel towards him? Do any of these words resonate with you about your relationship with God?

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# Sunday

**IN PRAISE OF THE LORD**

*“The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.”*

How does God want to be praised? In Exodus 34, when God granted Moses’ request and revealed himself to him, he said this as he passed by Moses: “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.”

This description is the long version of “righteousness”—the core expression of God’s character, including the part about punishing those who reject that righteousness. We must not think of righteousness as the absence of sin; rather, sin is the negation (or repudiation) of righteousness. Righteousness is the core of who God is.

In this psalm that aims to comprehensively praise God for who he is, we read verses extolling his compassion, faithfulness, goodness, responsiveness, nearness, protection, sustenance, glory and might and, briefly, but definitely, “all the wicked he will destroy”.

God wants us to know him for all the positive things he is to us but he does not allow us to ignore, or conveniently overlook the truth that his righteousness includes his wrath against those who reject righteousness.

God abounds in love and faithfulness; he is compassionate and gracious; he forgives. Indeed he is slow to anger but we must never make the mistake and take his mercy for granted and abuse his grace. God is not weak and therefore we must not understand “compassion, faithfulness, goodness, responsiveness, nearness, providing protection and sustenance” to be weak.

The modern Christian makes the mistake of understanding God, and the words that describe God, from the literature of the world that can only capture man’s experience of Godly virtues. Even worse when Christians pass along the wisdom of the world as God’s wisdom. God is infinitely true while man can be weak, capricious and conflicted. God reveals himself to us in words we can understand but to fully appreciate who he is, we need to immerse ourselves in his Word.

How then can we exalt and extol him, and praise him to all around us? Not only with words surely, but to embrace those qualities and principles that he has chosen to be known by and at every point when we fail to honour those qualities, and we surely will, to turn to his Word and to Him, knowing that he “upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down.” In this way, we bring word to life and life to word, and our knowledge of him is enriched.

*“I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever. I will meditate on your wonderful works and I will proclaim your great deeds.”*

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.