**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

[**DEUTERONOMY 27:1-26**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2027&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 [DEUTERONOMY 27:1-26](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2027&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. *Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people: “Keep all these commands that I give you today. When you have crossed the Jordan into the land the Lord your God is giving you, set up some large stones and coat them with plaster. Write on them all the words of this law when you have crossed over to enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, promised you. And when you have crossed the Jordan, set up these stones on Mount Ebal, as I command you today, and coat them with plaster. Build there an altar to the Lord your God, an altar of stones. Do not use any iron tool on them. Build the altar of the Lord your God with fieldstones and offer burnt offerings on it to the Lord your God. Sacrifice fellowship offerings there, eating them and rejoicing in the presence of the Lord your God. And you shall write very clearly all the words of this law on these stones you have set up.”* What is to be the occasion for this ceremony? What is to be the mood of the people during the ceremony?
2. *Then Moses and the Levitical priests said to all Israel, “Be silent, Israel, and listen! You have now become the people of the Lord your God. Obey the Lord your God and follow his commands and decrees that I give you today.” On the same day Moses commanded the people: When you have crossed the Jordan, these tribes shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin. And these tribes shall stand on Mount Ebal to pronounce curses: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali. The Levites shall recite to all the people of Israel in a loud voice:* The ceremony was structured so that everyone was involved, half to pronounce the blessings and the other half to pronounce the curses and everyone would respond with “amen”. What is the point of the ceremony? What does it mean to become the people of God?
3. *“Cursed is anyone who makes an idol—a thing detestable to the Lord, the work of skilled hands—and sets it up in secret.” Then all the people shall say, “Amen!” “Cursed is anyone who dishonors their father or mother.” Then all the people shall say, “Amen!” “Cursed is anyone who moves their neighbor’s boundary stone.” Then all the people shall say, “Amen!” “Cursed is anyone who leads the blind astray on the road.” Then all the people shall say, “Amen!” “Cursed is anyone who withholds justice from the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow. Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”* What stands out to you as you read these curses?
4. *Then all the people shall say, “Amen!” “Cursed is anyone who sleeps with his father’s wife, for he dishonors his father’s bed.” Then all the people shall say, “Amen!” “Cursed is anyone who has sexual relations with any animal.” Then all the people shall say, “Amen!” “Cursed is anyone who sleeps with his sister, the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother.” Then all the people shall say, “Amen!” “Cursed is anyone who sleeps with his mother-in-law.” Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”* In the area of sexual sin, what is God’s concern?
5. *“Cursed is anyone who kills their neighbor secretly.” Then all the people shall say, “Amen!” “Cursed is anyone who accepts a bribe to kill an innocent person.” Then all the people shall say, “Amen!” “Cursed is anyone who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out.” Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”* It is likely that we should take all these as illustrative of God’s concerns, in the sense of drawing lines that we should not cross. How would you express the opposite of these curses?

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**DEUTERONOMY 28:1-14**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2028&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 [DEUTERONOMY 28:1-14](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2028&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. *“You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country. The fruit of your womb will be blessed, and the crops of your land and the young of your livestock—the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks. Your basket and your kneading trough will be blessed. You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out.”* This section tells us how God will bless the Israelites as they maintain positively their relationship with him. How would you describe this blessing?
2. *“The Lord will grant that the enemies who rise up against you will be defeated before you. They will come at you from one direction but flee from you in seven.”* How would you understand this blessing to mean?
3. *“The Lord will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The Lord your God will bless you in the land he is giving you.”* How would it be like to live under the blessing of God?
4. *“The Lord will establish you as his holy people, as he promised you on oath, if you keep the commands of the Lord your God and walk in obedience to him. Then all the peoples on earth will see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they will fear you. The Lord will grant you abundant prosperity—in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your ground—in the land he swore to your ancestors to give you. The Lord will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. The Lord will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the Lord your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom.”* What is to be the experience of the Israelites as God’s people? How would you summarise it?
5. *“Do not turn aside from any of the commands I give you today, to the right or to the left, following other gods and serving them.”* What is the part of the Israelites in this covenant? How would you describe it?
6. How would you describe the God that the Israelites will come to know as they walk in the ways of their God?

# Friday and Saturday

[**DEUTERONOMY 28:15-68**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2028&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 [DEUTERONOMY 28:15-68](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2028&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. Read through the long passage that describes what it would be like for the Israelites should they choose to renege on their covenant. How would you describe this God?
2. Do you think the God that Moses introduced to the Israelites, the God of Blessing and the God of Curses, the God of Compassion and the God of Wrath, is the same God that we all worship and call Father, the One we have pledged to to become his people?
3. Paul tells us in Romans 5 that *“God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”* In other words, through Christ we are saved from God’s wrath but even more, we will receive God’s blessing. Would this mean that we will now only experience the God of Blessing and the God of Compassion? What if someone made vows to receive Christ’s sacrifice and follow him without intending to follow through those vows? What is the difference between such people and those who are sincere but constantly fail because they are weak?
4. In coming to know the God of Moses, would it make any difference to your walk as a Christian?

# Sunday

**THE LORD YOUR GOD**

*“Be silent, Israel, and listen! You have now become the people of the Lord your God. Obey the Lord your God and follow his commands and decrees that I give you today.”*

In Exodus 33 (our passage for week 2), after the golden calf incident, God told Moses “Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way.”

To be the people of God is a heavy responsibility, not just because we bear God’s name and we must not sully it, but also because his eyes are on us always; that is both a blessing and a curse. “I might destroy you on the way,” God tells the Israelites.

When we become Christians, we too sign up to be a part of the people of God. The major difference is that we are shielded from God’s wrath by the blood of Jesus our Lord. But do not make the mistake of thinking that everything is now free and easy because we have a golden pass.

Many people think that they are signing up for a golden pass whereas the truth is that we are signing up to be the people of God and the golden pass shields us from God’s wrath while the Holy Spirit works in us so we become fit for the Kingdom.

Perhaps too our Gospel has become perverted and we trick people into a commitment they do not intend to keep.

The God of Moses, the God of the Old Testament, is the God of the New Testament and we must not paint a false picture of him. The Old Testament is very clear: fear God. He is compassionate and merciful and has given us his Son so that judgement can be withheld but his purpose for his people is that they reflect his glory.

*“The Lord will establish you as his holy people, as he promised you on oath, if you keep the commands of the Lord your God and walk in obedience to him. Then all the peoples on earth will see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they will fear you.”*

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.