**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 29:1-29**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2029&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 29:1-29](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2029&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. *“Carefully follow the terms of this covenant, so that you may prosper in everything you do. All of you are standing today in the presence of the Lord your God—your leaders and chief men, your elders and officials, and all the other men of Israel, together with your children and your wives, and the foreigners living in your camps who chop your wood and carry your water. You are standing here in order to enter into a covenant with the Lord your God, a covenant the Lord is making with you this day and sealing with an oath, to confirm you this day as his people, that he may be your God as he promised you and as he swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”* The culmination of Moses’ address to the Israelites is the official establishment of the covenant between God and those who would become his people. The terms of the covenant may be loosely described as the Law of Moses and sets the Israelites apart (the meaning of “holy”) as the people of God. What do you understand to be the terms that set you apart as a Christian, as being a part of the people of God?
2. *“Make sure there is no man or woman, clan or tribe among you today whose heart turns away from the Lord our God to go and worship the gods of those nations; make sure there is no root among you that produces such bitter poison. When such a person hears the words of this oath and they invoke a blessing on themselves, thinking, “I will be safe, even though I persist in going my own way,” they will bring disaster on the watered land as well as the dry. The Lord will never be willing to forgive them; his wrath and zeal will burn against them.”* This is about those who enter into the covenant on false premises, essentially defiling the covenant. What are the consequences? Can there be such people among Christians as well? How would you describe them?
3. *All the nations will ask: “Why has the Lord done this to this land? Why this fierce, burning anger?” And the answer will be: “It is because this people abandoned the covenant of the Lord, the God of their ancestors, the covenant he made with them when he brought them out of Egypt. They went off and worshiped other gods and bowed down to them, gods they did not know, gods he had not given them. Therefore the Lord’s anger burned against this land, so that he brought on it all the curses written in this book. In furious anger and in great wrath the Lord uprooted them from their land and thrust them into another land, as it is now.”* Moses makes it very clear, leaving no doubt, that when the people of God turn their heart away from him, the consequences will be dire. Do you think this will be the case for Christians as well? Explain your thinking.
4. *“The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.”* Simply put, there are many other matters that we do not know but they are not our concern. We are responsible for what we know. Is this a comfort to you or would your response be that it is better then to know as little as possible? Does what you know weigh you down as a burden too heavy to bear, or it lifts you up and gives you hope and joy?

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**DEUTERONOMY 30:1-10**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2030&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 30:1-10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2030&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. *“When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come on you and you take them to heart wherever the Lord your God disperses you among the nations, and when you and your children return to the Lord your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you. Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the Lord your God will gather you and bring you back.”* Moses left no doubt that the Israelites will fail to keep the terms of the covenant and they will be removed from the Promised Land and scattered among the nations but assured them that God will always be ready to restore them back to the land should they return to the covenant. What does this tell you about God?
2. *“He will bring you to the land that belonged to your ancestors, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your ancestors.”* Do you think this will also be the case for Christians who leave the faith and then return?
3. *“The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live. The Lord your God will put all these curses on your enemies who hate and persecute you. You will again obey the Lord and follow all his commands I am giving you today.”* It would seem that God would do something to enable these returnees to become righteous. For us in the post-Christ era, this is a clear reference to the Gospel. What is to become of these Jewish returnees?
4. *“Then the Lord your God will make you most prosperous in all the work of your hands and in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your land. The Lord will again delight in you and make you prosperous, just as he delighted in your ancestors, if you obey the Lord your God and keep his commands and decrees that are written in this Book of the Law and turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”* Do you think it means that Christians will be prosperous and successful in life as long as they are obedient to God?

# Friday and Saturday

[**DEUTERONOMY 30:11-20**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2030&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 30:11-20](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2030&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. *“Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, “Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?” Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, “Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?” No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it.”* God specifically described his requirements as “not too difficult or beyond reach”. Do you think this is the case for Christians as well?
2. *“See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. For I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.”* Do you think this is the case for Christians as well, or we will enjoy God’s love and blessing no matter what, because of Christ?
3. *“Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”* Is the choice obvious and clear to you or are you conflicted and confused? What will it entail to choose life? Do you think choosing life is about the hereafter or is it about life in the present as well?

# Sunday

**THE COVENANTAL GOD**

*“Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the Lord your God will gather you and bring you back. He will bring you to the land that belonged to your ancestors, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your ancestors.”*

God’s faithfulness and loyalty is beyond compare. When he says “yes” he has already taken into account every possibility and every eventuality. His reach covers the most distant land under the heavens and all he requires is for the Israelites to reach out their hands toward him. In other words, we do what we can and he will make up the rest. This is the God who invites us to covenant with him.

This is what it means when he tells us “Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach.” It does not mean that what we do is sufficient; only that it is sufficient for God to do the rest in Jesus Christ. God knows our limitations and he does not set us standards that we can never meet. But he does require us to reach out to him. It could perhaps be merely a cry to him as we drown in the darkness that surrounds us, like the thief next to Jesus. It could be the challenge of abandoning that which holds us back from truly reaching out to him, like the rich young ruler. He does not require us to have the right words or the right phrases, just the right heart.

This is the God who invites us to covenant with him.

But when our hearts turn away from him and we grow cold towards him and our passions burn for the things and experiences that run contrary to his will, and we discard the values that he taught us, that he stands for—love, compassion, mercy, goodness, selflessness, generosity, grace—we must not expect him to be indifferent.

This too is the God who invites us to covenant with him.

*“But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.”*

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.