**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

[**JOHN 4:1-15**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%204&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 [JOHN 4:1-15](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%204&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 Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John—although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.”* What is the significance of this little detail in the context of the overall narrative of the life and ministry of Jesus? Why did Jesus decide to avoid a possible confrontation with the Pharisees?
2. *“Now he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.”* All these details give the impression that the meeting with the woman of Samaria was accidental, unplanned. Do you think so? The little detail about Jacob and Joseph tells us that the Samaritans have close ties with the Jews even though they emphasise their differences. In the light of all these, what do you think of Jesus’ decision to stop at the well?
3. *When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)* It is interesting that Jesus did not ask his disciples for a drink earlier but instead asked the Samaritan woman when she came. Why was the woman surprised? What does it mean to you, seeing Jesus cross cultural lines and barriers? What are some cultural barriers that separate you from other groups of people, even though you have more in common than differences?
4. *Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”* It is clear from Jesus’ reply that his main motive in starting the conversation was not that he would like a drink. What was the focus of the conversation at this point?
5. *“Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?” Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”* The woman played along (I think) with Jesus without rancour, pointing out that Jesus was clearly claiming to be more than he actually was. Jesus raised the stakes even higher. What did he promise?
6. *The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”* Do you think the woman at this point accepted that Jesus was genuine or was she still playing along? What do you think the woman understood to be Jesus’ claim?

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**JOHN 4:16-26**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%204&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 [JOHN 4:16-26](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%204&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. *“He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.” “I have no husband,” she replied. Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”* Just at the point when the woman asks him to give her what she needs, Jesus abruptly changes the subject. His reply was quite cheeky as well, emphasising that the woman’s answer was accurate but does not represent the facts. What do you think was his intention?
2. *“Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”* This was her initial assessment of who Jesus was. How was it that the woman came to such a serious conclusion from Jesus’ response? (Interestingly her later description was that “He told me everything I ever did.”)
3. *“Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”* For the first time, Jesus answered her question directly, in detail and demonstrated a complete grasp of the issues. Why did Jesus take her question so seriously, instead of focusing on her issues in relationships?
4. What does Jesus’ reply teach you about the kind of worshippers the Father seeks?
5. *The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”* The conversation moved from a playful banter to a deep spiritual conclusion, revealing along the way the woman’s search for truth. Do you think Jesus sought her out or this meeting was a happy accident?

# Friday and Saturday

[**JOHN 4:27-42**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%204&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 [JOHN 4:27-42](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%204&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. *Meanwhile his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.” But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.” Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?” “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.”* Looking at Jesus’ response and what he said was “food”, how would you describe Jesus’ attitude? Would you say that Jesus was making the point that the spiritual has priority over the natural? Do you think “food” describes something that compels (I must eat), that satisfies (this is what makes me happy and fulfilled), or it is something natural (as much as eating is a human activity, so too is helping people find God and find answers)? Would you say this “food” is specifically about evangelism, the Gospel, or would you broaden the scope to include serving God in any way? How do you compare in your own attitude towards Jesus’ “food”?
2. *Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” They came out of the town and made their way toward him.* What the woman did here could be described as evangelism (bringing others to meet Jesus). Would you consider this a natural thing to do or it is something unnatural for you? What does “leaving her water jar” tell you?
3. *Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers. They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”* What can you learn about the Gospel that saves from what the Samaritans understood?

# Sunday

**THE WOMAN AT THE WELL**

*“My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.”*

I don’t think that the meeting at the well was a chance encounter. Just like the man who was possessed by the legion, and the syro-phoenician woman, it seemed to me that Jesus made choices that allowed him to meet the woman. And if that were the case, it tells me that God is very much aware of the individual and in these cases, individuals who live in non-jewish communities.

For the woman to quickly move from “interesting Jewish man who is willing to cross cultural barriers”, to “I can see you are a prophet” and finally to “you are able to explain and show me how to overcome the differences between my community and the Jews so I can reconcile the God whom we both worship, could you be the Messiah” tells me that she has been seeking the truth and getting lost along the way.

Having found answers that satisfy her soul, she naturally shared her joy with her community and brought them to meet Jesus. “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?”

This was not an invitation to be entertained or to be impressed by Jesus’ prophetic abilities; “Could this be the Messiah?” she asked. It was an invitation to investigate the credentials of the man who claimed to be he.

The onus was on Jesus and he did not disappoint. “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”

In this encounter, we see what it means to Jesus to bring people to know the truth of God and ultimately to worship him in truth and in spirit; not to be distracted by man-made issues, not to be overwhelmed by personal issues, not even to be encumbered by secondhand knowledge—knowing God by proxy and relying on the experience of others—ultimately the Gospel is about encountering the Way, the Truth and the Life.

*“Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”*

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.