**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

[**1 TIMOTHY 5:1-2, 17-20, 6:1-2**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Timothy%205&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 [1 TIMOTHY 5:1-2, 17-20, 6:1-2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Timothy%205&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. *“Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.”* In the 3 passages for today’s contemplation, Paul deals with the matter of honour, how we honour different groups of people in the church community and treating them as if they are family. It assumes that we honour our parents and our siblings properly, which is often not the case in modern times. What do you think it means to honour the old and the young, the women and the men in the church community? Do you take care of the way you treat the different members of your church community?
2. *“The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.”* In the passage Paul gave an example of what he means by this. How would you describe Paul’s notion of “double honour” and do you think this biassed attitude is right? Why does the bible teach that those who lead the church should be accorded special honour? What does Paul recommend for leaders who “are sinning” (meaning there is no repentance)?
3. *“All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God’s name and our teaching may not be slandered. Those who have believing masters should not show them disrespect just because they are fellow believers. Instead, they should serve them even better because their masters are dear to them as fellow believers and are devoted to the welfare of their slaves.”* Thankfully there is no slavery these days but the key point Paul raised is that the respect that society upholds should also be upheld by Christians, and that carries into the church community as well. Why is this important?
4. In these modern times, the idea of “honour” is archaic and accorded lip-service most times, especially among the younger generation. Why do you think this is so? Do you think the biblical notion of honour (beginning with honour your father and mother) is something that Christians should uphold and keep alive in our culture and community? How can we teach the younger generation and instil in them “honour”?

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**1 TIMOTHY 5:3-16**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Timothy%205&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 [1 TIMOTHY 5:3-16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Timothy%205&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. *“No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the Lord’s people, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.”* It is likely this “list of widows” recognises widows that the church helps financially. Why would the church deem it important to help widows financially? At the same time, this can be a severe burden on the church finances and Paul gives some basis to limit those who would make it onto the list. What is Paul’s reasoning for rejecting certain widows from the list?
2. *“If any woman who is a believer has widows in her care, she should continue to help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need.”* Basically Paul wants widows in need to explore the options available to them, or for individuals to help directly, and let the church be the help of last resort, so as to have the resources to help those who have no other recourse. Do you think this is a good and honourable approach to meeting the needs of the church community? Do you think it is alright to ask people in need to explore their options and do what they can do to help themselves or that the church should never shrink from extending help to those who ask?
3. In the time of Paul and Timothy, widows needing help are many and the bible frequently mentions that we are to care for widows and orphans. Who would be “widows and orphans” in your community and what kind of help would they need? Do you think helping them should be under the umbrella of the church or it is better to be done by individuals?

# Friday and Saturday

[**1 TIMOTHY 5:21-25**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Timothy%205&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 [1 TIMOTHY 5:21-25](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Timothy%205&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. *“I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism.”* The immediate context is in dealing with elders who have gone astray but the larger context of the passages we have been looking at is also relevant. To accord honour where honour is due as a life principle is to avoid the accusation of partiality and favouritism. Do you think this is a good principle? Do you think it is possible for you to adhere to it?
2. *“Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.”* The laying on of hands signifies public endorsement and when one does so without careful consideration, they may inadvertently be tainted by those they endorse. Paul makes a distinction between “honour” and “endorse” and while we should honour where honour is due, we must be careful whom we endorse because “The sins of some are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them” (v24). Do you think this is an important distinction to make? How can we “keep ourselves pure”?
3. *“Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.”* It is difficult to see this little instruction in the context of chapter 5 but perhaps a simple way is to read it in the context of what we have been considering—honour—and in this case, honour your body as well; don’t think that you should sacrifice your body’s needs (and health) for the sake of some spiritual pursuit (drinking only water can be some expression of asceticism). What do you think?
4. *“The sins of some are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them. In the same way, good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not obvious cannot remain hidden forever.”* The subtext basically is, “persevere in doing what is good and right and at the end of the day, the truth will become clear for all to see.” In the light of the fact that the results are not always apparent and obvious, how can we keep ourselves pure?

# Sunday

**HONOUR**

*“Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.”*

It is interesting that “honour” is embedded in the 10 commandments, “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you” and is the first command in the Decalogue that is not directed towards God but it has consequence for the life we live.

From the way Paul expands the idea of “honour” in 1 Timothy 4, we learn that “honour”—to give respect where respect is due, and to respect the differences between the people in our community, to honour those who lead and have authority over us and also to honour those who are in need and powerless to help themselves—is a basic principle that can help us live right. Paul even got down to the level of honouring our bodies and not abusing it for some higher principle. Everyone, and everything, have their proper place in our life and we do well to honour them.

As is true in so much of life, sometimes the truth is clear and apparent and sometimes the truth will show itself in more subtle ways, becoming apparent only over time; but Paul is certain that the truth—to act on the basis of honour is a God-given principle to guide us through life—cannot remain hidden forever.

The promise of the fifth command, that we will “live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you”, is obviously about life in the Promised Land for the Jews, but surely we will not be wrong to believe that this is also true for us in our Promised Land, the kingdom of God.

Placed in-between chapter 4 — “godliness has value for all things” — and chapter 6 — “godliness with contentment is great gain”, chapter 5 is intriguing for its down-to-earth focus on people and life.

*“The sins of some are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them. In the same way, good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not obvious cannot remain hidden forever.”*

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.