**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 6:3-5**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Timothy%206&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 6:3-5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Timothy%206&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. *“These are the things you are to teach and insist on. If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, they are conceited and understand nothing.”* Note that the immediate context is chapter 5, those practical instructions about relationships, widows, elders and even drinking wine to stave off stomach problems. But as Paul goes on to talk about godliness, we should widen the context to include chapter 4. True spirituality is about godliness but godliness is also about being consonant with the laws of life (and perhaps too the laws of nature?) that God has established. Paul insists that this is what Christianity is all about. Do you agree and does your own Christian life express this?
2. *“They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.”* These are those who insist that Christianity’s focus should be on something else. Paul refers to them as people who raise theological debates and other “Christian issues” and suggests that these matters actually cause friction among the Christians. In other words, controversies distract people from true spirituality. Do you think that people create controversies to raise their own profile and out of their own interests or they actually care about true spirituality? In what way can people peddle spiritual pursuits as a means to financial gain?
3. *“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”* Rather than creating controversies, godliness creates contentment. Do you agree? How can we be content?

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**1 TIMOTHY 6:6-10**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Timothy%206&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 6:6-10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Timothy%206&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. *“But godliness with contentment is great gain.”* Why is it that Paul puts contentment alongside godliness? Is it possible to be godly and discontented? Is it possible to be content if we don’t really value godliness?
2. *“For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.”* Paul suggests that when our basic needs are met we have what it takes to be content; the rest depends on our spiritual resources. Is this reasoning enough for you not to put all your energies into the pursuit of financial gain and more into spiritual gain? How would you persuade another person that they should be content?
3. *“Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”* Do you think this argument of Paul is valid? Do you think it is possible to desire to be rich and not fall into temptation and traps? What then would you consider to be a lifestyle of contentment in the modern world? What is enough?

# Friday and Saturday

[**1 TIMOTHY 6:11-16**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Timothy%206&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 6:11-16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Timothy%206&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. *“But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.”* “All this” would be the controversies, arguments, envy and strife, and the driving ambitions caused by the pursuit of money and discontent. To “flee from” would be to acknowledge that these are not the important matters in your life but instead to pursue, to make “righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness” to be the things that really matter. Do you think this is valid advice?
2. *“ … pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.”* How would you describe righteousness and godliness? What has “faith and love” to do with “endurance and gentleness”? In real life—at work, in the home, and in church—what comes to mind when God tells you to “flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness”?
3. *“Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”* Paul gives the impression that to flee from, and to pursue, are matters that do not come naturally or easily. It is a daily fight. Does this make you give up already, or do you think it is high time your Christian life gets some backbone? Why is it worth the while to fight?
4. *“In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.”* Paul puts this call to fight the good fight for “righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness” in the context of our Lord willingly sacrificing himself, and of God, holy and righteous, high and lifted up. We are not fighting a losing battle because we are fighting for God and we are fighting for our Lord who sacrificed himself so we can fight. Does this make you more willing to make “righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness” the focus of your Christian life, or it makes no difference?

# Sunday

**FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF THE FAITH**

*“But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.”*

It is easy to be distracted by the issues we face, the desires that drive us, the people that irritate us, even the practices that we do weekly as expressions of our faith and worship. Paul tells us that we must not be distracted, or let ourselves be distracted, and instead we must be absolutely clear in our mind and heart that which is truly important to God and therefore to us.

It is interesting that Paul does not mention bible study, theology, prayer meetings, worship meetings and worship songs; yet in the best of times, when we are encouraging one another to pursue God, these are the things we focus on.

What does Paul think is the core of the Christian life? Righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness, and, may I add from chapter 5, to be consonant with the laws of life and nature.

How often do we use these words of Paul when encouraging one another to walk in the faith? Rarely, if ever. But Paul is very clear that Christian concerns are not about controversies (and I would include theology, bible study, church attendance and the like, not because they are wrong or bad but because the church focuses so much on these matters). He is also very clear about what drives the non-Christian—money, power and success—and these are also not what should drive us as Christians.

Ultimately, the Christian must be focused on the kind of person they become: righteous, godly, full of faith and love that is expressed in endurance and gentleness. Everything else must be evaluated in this light.

In other words, “bible study, theology, prayer meetings, worship meetings and worship songs” must be understood in terms of how they help us to become righteous, godly, and full of faith and love. They are the means to an end, not the ends in themselves. Seen in this light, there is no need for quarrels or controversies; there is no need for jealousy or malice or anger, there is no need to be upset over the issues and problems we face in the church community.

Let us take the time to deepen our understanding of what it means to be “righteous, godly, and full of faith and love” and to think through our priorities so that we stay away from the things that will distract us but embrace the things that will help us. These are not basics that we graduate from to pursue higher pursuits. These are the substance of the eternal life to which we were called when we became Christians.

Paul describes this as a fight because it is truly difficult to become “righteous, godly, and full of faith and love” while we are in the world; the world is a distraction that we must overcome. But we must fight because our Lord sacrificed himself so we are in a position to fight. And we must fight because we know we are on the side of God the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see.

*“In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.”*

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.