**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

[**PSALM 101:1-2**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+101&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 the past day. Share with God what you thought or felt. Pray also for those he has laid on your heart.
2. Read [PSALM 101:1-2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+101&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 will sing of your love and justice; to you, Lord, I will sing praise.”* As he comes before God, David sings his praise. Looking back at the times you have spent in God’s presence, is there a natural desire to praise him, or is there mostly prayers for help and favour, or is there mostly silence? How do you honestly feel about your God? David praised him for his love and justice. What is foremost on your mind when you think about God?
2. *“I will be careful to lead a blameless life—when will you come to me?”* Praise leads to action and David promises to be careful to lead a life that pleases God. Do you care about what God thinks of the way you live? Curiously, David asks when God will come to him, not to rescue him since there is no plea in this psalm, but perhaps out of a consciousness of what God will see when he comes visiting. What can you do so that as you live your life you are conscious that you are under the gaze of God?
3. *“I will conduct the affairs of my house with a blameless heart.”* Whether you are the head of your household, or you are single and work for a living, or you are a student, all of us have a life that we are responsible for. What do you think is a blameless heart in your context?
4. David is conscious that praising God is with song and words and also in heart and deed. How can you consciously live a life that is consistent with your praise?

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**PSALM 101:3-5**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+101&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 [PSALM 101:3-5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+101&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 will not look with approval on anything that is vile. I hate what faithless people do; I will have no part in it.”* What would you understand to be vile and what is it that faithless people do? How can we be seduced into approving what is vile and accepting as normal or even good deeds that arise from faithlessness? Do you even participate in these acts?
2. *“The perverse of heart shall be far from me; I will have nothing to do with what is evil.”* What deeds would you describe as perverse and evil? These days many stories on TV and the movies explore perversion and evil. What is your attitude towards them? Is evil and perversion fascinating or goodness and love boring to you?
3. *“Whoever slanders their neighbor in secret, I will put to silence; whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart, I will not tolerate.”* Slander is both false and damaging and to be done in secret means that the person slandered has no opportunity to defend. Do you participate in slander? Those who slander do so from a position of superiority, implying that they are righteous and they look down on others deemed inferior. How do you keep yourself untainted by such behaviour among your peers and friends?

# Friday and Saturday

[**PSALM 101:6-8**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+101&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 during the past day. Share with God what you thought or felt. Pray also for those he has laid on your heart.
2. Read [PSALM 101:6-8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+101&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. *“My eyes will be on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me; the one whose walk is blameless will minister to me.”* David resolves to honour those who are faithful and blameless. Do you likewise take care to do so in your life? The media often paints as heroes those who are successful because they are violent, promiscuous, cunning and self-serving. The righteous are often portrayed as weak and even hypocritical. Do you take care to uphold those whom God upholds and walk with those who seek to obey him or are you attracted by wealth, popularity and power?
2. *“No one who practices deceit will dwell in my house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in my presence.”* David avoids people who lie and deceive and, obviously, seeks to be on the side of truth and clarity. Would you say you stand with David on this?
3. *“Every morning I will put to silence all the wicked in the land; I will cut off every evildoer from the city of the Lord.”* Perhaps as king he has the authority and resources to do this. Where we have authority and responsibility, even just in our own heads, or in the department we work in, or the relationships we are invested in, do we promote good and goodness and defang wickedness and evil?

# Sunday

**I WILL BE CAREFUL TO LEAD A BLAMELESS LIFE**

*“I will not look with approval on anything that is vile. I hate what faithless people do; I will have no part in it. The perverse of heart shall be far from me; I will have nothing to do with what is evil.”*

In Ephesians 4 and 5, Paul tells us very clearly that two actions complete the move towards God: reject evil and embrace good. It is not one or the other but both.

In David’s psalm that proclaims his resolve to lead a life that pleases God, David begins with the heart. He wants to make sure that the things that God detests, he detests as well, and the things that God loves he will surround himself with them. He then moves on to his environment, his household, his associations, his heroes and even his nation.

In our day and age, this is a very difficult thing because media and entertainment are besotted with evil disguised in attractive narratives. We are persuaded to understand and sympathise with those who, in the cold light of day, are vile, faithless, perverse and evil. We are manipulated to such anger and hatred that we can feel the joyful release when the villain finally gets their just desserts. We are exposed to plots where lying and cheating, lustful behaviour and manipulation, deception and slander, violence and revenge, are ultimately rewarded. Many cultural endeavours—whether song, story, ideas and perspectives—often try to overturn moral norms that we instinctively accept.

All the more these days we need a clear resolve to honour and embrace into our lives goodness and godliness and reject the perverse and evil. The question we need to ask ourselves is whether we, together with those we love and are responsible to raise, do so with a clear resolve or we blissfully continue to swim with the sharks.

*“My eyes will be on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me; the one whose walk is blameless will minister to me.”*

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.