**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.

Notes:

* I copy the Word files to my Google Drive and then use Google Docs so they are not only archived in my Google Drive, but I can also access them wherever I have internet access.
* Don’t be fixated on the questions. Skip them if they are not helpful. The important things are the text, your thoughts/responses and God.
* Also don’t be fixated on the dates/sequence. Change the dates/days however you wish.
* I find writing down my answers/thoughts/prayers very helpful to focus my mind. Not to mention that I can always refer back to them.

# Monday

**MARK 1:1-12**

1. Take time to be quiet, until you can focus on being in the presence of God. Read the text until you can understand what it says. If you have any initial thoughts, write them down.
2. Jesus not an obscure man who suddenly shot to fame. You are probably familiar with the details of his birth and the many proclamations about him. Here we read of John, sent to “prepare the way” for him. Why are all these details necessary? And why doesn’t Jesus come in the fullness of his divine nature so there is no doubt as to who he is?
3. How did John the Baptist prepare the people for the Lord? What was he able to do? What was he not able to do?
4. Consider the role of preparing people to receive the Gospel. In what ways can you be such an agent for the Lord? Do you think this is an important role? What is NOT a part of such a role?
5. Do you think you are called to such a role?
6. Write down a prayer in response.

# Tuesday

**MARK 1:1-12**

1. Take time to be quiet, until you can focus on being in the presence of God. If you have any initial thoughts, write them down.
2. Read the passage. Review the answers/thoughts you wrote down yesterday. Is there anything that you need to respond to?
3. Review the past day. What concerns/joys/events occupy your heart?
4. Write down a prayer in response.

# Wednesday

**MARK 1:9-13**

1. Take time to be quiet, until you can focus on being in the presence of God. Read the text until you can understand what it says. If you have any initial thoughts, write them down.
2. *The Spirit descended on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.” At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness.* How do you rationalise the two: an expression of love and affirmation, and the wilderness experience that followed?
3. *“He was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan.”* In terms of experience, what does the wilderness represent? It was also a place where he was vulnerable to Satan. What value can a “wilderness experience” give?What does the presence of wild animals and of angels suggest to you?
4. In this experience of Jesus there was the presence of the Holy Spirit, the message of love and affirmation, the wilderness experience, the presence of angels. Which is most significant to you at the time? Why?
5. Write down a prayer in response.

# Thursday

**MARK 1:9-13**

1. Take time to be quiet, until you can focus on being in the presence of God. If you have any initial thoughts, write them down.
2. Read the passage. Review the answers/thoughts you wrote down yesterday. Is there anything that you need to respond to?
3. Review the past day. What concerns/joys/events occupy your heart?
4. Write down a prayer in response.

# Friday

**MARK 1:14-20**

1. Take time to be quiet, until you can focus on being in the presence of God. Read the text until you can understand what it says. If you have any initial thoughts, write them down.
2. If Jesus were to have come today, bearing the same message “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel”, how would he word it? What reason is there for people to repent and believe?
3. Recall the time when you decided to follow Jesus as these disciples did. What was your reason for doing so? In the same way, why do you think these fishermen decide to follow Jesus?
4. Mark 1:1-20 is a very condensed summary of many events which are told in more detail in other gospels, outlining the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. That Gospel has reached across centuries and oceans to reach you. The call remains the same: Follow me! What does the fact that you are called to follow Jesus mean to you?
5. Write down a prayer in response.

# Saturday

**MARK 1:14-20**

1. Take time to be quiet, until you can focus on being in the presence of God. If you have any initial thoughts, write them down.
2. Read the passage. Review the answers/thoughts you wrote down yesterday. Is there anything that you need to respond to?
3. Review the past day. What concerns/joys/events occupy your heart?
4. Write down a prayer in response.

# Sunday

**PREPARE THE WAY**

Mark tells us that right from the beginning, God prepared the way. He prepared John to be a witness, authenticating the truth of Jesus. In other gospels we are told of the remarkable events surrounding the birth of Jesus, the prophecies fulfilled, right down to the detail of his birth in Bethlehem.

This chapter also tells us of the preparation of Jesus, from the empowering affirmation of his baptism to the soul-searching battles in the wilderness, emerging with a clear message:“The time has come, the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

Our passage ends with the calling of the fishermen; both the beneficiaries of all the preparation, but also the next in line, in a long chain of actors in this drama no less than the mission to save the world. As Jesus received the Holy Spirit, so too the fishermen, now disciples and later apostles, and so too we.

Preparation is key. At our baptism we are received into the family of God: this is my Child, whom I love, with whom I am pleased. At that point we received the Holy Spirit. And now we are in the midst of the process of refinement, as Jesus was in the wilderness, being tempted and tested, learning to rest in the love of God, learning to know and use the Word, learning to walk with the Spirit. This is our preparation and it will be life-long. As God meticulously prepared the way for Jesus, so too he prepares you so you too can be an open and level path for others to find Him.

1. Take time to be quiet, until you can focus on being in the presence of God. If you have any initial thoughts, write them down.
2. Review the passages of Scripture, and the answers/thoughts you wrote down in the past week. What conclusion can you draw from the passages of Scripture you have been considering? Is there anything that you need to respond to?
3. Read the short sharing above. Does it add anything to your conclusion?
4. Review the past week. What concerns/joys/events occupy your heart?
5. Write down a prayer in response.