**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

**COLOSSIANS 3:1-4**

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. Paul tells us that in God's eyes we who have died with Christ and were raised with Christ. What does he call us to do since this is so?
3. Do you think he is telling us to focus on going to heaven and forget about life on earth? What do you think this is all about?
4. "Your life is hidden with Christ in God", "Christ, who is your life". The basic picture is that when God looks at us he sees Christ. Why is this necessary?
5. Paul also tells us that when Christ comes again in glory we too will appear with him in glory. What do you think "appear with him in glory" means?
6. These theological truths tell us that through the death and resurrection of Jesus we are now fully clean in the eyes of God and we enjoy true fellowship with him and the day will come when we will be truly like him in glory. Write down a prayer in response.

# Tuesday

**COLOSSIANS 3:1-4**

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

**COLOSSIANS 3:5-11**

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. Why does Paul call on us to put to death our earthly nature? Is he referring to our human nature?
3. Paul gives examples of what he is calling us to put to death or get rid of: Sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry, anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other. Essentially they are sinful attitudes and behaviours. Why does Paul call on us to act on these things? Since in Christ we have died, have we not already been set free from sin?
4. A simple way to understand is that since we are free from sin we should act to make sure we continue to be sin-free. That means not allowing these attitudes and behaviours to be resurrected in our new selves. *Sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry, anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other*: Which of these attitudes and behaviours do you think deserve a place in your resurrected self?
5. *“The new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.”* In the eyes of God, the new self has no baggage; whatever you were in the past, in God’s eyes he only sees the glory of Christ. The process of restoring the image of God begins. Write down a prayer in response.

# Thursday

**COLOSSIANS 3:5-11**

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

**COLOSSIANS 3:12-17**

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. *“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. And be thankful.”* This is the picture of what the new self is to be. Carve it onto your heart and mind. This is what Paul calls us to set our hearts and minds on; the things that are above. Do you love this picture? Would you be eternally grateful to become such a person? This is all yours in Christ.
3. *“Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.”* Paul then calls us to also realise this vision in our brothers and sisters around us as we all work together to help each other put our sin behind us and embrace the life that Jesus awakens in us. What is the atmosphere that Paul describes, that will encourage such growth and restoration? What will you do to contribute to this ministry?
4. *And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.* Write down a prayer in response.

# Saturday

**COLOSSIANS 3:12-17**

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

**THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST**

*For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

This is such a mystery that we often just put it in a corner of our mind, labelled theory. How could we have died when we are very much alive? What does it mean that our life is now hidden with Christ in God? Yes we will be like him when he comes again, but what about now?

But however much we don’t understand the mechanics behind the mystery, we must embrace the results. When we claim Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, in God’s eyes we died and our life is hidden in Christ. This allows us to enter into fellowship with God. We get a fresh start and Paul tells us that *“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.”*

Very often Christian life is described in legalistic terms focusing on finding and purging sinful aspects of our lives. A Christian must do this, must not do that — it does not appear that we are very free. We are pulled back into a spirit of fear, wondering how God will respond because our conscience tells us that we have failed him time and again.

There is no question that sin has no place in the life of a Christian. But rather than obsessing over sin which has been dealt with by Christ, we focus on the task of righteousness; we set our hearts on things above. We use the freedom Christ has won for us to put on the righteousness of Christ in the spirit of love, joy, thanksgiving and worship. When sin seeks a hold on us we go to God for forgiveness and return to the joyful task of becoming like Christ.

It is when we are immersed in the life of God that we will have the power to leave behind the old life that is steeped in sin. All this is possible because of Christ’s death and resurrection. This is the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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 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.