[**TIME ALONE WITH GOD**](http://timealonewithgod.org/)

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

[**MATTHEW 5:13**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%205&version=NIV)

*2021 Week 9 focused on Matthew 5:1-12, the Beatitudes.*

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. *“You are the salt of the earth.”* What is the use of salt? In what way can Christians be “salt” in their community just by being truly Christian?
3. *“But if the salt loses its saltiness ...”* The analogy points to a Christian losing his or her “Christianness”. What would be “Christianness” in a Christian? What would a Christian who is not “Christian” in his character and lifestyle be like?
4. *“... how can it be made salty again?”* Salt that is not salty is actually not salt. There is no such thing as a true Christian whose character and lifestyle does not *seek* (or care about) to reflect the Lord he follows. Do you agree or disagree? Explain your position.
5. Jesus makes it very clear that those who follow him have a distinct “flavour”, and that distinctiveness has a positive effect on the people around him/her. Do you? Write down a prayer in response.

# Tuesday

[**MATTHEW 5:13**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%205&version=NIV)

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

[**MATTHEW 5:14-16**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%205&version=NIV)

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. *“Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.”* The issue here is the position of the lamp. Light is only useful if it reaches other people. So it should be positioned to be seen. If a Christian is light, where should he or she be located in the community to best benefit people?
3. *“In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”* Jesus clarifies that he is speaking about “others seeing your good deeds which glorify God” when he was talking about letting your light shine. What good deeds are you doing in your community (neighbourhood or workplace) that glorifies God? Are people blessed because you are in their midst?
4. The implication is that Christians cannot be too “private” so that no one knows or sees what they are doing or, just like salt, no one is affected by their lives. Would this have an impact on your lifestyle?
5. In John 1:5, we read of how “the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” Now Jesus proclaims that we “are the light of the world”, a world of darkness. He calls on us to join him in providing light for a world in darkness so that people may *“may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”* Write down a prayer in response.

# Thursday

[**MATTHEW 5:14-16**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%205&version=NIV)

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

[**MATTHEW 5:17-20**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%205&version=NIV)

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 anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”* Jesus makes it clear that he did not come to set aside what God requires of man. The Gospel is not a substitute for obeying God’s law. Does this go against the way you understand the Gospel? Is this salvation by works?
3. How are we as Christians to practise and teach the commands of God (the Law and the Prophets)? What is the fundamental requirement of the Law and the Prophets (see Matthew 22:37-40)? How does this connect with Jesus’ assertion that as Christians we are salt and light to the community?
4. *“For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”* How are we, who are saved by faith, to regard Jesus’ assertion here that our righteousness must surpass that of the Pharisees?
5. The bible teaches that through Christ we have been made perfect. *“For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy (Hebrews 10:14)”* Christ, by his death, has enabled us to be righteous in God’s sight. *“... God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us (Romans 5:5).”* Christ’s victory has enabled us to receive the Holy Spirit who will empower us to love God and love one another and love our neighbour. Write down a prayer in response.

# Saturday

[**MATTHEW 5:17-20**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%205&version=NIV)

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

**SALT AND LIGHT**

*“But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.”*

As salt must be salty, a Christian must reflect the Christ he or she follows. It is not that the Christian must fully and perfectly be Christlike—that would be impossible this side of heaven—but he or she as a disciple of Christ must be Christ-ian in some ways (is it about going to church and singing Christian songs, saying grace before meals, being baptised, or about showing love and kindness, being clean and ethical in business, being forgiving and merciful in relationships). Simply put, when people speak of us, we would want to hear words that Jesus himself would be happy to be described by. Not always, of course, but it reflects what people taste of us and what people see in us.

Jesus says that salt that is not salty is useless and should be thrown out. What then is he implying about Christians who claim to follow him but show no signs of it (see Matthew 7:21-23)?

Jesus goes a step further to say that we are sources of light to people around us and so we must be positioned so others may benefit from our light; they may see our good deeds and glorify God. A Christian is not to be in isolation, or be opaque. This doesn’t mean that every Christian must be an extrovert, but our lives must come into contact with others and bless them. Because they experience our “Christ-ianness” they give glory to God. While Jesus does not imply that we should always use religious language like “praise God!” or tell people “it is God who has enabled me to be who I am”, there is the idea that the way our lives impact those around us would cause them to think of God positively. It is not in words but in deed and character, and it is not what we think but what those around us think.

In the simple reference to salt and light, Jesus points out how we should love God and love our neighbour—the very essence of what God commands us to do—the saltiness of Christian salt and the light of Christian lives. Surely before we speak of Christ to those around us, our lives should demonstrate that our Lord deserves their praise and glory.

The Gospel enables this because the sacrifice of Christ cleanses our sin away and we are deemed perfect by God and this in turn allows him to give us his Holy Spirit who pours God’s love into our hearts. As salt and light, we live in ways that allow that love to express itself so that others can see, feel and be blessed by it.

The Christian faith is neither easy nor is it difficult. Rather, it is deep, reaching into our minds, our hearts, our souls, for that is where our salvation is worked out.

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. Do they add anything to your own conclusions?
4. Review the past week. What concerns/joys/events occupy your heart?
5. Write down a prayer in response.