[**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

[**GALATIANS 5:1-12**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians%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.

*Circumcision, a practice that God required of Abraham and his descendents, inducts a person into the Jewish system, the cornerstone of which is submission to the Law. While most of us have no wish to be circumcised, the underlying issues of law and works, grace and Spirit, are relevant. The spirit of law is basically seeking to be righteous by following a set of rules and regulations.*

1. *“I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law.”* Why is Paul so vehemently against circumcision and its implications, especially since circumcision and Law were both God’s initiatives? Does this mean that Christ abolished the Law? Is Paul implying a clash between Christ and the Law? (See Matthew 5:17.)
2. *“You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.”* The Galatians were Christians saved by faith in Jesus Christ (see Galatians 3:1-5), but some people have persuaded them that to continue as Christians, they must adhere to the Jewish system and be circumcised. So Paul declares, *“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.”* What is so wrong about living under rules and regulations as a Christian?
3. *“For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.”* So the problem is when we begin to think that if we can follow a set of rules well we gain “merit”, whereas faith informs us that our only merit is Christ, our hope. Law is about external compliance (be circumcised, obey the law). Grace and Spirit is about inner transformation (love). Faith reminds us that we rest in the grace that Christ won for us (because we can never be perfectly righteous on this side of Christ’s second coming) and we depend on the Spirit’s strength and guidance to grow in love. In God’s eyes, what has real merit (the only thing that counts)? What does it mean?
4. *“Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth?”* This was such a serious matter that Paul cursed those who deliberately confuse genuine Christians about their faith (see Galatians 1:6-9). Are you clear about what the Bible teaches about faith and grace, about justification and sanctification, about being saved and growing in righteousness? Write down a prayer in response.

# Tuesday

[**GALATIANS 5:1-12**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians%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

[**GALATIANS 5:13-18**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians%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. *“You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.”* Simply put, Christ has placed you in a position where once again you have a real choice. Don’t fall into the same trap that Adam did; choose the path of unselfish love that you were created to walk in. What is the difference between serving one another humbly in love and doing the things that we must do as Christians to help fellow Christians in need? Why is this freedom so important? What is the relationship between love and freedom?
3. Why is there such an emphasis on love in the growth and maturity of a Christian? Do you think love is the key/goal to your life as a Christian? What about … (fill in your own priorities such as worship, bible study, evangelism, going to church, CGs, speaking in tongues, serving in church)?
4. *“So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”* In simple language, when you have a choice, choose to listen to the Spirit. *“But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.”* “Walk by the Spirit” as against “Follow a set of rules and regulations.” What can we do to grow in our ability to walk by the Spirit?
5. We think we need rules to contain our flesh. Paul says that is to go backwards and abandon grace. He teaches us to revel in our freedom and in that freedom, we choose to walk by the Spirit and as we learn to choose unselfishly, this will weaken our sinful flesh. Write a prayer to God in response.

# Thursday

[**GALATIANS 5:13-18**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians%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

[**GALATIANS 5:19-26**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians%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.

*I’m grouping the “acts of the flesh” and “fruit of the Holy Spirit” so you can make some comparisons. They are of course artificial groupings but intended to help you think about them rather than see them as random acts.*

1. What you do in hope of pleasure or relief: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery.  
   The fruit of the Holy Spirit: love, joy and peace.  
   Do these “acts of the flesh” bring you what you need? How can “walking in the Spirit” help you?
2. What you do in hope of a better life or future: idolatry (following or imitating someone you admire) and witchcraft (turning to the power of evil); selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy.  
   The fruit of the Holy Spirit: kindness and goodness (wanting the good of others; it’s not about you but others).  
   Do these “acts of the flesh” please God? Is the blessing of God ultimately the better life and future, or do you prefer the life that you hope from these acts? How can “walking in the Spirit” help you?
3. What you do because you cannot control yourself: hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, drunkenness and orgies.  
   The fruit of the Holy Spirit: forbearance, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.  
   Do these “acts of the flesh” do you good or harm you and those you love? How can “walking in the Spirit” help you?
4. Looking at your answers above, which areas are your “flesh” dominating (pleasure/relief, better life/future, self-control)? Which areas is the Spirit strong?
5. Generally the “acts” shape the person and the life but the “fruit” is the shape of the person which is expressed in the decisions and acts you do thus shaping the life. Walking in the Spirit is two-way: acts shaping the person and person shaping the acts. Write down a prayer in response.

# Saturday

[**GALATIANS 5:19-26**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians%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

**FREEDOM TO LOVE**

*It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.*

Christ sets you free so that you will be free! That freedom is precious! Don’t use it to be enslaved again, or to indulge your sinful flesh. Instead, understand that your freedom is to enable you to genuinely love, and so serve one another humbly in love.

Law, or rules and regulations, or the “musts” in your life (I must this, I must that), can only shape you externally. Love works from the inside because love works out of freedom. Compelled love makes no sense and is a mockery of the real thing.

To exercise freedom, we choose. But to choose wisely, we let Scripture teach us and shape our minds, we choose out of love, we choose within the environment of our relationship with God in worship—in remembering, in prayer, in thanksgiving—we walk by the Spirit. And so we act (or not act) not because we must, not because we are compelled to, but because we know it is good, it is right, it is kind, it is constructive, and we have the grace and blessing of the Spirit.

Rather than live by a set of rules and regulations, walk by the Spirit instead. You cannot love a set of rules and regulations and they cannot love you back. The Spirit cares, the Spirit understands, the Spirit teaches, the Spirit trains, the Spirit disciplines, the Spirit forgives, the Spirit encourages, the Spirit empowers. The Spirit has your back. The Spirit is on your side. Walk by the Spirit.

However, the Spirit will not pander to your every desire but instead will teach and shape you so you are genuinely satisfied and in good shape to prosper as he weans you away from the harmful aspects of your being and replaces them with what will truly prosper you: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control.

Everyone is different and the Spirit recognises this. Rules and regulations don’t. If we walk with the Spirit then we should recognise and appreciate the Spirit’s pace with different persons and keep in step with him as well. And so there is no competition with each other; no comparison as to who is better or who is ahead; no judging. We give each other space and freedom and instead we serve one another humbly in love.

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.