[**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

[**2 CORINTHIANS 1:1-7**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+cor+1&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. *“To the church of God in Corinth, together with all his holy people throughout Achaia.”* How does Paul describe himself? And his audience? What is he very conscious of, both himself and his audience? Do you see yourself, and the members of your church, in this way? How would this constrain your response to the church?
3. *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.”* The focus of Paul’s praise is God’s comfort. In what way can we find comfort in God, our Father of compassion? Paul tells us that our experiences of God can in turn bless others as well. Do your experiences of God’s compassion and comfort inspire you to be compassionate and a source of comfort for others as well? Or you have had no experience of God’s compassion and comfort and you need others to comfort you?
4. *“For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.”* Paul asserts that if we are Christians (share in Christ’s sufferings) we will indeed share God’s blessings through Christ (our comfort abounds). Has this been your experience?
5. *“If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.”* Paul sees his experiences as resources for his ministry and in this way finds meaning in all that he goes through. And as the light of God’s answers shine through the dark clouds, those under his ministry will also be blessed. Surely as a member of the church of God, you can also see your experiences in the same light. Write down a prayer in response.

# Tuesday

[**2 CORINTHIANS 1:1-7**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+cor+1&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

[**2 CORINTHIANS 1:8-11**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+cor+1&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. *“We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself.”* Here we are given some idea of why Paul shared so much about comfort. How is it that as servants of God Paul and Timothy had to go through such extreme experiences? Are such experiences God’s punishment for something that he is displeased with? Can we presume that since we are Christians everything will be OK at the end of the day?
3. *“But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again.”* Paul sees the experience of totally relying on God’s power as something worthwhile. What is the value of such experiences? Are such experiences to be sought? In those days during the Roman persecution, many Christians were executed. Does it mean that Paul was wrong in his assertions? How should we understand what Paul is saying here?
4. *“... as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.”* How do our prayers fit into Paul’s big picture understanding of the difficult and even extreme experiences that sometimes are a part of our lives or those in our community?
5. Is there someone, some people, or you yourself, going through a difficult time? How can the perspective Paul shared be a source of comfort and encouragement? Write down a prayer in response.

# Thursday

[**2 CORINTHIANS 1:8-11**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+cor+1&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

[**2 CORINTHIANS 1:12-24**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+cor+1&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. Read vv12-14 carefully. List down what Paul describes as marks of a good Christian leader/teacher/servant. Which of these is most meaningful to you? Why?
3. Paul shared that he has decided NOT to return to Corinth as he originally intended and explains in v23 that it was a decision taken for the good of the Corinthian church; he was not being fickle but consistent in wanting the good of the church. He then turns it into a broader principle, saying, *“For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silas and Timothy—was not “Yes” and “No,” but in him it has always been “Yes.””* How would you understand the point he makes about Jesus? Is he saying that Jesus would never say no to our prayers, or that he will never reject us, or that all he desires of us will always be for our good even though the experience may not always be pleasant, or something else?
4. *“Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.”* What is Paul’s big picture view of our spiritual journey (he refers to both us and you here)—whether you are the servant-leader or a member of the congregation? How does this big picture view make you feel about your own journey with the Lord?
5. *“For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ.”* Write down a prayer in response.

# Saturday

[**2 CORINTHIANS 1:12-24**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+cor+1&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

**CHRIST OF THE “YES”**

The Christian Life has often been described in negative terms. We know much more of what we should not do rather than what we should. Even the positive, like righteousness, is seen in terms that are negative: don’t this, don’t that. As such we are often hard put to hold up our own life as a Christian as an example of the abundance of life.

Paul went through a very negative experience: *“We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself”* but his worldview gave him a positive perspective even in such dire circumstances. *“If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer.”* In fact he even viewed his problems as opportunity for the Christian brethren to pray and to be encouraged when God answers their prayers. *“Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.”*

For Paul the Christian life is not about undergoing great trials and pain for God’s glory; God’s glory is in his compassion, the comfort he bestows, the victory in deliverance, the triumph over death, the vindication of our faith, the consistent expression of his faithfulness.

The Christian life is about experiencing the power of Christ in whom all the promises of God are unleashed. *“I hope that, as you have understood us in part, you will come to understand fully that you can boast of us just as we will boast of you in the day of the Lord Jesus.”* As each walks with the Lord in their own paths, each will have victories to boast of when he comes.

Clearly it is not about living in sunshine and walking among roses, as Paul’s own life demonstrates. During the Roman persecution thousands of Christians died. Paul tells his audience, and he tells us, even in the worst of circumstances the power of Christ can wrest victory from the jaws of defeat as he demonstrated when his own death defeated the power of evil.

Why is Paul so confident? *“Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.”* Because God is at the beginning and the end.

*The question that God asks us in our text this morning is this: Are you living in the fullest enjoyment of God's YES to you in Christ Jesus? Or to put it another way: Have you said yes to all of God's YES to you? Is there any of God's YES to you to which you are saying NO or MAYBE or NOT NOW? Let our consecration to God … be this: This is the decade of my YES to you, O God. I consecrate myself to forsake the NO and the MAYBE and the NOT NOW of my unbelief. And I say YES to everything in your YES to me.* [*John Piper*](https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/all-the-promises-of-god-are-yes-in-christ)*.*

As Christians we have to be optimists because our Lord is the Christ of the “Yes”. We have to choose life, and choose to live, with all that enriches living, because our Lord is the Christ of the “Yes”.

*“For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God.”*

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.