[**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

[**PSALM 42:1-11**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+42&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. What is the Psalmist going through? What is missing? Has it always been like this?
3. What do you think is the cause?
4. What does the Psalmist do to help himself to keep on going? Were his friends helpful? Why not?
5. *Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me.* Ultimately the Psalmist cried out to God; a wordless, shapeless cry from the depths of his being. How did God respond? Were his problems resolved? What changed?
6. *I say to God my Rock, “Why have you forgotten me?”* At this point, the Psalmist is able to speak and articulate his thoughts and feelings to God (vv9-10) and then he repeats his chorus, “Why, my soul, are you downcast? …” Do you think this time it is different (the words are the same)?
7. Does this psalm strike a chord in you? Does it help you in any way? Write down a prayer in response.

# Tuesday

[**PSALM 42:1-11**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+42&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

[**PSALM 10:1-18**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=psalm+10&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. Do the detailed descriptions of the wicked that the Psalmist observes in his community strike a chord in you? Name or describe some that especially upsets you.
3. *He says to himself, “Nothing will ever shake me.” He swears, “No one will ever do me harm.”* They seem to get bolder and bolder, and more and more arrogant. What is the Psalmist’s complaint to God?
4. *His victims are crushed, they collapse; they fall under his strength. He says to himself, “God will never notice; he covers his face and never sees.”* The Psalmist feels for the poor and helpless who are exploited and oppressed. What is his response? What is his dilemma? What does he want God to do?
5. *The Lord is King for ever and ever; the nations will perish from his land.* What certainty did the Psalmist fall back on? In what way does this help him with the problem of evil that he sees?
6. The Psalmist prays in vv12-18. How would you describe his prayer? Can this help shape your prayer for the injustice and the victims of injustice that you see around you? Write down a prayer in response.

# Thursday

[**PSALM 10:1-18**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=psalm+10&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

[**PSALM 130:1-8**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%20130&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. What kind of situation is the Psalmist in? What does he seek? Does he not think God will forgive? Why does it seem to overwhelm him such that his cry is a cry of desperation?
3. What does his hope rest upon? Is it a solid foundation? So what is he waiting for “more than watchmen wait for the morning”? What does the morning represent?
4. Why is it good to “hope in the Lord”? In the context it is about forgiveness and the redemption he seeks with God’s forgiveness. Do you think this is a valid principle for all of life?
5. Are there circumstances in your life now where you should reach out to God in hope? Write down a prayer in response.

# Saturday

[**PSALM 130:1-8**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%20130&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

**DESPAIR AND HOPE**

*People say to me all day long, “Where is your God?”*

I imagine that “people” could often be just voices in your own head, questioning, casting doubt and even mocking your faith.

In the first psalm, the Psalmist shared with us a part of his journey when he experienced unexplained depression, a loss of confidence and optimism, or just a dry spell in his own spiritual experience. Prayers seem to hit the ceiling and fall forlornly back onto the bed. In the second, his experience of the “missing God” had more tangible causes but is no less troubling, with no easy answers available. In the third the Psalmist knows God has every reason to go missing—he has sinned—but finds it difficult to acknowledge his forgiveness. He knows—his theology is sound—yet he waits, while in truth it is God who waits for him.

The truth of the matter is that the real answer to our despair is hope; not the solutions, the change in our circumstances, that we long for. This is not to say that real and tangible solutions may not come our way courtesy of a compassionate and generous God and we must not give up praying to him. But we live in the world and not in heaven. We pray “Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” We ask “Give us this day our daily bread.” And we call on him to “lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.” We do so because we live in the world and not in heaven, yet, “this world is not my home; I’m just a-passing through”. We hope.

Hope is not for sunshine and roses. It is for that darkest valley where we cannot see but need to rely on our inner sight. Hope assures us and hope will see us through to the other side. I will fear no evil; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

Yet in Paul’s summary of the three greatest movements of the heart—faith, hope and love—hope is in the list. Hope is a state of heart that God calls us to, and therefore we know that dark valleys are part and parcel of our journey.

The Psalmist models for us an honest relationship with God, not a triumphalist one. Out of the depths we cry out to God. Why, Lord? Where are you, God? Have you forgotten me, God? Please do something, Lord. And he is there all the time, and he hears us.

*By day the Lord directs his love, at night his song is with me—a prayer to the God of my life.*

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.