[**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

[**EPHESIANS 4:17-24**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%204&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. *“So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.”* Clearly it is not “how Gentiles live” that is the issue but the basis for their lifestyle, which is futile. *“They have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.”* If this life is all there is, then “eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die.” If there is life beyond death, if there is a God who cares about us, and tomorrow is eternity, how should we live? Looking at your choices in life, which thinking dominates your choices?
3. *“You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds.”* Becoming a Christian has to be life-changing because it reflects a fundamental change of mind. Do you think your lifestyle is shaped by the truth that Jesus stands for, which is to be *“like God in true righteousness and holiness”*? Has Jesus been the fundamental driver of what you have become?
4. Or has your life been largely the same, except for a few additional activities such as going to church and participating in its activities?
5. “*They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.”* Paul says that those who live like the Gentiles (in the futility of their thinking) are separated from the life of God and experience a hardening of their hearts (against the things of God). Write down a prayer in response.

# Tuesday

[**EPHESIANS 4:17-24**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%204&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

[**EPHESIANS 4:25-31**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%204&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 each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor.”* As a Christian, you live in truth and not in falsehood. How do you fare in this area?
3. *“In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.* How do you fare in this area?
4. *“Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands…”* How do you fare in this area, *“... that they may have something to share with those in need”* and this area?
5. *“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”* How do you fare in this area?
6. *“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.”* How do you fare in this area?
7. *“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”* While the above are specific practical examples, in general, unrighteous behaviour grieves the Holy Spirit. Does your behaviour grieve or bring joy to the Holy Spirit? Write down a prayer in response.

# Thursday

[**EPHESIANS 4:25-31**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%204&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

[**EPHESIANS 4:32-5:2**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%204&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. *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.* The assumption is that “one another” are involved in each other’s life as they are brothers and sisters in the body of Christ. If “one another” relate like almost strangers then there is no cause to require kindness, compassion and forgiveness. It is in such closeness that forgiveness, kindness and compassion will be frequently called upon. Would this describe your church experience? What is the basis for our forgiving, compassionate and kind spirit towards one another?
3. *Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.* God would have rightly and justly condemned us but chosen instead to love us. This is what God stands for and he sets us the example. Is there a situation in your life where you can choose to love even though you can rightly condemn or take offence or demand just compensation?
4. Paul points out that the basis for God’s call to be kind, compassionate, forgiving and loving is Christ’s generous love towards us and God’s generous love towards us. This is the God we worship and follow. Write down a prayer in response.

# Saturday

[**EPHESIANS 4:32-5:2**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%204&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

**FROM FUTILITY TO ETERNITY**

*So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.*

Futility is the viewpoint that no matter what you do, it will make no difference. Therefore what you do is meaningless. And since what you do is meaningless, you might as well give free rein to whatever you want and like. And so, *“Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.”*

This works both ways. If your choices and your behaviour are basically self-indulgent, destructive and focused on self interest, then futility is still dominant in your thinking. Paul implies here—*”They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts''*—that when we dwell in the negative and destructive then we are separated from the life of God and that will also darken our minds and harden our hearts, because when we dwell in the negative, we are giving the devil a foothold.

But when you become a Christian you are saying that you do not believe that life is futile; you believe in God, in truth and in eternity. Such a fundamental shift in worldview must mean a fundamental shift in behaviour and life choices.

You abandon the negative and destructive forces in your life—bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, slander, malice—and the self-indulgent behaviours—indolence, temper, stealing, unproductive lifestyle—because now what you do makes a difference. Instead you embrace the example of the Lord—*”Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you”* and *“Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God”*—and the example of God—”*Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love*”.

Because God is real, because Christ has saved you by sacrificing himself for you, you can choose to live in the positive and know it makes a difference. Truth, righteousness, holiness, generosity, productive life and constructive words, compassion, kindness, forgiveness—all these are deeply rich and meaningful.

*You were taught … to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

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.