[**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

[**ROMANS 5:12-21**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%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. Look over the arguments in vv12-19: The common factor is the phrase “one man” referring to two different “one man” resulting in two different outcomes; one is Adam and the other is Jesus. What did Adam do and what was the outcome for humanity? What did Jesus do and what is the potential outcome for the sons of Adam?
3. *“Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.”* Here is an interesting pattern: Just as an individual’s sin and disobedience can bring pain to many people, so also an individual’s righteous act and obedience can bring about healing and good to many people. This pattern is of course found in Adam’s sin and Jesus’ obedience. Do you think that our disobedience and obedience can have similar (but of course limited) consequences?
4. *“The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* A simple way of understanding this is that in death (son of Adam without Christ), sin is supreme while in righteousness (through Christ) grace is king; grace will be the overpowering reality to bring about eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Is this about our becoming Christians or about our growth in righteousness (sanctification) as Christians? What do you think grace is all about and why is it contrasted with law? Is grace the same as forgiveness and mercy?
5. *“But where sin increased, grace increased all the more.”* There is no sin that grace cannot deal with. Write down a prayer in response.

# Tuesday

[**ROMANS 5:12-21**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%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

[**ROMANS 6:1-14**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%206&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. *“Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?”* If when a Christian sins God responds with grace, wouldn’t it encourage a Christian to keep on sinning? How does Paul respond to this argument? What is his reasoning?
3. *For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.* What does it mean that we are no longer slaves to sin? Do you think this is theory or reality?
4. *“In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”* Not only do we no longer need to smoke but we now actually enjoy exercising! *“For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.”* What then is grace all about? How would it have been if we are under the law and we sin?
5. In vv12-13, how does Paul teach us to respond to the truth of God’s grace in our lives?
6. Does the truth of God’s grace adequately answer the problem of sin in your life? Why is this better than living by a set of rules that we must obey to be righteous? Write down a prayer in response.

# Thursday

[**ROMANS 6:1-14**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%206&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

[**ROMANS 6:15-23**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%206&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. *“Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace?”* If we are not under the law, and so there is no fear of punishment and condemnation, what is to stop us from just going ahead and sin? What do you think? How does Paul answer this?
3. *“Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?”* Firstly, while you may be free from the power of sin, if you offer yourself voluntarily to sin then you go back to being a slave to sin. Secondly, the problem with sin is that it is not merely a different choice from righteousness—it corrupts (death). If you choose to undo all that Christ has done for you, can you be sure you are saved? If you choose to affirm all that Christ has done for you, will you not be confident you are on the right track?
4. *“What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.”* What is so wonderful about sin that you are so desperate to return to it? *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* What do you want when you choose to follow Jesus? What will result as you choose to reject sin and embrace righteousness?
5. *“Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness.”* As a Christian facing temptations, sinful desires and sinful choices, together with encouragement to love, patience, self-control (fruit of the Holy Spirit), a desire to please God and obey him, and good choices for righteous response, how can we choose to go down the right paths? As we do so, how does grace help us?
6. Our faith is expressed in the choices we make and we can make free choices because in Christ we are no longer slaves to sin. We make these choices daily. When we fail, God meets us with forgiveness, mercy and grace. With grace we can do better next time and in time we will find it natural to choose righteousness. Write down a prayer in response.

# Saturday

[**ROMANS 6:15-23**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%206&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

**GRACE**

*But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Someone taught me to distinguish between forgiveness, mercy and grace. Forgiveness is to set aside the offence the offended party feels that was caused by the wrong that you did. It is dealt with on the side of the one offended. Mercy is to set aside the justified punishment or response that you are due for the wrong that you did. Grace is to give you the good (or the good response) that you do not deserve, and often in a context where you deserve the opposite.

Clearly then, grace is the fullest and most positive response God can give us with respect to our sin. In grace is God saying to us, “Not only do I forgive you, not only do I set aside the penalty for your sin, I also help you; I give you the resources you need to overcome; I am patient with you; I love you as if you are already perfect; and ultimately, I bless you.”

Grace is God’s response not for anything that we are or have done, but for Christ’s obedience and sacrifice.

In most people’s minds there is scepticism as to the effectiveness of grace as the means to righteousness. We tend to think that fear is stronger than grace to bring about change. We think that hunger will compel a person to overcome the obstacles to change. Paul however tells us that sin reigns in death but grace reigns in life. The soul that is saved responds to grace; the unrepentant soul responds to sin. Grace is the fuel to produce true righteousness, not compulsion or threats.

What does grace do?

When we are under grace, we turn to God for his resources when we are struggling with sin. Paul tells us that the repentant soul is set free from the power of sin because we are no longer under law but grace. Even more, under grace the repentant soul is alive to God, responsive to him and all that he stands for.

Paul then tells us, “Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness.”

We yield ourselves to God because we trust him to respond to us in grace, and we ask him to mould us as his instrument of righteousness. And because we are under grace and not law, we can do so every time we struggle. “But where sin increased, grace increased all the more.”

There are those who think that grace can be abused but Paul warns that sin enslaves and when a soul that is freed from sin willingly submits to sin, that soul will once again be enslaved. Sin brings about death (corrupts us to the point we no longer respond to God). There is no reason to abuse grace to go back to sin. Sin is its own punishment.

*“But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

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.