[**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

[**JOSHUA 7:1-9**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua%207&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. *“But the Israelites were unfaithful in regard to the devoted things; Achan son of Karmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So the Lord’s anger burned against Israel.”* Although it was one person, Achan, who disobeyed and brought the forbidden items into the Israelite camp, the Israelites were deemed unfaithful and the Lord’s anger burned against Israel. Why (see Joshua 6:18)? Why not just against Achan? What do you learn about God?
3. Why was Israel defeated by Ai? Was it because they underestimated the opposition? Did Joshua make a mistake? What resulted from the defeat?
4. *“Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell facedown to the ground before the ark of the Lord, remaining there till evening.”* What does this posture communicate?
5. Vv7-9: Was Joshua questioning whether God has gone back on his word to him? Was he apologetic because he (Joshua) failed? Did he think that maybe taking Canaan was a little too ambitious for Israel? What were the feelings that Joshua was trying to communicate? What do you think was Joshua’s assessment of the situation? Do you think he went too far in what he said to God? Why or why not?
6. *“What then will you do for your own great name?”* Joshua wondered if God was asking Israel to do what they were not ready to do. The defeat tarnished the name of God and he wondered what God was prepared to do for his own great name. How do you respond when you face defeat in your own life? What would you ask of God? Write down a prayer in response.

# Tuesday

[**JOSHUA 7:1-9**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua%207&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

[**JOSHUA 7:10-13**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua%207&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. *“Stand up! What are you doing down on your face?”* Why did God say this in response to Joshua? Why doesn’t God want Joshua to be prostrate? Do you think he was pleased with what Joshua said to him? Did God rebuke Joshua? Why not?
3. *Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions.* God tells Joshua what had actually happened but said nothing about Joshua’s failure to inquire after God when he decided to go up against Ai. Why?
4. *“That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction.”* What was the consequence of the sin of Achan? Do you think this was the result of sin (surely the Israelites are not righteous?), the presence of “devoted things” (is God so weak?), or the consequence of what God promised would result from their failure to comply? Do you think we as Christians are in the same position as the Israelites, in that when we sin God leaves us vulnerable?
5. *“Go, consecrate the people. Tell them, ‘Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow; for this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: There are devoted things among you, Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove them.’”* What was Israel to do about the sin of Achan? What does it mean to consecrate yourself? Why is this important? Write down a prayer in response.

# Thursday

[**JOSHUA 7:10-13**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua%207&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

[**JOSHUA 7:14-26**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua%207&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 did God instruct Joshua to do?
3. *“Whoever is caught with the devoted things shall be destroyed by fire, along with all that belongs to him.”* The penalty is death. Do you think this is too harsh? *“I coveted them and took them.”* In itself it sounds like a small thing. It did not require thinking or planning. Yet the consequence was that 36 of his countrymen died and so will he. How do you feel about this? How did God feel about it?
4. *Joshua said, “Why have you brought this trouble on us? The Lord will bring trouble on you today.” Then all Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them.* What lesson did Israel learn that day?
5. *“My son, give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, and honor him. Tell me what you have done; do not hide it from me.”* In confession and repentance we honour and fear God. When we deny and hide, we dishonour him. While his sin had to be dealt with for the sake of Israel, Joshua was advising Achan to set right his relationship with God. Write down a prayer in response.

# Saturday

[**JOSHUA 7:14-26**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua%207&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

##### SIN AND CONSEQUENCE

*“When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them.”*

It was all so easy. Achan saw, coveted and took what he coveted. He knew he shouldn’t. Joshua had commanded that all silver and gold will go into God’s treasury. It would appear that for all his experiences in the wilderness, he did not think that God is one who will know what he has done or at least, wouldn’t be bothered.

This, however, is how God saw it: “Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions.” And this is God’s judgement: Whoever is caught with the devoted things shall be destroyed by fire, along with all that belongs to him. He has violated the covenant of the Lord and has done an outrageous thing in Israel!’

“Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep.”

Joshua was unaware of what had happened. He was focused on the military campaign and, to my mind, did not pay enough attention to the concerns of God. Having witnessed the might of God to bring down the walls of Jericho, that put the fear of God into all the inhabitants of Canaan, he inexplicably decided to deal with Ai without the help of God. And when things went horribly wrong, blamed God.

God’s patience with Joshua and restraint in responding to him is revealing. Joshua was, after all, new to the role of leading a nation of God’s people. He had stepped into the shoes of Moses on the promises of God to “never leave you nor forsake you.” God was true to his promise.

Joshua thus learned a valuable lesson, one that he would take to heart after he defeated Ai in chapter 8. “That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction.” Israel’s might is the God who stands with them and Joshua’s most important task is to ensure that Israel remains true to their covenant with him.

It is important that we do not confuse God’s relationship with Israel and his relationship with us as followers of Jesus. That covenant was based on Law; compliance with the terms of the covenant. God’s relationship with us as Christians is based on Grace; God’s favour extended to us in response to the obedience and sacrifice of Jesus. God’s commitment to us is based on his commitment to Jesus.

However, it would be foolish of us to think therefore that our actions—our trivialising of God’s concerns and commands, our allowing sinful practices, sinful behaviour and sinful values to take root in our minds and hearts—have no effect on God’s relationship with us. Paul in Ephesians 4:30 warns us not to grieve the Holy Spirit and in 1 Thessalonians 5:19, not to quench the Holy Spirit. Our relationship with God is spiritual and allowing sin, unconfessed and unrepented sins, to fester will certainly compromise the power of God’s presence with us and in us.

Israel suffered the consequence of Achan’s sin but Achan died for his own sin before God’s relationship with Israel could be restored. In our case, Jesus died for our sin. Sin is never trivial; never inconsequential.

*Joshua said, “Why have you brought this trouble on us? The Lord will bring trouble on you today.”*

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.