[**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 8:1-2**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua%208&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 not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”* God frequently used this phrase with Joshua. What do you think it means for Joshua? What has he to be afraid of, and why was he in danger of discouragement? Or do you think it was just a general encouragement? Do we, in our daily lives, need this reminder?
3. *“Take the whole army with you, and go up and attack Ai. For I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai, his people, his city and his land.”* What is different this time in the approach to Ai from before? Why do you think God wants Joshua to take the whole army when, in the eyes of Joshua’s spies, two or three thousand would have been sufficient (see Joshua 7:3)?
4. *“You shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king, except that you may carry off their plunder and livestock for yourselves.”* What was different in God’s instructions regarding plunder this time? Why the difference from the Jericho campaign? What does it tell you about God and his instructions?
5. *“Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”* There will be times when you fail and you sin even as you try to do God’s work. There is a need to be clear that God accepts our repentance and removes our guilt every time. There is no stain, no lingering residue that might continue to affect God’s relationship with us. We can move on with confidence. God holds no grudges. Write down a prayer in response.

# Tuesday

[**JOSHUA 8:1-2**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua%208&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 8:3-29**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua%208&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 Joshua and the whole army moved out to attack Ai. He chose thirty thousand of his best fighting men and sent them out at night with these orders: “Listen carefully. You are to set an ambush behind the city.”* How did Joshua obey God’s instructions? What can you learn from his example?
3. *Early the next morning Joshua mustered his army, and he and the leaders of Israel marched before them to Ai.* Once again, what is the difference in Joshua’s attitude towards the Battle of Ai from the first Ai campaign? What can you learn from Joshua’s example?
4. There was a degree of maturity in Joshua’s military tactics in this campaign. Do you think these tactics came from God or were the ideas of Joshua and his military leaders? Note that the instruction to set an ambush behind the city was from God.
5. *For Joshua did not draw back the hand that held out his javelin until he had destroyed all who lived in Ai. But Israel did carry off for themselves the livestock and plunder of this city, as the Lord had instructed Joshua.* Right up to this point you read that Joshua faithfully carried out God’s instructions. Do you think this was the right response from Joshua? What about you? Have you been careful to be faithful in carrying out God’s instructions? Write down a prayer in response.

# Thursday

[**JOSHUA 8:3-29**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua%208&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 8:30-35**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua%208&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. Joshua had learned the hard way that his first and most important duty is to safeguard Israel’s relationship with God, by obeying his instructions fully. Israel’s success depended on God being on their side. Once the Ai campaign was concluded successfully, what did Joshua do? Do you think Joshua’s lesson learned is something that you should consider, that God’s presence in your life makes a vital difference? If you think so, what should you do?
3. *“There, in the presence of the Israelites, Joshua wrote on stones a copy of the law of Moses. All the Israelites, with their elders, officials and judges, were standing on both sides of the ark of the covenant of the Lord, facing the Levitical priests who carried it. Both the foreigners living among them and the native-born were there.”* As you read of this solemn ceremony performed in the presence of all Israel, what do you think is the message to everyone present? (Remember Joshua 1:8). What can you learn from this?
4. *Afterward, Joshua read all the words of the law—the blessings and the curses—just as it is written in the Book of the Law. There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua did not read to the whole assembly of Israel, including the women and children, and the foreigners who lived among them.* That emphasis—there was not a word … that Joshua did not read to the whole assembly of Israel—being careful not to miss out anything, comes through very strongly. Do you have the same care towards the Word of God? Do you think this is something that the church should be mindful of? Write down a prayer in response.

# Saturday

[**JOSHUA 8:30-35**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua%208&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

##### REPENTANCE AND CONSECRATION

*“Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”*

It is interesting that God made it a point to repeat the encouragement he gave to Joshua at the beginning of his commissioning. The matter is dealt with, we’re good, let’s move on. This, I believe, should be our understanding of God and his relationship with us. Sin gets in the way and weakens us. We repent of our sin as we are made aware of it. Then we believe God’s promise that he forgives us on the basis of Jesus’ sacrifice. And we move on.

Paul in Romans 8 tells us that “Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.” ([Romans 8:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=romans+8&version=NIV)). I believe that this means we don’t dwell on our sin; we move on to set our minds on what the Spirit desires.

Satan casts doubts on our sincerity, our resolve to turn away from sin; he wants us to mull over our failure and work up appropriate emotions of regret, shame and sorrow. The truth of the matter is that these things are not what moves God to forgive; it is the intercession of Jesus and his sacrifice for us that moves God. So, do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Turn your attention once again to God’s word and follow him.

Joshua learned well his lesson. He humbled himself and followed God’s instructions carefully. And victory followed. But what he did after the victory underlines just how much he has taken to heart God’s instructions.

As you step back and watch the whole of Israel—every man, woman and child, including the foreigners living among them—silently watch as Joshua wrote God’s Law onto stone tablets, and then solemnly read those words aloud to his audience, you will surely sense how it is now imprinted on them that they are a people of God’s Word. Everyone must be mindful of God’s Word. And fresh from the victory over Ai, just after that ignoble defeat that caused their hearts to melt with fear and despair, after that tragic episode where they all stoned Achan to his death, everyone must know that Joshua is telling them that God’s Word is the difference between defeat and victory. Their survival and their success depends on God.

*“Do what the Lord has commanded. See to it; you have my orders.”*

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.