**TIME ALONE WITH GOD**

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 and Tuesday

[**PROVERBS 1:1-7**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=proverbs+1&version=NIV)

Please go to this page, [New Format](http://timealonewithgod.org/new-format/), where I explain the rationale for this new format. Let me know whether you find the changes helpful or not. Thanks.

Remember this is your time alone with God. It is a time to tell God what is on your mind (thinking back over the past day), listen to him speak to you (reading and meditating on a bible passage), and finally, to respond to him (prayer). The questions are there to help you do this. Ignore them if they do not help. If your time is limited, I suggest that you don’t do everything in one go but spread them over the two days.

1. Take time to be quiet so you can focus on your time alone with God. Recall and briefly write down any significant things that happened or occupied you during the past day. Share with God what you thought or felt. Pray also for those he has laid on your heart.
2. Read [PROVERBS 1:1-7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=proverbs+1&version=NIV). Write down what you think the passage is about and what it says to you. Feel free to use the questions in “Further Thoughts” to help you think over the text.
3. What is God saying to you? Write down a prayer in response.

**Further Thoughts**

1. This introductory passage tells us that the book is about Wisdom, Knowledge, Insight, Prudence, Right, Just and Fair. What do you think Wisdom is all about? Spend a bit of time on what each of the other words means and how they each describe some aspect of wisdom. Which of them attracts you the most, that you think will be most helpful to you to possess? Why?
2. Solomon associates these words with attributes like Discretion, Prudent Behaviour, Discernment and Understanding. Describe the person who is well instructed in these Proverbs. Is this someone you would like to become?
3. Solomon tells us that these are people who “listen and add to their learning”, who “receive instruction” and “get guidance” and who are “doing what is right, just and fair”. What kind of people would be well described in this way? Would you be such a person?
4. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.* Finally Solomon tells us that the prerequisite quality in a person who will be wise, is the fear of the Lord. This is not the fear of evil or punishment or pain. How would you describe a person who has the fear of God in him? He also tells us that those who do not value wisdom and instruction are fools, unable to be trained in the wisdom of life and of God. Do you agree? Do you think Solomon is talking about the proverbs he wishes to share, the wisdom that comes from the Bible, or just wisdom and instruction in general?
5. *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.”* All of these qualities God imparts and the fear of him is the key to receiving God’s wisdom. Do you think all that Solomon has been speaking of are qualities that a Christian should reflect?

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**PROVERBS 1:8-19**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=proverbs+1&version=NIV)

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1. Take time to be quiet so you can focus on your time alone with God. Recall and briefly write down any significant things that happened or occupied you the past day. Share with God what you thought or felt. Pray also for those he has laid on your heart.
2. Read [PROVERBS 1:8-19](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=proverbs+1&version=NIV). Write down what you think the passage is about and what it says to you. Feel free to use the questions in “Further Thoughts” to help you think over the text.
3. What is God saying to you? Write down a prayer in response.

**Further Thoughts**

1. *“My son, if sinful men entice you, do not give in to them.”* What do these men propose? How does Solomon describe such people? Who do you think is the victim? Why is it foolish to join them in their schemes?
2. *“Such are the paths of all who go after ill-gotten gain; it takes away the life of those who get it.”* Wisdom tells us that ill-gotten gain ultimately brings death. Why so?
3. Do you think ill-gotten gains are still attractive nowadays? What would be modern versions of such schemes? How can people fall prey to such schemes?

# Friday and Saturday

[**PROVERBS 1:20-33**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=proverbs+1&version=NIV)

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1. Take time to be quiet so you can focus on your time alone with God. Recall and briefly write down any significant things that happened or occupied you the past day. Share with God what you thought or felt. Pray also for those he has laid on your heart.
2. Read [PROVERBS 1:20-33](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=proverbs+1&version=NIV). Write down what you think the passage is about and what it says to you. Feel free to use the questions in “Further Thoughts” to help you think over the text.
3. What is God saying to you? Write down a prayer in response.

**Further Thoughts**

1. *“How long will you who are simple love your simple ways? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge?”* Do you think that in general people are like this, refusing to think, preferring to disparage and make fun of righteousness, rejecting God’s truth? What about you?
2. *“Repent at my rebuke! Then I will pour out my thoughts to you, I will make known to you my teachings.”* Those who turn to Wisdom, Wisdom will teach them. But those who do not will not receive sympathy or help when they desperately need wisdom. How can we become wise? When should we choose to learn to be wise? When will it be too late?
3. *“For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them; but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm.”* This is Wisdom speaking but don’t you think it is also the voice of God?

# Sunday

##### THE WISE LISTEN AND FOOLS HATE KNOWLEDGE

*“How long will you who are simple love your simple ways? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge?”*

[Matthew 13:10-12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=matthew+13&version=NIV) is a very interesting account where the disciples asked Jesus, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?” Jesus replied saying, “Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.” There is a positive cycle and a negative cycle; there is no in-between.

The “you” are the wise, those that listen, those who understand the value of what they are taught, those who treasure what God wants to teach. What they learn will give them the capacity and hunger to learn even more and Jesus says, “they will have an abundance”; there is no limit.

“Them” are the simple, the foolish, those who do not appreciate what God teaches, those who mock the things that God recommends, those who would not take the time to pay heed to his warnings and reproach. Solomon in Proverbs 1 tells us, “For the simple are killed by their turning away, and the complacency of fools destroys them.” Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.

The key to life, wisdom, surely must come from God the Creator of life. This is why the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. (Fear, of course, does not mean being frightened of or scared of as if God is evil and harsh, but rather understanding and acknowledging who he is in the whole scheme of life.) If instead we choose to learn from those around us who have limited experience and limited resources, who tell us with simple logic that the easiest and quickest way to get rich is to rob and steal from others (for example) and we agree with their irresistible logic, and deny the wisdom that God teaches, then who can set us on the right path?

And so Solomon portrays Wisdom as calling out on the streets, “Out in the open wisdom calls aloud, she raises her voice in the public square; on top of the wall she cries out, at the city gate she makes her speech: “How long will you who are simple love your simple ways? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge?”

The only way back is to repent and trust (again) the wisdom of God. God is patient and generous. Those who repent he will embrace. “Then I will pour out my thoughts to you, I will make known to you my teachings.” But those who disregard him will learn the truth only when it is too late. “They will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes.”

*“But whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm.”*

1. Review the answers/thoughts you wrote down in the past week. Read the short sharing above. Does it add anything to your own thoughts?
2. What is God saying to you? Write down a prayer in response.