**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

[**ISAIAH 55:1-3**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah%2055&version=NIV)

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 [ISAIAH 55:1-3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah%2055&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. *“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.”* It is very likely that Isaiah’s audience were in dire straits. Do you think this is about food and drink or something more? What is the underlying message from God? Do you think there is any significance to the unusual phrasing, to “buy without money and without cost”? Why not just say, “take, it is free”?
2. *“Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy?”* The follow-up question highlights the fact that what the Israelites were getting for their hard-earned resources were a) not the real thing; and b) does not satisfy. Do you think the question is relevant to us today? What is the alternative, according to God? Is this a viable alternative? Does it provide real solutions?
3. *“Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare.”* God characterises what he offers as “good, delightful and rich”. What is it that he offers (see v3)? How is it good, delightful and rich for your soul?
4. *“Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live.”* Pay attention! Listen! Come! A few weeks ago we were considering what Jesus taught, in Matthew 13, that only those who “understand” will turn so that he will heal them. Here it is again. Do you turn to God to seek what your soul truly needs, that which is good, delightful and nourishing for your soul? This is not just about your salvation, but the ongoing redemption of your soul.

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**ISAIAH 55:3-7**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah%2055&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 [ISAIAH 55:3-7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah%2055&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. *“See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a ruler and commander of the peoples.”* Is it possible that this is a prophecy of Jesus (linking to the reference to David in v3)? A witness tells or reveals, points or directs, attests to or confirms. In the context of Isaiah 55, what is he a witness of? Who is he to be a king of?
2. *“Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations you do not know will come running to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor.”* “You” here is the “him” in the previous verse, as the prophet now addresses him directly. What do you think is referenced by “nations you do not know”? Combined with the assertion that this will happen because of the “Holy One of Israel”, what will the peoples that the Messiah is king over, be in composition?
3. *“Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.”* “Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near.” There is a time frame, an optimal period to take advantage of this extraordinary offer of God. Why is this so? What will happen after this time? How are we to “seek God”, “call on him”, “turn to the Lord”, “come to him”?

# Friday and Saturday

[**ISAIAH 55:6-13**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah%2055&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 [ISAIAH 55:6-13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah%2055&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. *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord.* Following from the call to repent and forsake evil so that God will pardon and forgive, God asserts his transcendence over man. If indeed the concerns and ways of God are completely beyond our comprehension, much less experience, how should we respond?
2. *“As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater…”* All life depends on the processes and resources that God has built into his creation. All life has been sustained perfectly in all time. How does this truth make you feel about God?
3. *“… so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”* Is it not sensible to believe that God will accomplish his will and purpose perfectly? What do you think?
4. *“You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.”* What does this picture that is painted tell you about that purpose of God that will surely be accomplished?

# Sunday

##### COME!

*“As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater…”*

We have all been brought up to believe that there is no such thing as a free lunch. And even in the context of what God offers, that is true, because what he offers has been wrought at a great cost. And so he tells us, “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.” It is not a cheap feebie; it is the real deal: good, delightful and nourishing; bought at great cost.

Unfortunately though, we have been conditioned to treat unbelievably good deals with suspicion. And so many people prefer to turn to the solutions they can pay for: with money, with effort, with good works, with self-inflicted pain, with sacrifice, with hardship; thinking that these must be good, because they cost us so much.

And God asks, “Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy?”

The truth is, though, that what we need we can never pay for. It is beyond our ability to acquire. Yet still we cannot believe that God would acquire it for us and offer it to us at no cost.

And so God has to persuade us and help us see the truth.

He tells us that he is not like us. He is God! What does he want or need from us? He is love! What ulterior motive would he harbour? Look at creation, he says. I have created the processes and resources needed to sustain your life and required nothing from you. And they have sustained your life perfectly all this time. Do you think it is any different from what I am telling you, offering you now?

For those of us who are thinking that this is about salvation, and we are already saved, please think again. This is about life. Just as God has created a universe that sustains our physical life, he offers himself to sustain our soul and spirit. Come, he tells us. We must not stop coming to him.

*“Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live.”*

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.