**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

[**ACTS 4:1-12**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%204&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 [ACTS 4:1-12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%204&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. *“They seized Peter and John and, because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.”* What happened as a result of the events in chapter 3?
2. *They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: “By what power or what name did you do this?”* How did Peter reply?
3. *“The name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead. … Jesus is ‘the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.’ Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”* List out the details that Peter raised about Jesus: what are the implications of each of them (for example, note that Peter called Jesus the Christ, meaning Messiah)? These details give you a good idea what a person’s faith in Jesus is all about.
4. *“Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them …”* What do you think is the significance of this little detail? What do you think was the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit?

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**ACTS 4:13-22**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%204&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 during the past day. Share with God what you thought or felt. Pray also for those he has laid on your heart.
2. Read [ACTS 4:13-22](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%204&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. *“When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.”* What is the writer implying with these details?
2. *“Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name.”* After hearing Peter’s response, and noting their own observations, what were the religious leaders concerned about and what was their priority?
3. *Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”* What was Peter’s concern and priority? Why such a discrepancy between the religious leaders and Peter?
4. *“After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened.”* It seems that the fact that people had positive views of the actions of Peter and John helped to prevent the religious leaders from being harsh in their response. What lessons can you draw from this about your own efforts to share your knowledge and experience of Jesus?

# Friday and Saturday

[**ACTS 4:23-31**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%204&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 [ACTS 4:23-31](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%204&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. *“On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them.”* Do you think it was a good idea to give the whole congregation a chance to respond to the threats of the religious leaders? Wouldn’t this divide the congregation? What does this convey to you, that Peter and John told the church what the religious leaders had said to them?
2. *“When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God.”* The key word is “together”. What is the essence of their response to the developments in chapter 3 and 4?
3. *“After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.”* Do you think it is significant that the presence of the Holy Spirit was strongly evident ***after*** they prayed? What was the outcome?

# Sunday

##### IN ME YOU MAY HAVE PEACE, IN THIS WORLD YOU WILL HAVE TROUBLE

*“Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”*

In other words, do what you have to do, and help us to do what we have to do. We are looking at you, not at them. The most important thing is your work, your mission, your Gospel.

In John 16, Jesus tells us in no uncertain terms that in this world we will have trouble. But he puts it in the context of our relationship with him and the presence of the Holy Spirit in us. “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:4-5 ESV). “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.” (John 16:13-15 ESV)

In other words, there will be trouble, but focus on your relationship with me and learn from the Holy Spirit.

The community that was born from the preaching of the Gospel took Jesus’ instructions to heart and devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. They took to heart Jesus’ call for them to be his witnesses (see John 15:27). And now, in the face of trouble, they remained firm to their commitment to him.

Interestingly, there is no mention of what they did in order to be “filled with the Spirit”, to “receive the Spirit”, to be “empowered by the Spirit”.

Yet at the same time, we see the movement of the Holy Spirit among them. We see this in the transformation that took place in that community, as they “loved one another”. We see this in their devotion to the Word, to one another, to the Lord; we see this in the signs and wonders that the apostles were able to do; we see this in the boldness of “unschooled” Peter in responding to the religious leaders; and we see this as the church renewed their commitment and faith in the face of trouble, as the room shook and the Christians spoke boldly the Word of God.

There was no plea to God to remove the threats and smoothen the path that they have to tread. They knew to expect trouble because Jesus had already told them. All they asked for was that God would not allow these threats to them to obstruct his work, and that he would enable them to continue with boldness.

*“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”*

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.