**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

[**GENESIS 25:1-34**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%2025&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 [GENESIS 25:1-34](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%2025&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. *Abraham left everything he owned to Isaac.* This chapter marked the end of the story of Abraham. He never saw the fulfilment of God’s promises yet he took seriously what God said, that these promises will be carried on through a son by Sarah his wife (see Genesis 17:15-16) He took care of his other children but it was Isaac who inherited everything. What do you think caused Abraham to hold so steadfastly to God’s promises? Do you think you have faith like Abraham did?
2. *“Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant.”* We saw how the Lord led Abraham’s servant to find Rebekah for Isaac (2022 Devotions Week 2). And now we read of the Lord answering Isaac’s prayer for a child. What do you think these developments would mean for Isaac in his own walk with God? In what ways has your own faith in God been strengthened in the past year? Do you have concrete experiences of God’s hand with you? How so (or why not if you answer in the negative)?
3. *“Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger.”* As the life of this young family developed, the fact of two separate and distinct individuals gave rise to complications: Isaac and Rebekah, Esau and Jacob, and rivalries developed. Yet even before they were born, God had already made his choice as to who would carry on the covenant. What can you learn from this truth? Is the question of fairness relevant?
4. *“So Esau despised his birthright.”* Do you think the outcome of this little manipulation by Jacob was relevant to the overall plan of God? What did it reveal about Jacob and Esau?
5. Paul, in Romans 9, drew from this chapter the fact that God’s choosing of Jacob was not influenced by any other factor except for the mystery of his own purpose, and highlighted the fact that God is surely free to choose. Does this mean that our lives are predetermined? Do Jacob and Esau have a choice as to the kind of persons they will grow up to become?

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**GENESIS 26:1-11**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%2026&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 [GENESIS 26:1-11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%2026&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. *The Lord appeared to Isaac and said, “Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live. Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you.* It is important to bear in mind that all Isaac has at this point were stories that were told to him by his parents. Certainly there were no established records or writings as to how to relate to God. God was being revealed, firstly in the life of his parents and now in his own life. He would have known about the famine and what transpired in Egypt. What is the relationship that God was building with Isaac, telling him not to go to Egypt even though that was the obvious choice, and instead to stay in Gerar?
2. *“Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because Abraham obeyed me and did everything I required of him, keeping my commands, my decrees and my instructions.”* God basically told Isaac that his experience in Gerar will demonstrate the truth of God’s blessing that he has inherited from his father, a blessing that has been strengthened by the obedience of his father. What was the basic message that God gave to Isaac? What was Isaac to expect?
3. *When the men of that place asked him about his wife, he said, “She is my sister,” because he was afraid to say, “She is my wife.” He thought, “The men of this place might kill me on account of Rebekah, because she is beautiful.”* Obviously the inspiration for this response came from his parents. Why do you think Isaac chose to use the same response as his father in similar circumstances—in Egypt (Genesis 12) and later in Gerar (Genesis 20) as well—even though it had been shown to be a flawed strategy?
4. *“When Isaac had been there a long time, Abimelek king of the Philistines looked down from a window and saw Isaac caressing his wife Rebekah.”* Nothing happened to Isaac and his wife even though they stayed in Gerar for a long time. Why did Isaac maintain the charade? How was it that Abimelek (the same name as in Genesis 20, and is probably a royal name rather than a personal name) found out the truth?
5. *So Abimelek gave orders to all the people: “Anyone who harms this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.”* What was the outcome? What conclusion could Isaac draw about what God said to him?

# Friday and Saturday

[**GENESIS 26:12-33**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%2026&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 [GENESIS 26:12-33](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%2026&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. *“Isaac planted crops in that land and the same year reaped a hundredfold, because the Lord blessed him. The man became rich, and his wealth continued to grow until he became very wealthy. He had so many flocks and herds and servants that the Philistines envied him.”* How did Isaac become so wealthy?
2. *Then Abimelek said to Isaac, “Move away from us; you have become too powerful for us.” So Isaac moved away from there and encamped in the Valley of Gerar, where he settled.* In the ensuing antagonism between Isaac and the Philistines, how did the Philistines try to limit Isaac’s ability to grow richer and more powerful? Did they succeed? Why not?
3. *He moved on from there and dug another well, and no one quarreled over it. He named it Rehoboth, saying, “Now the Lord has given us room and we will flourish in the land.” From there he went up to Beersheba. That night the Lord appeared to him and said, “I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham.” Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord. There he pitched his tent, and there his servants dug a well.* What was Isaac’s conclusion from his sojourn in Gerar? How did he respond?
4. *Meanwhile, Abimelek had come to him from Gerar, with Ahuzzath his personal adviser and Phicol the commander of his forces. Isaac asked them, “Why have you come to me, since you were hostile to me and sent me away?” They answered, “We saw clearly that the Lord was with you; so we said, ‘There ought to be a sworn agreement between us’—between us and you. Let us make a treaty with you that you will do us no harm, just as we did not harm you but always treated you well and sent you away peacefully. And now you are blessed by the Lord.”* What was Abimelek’s conclusion about Isaac? How did he respond?
5. What conclusions can you draw from Isaac’s own encounter with the God of his father, that is relevant to your own walk with God?

# Sunday

**THE GOD OF ISAAC**

*“Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live. Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you.”*

I can’t say that God commonly instructs us as directly and specifically as he did with Isaac but then Isaac did not have the benefit of Scripture as we do; all he knew of God were the stories told to him by his parents. What really touched my heart was that God set about to help Isaac know him; which tells me that this is fundamental in any relationship, let alone a relationship with the God of the universe.

Isaac did as instructed; he remained in Gerar. And he did what his father did: claimed his wife to be his sister. I can’t help but think that Isaac wanted to experience what his father experienced; the miracle of God’s protection and care but things turned out differently from his father’s experience. He stayed much longer and became immensely wealthy and powerful as the Lord blessed his ventures in farming and sheep rearing. And though there was potential for problems because he was not local, the Philistines recognised the hand of God upon him and reached out to make peace.

At the end of the period, Isaac himself “built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord.” God had become not just the God of Abraham, but also the God of Isaac.

The question before us is whether we, with all the advantages of Scripture, of the Holy Spirit, and of the example of countless Christians before us, whether we know God in this personal way. We have way more knowledge of God than Isaac ever did; but do we know Him and recognise his hand upon our lives and trust he blesses and continues to bless us?

*“Now the Lord has given us room and we will flourish in the land.”*

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.