**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

[**1 JOHN 1:1-4**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%201&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 [1 JOHN 1:1-4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%201&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. *“That which was from the beginning …”* Considering John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”, what/who is John referring to?
2. *“… which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched …”* “The eternal entered time and appeared to human beings” as John Stott puts it. Why the emphasis that Word/God was an existential fact? Why does the Gospel require a historical Jesus?
3. *“… this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.”* What/who would you understand to be the word of life? What does the description convey to you?
4. *“The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.”* John describes Jesus as “the life” and “the eternal life”. What is the core emphasis of the Gospel as summarised by John? Would this be the way you view the Gospel?
5. *“We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.”* What do you think John means when he speaks of “fellowship” in this context? “You have fellowship with us and we have fellowship with God.” What would this imply about “you” and “God” in this context? What would it imply about “you” and “us”? How then should we understand the relationship of Christians with one another and with God? Would that also mean that Christians are not meant to be in isolation?
6. “*We write this to make our joy complete.”* Whether the “writing” is about the whole letter, or the Gospel as mentioned in the previous verses, John’s final goal is completeness of “joy” meaning that he has the joy but he continues to serve the Gospel in order to complete that joy. In what way can serving the Gospel bring joy? Does being a part of the experience of more and more people entering into fellowship with you and with God bring you joy?

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**1 JOHN 1:5-7**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%201&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 [1 JOHN 1:5-7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%201&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 is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.”* Here is an interesting shift in focus: while the previous verses spoke of Jesus as Life, John now says that Jesus told them that God is Light. This is not about differentiation (Jesus-Life, God-Light) but the expansion of our understanding of who God is. One does not cancel out the other. What would you understand about the theological revelation that “God is Light”? Together with the declaration is the further emphasis that “in him there is no darkness at all”. What would this imply?
2. Light shines, meaning that it shows itself; it does not hide. Light exposes, in that whatever that light shines upon is revealed and brought into the open. Darkness can also mean the absence of such qualities. Do you think that these characteristics of light are relevant in this context, or should we take John’s subsequent emphasis that “in him there is no darkness at all” to mean that the context is only about good and evil?
3. *“If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth.”* This is directly drawn from the previous statement that God is light and in him is no darkness and of course “fellowship” was the result of the proclamation in the earlier verses. What do you think John means by “walk in darkness”? What is the conclusion that John wants us to come to from this?
4. *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”* Once again “fellowship” comes into the picture. What do you think is meant by “walk in the light”? Do you think it is possible for Christians to walk in the light? Is light necessary for fellowship to take place? How does it all come together—purified by the blood of Jesus, walking in the light, having fellowship with one another, or in the sequence that John writes: walk in the light, fellowship with one another, purified by the blood of Jesus? Is there a difference?
5. Just as darkness is excluded in God, our “walking in darkness” will exclude us from fellowship with God and fellowship with one another. This introduces us to John’s style of writing here, which is very black or white. Do you think John is implying that we cannot claim to be saved if we continue to sin, or it is about who we follow, light or darkness, or that in God’s eyes we walk in the light (despite the fact that we may not) because we are cleansed by the blood of Jesus? Or is it something else?

# Friday and Saturday

[**1 JOHN 1:8 – 2:2**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%201&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 [1 JOHN 1:8 – 2:2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%201&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. *“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.”* (See also v10.) Clearly “we” has to be Christians since John includes himself. And it answers the question from the previous session: none of us can claim to be without sin. How can this truth help you in your own struggle with sin in your life (or even that you cannot put your finger on any areas of your life that you would consider sinful and “darkness”)? Is this a reality in your own consciousness of your Christian walk?
2. *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”* So here is the answer to the question in the previous session about the fact that “walking in darkness” excludes us from fellowship with God. Do you think it is important to confess every sin that comes to mind, or always include a “and everything else that I might not even be conscious of” clause when we pray, or this is about stuff that the Lord has laid on your heart, or stuff that has been brought to your attention? Should we vigilantly search our hearts every day or week or live lives in faith that Jesus has already brought us into the light?
3. *“My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.”* So, what essentially is John teaching us?
4. Do you think there is any relevance between the proclamation about the Word of Life and God is Light? Is there any correlation between life and light?

# Sunday

**FELLOWSHIP**

*“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”*

“Fellowship” is the word used to translate “koinonia”. Joseph Henry Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament defines it as “fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation.” Its origin is in the Greek word koinonos, which means partner, sharer, and companion.

John describes being a Christian as “fellowship with God” and those who become Christians then have fellowship with fellow Christians and with God. This is a very intimate and beautiful description of what it means to be a Christian.

Perhaps another expression of this fellowship is in John 17 when, in his prayer, Jesus said:

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”

God is light and so it is not possible for those in darkness to have fellowship with him. But for those who accept Jesus’ invitation to have fellowship with him, who accept the invitation to walk with the light and in the light, the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all unrighteousness, allowing us to have fellowship with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. When we become Christians, bonds develop, with other Christians, and with God. Such bonds cannot exist for those who are not Christians, those who do not walk in the light, those not purified by the blood of Jesus.

This picture of fellowship, bonds between fellow Christians and God gives us a view under the hood of what it means to be a Christian. It explains why John speaks of joy when another is attached to this network of Christians with God at the centre and it alludes to the completeness of joy when that body is finally complete and Christ comes again.

The fact that we are Christians does not mean that we are now sinless. “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” We do sin, but we receive his promised forgiveness when we confess and repent and continue to be purified from all unrighteousness.

God is light and we who walk in the light should not take sin lightly even though Christ has now provided the means to deal with it. “I write this to you so that you will not sin” John says and tells us that when we do sin Christ is the one who advocates for us; he is the one who pays for our sin.

*“He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole 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.