**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 2:3-6**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%202&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 2:3-6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%202&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. *“We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands.”* In the first chapter, John outlined the basics of the Gospel: Life eternal through fellowship with God, made possible by being purified by the blood of Christ, who is the Word of Life. God is light and fellowship with him is only possible as we live in the forgiveness that the blood of Jesus’ sacrifice achieved. So what John tells us now is “post-Gospel”. As Christians, what should we be doing? What will this do for us? What if we don’t?
2. *“Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.”* In other words, as true Christians, we are on a journey to become more like Christ (rather than live in the way that Jesus did). In your mind, what is it like to become more like Christ? Is this your priority in your own journey with Christ?

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**1 JOHN 2:7-8**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%202&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 2:7-8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%202&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. *“Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard.”* Flowing from the thought that the way to know God is by obeying him, the very first step is in the old command, “the message you have heard.” Mark 1:14-15 tells us, *After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”* What then is the first step that led us into the kingdom?
2. *“Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.”* John tells us that the old command, “repent and believe” is now the new command, new because we have passed from darkness into light when we took the first step, and now the process of sanctification is already taking place. Why are we asked to continue to repent and believe? What is the difference between the old command and the new command?
3. Do you think that repentance from sin, believing that we are and continue to be forgiven and that the blood of Jesus would purify us in the eyes of God, should be our practice in obedience to God throughout our Christian life? In the previous verses, John says that when we keep his commands — and John tells us that he commands that we repent and believe — then we know that we have come to know him, that love for God is made complete in us, and that this is the way to “live as Jesus did”. Does this make sense to you? Are these developments in your Christian life something that you want for yourself?

# Friday and Saturday

[**1 JOHN 2:9-10**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%202&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 2:9-10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%202&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. *“Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness.”* Do you think John is saying that a person cannot be a Christian and hate fellow Christians, or that hatred in a Christian must be dealt with because hatred places one in darkness? What do you understand hatred to be: to desire bad for another, acting to harm another, withholding good from another or just the feeling of animosity towards another? Do you think this is specific to fellow Christians or that Christians must not harbour hatred in their heart (regardless of object of hatred)?
2. *“But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them.”* Hatred not only compels you to do bad things, but it also places you in a place that pushes God out, blinds you to the consequences of your actions, and causes you to see only the bad things you want to see in the other person. It feeds itself. Do you think this is true?
3. *“Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him[b] there is no cause for stumbling.” (ESV)* I took the ESV translation because it tells us (see the footnote if you have ESV) that “in him” can be translated as “in it”, meaning that there is nothing in the light that may cause a person to stumble. I think this makes better sense. “Stumbling” would be explained by the next line about being in darkness, not knowing where they are going and being blinded. Light would have the opposite effect. Love opens your heart to God, draws you into his presence, and allows you to tap into his power to heal and purify. What would you understand by love: a warm feeling towards another, desiring his good, doing things for his good, being interested in the person to spend time with him and share your life/heart with him?
4. Later in the letter, John would tell us that God is love. Having told us already that God is light, it is interesting that he links the two: love brings you into light while hatred attracts darkness. What do you think of this connection? In what John tells us in these verses about obedience, repentance and faith, and love, how is he teaching us about maintaining our fellowship with each other and with God?

# Sunday

**THE JOURNEY**

*“Whoever says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.”*

The simplest way to understand what John is telling us is that a Christian must be on a path that leads to knowing God, loving him and therefore being like Christ. It doesn’t make sense to say that you are a Christian but you do not wish to obey him, you have no desire to know him, you have no love for him or for all that he stands for, and there is no evidence at all that you seek to become like Jesus. Such a Christian is a liar. He is not a Christian at all.

Of course we are talking about a journey of many steps but as John says, “the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.” The destination is clearly marked out by John’s assertions. Becoming a disciple of Jesus, coming into fellowship with God, is not about raising a hand, saying a prayer, performing rituals weekly or yearly. You come into fellowship with God who is light and ultimately you are to become light. The first step is to repent and believe, and this deals with your sin and lets you into the kingdom. From there God seeks to deal with your sin, to dispel your darkness and to bring you more and more into light.

John sets out two principles that must undergird our journey: 1) repent and believe; and 2) love. The first deals with the darkness that we continue to harbour in us while the second dispels the darkness. The first is like medicine that helps keep the darkness at bay while the second is like medicine that fights the darkness.

*“… the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.”*

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.