

# "Silence and Solitude"

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## Overview



We live in a noisy world. The combination of advertising, internet messaging, news feeds, media blitzes and more make for a virtually unending stream of information demanding our attention.

On the one hand it can be quite exhilarating - there's always something new to see, some new idea to explore. However the incessant clamor can sometimes leave us searching for a break from the communication onslaught.

And so we may go seeking for some silence and solitude...only to find that now the lack of background noise is unsettling. Despite such discomfort, this lesson suggests we should seek out periods of solitude so that we can hear what we truly need to hear.

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## Getting Started



1. What is the longest amount of time you have spent completely by yourself? What were the circumstances? Was it a good experience or a bad one?
  2. Given the choice, would you rather have some noise running in the background (TV, music, internet, etc.) or not? Can you give a reason for your preference?
  3. How often do you typically go without checking your email, phone, or Facebook? How long do you think you could avoid checking these things without feeling anxious?
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## The Text



<sup>10</sup> He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth."

Psalm 46:10 (NIV)

<sup>35</sup> Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Mark 1:35 (NIV)

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## The Audio (optional)



"Silence and Solitude" - by Kyle Corbin, Nov. 3/19

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## Understanding



1. In Psalm 46:10, what two actions does the Psalmist call the reader to perform? How do you understand these two actions being lived out?
2. Why do you think the Psalmist calls for "stillness" here? Is it optional? Why or why not?
3. Read Psalm 46 in its entirety. What are the truths about God being reinforced? How could such truths be helpful to us?
4. What beliefs about God are we demonstrating when we practice the things called for in Psalm 46:10? Consider Isaiah 30:1-15.
5. How does being silent before God help our relationship with Him? (Check out Eccl. 5:1-2, John 15:5).
6. Jesus seemed to value times of solitude in His life. Review the different times Jesus chose solitude during His ministry. For each one study the context and consider how solitude would have been helpful for Jesus (consider Matt. 4:1-11, Luke 6:12, Matt. 14:13, Mark 1:35, Mark 6:31, Luke 5:16, Matt. 17:1-9, Matt. 26:36-46).

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## Applying



1. Are silence and solitude connected? In what way? Can you have one without the other?
2. How is loneliness different from solitude (in the way Scripture depicts it)? Which one do you experience more?

3. What factors might make people uncomfortable with solitude and silence? Which of these factors (if any) might cause you to avoid seeking solitude? Is it wrong to neglect solitude in our lives? Why or why not?
4. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being "I have no need" and 10 being "I need it right now"), how would you rate your need for solitude in your life today?
5. How and where could you potentially find more silence and solitude in your daily routine? In your week? In your year?
6. Consider the following practical suggestions for pursuing silence and solitude (and identify one or two steps you will take in the coming week to help develop this discipline in your life):
  - a) Find a time and place that works well for you.
  - b) Set a goal (start with a small amount and work your way up).
  - c) Practice
    - i) Put your phone and other distractions away.
    - ii) Find your place.
    - iii) Begin with prayer.
    - iv) Continue by "abiding in the vine" (practice the presence of God).
    - v) Practice other disciplines (study, confession, etc.)
    - vi) Close in prayer.
  - d) Remember:
    - i) There is no pass or fail for this.
    - ii) Know that your mind will start working overtime.
    - iii) If you fall asleep, view it as a blessing or teaching moment.

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### Memory Verse(s)



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Psalm 46:10 (NIV)

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### Extra Resources



- ❖ *"Silence and Solitude"* by Pastor Kyle Corbin ("Immanuel Church" website, Nov. 3, 2019). Pastor Kyle provides some practical suggestions for incorporating more silence and solitude into our spiritual walk.
- ❖ *"The Discipline of Solitude"* by Richard J. Foster (chapter 7 of "Celebration of Discipline" by Richard J. Foster, HarperOne, 2018, pp. 96-109). Foster recounts the experience of many saints of old and outlines some practical steps regarding solitude.
- ❖ *"Get Alone With God"* by David Mathis ("Desiring God" website, Jan. 11, 2017). Mathis uses this article to explain why we should take joy in being alone with Jesus.