



THE REST OF YOUR LIFE

DIGGING DEEPER

SOLITUDE & SILENCE

JUNE 9

Solitude is the answer to problem of distraction.

Work through the following questions and scriptures on your own, and get together with your running partner, life group, or friends and family to talk through what you are learning.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you enjoy being alone? What is your favorite way to spend time by yourself?
2. Do you enjoy silence or do you try to avoid it at all cost? Explain.
3. John Mark Comer, author and founder of Practicing the Way, a holistic guide to integrate spiritual formation into your life and community, claims that “**Distraction is one of the greatest threats to spiritual health in the modern world.**”
 - Do you experience this to be true in your own life?
 - What are the greatest distractions in your life currently that get in the way of you growing in your relationship with Jesus? Or if you don't yet follow Jesus, what are the distractions that keep you from exploring who He is?
4. Read **Luke 5:15-16, Mark 1:35-39**
Make some observations about this passage (What does the text say?):
 - What do you notice and what are you curious about?Make some interpretations (What does the passage mean?)
 - What do you learn about humanity?
 - What do you learn about following Jesus?Now make some applications (what's my response?)
 - How are you encouraged, challenged, or convicted by this passage?
 - What should be our response to this passage?
5. In what ways should practicing silence and solitude help us know Jesus more?
 - In what ways should practicing silence and solitude help us become more like Him?
 - In what ways should practicing silence and solitude make us counter-cultural?
6. What role does silence and solitude play in your relationship with God? How have you encountered God in that place?
 - If it doesn't play a role, what keeps you from it?

7. Read **Matthew 4:1-11**.

- What enabled Jesus to resist the “tempter” after spending 40 days in silence and solitude? What foundation did He have?
- Why might it be important to have this foundation when intentionally entering silence and solitude, especially long periods of it?

8. How can you begin incorporating this ancient practice in your life and how can your community come alongside you in this?

KEY SCRIPTURE

Luke 5:15-16 Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

Mark 1:35-39 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. Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!” Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

Matthew 4:1-11 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: “He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.” Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’” Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

PRAYER

Guided silent prayer: In your group, have one person lead the group through these prayer prompts:

First, I invite you to close your eyes and take a deep breath, hold it and then exhale. Through this simple, physical act, we remember that God is not far away, in some inaccessible place outside of our world, but right here, closer than your breath. He is here and wants to meet with you. You can also use your breath as prayer to help draw your attention to God with your mind as well as your body. This is an ancient practice called, “breath prayer.” As you inhale and exhale, pray, “Come, Holy Spirit” or, “Lord, have mercy upon me”, or just “Jesus.” Let’s sit in that breath prayer together.

Now, I want us to meditate on the simple thought that God loves you and just wants you in this moment. Don’t try to make anything happen. Imagine Him sitting with you. What does He do? What does He say? There is no agenda other than to be together, to rest together. Let’s just sit in the presence of God for a moment, and I’ll pray to close our time.

End by reflecting on how that experience went for the group. It’s ok if it was hard, it takes time and practice to get used to, and even then there will be times where it is challenging to be still and quiet.

PRACTICE

How are you going to practice silence and solitude this week in the way that God revealed to you? Here are a few guidelines:

Choose a place with the least distractions and noise- this means putting any electronic devices away!

Choose a time and a rhythm- is it first thing in the morning, during your lunch break, right before bed? Remember to start small. Even 5 minutes can be enough to start with. Consider using the prayer prompt above to guide you. Or meditate on a short psalm or scripture passage.

Don't quit- Remember, this is not meant to be easy. Anything valuable in our lives takes discipline to maintain. Do not be surprised or discouraged by the distractions that enter your mind. When you become aware of them, simply draw your attention back to the presence of God and lay your anxious thoughts down.

Reflect- How did you encounter God in this time? How did you encounter yourself? Did you encounter any lies from the enemy? Consider writing these things down.

Share with a friend- We need others to help us on this journey. Who can you ask to check in on how it's going?

Recommended Resources: <https://www.practicingtheway.org/>

Download the Lectio 365 prayer app to help guide you

[Lectio 365 for families](#)