

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES – SILENCE & SOLITUDE

“THE DEEP PLACES” - Psalm 42

Open: Quietness of Courtice

Passion for & listening to God's Word, Prayer,
Simplicity, Meditating on God, Fasting

Today, we look at silence & solitude = deep - diving

What are these disciplines?

Silence – “abstaining from noise for spiritual insight”

- focus on listening
- "internal dialogue" that takes place between us & God

Solitude – “withdrawing to privacy for spiritual purposes”

- can be minutes, day, days, months
 - can either heighten other disciplines (ex. worship, prayer, study) or just to be alone with God - removing distractions
- Ex. retreats, natural surroundings...

➤ Why both? Compliment each other with purpose to deepen us (w/o them we become shallow)

➤ **Psalm 42 - out of his depression**

1- "my soul pants for you O God", 2- "my soul thirsts for the living God", "Where can I go and meet with God?" 6- "my soul is downcast so I will remember you", 7-"deep calls to deep" 5,11- "put your hope in God, I will praise Him my Saviour and my God" = we all have had times of struggle, and if we search out God in silence/solitude, He will deepen our faith in Him!

The challenge? - Our Western Culture is comfortable with noise & crowds - "dead air", "awkward"

- we live in a busy and noisy world so silence and solitude don't seem to fit.
- But they are a human need = restful places, nature/retreats

Why are Silence & Solitude Essential for Christians?

1. Jesus modelled it - remarkable

➤ Prayer

Matt.14:23- 5,000 "went mountainside to pray"

Mark 1:35 - Peter's mil healed, "solitary place to pray"

Luke 5:16 - crowds healing, "often withdrew to lonely places to pray"

➤ Rest

Matt.15:29 - after healing, "mountainside & sat down"

Mark 6:31 - before 5,000, with disciples, hungry, "come with me to a quiet place to rest"

Mark 7:24 - after public challenge to P & tol, 30 miles to Tyre "entered a house, not wanting anyone to know it"

➤ Direction

Luke 4:1 - temptation, full of HS, "led Him by spirit in desert where he was tempted for 40 days" - Matthew = Jesus public ministry starts

Luke 4:42,43 - after healing, daybreak, "solitary place...people "stay!"...Jesus "I must preach God to other towns, because that is why I was sent"

Luke 22:41 - Gethsemane - withdrew to pray, "not my will but yours be done"

** Jesus OFTEN withdrew for the purposes of prayer, rest, affirming God's direction/His purpose!

** to be like Jesus, we must discipline ourselves to find times of silence & solitude

Quote Dallas Willard - *"we must recognize that these "places" are our primary source of strength, as they were for Jesus and Paul. In aloneness, it is possible to have silence, to be still, and to know that Jehovah is God" (Ps. 46:10) - The S. of the D.*

2. **Followers** relied/rely on it to hear from God

- Elijah (I Kings 19) - to meet with God - not in the noise of the powerful wind, tore up the mountainside, nor the pounding of earthquake, nor the rage of fire but a gentle whisper
 - Paul (Gal.1:17-2:1) - after conversion - "did not go to see those who were apostles before I was, but Arabia (3 years) - then Peter and James only" - time to be alone with God
- ** Sometimes we must remove the noise/voices of others to hear from God**

Ex. Noise in the car this week - training to listen

Sarah Edwards (Jonathan Edwards -preacher/ revivalist/ theologian critical part in the 1st great awakening (prot. Eur/Brit. America) and revivals of 1733-1735 - wife Sarah - *"she loves to be alone to be with God...walking in the fields/groves...Always seems to have [God] conversing with her"*

**** We have to find a place, a park, the beach, our neighbourhood, conservation area...for regular solitude so that we can hear from God**

**** Caution - not listening to others, only God**

3. This **discipline** takes us spiritually deeper

- We express our worship to God – Hab.2:20 (the lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth be silent before him), Zeph.1:7 (Be silent before the Sovereign Lord, for the day of the Lord is near.)
- We **express** our faith in God – Ps.62:1-6 (He is my salvation, fortress, rock - I will not be shaken 2x. My hope comes from Him) Is 30:15 (In repentance and rest is your salvation, **in quietness and trust is your strength,**)
- We **understand** ourselves in the light of God's Word - Ex.3-4, Luke 1:20 – Moses/Zechariah our doubts Spurgeon - *"Few men truly know themselves as they really are. To study one's self in the light of God's Word, carefully go over one's condition, and using all the tests*

given in Scripture, would be a healthy exercise. But how few care to go through it"

- James 1:19, 26 (quick to listen, slow to speak, righteousness God desires, tight reign or faith worthless), Prov.17:27-28 (wise use words with restraint) – control

How to

- “Minute Retreats” - brief times of silence
- “Day of Silence & Solitude” - control of noise
- “Get Aways” - brief or long
- “Special Places” - find a place (Jesus' mountainside)

**Billy Graham – Chuck Templeton ... “Lord, what shall I do?”
Moonlight, woods - Placed his Bible on a stump I don't have
the answers but, I accept this Book by Faith as the word of
God” - later recalls this time of Solitude as a shaping one!**

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- _____ – Matt.15:29, Mark 6:31, Mark 7:24
- _____ – Luke 4:1, Luke 4:42,43

2. Followers _____ on it to _____ from God

- Elijah (I Kings 19), Paul (Gal.1:17-2:1)
- “Sometimes we must remove the noise/voices of others to hear from God”*
- Sarah Edwards – *“always conversing with her”*

3. They take us spiritually _____

- We express our _____
Hab.2:20, Zeph.1:7
- We express our _____ Ps.62:1-6, Is 30:15
- We _____ ourselves in the light of God’s Word - Ex.3-4, Luke 1:20 - our _____
Billy Graham – *“Lord, what shall I do?”*
- James 1:19, 26, Prov.17:27-28 – _____

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