

Silence & Solitude -

How do we escape the chaos of life?

In the chaos of the urban, digital age, it's easier than ever before to "gain the whole world, and yet lose your soul." How do we stay emotionally alive and spiritually awake? Among the ancient practices of the way, "Silence & Solitude" is the number one practice for apprenticeship to Jesus. Simply put, it's a moment of intentional time in the quiet to be alone with God. In the modern era, this just might be the first step to a life well lived. This practice involves learning how to remove yourself from the chaos of our modern, digital age to refocus and reconnect with God.

1. TEACHING – Silence and Solitude – Being Renewed:

Read and reflect on the following passages:

Mark 1:35; 6:30-32, 45-46

Luke 5:15-16

Psalm 46:10

Visit <https://practicingtheway.org/practices/silence-solitude> to listen to the following teachings and ideas on how to practice silence and solitude. You can also find recommended readings on this practice.



How do we thrive? Is there a practice from the life of Jesus that could set us up to thrive in the chaos of the overbusy, digitally distracted, noisy, urban world? Yes. It's the practice of silence and solitude. Put simply, it's intentional time in the quiet to be alone with ourselves and God.

<https://practicingtheway.org/teaching/jesus-and-the-lonely-place>

How do we deal with emotion? Silence and solitude isn't for the faint of heart. Often when we slow down long enough to get alone with ourselves and God, we feel all sorts of emotions that we've been frantically trying to outrun in the busyness of our lives. Elijah's story in 1 Kings 19 is a seven-stage pattern for how to move through fear and emotional pain into freedom and joy.

<https://practicingtheway.org/teaching/elijah-and-the-broom-bush>

How do we know who we are? One of the foundational goals of silence and solitude is to get to the place where we know who we are in God. The truth. In this story of Elijah we see a pattern emerge; seven stages that define not only his journey but his experience with God in silence and solitude.

<https://practicingtheway.org/teaching/elijah-and-mt-horeb>

2. PRACTICE SILENCE AND SOLITUDE – *Being intentional:*

This is an EXAMPLE exercise of how you could put silence and solitude into practice:

1. Put away your phone or any other distractions, settle into your time/place, and get comfortable

• For most people, sitting with your back straight, shoulders relaxed, legs on the floor is a good start. Others do better lying on their back in a relaxed position. Some of you may prefer to do this exercise while walking or doing something simple with your hands, like laundry or drawing.

2. Begin with a breathing prayer

- Close your eyes.
- Take long, deep, slow breaths (if you want, count 4 seconds in, 4 seconds wait, 4 seconds out, repeat). Inhale through your nose, exhale through your mouth.
- Then move into praying Psalm 46:10 over yourself. “Be still and know that I am God.” Still yourself. Take some deep breaths. Keep repeating those words, dropping off one phrase at a time, until you are just reminding yourself to “Be.”
- Be still and know that I am God.
- Be still and know that I AM.
- Be still and know.
- Be still.
- Be.
- Release the constant chatter in your mind. Let each thought go as quickly as it comes, and just focus on your breathing.
- Your mind will seize this opportunity to run wild with thoughts, feelings, memories, to do’s, and distractions. That’s okay. Don’t judge yourself, feel bad, give up, or worry. When you notice your mind start to wander, just recenter by repeating Psalm 46:10 and come back to your breathing.
- Do this for a minute or 2.

3. Spend a few minutes “abiding in the vine”

- Transition from your breathing prayer to “the practice of the presence of God.”
- Notice God’s presence all around you, in you. For some people it’s helpful to imagine the Father is sitting in the chair across from you or on a throne.
- Welcome his love, joy, and peace from the Holy Spirit.
- If you want, open your mind and imagination to listen for God’s voice, or get something off your chest in prayer.
- But the main goal here is simply to “be with Jesus.” Don’t feel like you have to “do” anything. Just relax and enjoy his presence.

4. Close in a prayer of gratitude and commit the rest of your day to the Father

A few things to note:

1. You can’t “succeed” or “fail” at this practice. All you can do is show up. Be patient. This takes some people years to master. Resist the urge to say, “I’m bad at this” or “This isn’t for me.” Don’t judge yourself, especially if you’re an overachiever type.
2. If you’re more of an “S” on the Meyer’s Briggs, and sitting still is just death, you might want to try this while doing a stretching exercise or going on a walk somewhere quiet and distraction free (like a park or short hike). Apply the same idea to a walking prayer, and just focus on your walking instead of your breathing.

Visit <https://practicingtheway.org/practices/silence-solitude> and click on each of these circles for more ideas and resources how to practice silence and solitude.



1

The Basics

In our over busy, distracted world, the first challenge we face is the ability to slow down and focus.

2

Emotional Health

Human beings are emotional creatures. For Jesus, emotions, positive or negative, are places to meet with God.

3

Casting Care

Most people, whether they are aware of it or not, are living with some form of low-grade anxiety.

4

Listening Prayer

Prayer is to be a conversation where both parties share openly and listen carefully to each other.

5

Lectio Divina

The practice of spiritual reading: an ancient time-tested method of meeting God in the Scriptures.

6

Retreat

Now we want to stretch ourselves and try something longer. We want to do what we're calling a "retreat."

3. TAKE STEPS TO GROW IN COMMUNITY:

A. To grow in this practice, what is **one idea you want to experiment with this coming week / month?** How will you do that?

B. **Is there someone that you could connect with for mutual encouragement, learning and accountability to deepen in this practice?**¹ It might be your spouse, sibling, close friend, someone in your life group or someone else at this workshop.

¹ This is a practical way we can fulfill our vision together at TCBC "Transforming lives through Christ-centred community"

"Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24-25).