



A Class on Spiritual Disciplines

# *pursuing* His Presence





# **Pursued by God Through Silence!**

*Week 5*





# Reminder: The Big Picture on Disciplines

“...more of God is our greatest need, our greatest joy, our only rescue. This isn’t optional. He is the source of the strength and resiliency we need for this hour, the Life that allows us to enjoy everything else in life. So the question remains: What will you do on a daily and weekly basis to find God and receive more of Him?”

*~ John Eldredge, Get Your Life Back, pg 195*





# Reminder: Stew's Bookends Approach

- Start with the biggest picture: Victory in this life involves remaining true to God to the very end while maintaining a mature perspective
  - To find more of God & Jesus as our all in all in every situation all day every day
  - Doing so requires an operational & functional union with the Father and Son through the Spirit (Jn 17:21) – a daily, ongoing vine-and-branch relationship
  - Requires forsaking other lovers and our own 'small stories' (*The Sacred Romance*)
- Prayer = speaking to God, sometimes includes 'listening prayer'
- Solitude/Silence = pre-requisites for hearing from God in your deepest parts
- Second pre-requisite: Believing that hearing the voice of God is essential to Christian discipleship
  - God speaks in non-metaphoric ways
  - We grow in learning to recognize them
- Your starting point: Be oriented to ultimate, eternal reality
  - Know your current emotional state
  - Know your current physical state
- Generally, the largest pre-requisite to hearing about big things is regularly hearing about small things – it's got to be your regular practice





# Psalm 46:10

[10] *Be still* and know that I am God.

[10] *Cease striving* and know that I am God.

[10] *Stop your fighting* and know that I am God.

[10] *Calm down* and know that I am God.

[10] *Stand silent* and know that I am God.

[10] *Let go of your concerns* and know that I am God.





# Let's Take the 5-Minute Challenge

Ask Jesus what He is praying for you right now, then wait for an impression/answer...

-- OR --

Sit and receive the love of God the Father for you with no requests, just receive...

-- Keep coming back to Ps 46:11, "Be still and know that I am God."





# Passages About Hearing

- ‘...My sheep hear my voice and I know them...’ – *John 10:26-28*
- God was not in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire, but after the fire the sound of a gentle blowing; aka the ‘still small voice’ – *1Kings 19:11-13*
- Samuel hears a literal voice 3 times before saying, “‘*Speak Lord for your servant is listening.*’ *The Lord said to Samuel...*” – *1Samuel 3:9-11*
- **Jesus does not fight for your attention over distraction; Jesus does not raise His voice to be heard over the loudness of your life**
  - You have an active enemy who opposes anyone hearing from God, and who actively promotes distraction, noise, chaos, and disorientation
  - “Whatever is vying for your attention, it’s pretty safe to say it isn’t assuring you of the goodness of God, His active involvement in the world, or how utterly safe you are in His care.” – *John Eldredge*





# Getting Started

- Be grounded in God; do things that connect you; have a thick cord
  - Audio Bible, Christian radio, memorization, Pause app reminders to re-align
- Notice the distractions – take an inventory/ask your spouse to ID them
- Shut off the distractions – get used to times of no entertainment
  - ...just sit in silence! It becomes more comfortable as you do it (morn. of prayer)
- City Central / Freedom Immersion approach
  - Confess your sin, Lean not...bind your imagination, Engage the enemy/send away any unclean spirits, Ask of the Lord, Receive a word/impression/picture
- Develop a conversational relationship with God (EJR 208)
- John Eldredge's Approach
  - The Prayer of Descent (Appendix 1 in EJR / page 140ff in *Resilient*)





# The Prayer of Descent

- Understand where God resides
  - Your physical body is the temple of the Holy Spirit – 1Cor 6:19
  - God indwells you in the form of the Holy Spirit – Jn 14:17
- Eldredge says get in touch w/ where the Spirit is; inward not upward
  - Get in a comfortable place and comfortable body position
  - Play instrumental music that won't distract
- Get past the shallows and midwater down into the depths of your being
  - Tune out the world to actively give Jesus your undivided attention
  - Consciously and intentionally love the Father/Jesus/Holy Spirit within you
- Move into benevolent detachment – stop mentioning cares, give them over, release everyone to God, don't intercede
- Follow Jesus deeper within – let Him lead you
- Be open to what He wants to do or where He wants to go
  - Could be comfort, a word or picture, something He wants to show you, somewhere He wants to take you





# Never Forget -- GROWTH IS OPPOSED!

- Satan's primary goal: keep us away from God in any way possible
  - Discourages us from developing Godly habits in the 1<sup>st</sup> place
  - Prevents our relationship with God from growing at any cost
- Our endless activity crowds out margin (B-U-S-Y)
  - This world and the things of it are Satan's puppets
- Our own mind distracts us when the world doesn't
  - We're surrounded by false and substitute truths
- We're tempted to doubt our identity (Jn 17 union/oneness)
  - Creating 'small stories' that distract us from God's Kingdom

Bottom line: You have to actively, habitually fight to get to this level of the Christian life





# Psalm 1:1-2

[1] Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; [2] but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.





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