

Spiritual Disciplines- Silence

Intro

- o We are continuing our spiritual disciplines series.
- o What is a spiritual discipline?
- o they are habits that promote spiritual growth.
- o Why are they important?
- o If we are to grow deeper in our relationship with God we need to practice these disciplines, just like an athlete practices and prepares for their sport.
- o I really appreciated the illustration Brandyn used last week...spiritual disciplines pull us out of the kiddie pool of faith and place us in the deep end. And that's where we want to go, we want to go deeper in our relationship with God.
- o Last week Brandyn taught on solitude
- o Who remembers what he said solitude was?
- o Solitude is different than isolation, it is essentially setting aside a time and even a place for you to get alone with God.
- o All of the spiritual disciplines work together, and we really need to be practicing them all, but this week's discipline, more than many of the others, goes hand in hand with solitude.
- o We could have taught this week's discipline along with last week's.
- o I don't do this weeks discipline very well...any ideas what it is?
- o I shall reveal it after we read some scripture

Intro Discipline--silence

- o Read 1Kings 19:11-13
- o Give background on this story
- o Where was God? God revealed Himself to Elijah, but where was He?
- o He wasn't in the wind, or the earthquake, or the fire. What do these things have in common?
- o They're big and they can grab your attention. They're all loud.
- o Anyone remember the tornado from a few years ago? The wind was intense and loud.
- o Have any of you been in an earthquake? I have and it's loud.
- o Fire is loud too...you have the crackling of the wood, the rush of the flames. All of these are loud
- o **But God revealed Himself in a whisper.**
- o A whisper demands your attention, but how do you hear a whisper?
- o You have to be quiet. Think about it, in order for Elijah to hear God in the whisper he had to be silent. That's our discipline for today...silence.
- o We don't like silence, though do we?
- o I know I don't. You can ask Pastor, Alex, or Jomollah, usually when you come into my office there is something making noise.
- o For many of us the first thing we do when we get into a situation where it's quiet..we put music on or turn the tv on...we don't like silence.
- o Why don't we like silence?
- o I think the easy answer is it makes us uncomfortable.
- o We have incorporated noise into our lives so much so, that the complete absence of it makes us uncomfortable.
- o **Yet, in order for us to hear God, to go deeper with Him, we need to practice silence from time to time.**

What is Silence

- o Read Psalm 46:10
- o Be still—this phrase in Hebrew can mean several things
- o One is to relax or withdraw—this is what we learned about last week during solitude
- o Another is to be quiet
- o The writer of this psalm is essentially telling us to be quiet and know God.

- o Silence is the voluntary practice of attending and listening to God in quiet, without interruption and noise.
- o **Essentially we choose to be quiet and cut out all distractions to spend time with God**
- o **It is our quiet time**
- o Solitude and silence go together, we get ourselves alone to commune with God, but sometimes in order to hear from God we need to be silent, we need to cut out all distractions.
- o Could you hear what I was saying? Maybe, but did you really get anything out of it? Probably not.
- o **You can't hear from God unless you are quiet, unless you cut out the distractions.**
- o Last week Brandyn brought up meditation. It's an important part of silence and solitude.
- o He brought up the idea that eastern meditation focuses on clearing your mind.
- o In Biblical meditation yes you need to clear your mind, but as Brandyn said, what do you fill it with? You need to fill it with God.
- o **The spiritual discipline of silence is not silence for the sake of being quiet. It is being quiet and undistracted for the sake of seeking God. This is why the psalmist tells us to be still and know God.**

Benefits of Silence

- o Many of us need to realize the addition we have to noise, myself included. The convenience of sound has contributed to a spiritual shallowness in the church.
- o **With the ease of access to recordings and headphones our generations are among the most noise polluted ever, and we have an unprecedented need to learn the disciplines of silence and solitude.**
- o Being silent has a lot of benefits. I know it's awkward and we don't like it. But, practicing silence along with solitude and the other disciplines will really help us as we seek to grow deeper in our relationship with God.
- o **The first benefit we've already discussed, it allows us to hear God more clearly.**
- o We saw that in 1 Kings, in order for Elijah to hear God in the whisper he had to be quiet.
- o It's not a conversation with God if we are the only ones talking, and it's also not a conversation if God is speaking and we're not listening.
- o **Another benefit is to express worship to God**
- o Worshiping God does not always require words, sounds or actions. Sometimes worship can be a God focused stillness and hush.
- o **Habakkuk 2:20 and Zephaniah 1:7**—These passages describe worshiping God through silence. There are times to speak to God and there are other times to just be in awe of who He is and what He's done.
- o **This next benefit ties in with Alex's lesson next week on Self-Care- Silence allows us to be physically and spiritually restored.**
- o This also ties in with Brandyn's lesson from last week. He mentioned Laura had a secret place she would go to in Lynchburg to get alone with God. I too had one.
- o When I would feel overwhelmed by what was going on and I need to get alone with God I had a lookout just off the highway that I would go to. It was about 45 minutes outside of the city, and I'd sit there in silence and read my Bible. I could sit there for hours. And when I returned I felt refreshed and ready to face the challenges ahead. This is because I was with God and I allowed Him to restore me.
- o **Jesus even told His disciples to do this in Mark 6:31**
- o Jesus said this to His disciples after they spent several days in intense spiritual and physical output. Jesus' prescription for His disciples was for them to go with Him to a quiet place and to rest.
- o Although I enjoy music, tv, video games, and all of these other distracting noises that are out there, they are not always the most relaxing. In order to relax and be refreshed sometimes we need to get alone with God and just be silent and still.
- o **There are many other benefits of silence, but I will share one more. Learning silence can also help us learn to control our tongues.**
- o Let me explain this a little. Ecclesiastes 3:7 tells us there is a time to be silent and a time to speak. We need to learn when we should speak and when we should be quiet.
- o James writes in James 1:9 that as Christians we should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry.
- o It is very easy for us to speak our mind, in fact it is so easy that when others are talking to us we're often thinking about what we want to say next instead of actually listening to what they're saying.
- o If we can learn to be quiet and listen to what God is saying to us, it will become easier for us to listen to what other people are trying to say to as well.

- o **How does silence help me learn when to speak and not to speak?**
- o When we practice silence and solitude, we may find that we don't need to say many of the things we think we need to say. In silence we can learn to rely more on God's control in situations where we would normally feel like we need to speak or speak too much.
- o The skills of observation and listening are also sharpened when we practice silence with God.
- o **If you want to learn about the other benefits of silence check out some of the resources provided in the lesson on the app.**

Tips for Practicing Silence

- o As we begin to wind this lesson down I want to provide some tips for practicing silence.
- o You can practice silence a few ways. Perhaps you're just being outwardly quiet and you want to read the Bible, write in your journal, or pray. During this type of silence, you might be engaging in an internal dialogue.
- o Sometimes you need to quiet your mind too, so that you can hear from God. In this practice don't read, don't write, just be still and reflect and focus on God.
- o **With either way I mentioned here are some good tips.**
- o **Find an intentional place** –a place where you know you can have very few distractions.
- o **Set an intentional time**- make it a sacred appointment that you keep. When I was in grad school every Wednesday I skipped my lunch and would go to the prayer chapel to just read and pray in silence.
- o **Intentionally listen**- make an effort to listen to what God has to say. Turn off your phone, laptop, and other technology, set timer to keep from watching the clock.
- o **The point of these tips is to be intentional...**

Other Resources

[How to Practice the Spiritual Discipline of Silence](#)

[Take a Break From Chaos](#)

[Reclaiming Silence and Solitude as Important Disciplines](#)

[Silence and Solitude Benefits](#)