



WELCOME TO THE

table



FOR ME

Practices of Grace from the Giver of Grace



The Discipline of Solitude

What if the greatest threat to the Christian faith today isn't secularism but distraction?

Cal Newport author of *Digital Minimalism* says,
“It is now possible to completely banish solitude from your
life.”



The Discipline of Solitude

*“Music and silence—how I detest them both! How thankful we should be that ever since our Father entered Hell—though longer ago than humans, reckoning in light years, could express—no square inch of infernal space and no moment of infernal time has been surrendered to either of those abominable forces, but all has been occupied by Noise—Noise, the grand dynamism, the audible expression of all that is exultant, ruthless, and virile—Noise which alone defends us from silly qualms, despairing scruples, and impossible desires. **We will make the whole universe a noise in the end. We have already made great strides in this direction as regards the Earth.** The melodies and silences of Heaven will be shouted down in the end. But I admit we are not yet loud enough, or anything like it. Research is in progress. C. S. Lewis, “Letter XXII,” in *The Screwtape Letters* (New York: Collier Books, 1982), 102–103.*



What is Solitude?

Is there a practice from the way of Jesus that could position you and me to hear Jesus's voice and all the noise of the modern world?

Luke 5:15-16

[15] But now even more the report about him went abroad, and great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities. [16] But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray.

Solitude is intentional time in the quiet with ourselves and God.



What is Solitude?

Mark 1:35-39

[35] And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. [36] And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, [37] and they found him and said to him, “Everyone is looking for you.” [38] And he said to them, “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.” [39] And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

Before and after any great work or move of God we told of Jesus’ retreat and return to continue ministry.



What is Solitude?

“Solitude and it’s most basic and profound level, is simply an opportunity to be ourselves with God.” - Ruth Haley Barton.

Luke tells us that Jesus often would retreat into quiet or desolate places to spend time with the father and for rest.

He would retreat to Solitude and return to community.

RETREAT ← → RETURN

Solitude and community are the 2 basic containers for all of the disciplines. We are drawn to both but are scared of them if we’re honest.



Misconceptions with Solitude

1. It's not *loneliness*

Richard Foster in *Celebration of Discipline* says
Loneliness is inner emptiness (absence).
Solitude is inner fulfillment (presence).



Misconceptions with Solitude

2. It's not *isolation*.

**Solitude is chosen separation for refining your soul.
Isolation is what you crave when you neglect the
first.**

- Wayne Codeiro



Misconceptions with Solitude

3. It's not *aloneness*.

You can be alone, but not disconnected.
We are often alone, but our tether to the world
through devices and distractions.



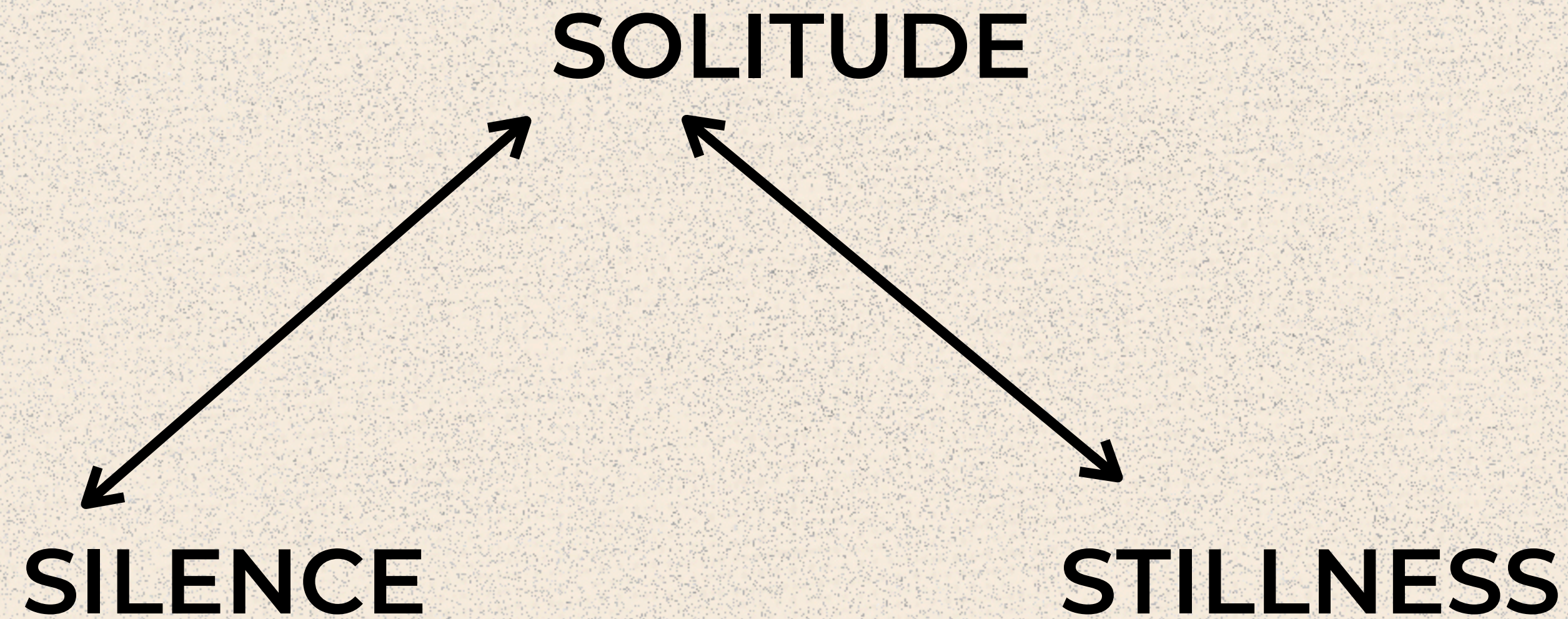
Biblical Background For Solitude

We were designed with a need for solitude

- **Matthew 14:13**
- **Matthew 15:29**
- **Mark 1:35**
- **Mark 1:45**
- **Mark 6:31-35**
- **Mark 8:4**
- **Luke 4:42**
- **Luke 5:16**



Practicing Solitude



EXTERIOR— disconnect
INTERIOR— quiet the noise

State of inner tranquility
An attitude of listening and openness to God



Practicing Solitude

- As Henri Nouwen put it: “Solitude is not a private therapeutic place. Rather, it is the place of conversion, the place where the old self dies and the new self is born, the place where the emergence of the new man and the new woman occurs. ... In solitude, I get rid of my scaffolding. I have no friends to talk with, no telephone calls to make, no meetings to attend, no music to entertain, no books to distract, just me — naked, vulnerable, weak, sinful, deprived, broken — nothing. It is this nothingness that I have to face in my solitude, a nothingness so dreadful that everything in me wants to run to my friends, my work, my distractions ...”



- **3 THINGS WE ENCOUNTER IN SOLITUDE**

- 1. OURSELVES (emotions, fears, anxieties, sin, desires)**
- 2. OUR ENEMY (unholy trinity: the world, the flesh, the devil)**
- 3. OUR GOD (holiness, restorer, good Father, friend)**

Start small and simple, find a quiet place and time to go to regularly. Next is a list of resources to help map out a plan of action in the discipline of Silence and Solitude.



A few resources to choose from to help:

- ***An Invitation to Solitude and Silence* Ruth Haley Barton**
- ***Sacred Rhythms* Ruth Haley Barton**
- ***The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* John Mark Comer**
- ***Practicing the Way* John Mark Comer**
- ***The Spirit of the Disciplines* Dallas Willard**
- ***Living in Christ's Presence* Dallas Willard**



Our Hope

**May we become a people so pored out for his
Namesake that we run to that part of God that is only
found in solitude.**





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