



Practices for

LIFE WITH JESUS

Part 4: The Practice of Solitude

Luke 4:38-44

The practice of solitude is the primary way we stay present to ourselves, God and others.

OUR GREAT DILEMMA AND CHALLENGE

"Over the margins of life comes a whisper, a faint call, a premonition of richer living which we know we are passing by. Strained by the very mad pace of our daily outer burdens, we are further strained by an inward uneasiness, because we have hints that there is a way of life vastly richer and deeper than all this hurried existence, a life of unhurried serenity and peace and power." Thomas Kelly, "A Testament of Devotion"

"Hurry is the great enemy of spiritual life in our day. Hurry can destroy our souls. Hurry can keep us from living well. ... For many of us the great danger is not that we will renounce our faith. It is that we will become so distracted and rushed and preoccupied that we will settle for a mediocre version of it. We will just skim our lives instead of actually living them." John Ortberg, "The Life You've Always Wanted"

"This new normal of digital distraction is robbing us of the ability to be present. Present to God. Present to other people. Present to all that is good, beautiful, and true in our world. Even present to our own souls." John Mark Comer, "The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry"

JESUS AND SOLITUDE

"The Jesus way wedded to the Jesus truth brings about the Jesus life." Eugene Peterson

"But Jesus often withdrew to solitary places and prayed." Luke 5:16

*"Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."
Mark 6:31*

"At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place." Luke 5:42

In solitude, Jesus connected deeply with His Father, who nourished His soul and guided Him into the life He was called to live. In solitude, Jesus was reminded of His identity and calling, and He was able to resist the pressures of people and the temptations of the Devil.

Solitude is the intentional practice of separating ourselves from people, technology, and the world in order to be attentive to God and our own souls.

"Solitude is the spiritual practice by which we cultivate the architecture of silence and stillness in a chaotic, noisy, busy and toxic culture." Peter Greig, (see Greenwood practice of solitude, podcast).

THE BENEFITS OF SOLITUDE

We Stay Present to Ourselves

- We detox from the over-stimulation and noise of our culture and get in touch with our exhaustion
- Our true feelings
- Others' voices and expectations

*"Solitude is the one place where we can gain freedom from the forces of society that will otherwise relentlessly mold us."
John Ortberg*

- Our deepest longings and desires

"I am noticing that the more I fill my life with the convenience of technology, the emptier I become in the places of my deepest longing." Ruth Haley Barton, "Sacred Rhythms"

We Come Present to God

- His still, small voice
- What is most true of us in Christ (broken and sinful yet loved and forgiven), recognition and relinquishment
- Nourished by God's LIFE in the Spirit (John 15 vine, branch).
- Reoriented to our identity and calling

We are Empowered to Move Towards Others as Lovers, Rather than Consumers

- If we are going to love well, we must slow down. If we are going to walk closely with Jesus, we must slow down.

JESUS' INVITATION (MATTHEW 11:28-30, MARK 6:31)

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." Jesus

"Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." Jesus

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Look at Luke 4:38-44, 5:12-16 and Mark 6:30-31. What do you observe about Jesus' life and his practice of solitude?
- What has been your experience with the practice of solitude as a follower of Jesus? Have you experienced any of the benefits of solitude mentioned in the sermon?
- Look at the practice of solitude in Greenwood's digital library of practices. What are your thoughts about what you see there? What is one step you could take this week to experiment with the practice of solitude?