

Week 1: Transformation: your tomorrow begins today!
Transformation through silence and solitude

START OFF WITH 3 MINUTES OF TOTAL SILENCE

In our noisy and chaotic lives, we need to take a moment to breathe in and be still.

Psalm 131:2 (New Living Translation)

Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself,
like a weaned child who no longer cries for its mother's milk.
Yes, like a weaned child is my soul within me.

Why do we need silence and solitude?

1. Because Jesus did it

Matthew 14:23 (The Message)

With the crowd dispersed, he climbed the mountain so he could be by himself and pray. He stayed there alone, late into the night.

Mark 1:35 (The Message)

While it was still night, way before dawn, he got up and went out to a secluded spot and prayed.

Luke 4:42 (The Message)

He left the next day for open country. But the crowds went looking and, when they found him, clung to him so he couldn't go on.

John 6:15 (The Message)

Jesus saw that in their enthusiasm, they were about to grab him and make him king, so he slipped off and went back up the mountain to be by himself.

2. Because we need God's direction

"I commend solitude to any of you who are seeking salvation, first, that you may study well your case as in the sight of God. Few men truly know themselves as they really are. Most people have seen themselves in a looking-glass, but there is another looking-glass, which gives true reflections, into which few men look. To study one's self in the light of God's Word, and carefully to go over one's condition, examining both the inward and the outward sins, and using all the tests which are given us in the Scriptures, would be a very healthy exercise; but how very few care to go through it!" (C. H. Spurgeon)

C. S. Lewis in his book *Mere Christianity* says, "God designed the human machine to run on himself. He himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn, or the food our spirits were designed to feed on. There is no other. That is why it is just no good asking God to make us happy in our own way without bothering about religion. God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing."

3. Because our mind, body, and spirit need it

After spending themselves in several days of physical and spiritual output, notice the means of replenishment Jesus prescribed for His disciples, "Come away by yourselves to a lonely place and rest a while" (Mark 6:31)

Psalms 46:10 (The Message)

"Step out of the traffic! Take a long, loving look at me, your High God, above politics, above everything."

What prevents us from being silent and alone?

1. Fear of our past or fear of our future
2. Our culture

Living the Christ-centered Life Between Walden and the Whirlwind, Jean Fleming observes, "We live in a noisy, busy world. Silence and solitude are not twentieth-century words. They fit the era of Victorian lace, high-button shoes, and kerosene lamps better than our age of television, video arcades, and joggers wired with earphones. We have become a people with an aversion to quiet and an uneasiness with being alone"

How do we do it?

1. Location, location, and location (Find them in your home, around the corner, and for overnight stays.)
2. Start off simple
3. Schedule time away during the year

First, think of silence and solitude as complementary disciplines to fellowship. Without silence and solitude we're shallow. Without fellowship we're stagnant. Balance requires them all. (Taken from Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life by Donald S. Whitney, copyright 1991.)

THE CHALLENGE: Take 15 minutes of alone time where you are quiet and simply listen for God's direction.