

All By Myself

by

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Rest. Solitude. Peace. Quiet. When was the last time you got away by yourself? I look forward to spending time alone with my Holy Father. Sometimes I take walks and meditate and talk with God. Other times I let God delight me with His creation (flora and fauna) as I ride my bike along country dirt roads.



God's word has a lot to say about resting. As I looked up verses on resting, the Holy Spirit quietly brought something important to my attention; For me being able to rest in God is not really a matter of reducing over commitment, or busyness. I guard my schedule carefully and plan regular periods of alone time with God. Rather, the Spirit showed me that resting is an issue of trust. I thought this concept over in light of my current battle with unrest, and I knew God was right. I need to trust God with the next step in my walk with Him. When I trust God with my past, my present and my future, then I am able to rest by myself in His holy presence.

"You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in You." Isaiah 26:3

"In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength." Isaiah 30: 15

"Return to your rest, O my soul. For the Lord has dealt bountifully with you." Psalm 116: 7

"Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.

Psalm 37:7

Please read Matthew 14:9-23.

What terrible event had just taken place according to verse 10?

What did Jesus do when he had learned of the death of His cousin John the Baptist (verse 13)?

What did the multitudes do when they heard about the death of John?

Jesus did not get the alone time that He was seeking.

Why do you think Jesus wanted to be by Himself?

If we peek ahead at verse 23 we learn what you probably already guessed; that Jesus wanted to get away by himself to pray.

What do you think He may have talked to his Father about?

I think Jesus was deeply moved by the death of His cousin and wanted to be alone with His Father to talk to Him about John's death. Sometimes I think we wrongly believe that Jesus has no reason to feel pain or sympathize with us when we are troubled because He is omniscient and He is God. But remember, Jesus wept over the death of His friend Lazarus knowing full well that He would be raising him from the dead in just a few moments (John 11:28-44).

While we don't know for certain what Jesus said to His Father, it's obvious that He had a lot on His mind and wanted to be alone. However, Jesus did not get to be alone.

According to verse 13 what did the multitudes do when they heard about the death of John?

What did Jesus spend His time doing?

After Jesus healed the sick, He performed one of the most famous miracles of the New Testament, the Feeding of the Five Thousand. Thank you, Jesus, that You are never too busy for your followers when they need your healing touch and hunger for your presence. Even though Jesus took the time needed to heal the sick, verses 22- 23 tell us that He was still very anxious to be alone with His Father.

Please read verse 22-23 again and write down the first word of verse 22.

This portion of our text brought a smile to my face as the Greek opened the scriptures before my eyes. The Greek word for *immediately* is *eutheos* which means what you think it means "immediately, straightway, and forthwith" (BLB). I believe Jesus sent off His disciples as soon as possible because He had not forgotten His earlier appointment with God.

Keep this definition in mind as we search out the meaning for the word *made* in verse 22. The word *made* transliterates *anagkazo* which means, "one by one or two by two, to compel, to drive to, every, apiece, by force." Part of *anagkazo* is derived from the Greek word *agkale* which means among other things, "the curve or inner angle of the arm" (BLB).

Can you just picture Jesus physically turning the disciples one by one and shepherding them to the boat? Let's use our imagination for a moment along with the Greek definitions to go back and reconstruct the scene following the Feeding of the Five Thousand. The following is my own paraphrase:

"After feeding the five thousand and sending them off, Jesus instantly, as soon as He possibly could, physically lined up His disciples one by

one and by the power of God sent them off in the boat so he could be alone." Are there any mothers, teachers or caregivers out there who can relate? On many occasions I have given my sons instructions and then purposely physically turned them in the right direction (usually to bed) so I could have a little alone time. Sometimes it has felt as if it has taken all the power of God to get them off to bed!

What did Jesus finally do after He sent off His Disciples?

We are already familiar with the word for pray in this verse, *proseuchomai*, which means "to pray earnestly for, to worship, to give thanks."

So what can we learn about prayer from Jesus example and actions in this passage?

No matter how busy we are, we need to make prayer a priority in our lives as Jesus did. Despite very needy multitudes, Jesus purposefully spent time alone with God. As I once heard, "I'm not too busy **to** pray; I'm too busy **not** to pray." Think about it.



Set a special time and place to meet alone with God as Jesus did. In order to be alone with God, Jesus left His work and His disciples. Could you imagine walking up a steep mountain to pray (I could!)? He did what it took to be alone with God.

Be committed to but not legalistic about your prayer time, as Jesus was. Sometimes God brings along divine interruptions that need our attention. These divine interruptions will most likely be the exception not the rule. Return to your prayer time as quick as you can.

If you don't have a time in your schedule for prayer I'd like to challenge you to set a time right now. Please record where and when you will meet with God.

If you haven't already spent time today in quietness and prayer, take a few moments now to rest in His presence.

"Be still and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10

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