

# Silence and Solitude

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

It's been said that the spiritual discipline of silence and solitude is the most important because all the others hinge on our communion with God. If we have this time with Him, then we are grounded and ready to move into and learn about the other disciplines. That's why I've chosen to start with this discipline.

That being said, the spiritual discipline of silence and solitude is also one of the most intimidating for many of us. We can be ... afraid of the silence, afraid of being by ourselves. Or, maybe, if you live in the midst of a crowded, busy household, silence and solitude may seem like the impossible dream.

Think about what a premium our culture places on instant access and communication. Cell phones allow us to be reached at times when just a few years ago, we would have been inaccessible, like on a walk or driving in our cars. They intrude in conversations with friends, at luncheons, even in church!

While on vacation this week. I've had a good chance to observe our obsession with cell phones—and realized my own obsession. On a number of occasions, I've observed teens who were hanging out with their friends on the beach, and the whole time they were with their friends they were ignoring them, texting other people. One girl even had her phone in the pool. She texted while she was in the pool by standing in the shallow end and texting instead of swimming or talking to her friends. I have been guilty of frequently checking my e-mail on my phone and dashing to answer every ring.

The discipline of silence and solitude helps us to disconnect from distractions and connect with the true lover of our

souls, God. If Jesus needed times of silence and solitude with God—and He did regularly—then how much more do we? When we don't have those times, our souls can become sick. We become discouraged, depressed, hopeless, without realizing why we feel that way.

You'll need to plan to add times of silence and solitude into your life. Rarely will these times just open themselves up for you. Perhaps you can work in a few minutes each day, a longer time on the weekend, schedule a monthly few-hours-long time to get away, or maybe even go on a longer retreat.

Over the next few blogs, we'll look at how to make this work in your life and what silence with God can look like.

Pray on!