

Habits

ANCIENT PRACTICES FOR TODAY'S WORLD

OPENING UP



Solitude is probably one of the most neglected spiritual disciplines in modern Christianity. While not often practiced it is much needed by followers of Jesus. Is solitude something that is a regular rhythm for you?

TEXT



Follow Jesus Into 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."

MESSAGE OUTLINE



Big Idea: Spiritual Solitude is Disconnection from the World to Connect with God.

1. The Need for Solitude. (v. 35)
2. The Practice of Solitude. (v. 35)
3. The Result of Solitude. (v. 36-39)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



- Do you ever spend time in solitude before the Lord? Why or why not? If you don't, what is keeping you from doing so?
- What does solitude look like for you? Explain.
- In the message we saw that this is something Jesus did often. It wasn't a once a year or one-time thing. "Often" is a regular rhythm. How does it make you feel that solitude is something Jesus did often? Does it compel you or overwhelm you?
- If spiritual solitude is disconnection from the world to connect with God what are things you need to disconnect from in order to connect with God?
- For Jesus solitude was a place of rest and refreshment with His father. Do you think that that is something missing in your walk with God?
- The result of solitude, for Jesus, was power to carry out the mission God had given Him. Does your walk with Jesus ever feel powerless?
- What are some practical steps you can take to integrate the spiritual discipline of solitude into your faith walk?

CHALLENGE



John Mark Comer writes, *the wilderness isn't a place of weakness; it's a place of strength. Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness because it was there, and only there, that Jesus was at the height of his spiritual powers. It was only after a month and a half of prayer and fasting in the quiet place that he had the capacity to take on the devil himself and walk away unscathed. That's why, over and over again, you see Jesus come back to the eremos (the desolate or quiet place).*

Today we learned that Solitude is disconnection with the world to connect with God and this is needed in the life of the believer! It's a place of strength, not weakness. It's a place of connection with God so that we can fulfill the will of God. Discuss and challenge fellow Life Group members to put this into practice. Make a practical plan of how you each will pull it off and what "often" looks like. And then, hold each other accountable to that plan as a spiritual partner to one another.

PRAYER



Lord, thank you for today and this time we have together. It's a gift from you to be in community with other followers of Jesus. Jesus, thank you for the example you set before us as the best way to live for the glory of God. Holy Spirit, help us and empower us to faithfully follow Jesus' example to the best of our ability. We need you Lord.

Give us wisdom going forward on how best to disconnect so that we can connect with you. Help us remove those things that distract us from spiritual solitude with you, Father. We give our time over to you in order that we might re-prioritize our life around time with you. Lord, meet us in those times of silence and solitude that we might be filled up, spiritually energized, and empowered to do your mission.

As we leave this place, protect us from the lies of the enemy that will try to convince us that this is unimportant, outdated, weird or unneeded. We believe and trust that what your word says is for our good and your glory. We desire to walk in your ways.