

2022 ... A Year of Discipleship

Solitude

“I just want to be alone.” Most of us have expressed that sentiment at least once in our lives. Come home from a busy day of school or work? It’s good to be alone. Have a bad day? It’s good to be alone. Need to make a big decision and have to consider all the options? It can be good to be alone. This study’s focus is solitude. Solitude is defined as “the state or situation of being alone.”

The spiritual discipline of solitude isn’t just about being alone, but **being alone with God**. Solitude begins, however, with Sabbath.

1. Sabbath, the Hebrew word for “rest,” is key component in the Old Testament. Read Genesis 2:23. Who rests in this passage? What pattern is being started here?
2. To the Old Testament Hebrews the pattern for Sabbath was “rest before work.” What is the current pattern for Sabbath, assuming one takes a day for rest?
3. What happens when we work before rest? How productive are we? How focused on God are we?

4. The Bible records Jesus spending time in solitude nearly 40 times in the gospels. How does Jesus illustrate the need and practice of solitude? Read Mark 1:35 and Mark 6:30-32



SOLITUDE ISN'T JUST ABOUT RECHARGING TO GET ENOUGH ENERGY TO GET THROUGH THE WEEK, AND IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT SHUTTING DOWN WORK. IT'S PRIMARILY ABOUT BEING IN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND GETTING TO KNOW HIM BETTER.

The Being Challenge

5. Read James 4:7-8, 10. Why is the practice of solitude important?

6. Solitude can be practiced in several different places.
 - Your morning shower ... creates an intentional place for silence and reflection
 - Your morning commute ... transforms into a time for prayer
 - Your first or last 20 minutes of the day ... can become a time for journaling
 - Your lunch break ... becomes a time to reflect

What other examples of places you can be alone which can be transformed for a time for solitude?

We need to remember that solitude is about being alone with God, not isolation. Time alone is important, even healthy. But isolating oneself from other people isn't how God made human beings. We are made for relationships.

7. What we do with our alone time matters. We can either focus on worldly things, or we can focus on heavenly things. Where is the focus of your alone time?
8. Read Psalm 84:10. How does the psalmist speak of the importance of solitude?
9. Read Hebrews 12:1-3. How does solitude help us focus to spend time with God?
10. We live in a world which needs focus, and oftentimes has difficulty focusing. What does John 15:1-5 have to say about our need to focus and where our focus should be placed?
11. Solitude can be misunderstood as meditation. The Eastern religious view of meditation is about emptying our minds. Solitude, from a biblical perspective, is really about filling our minds with God's Word. What is the difference?
12. Read Colossians 3:2-4 and Philipians 4:8-9. How can we fill our minds with the things of God?

Solitude, as a spiritual discipline, isn't merely about being alone but being alone **with God**. We need time with God ... for prayer, for reflection, for being in His Word. We need time to rest before we work. We need know what we should say "yes" to and what should receive a "no." In a world full of distractions and full of things we seek to take our heart away from our Lord, solitude – being alone with God – helps us grow in our faith.