

Study Guide

Solitude

1. Share some of your impression from the sermon.
2. Read Romans 12:2. How do we “conform to this world” by always being in a rush and assuming that productivity is what is most important? Why does solitude at times feel wasteful or uncomfortable? Share you experiences with solitude.
3. Read Mark 1:35-36; Luke 4:42; Matt. 14:23. Discuss your observations on how Jesus found solitude. Why do you think he did so?
4. Read again, Romans 12:2. What does “transformation” look like for us? Discuss the idea that “You are what you think.” How do the stories of God, solitude and community foster transformation in our lives?
5. Read Romans 12:2 again. How can solitude help us fulfill the “perfect will of God”?
6. Discuss contemplative prayer and lectio divina. What seems to work well for you, and where is the struggle? Are there any steps you feel God is leading you to take based on this topic?

1. Contemplative Prayer

Slow Down

Sit quietly and ask God to direct your mind

Imagine the Presence of God

The Lord’s Prayer

Show gratitude by listing things

List the Names of God

Describe your Desires to God

Describe your fears to God

2. Lectio Divina

Select a passage

Relax and breathe

First reading (pauses)

Second reading (clauses)

Third reading (ponder the clause)

Rest

Action step

Message Slides

Solitude

Solitude

Use image

Solitude & Culture

Romans 12:2

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

>each on mouse click<

Solitude feels wasteful

Solitude feels uncomfortable

Letter by letter (Dan will prepare)

Solitude is the garden for our hearts, which yearn for love. It is the place where our aloneness can bear fruit. It is the home for our restless bodies and anxious minds. Solitude is not an easy place to be, since we are so insecure and fearful what we are easily distracted by whatever promises immediate satisfaction.

Henri Nouwen

Henri Nouwen

"Solitude is not immediately satisfying, because in solitude we meet our demons, our addictions, our feelings of lust and anger, and our immense need for recognition and approval. But if we do not run away, we will meet there also the One who says, "Do not be afraid. I am with you, and I will guide you through the valley of darkness.

Let's keep returning to our solitude."

Solitude & Jesus

Mark 1:35- "Rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.

Luke 4:42- "When it was day, he departed and went into a desolate place."

Matt. 14:23- "After he dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone."

Mark 1:35- "Rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. And Simon and his companions hunted for him. When they found him they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns..."

Solitude & Transformation

Romans 12:2

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

>on mouse click<

Point- You become what you think about.

2 Cor. 3:18

“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Solitude & Activity

Romans 12:2

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

Solitude 101

1. Contemplative Prayer

Slow down

Sit quietly and ask God to direct your mind

Imagine the presence of God

Pray the Lord’s Prayer

Show gratitude by listing things

List the names of God

Describe your desires and fears to God

2. Lectio Divina

Select a passage

Relax and breathe

First reading (pauses)

Second reading (clauses)

Third reading (ponder the clause)

Rest

Action step

Spiritual Disciplines Handbook- Calhoun (see image)

Preparing for a day of space

THE INVITATION

Step 1 - *Schedule a day to unplug, quiet down, shut off, and listen.*

- › If we don't actually schedule it, it likely won't happen.
- › Fight the resistance that says you can't, won't, or shouldn't. The truth is, you need this time and your family and closest loved ones need you to take this time.

A FEW THOUGHTS TO HELP

Step 2 - *Go to one of your favorite places, e.g.:*

- › A place that has been holy ground for you
- › A place that you love and have good memories of
- › A place that wakes you up

Step 3 - *Find a quiet place.*

Step 4 - *Kickstart things.*

- › Read a favorite chapter in a book.
- › Listen to a favorite song.
- › Do what often works well to awaken your spirit.
- › Do something to refresh your mind and body (walk, hike, etc.).

Step 5 - *Listen.*

- › Reflect back on the last month:

What lessons, moments and memories stick out? (good or bad)

Where did God show up? How did He bless you?

Where did you need God to show up? How did you desire Him to bless you?

How did God speak to you?

How did you succeed? How did you fail?

What are you grateful for?

What regrets are you holding onto?

What caused you to feel empty, depleted, or discouraged?

› Look ahead to the next month:

What do you need to be aware of?

What do you need to prepare for?

Where do you need God to show up?

What goals do you desire to accomplish?

When will you spend time with God?

What fears or worries do you need to let go of?

LOGISTICS

Unplug - shut everything off.

Eliminate distractions - go to a place where distractions don't exist.

Equip yourself - take a journal, book, music, or whatever stirs you.

Identify your location - find a place that inspires you.

Schedule it - carve out the time in your calendar and stick to it.

Accept grace - silence is foreign in our obnoxiously loud world. This is new and it will take practice to find a good rhythm. Give yourself time and grace on this.

Remind yourself of the great leaders in history. Many of them had a practice of silence and solitude in their lives. Remind yourself how frequently Jesus pulled away from the crowds to be alone. He pulled away after crisis and struggle, he pulled away amid success, and he sought space and quiet to gain strength for what he was to face.

If this is your first time seeking solitude, we encourage you to take a part of the day to reflect back on your spiritual journey. **Go back to a time (or times) that God uniquely revealed Himself to you. Where were you? Who were you with? What was going on in life at that time? What did God speak to you about? How did God speak to you?**

Notes:
