

THE BIG IDEA: God deposits in us when we withdraw with him.

The Take-Off

Before we jump into the first of four practices that we're looking at during our Rhythms series, let's remember again the scripture that is the inspiration for our journey and also the warning that I shared with all of you last week.

First, [Matthew 11:28-30](#) from The Message translation of the Bible:

*"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. **Learn the unforced rhythms of grace.** I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."*

Second, the word of caution (or, rather, the image of caution)...

[\[IMAGE / Traffic in Sweden after switching driving sides\]](#)

The tendency we have as humans - especially when we are, in fact, tired, worn out or burned out - is to take the first prescription that we hear might help us and then overuse it.

We're like someone on a rope swinging back and forth from one extreme to the other, and so I told you that for a lot of us, this picture taken the day after Sweden changed what side of the road people could drive on might be a picture of how you could feel during a series that's designed to do the opposite.

In other words, the unforced rhythms of grace can - and often, do - feel forced before they feel natural.

Over the next 4 weeks we'll examine 4 practices that all of us are going to need to, well, practice!

Today, we're starting with solitude and silence.

Let's break it into 4 parts: what is it, who needs it, what does it do for us, and how do we do it?

Up first, what is it?

1. What is it?

- More importantly, what isn't it? Solitude isn't becoming a monk and moving to a monastery, and silence isn't the lack of all sounds.
- Our working definition of solitude will be the intentional withdrawal from social engagement and silence is the absence of all human-created stimuli.
- [Mark 6:31](#)
 - We are invited to come away to a desolate place
 - It is the intentional decision to unplug that creates solitude
- Solitude and silence make space — space in our souls and space in our lives — for God to do a deep work in us and through us in our relationships with others. We choose NOT to fill that space but allow him to.
- It is time set aside to do nothing.
- I can already hear you: I've got WAY too much to do to be able to spend time doing nothing.
- Maybe now would be a good time to talk about who needs it.

2. Who needs it?

- In a word: everybody.
- How do we know this is true? Because solitude and silence were a big part of Jesus' rhythm, and if he needed it, I can't think of anyone else who wouldn't!
- In fact, as busy as many of us are and as much as is piled on our plates, Jesus had more.
- He was sent to save mankind and reverse the curse of sin present in humanity since the moment Eve said yes to fruit that she should have left alone, and I'm going to say that Jesus' to-do list trumps ours!
- How did Jesus kick off his worldwide ministry? In solitude. / [Mark 1:12](#)
- How did Jesus start his day? In solitude. / [Mark 1:35](#)
- How did Jesus deal with the growing demands on him? In solitude. / [Luke 5:15-16](#)
- How did Jesus discern who would be key leaders in his ministry? In solitude. / [Luke 6:12-13](#)
- How did Jesus recover from a day full of ministry, miracles and record-breaking crowds? In solitude. / [Matthew 14:23](#)

- j. How did Jesus prepare for the greatest act of love and sacrifice? In solitude. / Mark 14:32-36
- k. Are you seeing a pattern? If Jesus needed to practice the rhythm of solitude and silence, why would we ever think we can get by without doing the same?
- l. Again, Jesus knows we need it and extends the invitation to us in Mark 6:31! "Come with me..."

3. What does it do for us?

- a. Just in case you still aren't convinced, let's talk about what we stand to gain from solitude and silence.
 - Psalm 46:10 / We KNOW God
 - Romans 1:20; Psalm 19:1 / We SEE God
 - 1 Kings 19:12 / We HEAR God
 - God doesn't always speak loudly
 - "Let us be silent that we may hear the whisper of God." Ralph Waldo Emerson
- b. Silence and solitude lead to reflection and self-examination. Sometimes silence screams, doesn't it? And sometimes we don't like what we hear! This is one reason that we fight so hard against it.
- c. But consider the benefit highlighted in this quote from Lt. Colonel Michael Erwin: "Leading oneself is the foundation of leading others. And personal leadership comes through solitude."
- d. Here's the bottom line about why solitude and silence are so important, and it's this week's Big Idea: **God deposits in us when we withdraw with him.**
- e. "If a man wants to be used by God, he can't spend all his time with people." - A.W. Tozer
- f. You will be amazed at how much you'll grow in power, conviction, and confidence just by implementing solitude and silence into your life. So let's wrap up talking about how to do it.

4. How do we do it?

- a. There are all kinds of ways to develop the rhythms of solitude and silence, but here are some suggestions on how to take those awkward first steps:
 - Turn the music off once a week during your daily commute
 - Wake up 20 minutes earlier than the rest of the house and simply sit
 - Turn your shower into a retreat
 - Sit with a journal
 - Go for a run or walk without your playlist
 - Turn off the television
 - Log out of Netflix
 - Turn off your phone
- b. One last tip: don't worry about "doing it right." Start where you are and let the rhythm develop.

The Landing

I can't think of a better way to end a message on solitude and silence than by practicing it.

So, let's take the time to be still. Use the short video and the worship that follows as a time to be with God - to REALLY be with God.

[VIDEO / Be still]

Worship - Abba Father

Prayer