

Week 2: The Practice of Silence and Solitude

Notes include work from John Mark Comer: *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* and also from www.practicingtheway.org

Solitude is the furnace of transformation. Without solitude we remain victims of our society and continue to be entangled in the illusions of the false self. (Henri Nouwen)

Table Talk:

READ: Mark 1:16-34

Jesus has a seriously busy "first day" on the "job". Skim this passage and list all the things Jesus did on this day.

READ: Mark 1:35-39

What does Jesus do immediately after all this activity? What do the disciples think he should be doing?

READ: Mark 6:30-34, 45-46

What is Jesus' response to his grief over his cousin John's death?

How does he respond to the interruption from the crowds?

What does he do when the crowds go home?

Why do you think Jesus would regularly slip away to "lonely places"?

What role do you think the regular practice of silence and solitude played in Jesus' emotional health and spiritual life?

Watch Video: "The Case for an Unhurried Life"

TABLE TALK:

1. What challenges would Jesus have faced to carve out time to be alone with God? Do you face any similar challenges?

2. *"Solitude is engagement. Isolation is escape. Solitude is safety. Isolation is danger. Solitude is how you open yourself up to God. Isolation is putting a target on your back for the tempter. Solitude is when you set aside time to feed and water and nourish your soul - to let it grow to maturity. Isolation is what you crave when you neglect the former. Solitude is anything but loneliness". - John Mark Comer.*

According to John Mark what is the difference between isolation and solitude? Have you ever experienced solitude as "opening yourself up to God"? What was the fruit of that experience?

Loneliness is inner emptiness, solitude is inner fulfillment.

- Richard Foster
