

Last week we discussed six rules of life, Jesus being the trellis that our vine of life should grow on, and becoming fruitful in our walk in the Spirit. Have you thought of or practiced any of these things this week in your life?

Silence and solitude

Before 1995 and the invention of the smart phone, there was a thing called “boredom”. How has the eradication of down time robbed us of the ability to be present? What does this mean?

We have an epidemic of distraction that is not only robbing us of time but also of our souls. “The noise of the modern world makes us deaf to the voice of God, drowning out the one input we most need.” Do you find yourself constantly focused on your phone?

The top 4 practices from Jesus that can help us

Matthew 4:1 – After Jesus was baptized: “Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.”

The first thing that Jesus did after being baptized was allow the Holy Spirit to lead him into the desert. Why did he do this?

Eremos – the Greek word for desert. It can also mean deserted place, desolate place, solitary place, lonely place, quiet place, and wilderness. This is how Jesus started his ministry. Why do you think he started it this way?

“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 (40 days) 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 you see Jesus time and time again in his life come back to the **eremos**. “It was an ongoing part of his life rhythm.” If the Son of God needs the eremos, do you think you do too? Why?

Clarity – Jesus came out of the wilderness with all sorts of clarity about his identity and calling. He was grounded. He knew what to say yes to and more importantly what to say no to. Sometimes it’s hard to say no to the world. Can you think of examples in your life when it would have been a good idea to say no?

Mark 6:30-31 – “The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, **“Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”**

Jesus is saying to get away from where you are and spend some quiet time with him. Do you find it hard to get away?

Jesus, though he was tired, made time to spend with the Father even at the expense of his sleep. What does this tell us about the importance of spending time with God?

In Luke, Jesus went to his quiet place no less than nine times. “In seasons of busyness we need more time in the quiet place, not less.” Jesus needed time. If Jesus even needed time, what does that say about you?

Silence and solitude

Silence – external and internal

1. External Silence – no noise, no music, no TV, quiet. John Climacus wrote: “The friend of silence draws near to God.” Do we use external noise to drown out internal noise? What does this mean to you?
2. Internal Silence – control the internal noise in your head, the constant flow of thoughts, lusts, feelings, worry, imagining, dreaming, by focusing on the quiet of God. Can you relate to this?

Solitude – alone with yourself and alone with God

“Loneliness is inner emptiness. Solitude is inner fulfillment.” – Richard J. Foster

Is it difficult for you to find solitude during the week? Have you ever thought of adding God to your alone time?

Like any other relationship, it takes time alone together to grow. Whether it is a girlfriend, wife, child, friend, relative, etc. you need to spend time alone with that person in order to create a healthy bond. It is no different than with God. Maybe even more so.

Gen. 24:62-63 – “Now Isaac had come from Beer Lahai Roi, for he was living in the Negev. He went out to the field one evening to meditate, and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching.” This is when God brought Issac’s wife to him, Rebekah. Good things can happen when we turn to God.