

Silence & Solitude

“But now more than ever the word about
Jesus spread abroad; many crowds would gather to hear him
and to be cured of their diseases.
But he would withdraw to deserted places and pray.”

–Luke 5:15-16

Ponder Luke’s Words

What do I learn about Jesus here?

How does this passage translate into my life?

Open your retreat guidebook to the “Morning Day One” section, the lesson
on **Silence and Solitude**. Read through the pages of this section again.
Review your notes.

Questions

- What stays with me from this section?
- How is the practice of silence and solitude currently part of my life? If not, how might it become integrated into my days?

Exercise

Turn to page 20. Engage again with this exercise.

Find a quiet place. Follow the instructions and then reflect on the experience by writing about it on pg.21.

Reflection

In solitude I get rid of my scaffolding: no friends to talk with, no telephone calls to make, no meetings to attend, no music to entertain, no books to distract, just me—naked, vulnerable, weak, sinful, deprived, broken—nothing. It is this nothingness I have to face in my solitude, a nothingness so dreadful that everything in me wants to go run to my distractions so that I can forget my nothingness and make myself believe that I am worth something ... Solitude is not merely a means to an end. Solitude is its own end. It is the place where Christ remodels us in his own image and frees us from the victimizing compulsions of the world. Solitude is the place of our salvation.

Henri Nouwen (from *The Way of the Heart*)

Questions

- How do I react to Nouwen's words? What phrase gets my attention the most?
- Do his words ring true for me? Why or why not?

Spend time with this line:

***“It [solitude] is the place where Christ remodels us in his own image
and frees us from the victimizing compulsions
of the world.”***

- What might Christ need to “remodel” in me?
- What are some of the “victimizing compulsions” that get in the way of Christ’s remodeling work in my life?
- What is a next step for me in the practice of silence and solitude?

**“Solitude is a ‘container discipline’ for the
practice of the other spiritual disciplines.”**

–Adele Calhoun



Book recommendation:

***Invitation to Solitude and Silence: Experiencing God’s
Transforming Presence***, by Ruth Haley Barton