

PRACTICING SILENCE & SOLITUDE

1. Identify a time/place that works well for you:

- Time: Many people find that early in the morning is best, but experiment with a time that works with your schedule.
- Place: Find a quiet, comfortable spot where you can rest with minimal distraction.

2. Set a modest goal:

- Start small and work your way up.
- Perhaps just plan to start with ten minutes, 3-5 days a week.

3. Some cautions:

- There are reasons why many people are afraid to be alone, especially without activity or noise. Like Jesus, in our solitude, we may have to deal with Satan's temptations and some wild animals (*Mark 1:13*). Enter the practice with focus and expectation of the Holy Spirit's aid.
- Solitude and silence are a revealing, purifying experience. Upsetting or painful thoughts, memories, and temptations may come to the surface. Whatever issues come up for us can then be brought to the Lord in prayer or shared with a wise brother/sister later.

Then, for the practice...

1. Put away your phone or any other distractions, settle into your time/place, and get comfortable.

- If you must be moving, you may prefer to do this practice while walking or doing something simple with your hands, like laundry or drawing.

2. Begin with quieting your mind and body.

- Close your eyes.
- Breathe slowly to help calm down your body. This helps your mind to focus.
- Begin to focus the mind on the person of Jesus.
- Your mind *will* seize this opportunity to run wild with thoughts, feelings, memories, to do's, and distractions. That's okay. When you notice your mind start to wander, just refocus with a short prayer, like, "Father...".

3. Spend a few minutes "abiding in the vine".

- Notice God's presence all around you and *in* you. For some people it's helpful to imagine the Father is sitting in the chair across from you or on a throne.
- Welcome his love, joy, and peace from the Holy Spirit.
- If you want, recall to mind scripture passages that you've memorized, or get something off your chest in prayer.
- But the main goal here is simply to "be with Jesus." Don't feel like you have to "do" anything. Just relax, enjoy his presence, and listen for anything he might be trying to say to you.

4. Close in a prayer of gratitude and commit the rest of your day to learning to abide in Jesus.

A few things to note:

1. You can't "succeed" or "fail" at this practice. All you can do is show up. *Be patient*. This takes some people years to master. Resist the urge to say, "I'm bad at this" or "This isn't for me."
2. If you absolutely hate sitting still, you might want to try this while stretching your body or taking a walk somewhere serene.



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3-weeks of intensive training to:

1. Be with Jesus.
 2. Become like Jesus.
 3. Do what Jesus did.
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 - Grow in the character of Jesus and obedience to His Word.
 - Learn how to lead others to become disciples of Jesus.
 - An inviting, set-apart location to enable breaking off habits of thought and action that keep us from Christlikeness and replacing them with daily practices that promote spiritual growth.

Website (includes informational videos): www.accounseling.org/abide