

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – 22nd November 2020

Theme: Spiritual Discipline for Christian Growth Topic: Spiritual Discipline: Solitude and Silence.

Main Text: Matthew 14:13-33

Key verse: Matthew 14:23: *“And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there”* (NKJV)

INTRODUCTION: Last Sunday, we looked at the Spiritual discipline of fellowship. The key verse from that study was an admonition to *“not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.”* Ironically, this Sunday, we are looking at a spiritual discipline which seems to fly in the face of fellowship - **Solitude and Silence**. Solitude can be defined as *the intentional withdrawal from social engagements*. Silence on the other hand refers to *the absence of sound or noise*; (i.e. stillness). Silence therefore encompasses cessation of any *external audible stimuli*. Silence further includes quieting of *external noise produced by others*, and *noise produced by oneself* (i.e. refraining to talk or talking only when necessary). There is therefore a direct relationship between silence and solitude: Silence enhances solitude and vice-versa.

- 1. (a) What makes solitude and silence a discipline to be pursued? (b) In what way(s) can solitude and silence help to deepen our relationship with God? (c) How easy or otherwise have you found your attempts to practice this discipline of solitude and or silence?**

Matthew 14:13 and 23 narrate two instances of Jesus withdrawing for a time of solitude and silence. In the first instance, news of the beheading of John the Baptist appear to be the stated motivation for His seeking a time of solitude. *“When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities”* (Matthew 14:13). The people got wind of his plans and followed. He had to look for another opportunity and employ some creativity: He *“made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray.”* (Matthew 14:22,23). Nothing was going to stop this time of solitude.

- 2. (a) What do you think prompted Jesus to doggedly seek solitude despite the initial frustration? (b) Read Mark 1:35; 6:31-32. What benefits do we find in seeking solitude and silence? (c) What additional benefit and motivation does 1 Timothy 4:6-8 offer us for the pursuit of this discipline?**

We live in a world filled with noise and activity. Advancements in technology has made it possible to be connected to work, friends and family and the world at large, virtually non-stop. There is communication overload. This constant noise and activity and endless distraction not only harry us, they seem to also squeeze out our effort to commune with God at a deeper level. Jesus experienced similar busy days. Mark 1:32-34; 3:7-8 give us a peek into Jesus' schedule and daily routine: *“At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. Then He healed many who were sick...”* *“But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude...”* Jesus was busy and surrounded with people yet he made a habit of withdrawing to remote places. (Luke 5:16).

- 3. (a) Mark 1:35; 2:13; 3:7; Luke 6:12. How did Jesus deal with the noise and endless activities around Him? (b) What did it take for Jesus to get those times of solitude and quiet? (c) What can we learn from Jesus in cultivating the discipline of solitude and silence despite our busy and noisy environments?**

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, You did not allow anything to stop Your times alone with the Father. Help me to also prioritize my times alone with You so that I do everything possible to find those windows for solitude and silence in my life and situation. Amen.*