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Tools for Discipleship – Solitude and Silence

Mark 6:30-32; Ecclesiastes 5:1-3

By Kirk Gambrell

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Using This Study

❶ EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters, so go back and pay close attention to the details that are emphasized or repeated in the passage.

❷ EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

❸ EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.



In the second week of looking at tools for discipleship, we will combine two tools that often go together: solitude and silence. In today's world, we often have very fast passed lives that have little opportunity for solitude and silence. Jesus makes it very clear that He values being able to withdraw and find a quiet place to reflect and seek God. He even teaches His disciples to do the same thing. This gives us the opportunity to listen for God to speak to us. It is difficult to listen when we are talking; therefore practicing silence at the same time becomes important. There are many warnings against using too many words or not keeping close rein on our words. This week we will practice slowing down, seeking God, and listening more while talking less.

*If you claim to be religious
but don't control your tongue,
you are fooling yourself,
and your religion is worthless.*

- James 1:26

EXAMINE His Word (Observation)

What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details and terms emphasized in these passages.

Read Mark 6:30-32 (NET)

³⁰ Then the apostles gathered around Jesus and told him everything they had done and taught. ³¹ He said to them, "Come with me privately to an isolated place and rest a while" (for many were coming and going, and there was no time to eat). ³² So they went away by themselves in a boat to some remote place.

Read Ecclesiastes 5:1-3 (NET)

¹ Be careful what you do when you go to the temple of God; draw near to listen rather than to offer a sacrifice like fools, for they do not realize that they are doing wrong.
² Do not be rash with your mouth or hasty in your heart to bring up a matter before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth! Therefore, let your words be few.
³ Just as dreams come when there are many cares, so the rash vow of a fool occurs when there are many words.

1. Who is involved in the text? Author, audience, main characters.
2. Where and when is this taking place? Geography and timeline.
3. What actions are carried out or commanded? Look for the verbs.
4. Is there anything repeated?
5. What is emphasized?
6. Is there anything in these passages that is related to other areas of scripture?
7. Are there things to be noted that are alike or unlike such as similes and metaphors?

② EXPLORE His Word (Interpretation)

What does God MEAN?

8. Does Jesus intentionally seek out places of solitude? (Luke 6:12-13; Mark 1:35, 6:30-32)

9. What do all the verses from question one have in common?

10. Read Ecclesiastes 5:1-3. Why is silence valued in these verses?

11. What does being silent allow us to do both at church and when we are alone?

12. What is the danger of using too many words?

③ EMBRACE His Word (Application)

Why does this MATTER to me?

13. Have you ever practiced solitude or silence? If so, what were some of the benefits you experienced?

14. Are there things that have helped you practice solitude or silence?

15. This week try and practice enjoying the short bits of solitude that you have; your morning coffee, in bed before the family wakes, step outside in the evening before going to bed. Then try and have one extended period of at least one hour of solitude.

16. Also this week try and have an extended period of time without talking. You may do this by the practice of only saying what you need to say for a period of time. Afterward share with your Discipleship partner where you were successful and what you learned.

Summarize your thoughts on the passage:

Write about what God wants you to KNOW, to FEEL, and to DO...

SERMON NOTES