



Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life. Proverbs 4:23 (NLT)

But the words you speak come from the heart—that's what defiles you. For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander. These are what defile you. Eating with unwashed hands will never defile you. Matthew 15:18-20 (NLT)

- If you want to deal with the corruption in your life, allow God to change your **heart**.

And I will give you a new heart—I will give you new and right desires—and put a new spirit within you. I will take out your stony hearts of sin and give you new hearts of love. Ezekiel 36:26

- Our spirit longs for **solitude**.

● He went up on a mountain **by himself** to pray. Now when evening came, **He was alone there.**" Matthew 14:23

● "So **He often withdrew himself** into the wilderness and prayed." Luke 5:16

● "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, **left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.**" Mark 1:35

- Our heart needs solitude for **prayer**.

- We are conditioned to need noise to drown out our **thoughts** and distract us from our **feelings**.

Definitions:

- **Solitude**: The practice of **temporarily** being absent from other people, and other things, so we can be **present** with God.

- Solitude doesn't eliminate spiritual community it, **enhances** it.

- **Silence**: The practice of voluntarily **quieting** myself, and my environment, so I can listen to God.

Why we need Silence and Solitude:

- We need to practice the art of **hearing** God speak to us.

Whoever belongs to God hears what God says... John 8:47 (NIV)

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. John 10:27 (ESV)

- I need to **give** to God what I am not designed to carry.

Cast all your cares on him because he cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7

Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you... Psalm 55:22 (NIV)

- I need **strength** in stressful times.

Why would you ever complain, O Jacob saying,

"God has lost track of me. He doesn't care what happens to me?" Don't you know anything? **Haven't you been listening?** God doesn't come and go. *God lasts.* He's Creator of all you can see or imagine. He doesn't get tired out, doesn't pause to catch his breath. And he knows *everything*, inside and out. He energizes those who get tired, gives fresh strength to dropouts. For even young people tire and drop out, young folk in their prime stumble and fall. **But those who wait upon God get fresh strength.** They spread their wings and soar like eagles, They run and don't get tired, they walk and don't lag behind. Isaiah 40:29-31 (Msg)

- I can't **give** to others when I'm **empty** myself.

Soon a large crowd of people had gathered to listen and be healed of their sicknesses. As often as possible Jesus withdrew to out-of-the-way places for prayer. Luke 15:16 (Msg)

Action Steps:

- **Schedule** time for God.

- Remove all the **distractions** you can.

- Just **be with** God.

"Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace." Matthew 6:6 (MSG)



TO CREATIVELY LOVE AND LEAD PEOPLE IN A GROWING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS.

Questions that can be used in Connection Groups:

These questions also work well for personal time with God.

- What scripture and/or point spoke most to you from the Talk on Sunday? Explain why?
- Do you intentionally guard your heart? What are some ways you do that?
- Read Ezekiel 3:26, what does that scripture mean to you personally?
- Why do you think our spirit longs for solitude?
- Have you practiced silence and solitude in your past? How was that?
- Do you agree that we have become addicted to noise to drown out our thoughts and feelings?
- Read through the definitions of Solitude and Silence; from these definitions, why are they necessary for us?
- Talk through the points under the heading "Why we need Silence and Solitude". Which of these speaks most to you? Explain.
- Do you think silence and solitude help us hear God speak to us? Why?
- Do you think silence and solitude help us give to God what we were not designed to carry?
- How does silence and solitude give us strength in stressful times?
- How does silence and solitude keep us from living on empty?

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Today's Talk..



A Heart of Solitude

Sunday, January 21st, 2024

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