
One From the Heart

In the Quietness

"In contemporary society our Adversary majors in three things: noise, hurry, and crowds. If he can keep us engaged in 'muchness' and 'manyness,' he will rest satisfied. Psychiatrist Carl Jung once remarked, 'Hurry is not of the Devil; it is the Devil.'" (Richard Foster)

If we are to be prepared for what God wants to do next in our lives then we must make room for God in the busyness of life to hear His voice and know His ways.

Too Busy

The world we live in is complicated and constantly competes for our attention. People busily rush around us and we tend to get caught up in this vortex of busyness that draws us further away from God.

The Bible tells us that Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), and that He came to give us life to the full (John 10:10). Jesus Himself tells us that His yoke is easy and His burden is light and all who are weary and heavily burdened should come to Him for rest (Matthew 11:28-30).

But are we promised peace when we enter into relationship with Christ?

Is Christianity supposed to work for us, like we are the centre and everything else is relative, existing to make our life better?

Do we treat God like the manufacturer of a product that should make our lives better, and then despise or ignore Him when He doesn't deliver?

The Purpose of Our Relationship with God

- + Saved for restored relationship with God and each other (John 1:12; 1 John 1:7)
- + Saved to escape deserved punishment in Hell (John 3:16-17; Romans 6:23)
- + Saved to become holy (John 17:17-19; Philippians 1:6; Titus 2:12-14; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 2:15-16)
- + Saved to live for God and represent His Kingdom – making this world a better place in His power (Hebrews 9:14; Ephesians 2:10; Matthew 10:8; Matthew 28:18-20)

The Promises (just a few of many)

- + Eternal life with Him starting now – present and future hope (Jeremiah 29:11; John 3:16-17)
- + Given us all we need for life and godliness right now (Psalm 37:23-24; Matthew 6:11; Ephesians 3:20; Philippians 4:13; 2 Peter 1:3)
- + Conquerors and over comers in Christ's strength (Isaiah 40:31; Romans 8:37; 1 John 4:4)
- + His Spirit for guidance, presence and power (John 8:47; 16:13; Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 2:16; Hebrews 13:5)
- + Gifts to build up the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27)
- + Fruit of the spirit – (Psalm 1:1-3; John 15:1-8; Galatians 5:22-25)
- + Abundant life – to the full (Psalm 16:11; John 4:13-14; 10:10; 17:13; Romans 15:13; 1 Timothy 6:19)
- + Rest and an easy burden when we're in Him (Matthew 11:28-30)

The Preconditions

- + Die to self, submit to and live for Christ (Matthew 16:24-26; Luke 14:26; Romans 12:1; Galatians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:24)
- + Everything for His glory (Colossians 3:17; 1 Corinthians 10:31)
- + Set your heart on pilgrimage, persevering until the end (Psalm 48:14; 84:5; 119:33; Mark 13:13; 1 Corinthians 1:8; Hebrews 10:36; 12:2; Revelation 2:26)
- + Strive to grow and be holy (2 Peter 1:5-9; 3:14; Hebrews 12:14)
- + Live obediently as His servant (Isaiah 15:22; John 9:31; 14:21, 24; 15:10; 1 John 2:3-6)

- + Trust God no matter what, not yourself (Psalm 20:7; 31:14; 37:5-6; 62:8; Proverbs 3:5-7; Matthew 6:25-34)
- + Find your joy in God, not the world (Psalm 37:4; James 4:4)
- + Wait on God (Psalm 37:7; Psalm 37:34; Isaiah 40:31)

God has promised so much, so why are we experiencing so little? The answer is in our failure to recognise our part to play in sanctification – the preconditions. While salvation is free there is a partnership in realising God's promises in our lives.

All the preconditions can be summarised down to this: seek God first and abide in Him. (Jeremiah 29:13; Matthew 6:33; Matthew 22:37-40; John 15:1-8)

What would need to change in our lives if we were to seriously pursue God ... seek Him whole-heartedly, and abide in Him? How do we achieve this in a busy world?

Jesus' Model

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. Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!" Mark 1:35-37 (NIV)

Barriers to Abiding in Christ

1. *Hearing Him above all the noise*
2. *Misunderstanding of why we need to hear His voice at all*
3. *Impatience*

Waiting on God

At the core, waiting on God helps us see that God is absolute, and everything, including ourselves, is relative in comparison. It helps bring our will in line with His, making space for His Spirit to move as the process of sanctification to the image of Christ takes place.

How to Wait on God

1. Confess Sin – be sure to approach God with a broken and contrite heart (Psalm 51:17) and confess any known sin (1 John 1:9)
2. Remove the Barriers or Hindrances
3. Exercise some discipline – determine in your heart to make God a priority and spend time alone with Him. Seek to be fully present to and uninterrupted in your interactions with God. God wants to talk to you – come with an expectant heart to hear His voice (Job 33:31; Psalm 78:1; 81:11-12; Mark 4:9; John 10:27)
 - + Wait Expectantly
 - + Practice slowing
 - + Seek Silence and Solitude

Challenge

What needs to change in the busyness of your life for you to spend time abiding with God in the quiet places?

Questions for Groups/Personal Reflections

1. Are you addicted to hurry, rush and adrenalin? Explain.
2. How have deadlines, timelines and bottom lines affected the pace of your life? What sort of power have you given to these imaginary lines? What options do you have?
3. What would it look like to insert margins of rest and relaxation into your day?
4. When people ask, "How are you?" what could you say instead of how busy you are?
5. How does technology influence your relationships? What relationships in your life need face time? (not the online version!)
6. What part does prayer play in slowing and finding silence and solitude?
7. Where do you have silence with God in your life? Do you think God values time with you in silence? Explain.
8. What sense of God do you have when you are alone with Him?
9. How could you make time alone with God more intentional in your everyday life? What needs to change to make this happen?