

Silence is the most prominent feature that instructed Moses, Elijah, The Baptist, Anthony, Macarius, and their www.nxgvision.com who seek the Lord with all their heart most often find Him in the silence of solitude.

Decentralization was the original theme of the Protestant Reformation, paralleled by social and economic changes tending in the same direction. In the volatile seventeenth century, Quakerism may be seen as the last formal expression of institutional Christianity in a chronology of devolving social and religious sectarianism. Alternatively, Quakerism may be considered the last logical manifestation in an historical devolution that ends with secular movements in the following century dominated by science and politics. The Quakers were among the last sects to appear in this historical movement, suffering criticism and persecution as the restoration of monarchy reasserted control up to the formal Acts of Toleration in Quakerism is an evangelical expression of Christianity in the sense of basing spiritual authority on the New Testament gospels. Quakerism has produced no theologians like Aquinas or Suarez or commentators like Ulrich or Phillip Melancthon , no charismatic preachers like John Wesley in the eighteenth century. Excluding itself from circles of power, the trajectory of Quakerism has been the individual and community on the one hand and social service on the other, the latter not as charity or duty but as advocacy born of the fullness of conviction in the example and teachings of Jesus. The framework for individual and community is silence. As one modern Quaker writer puts it succinctly, "Silence and witness are two pillars of Quaker spirituality. Overview Silence in worship consists of participants no longer necessarily Quakers today sitting in a circle at a private home or agreed place in "meeting. Usually set for about an hour, anyone may speak if so moved, but the expectation is that any vocalization is not frivolous. Quaker worship is an attenuated openness to the inspiration of God or the Spirit. If considered a form of meditation, it differs historically from other meditative forms in lacking a mantra as in Orthodox Christian or Hindu meditation, or a focal image as in Tibetan Buddhism. With regards to Buddhism, silent worship also differs from the concept of enlightenment in the professed openness of Quakerism to the inspiration of an objective if not circumscribed Spirit. Hence silent worship differs from shikantaza or "just sitting" of Zen Buddhism. In short, there is no comparable religious or spiritual phenomenon like Quaker worship. In terms of outward practice, the predominance of silence in Quaker practice may be seen -- like Quakerism itself -- as the historical result of a devolution. As suggested above, the seventeenth-century English context shows a popular movement that separated religion from established state power, followed by a movement to separate religion from the culture and society controlled by the established church as well as state. The result in Quakerism was a clear adherence to a spiritualized Christianity that harkened to the primitive or early communities of the New Testament, yet reconstructed on the experience of hardship and persecution in modern times. Hence silence as an alternative to vocalization of authority over individuals may be an element contributing to this Quaker practice, even while traditionally being seen by Quakers as a positive discovery by Quaker founder George Fox The overlap with silence as worship is intentional. The same theology guides the individual. The spirituality is immediately accessible and has no authority to consult or to grant validation. All of these figures were nominally Catholic. The latter writers expressed a post-Reform spirituality that transcended sectarian Christian theology and ecclesiastical configurations. The influential Quaker write Robert Barclay describes silent worshippers thusly: Each made it their work to return inwardly to the measure of grace in themselves, and not being only silent as to words but even abstaining from all their own thoughts, imaginations and desires. Center down into abasement and nothingness. This is what I labored after: Such words are not only more reminiscent of the Christian mystics and writers mentioned above but even of Eastern meditation. But Quaker silence differs from Eastern meditative practices in its goal. It does not normally advocate unity of self and God beyond the practical goal of returning to service in the community, whether the immediate community or the world beyond. Thus the Quaker writer John Woolman , author of the influential Journal, perceived silence largely in terms of worship. To him, the evolution of the Reformation was itself a revelation of the "real spiritual worship," wherein worshippers "dwell under the Holy Anointing and feel Christ to be our Shepherd. Tellingly, he notes that the process means that "rather than renouncing

power, wealth, and honor in a noble sacrifice, we simply discover that they no longer hold such interest for us. None of this is possible without work in silence. Historically, Quakers have approached silence pragmatically as worship and as effective discipline. William Penn saw silence as wisdom because it was "safe," while "Speaking is folly. Silence he calls generously "solitude. Forms of worship suggest a group psychology, according to some observers, but the catalog of dangers experienced by Quakers refusing to renounce their faith during the persecutions in England, or their activism in North America as abolitionists, or their pacifism, especially since World War I, belie the facile label of introvert. Silence is an abrogation of society and culture, of the premises of modern values falsely overlaid over religion and public life. What is the function of Christianity in conventional religion if it does not change the individual, if the dominant religious authorities never question the morality of institutions and powers? Silence is neither positive consent nor articulated dissent, only a pointer toward the spiritual potential of each person. Quaker silence intuitively fosters this path, even while avoiding a too garrulous description of what silence is. The essay locates silence in Christian spirituality while avoiding explicitly sectarian argument. Quaker silence, Melodia notes, is based on "the respect and love that Friends have for the Written Word -- the Bible -- by which they are inspired 99 times out of 100, seeking a direct link with the Spirit of God. This point leaves the content of revelation irresolvable as theology, with the exception of a strong sense of what the Quaker historian Hugh Barbour calls "moral purity" or integrity, in turn leading to a "self-consistency of the Spirit. As contemporary commentator Michael L. Birkel states of George Fox, the tradition founder of Quakerism: He learned that his efforts to separate himself from evil-doers were misguided in that the dividing line between good and evil ran through every human heart. Fleeing from sinners did not ensure his own moral purity, nor did it enable him to be in relationship with others. As a result of this experience he no longer ran away from people but instead found himself about to engage with them and minister to them. We may perceive a tacit critique of the solitary model, based alternatively, perhaps, on the model of Jesus coming out of the desert and not resuming that state thereafter. The seventeenth-century English hermit Roger Crab, who was already disposed to an eccentric Christianity as a virulent opponent of both high church and Cromwellian authority, was for a brief time a Quaker but left the Quakers to join the Behmenites, adherents of the German mystic Jakob Boehme, the founder of what would become theosophy. Perhaps for Crab, the Behmenites were more tolerant of a hermit tradition linked to an explicitly mystical Christianity. Or perhaps even Quakerism could not coexist with such a radical social eccentricity as eremitism. Eremitism was left to eccentrics who remained a source of tension with the elements of duty found in Quakerism and all Christian sects. As one modern writer has said, "Meeting for worship is a corporate experience. Despite its probable origins in monastic and mystic traditions, Quaker silence retains a pragmatic, even utilitarian, air as a preparation for external practice and social engagement. Modern Quakers tend to perceive solitude as loneliness and a form of spiritual and psychological alienation. Silence in the Quaker tradition addresses alienation without recommending physical solitude. The silence of Quaker devotion is sought out to conquer solitude in all its negative forms -- above all that which makes a person feel abandoned by God in the wilderness, even when in a large boisterous crowd, amongst jolly companions, or in the most religious of religious communities. Melodia points out that as a means or method, "maximum simplicity is reached. Of course, Quaker worship has risks also, Melodia points out, for silent worship -- like meditation in other traditions -- calls for a discipline at the same time as a flexibility and openness which creates a tension between individual and community. Ultimately, silence is a kairos or contingent gift that must be consciously used, applied, and cultivated. With silence, writes Melodia, problems appear in a less somber light, in their real dimensions, and seen wholly tractable. Daily worries lose their force, until they appear banal. Hurrying makes no sense. To where am I running, you ask yourself, and why am I running so? Anguish does not exist here any more. All is in its place and will be faced calmly, in good time. All of this, too, without a hint of mystical exaltation. Thus Melodia breaks the suggested links to meditative and mystical traditions that modern Quakers might like to establish -- or reestablish. Yet he approvingly quotes the Hindu mystic Vivekananda, disciple of Ramakrishna: Every soul is potentially Divine. The goal of life is to manifest this Divine within by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or by psychic control, or philosophy, by one more or all of these -- and be free. This is the whole of religion.

Doctrines of dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temple, or forms are but secondary details. An emphasis on the search for the divine, the links to which must be renewed by every generation, recreates the Quaker historical experience and that of the first Christians. Melodia recommends silence especially to sensitive souls cut off from self and from the perennial stream of values. Such people may be tired by the fruitless search for values in the world, and need to use silence to discover themselves, to confront their pains and fears. Through silence and introspection, the anguished person can "return to living in the dynamic wave of life beyond the limits of pain, fear, and death. The Quaker legacy of witness logically extended to society. This witness is unique among Christian denominations. Hence Melodia describes the Quaker as an "active mystic. The modern Quaker writer Arthur O. Roberts succinctly outlines the characteristics of silence. Roberts shows silence not as formal worship but as private reflection that nurtures the individual in the recognition of solitude. In his *Devotions on Silence*, Roberts writes that silence 1. For Roberts, "tranquility means inner peace independent of circumstances. Conclusion Quaker silence is part of the ongoing effort of humanity to identify the core of our striving for truth in the individual heart or soul and then finding a way of reconciling this truth with the world. Quaker silence is a unique phenomenon in the history of spirituality. It has the potential to nourish adherents to its faith as well as newcomers familiar with meditation and silence seeking a more traditional vocabulary without the urgency of refining doctrine or committing to a theological disposition. Methodology is a necessity for all religious and spiritual traditions, and Quaker silence offers a fascinating example of that effort to identify methods for achieving that harmony of individual and society, of individual and universe. As a unique method leading to pressing social consciousness, Quaker silence has much to be recommended in reconciling thought and practice in the life of the solitary. Orbis Books, and primary sources. URL of this page:

Chapter 2 : Silence in Quaker Tradition - Articles - House of Solitude - Hermitary

Among the ancient practices of the way, "Silence & Solitude" is the number one practice for apprenticeship to Jesus. Simply put, it's a moment of intentional time in the quiet to be alone with God.

July 18, Solitude is the furnace of transformation. Without solitude we remain victims of our society and continue to be entangled in the allusions of the false self. I was always left really inspired to do it, but still had one big question: My vision of it has always been getting quiet and clearing my mind, whatever that means. And if you have ever tried this, you know your thoughts will bombard you and 3 minutes in, you are thinking about the windows that really need a good scrub. We have to mentally prepare and know that this time is important. This time has value. I love the quote at the beginning of this post. Tozer How true is this? The name solitude makes this a non-negotiable. This is certainly the case for lots of moms of littles and for myself too, but we do need to see the value of getting completely alone. A cell phone in arms reach, even music. We have to create space for God to speak to us. Recognize each word and let the meaning take root. If you need a place to start, one verse that I have found myself meditating on often is Psalm This one is kind of visual and incorporates deep breathing which is great for so many reasons. It is so easy to live for temporary things. This exercise reminds me to fix my eyes on God instead of the world. Here are some helpful verses! When we ask God questions, we are inviting Him to speak. I was pleasantly surprised to see Gordon MacDonald say in *Ordering Your Private World* , that journaling was a way to practice silence or solitude. Try 5 minutes a day and increase as you can. Plan a time for extended silence and solitude 1 - 3 hours. Bonus points if you can do this out in nature by a lake on a mountainside. We simply cannot expect to experience soul deep connection with our Heavenly Father when we are constantly connected to the world. God calls us to get away. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul.

Chapter 3 : The power of silence and solitude. - Zero To Alpha

Silence and solitude can seem out of reach to the average man – the exclusive purview of the kind of religious ascetics and hermetic philosophers just mentioned, or a luxury that can be indulged only by those leaders who face choices freighted with heavy meaning and high stakes.

It is a life lived in stricter separation from the world in the Heart of God and in the heart of the Church for the Church. Previously, thousands of Christians were martyred as they shed their blood for the sake of Christ and His Kingdom. To a world of persecuted Christians, the Emperor Constantine brought peace and the cessation of bloodshed for the faith. When the persecutions ceased, the Church still had to face the great danger that confronts her even to this day, namely, to live in the world without compromise. Because of this threat to the authentic following of Christ and His holy Gospel, many fled into the solitude of the deserts, and thus a school of desert spirituality was forged. These men and women strove to imitate the lives of the great patriarchs and prophets: Abraham, Moses, Elijah, St. John the Baptist, and above all Jesus Christ, Himself. Since the world as persecutor was no longer the enemy of the Christian, the Christian had to become the enemy of the dark world. In the desert the Christian became a new kind of martyr giving witness to the saving power of the Risen Christ against the destructive powers of evil. The school of desert spirituality which evolved from this became the foundation of the eremitic and cenobitic ways of life which have endured until this very day. The laura, a colony of hermits under obedience to a Desert Father, was one of the forms of the eremitic way of life. Among the great Fathers of the Desert was St. Anthony. He is one of the patrons of the Hermits of Bethlehem. What we know of St. Anthony is from the classic biography written by St. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria. Augustine, in his Confessions, tells us that the book had a definite influence on his own conversion and on the vocations of others who were seeking God. Anthony was born around the year in Comus, Upper Egypt. At the age of twenty, St. Anthony lived in solitude some distance from his village and there spent his time reading the Scriptures, praying and doing penance. He engaged in manual labor in order to earn his food. He sought the advice and example of other outstanding hermits and strove in competition to imitate their virtues of prayer, fasting, mortification, silence, etc. Though Anthony preferred solitude, he was much sought after for spiritual guidance and healing. He formed them into a laura, a group of solitaries, and led them in the way of perfection and holiness. When asked for guidance, St. Anthony related stories to depict a point central to living out the Christian vocation. The sayings were later written down and shared with others. At the age of 60 Anthony withdrew further into the Egyptian desert and lived in greater solitude where he practiced a zealous and more intense ascetic life. He dwelt in the tombs where he suffered many temptations and came against all sorts of demons. After many years spent in seeking God through prayer, penance and combating the demons, he emerged from the desert a healthy man in body, mind and spirit. Anthony the Great, this celebrated Father of monks and hermits, is an example for the Hermits of Bethlehem. His whole life bespeaks the possibility of living a life totally for God. Within the Church, the Hermit of Bethlehem seeks just this: The life of the hermit is characterized by assiduous prayer, the daily asceticism of eremitic life, support of one another by silent presence and a weekly opportunity for sharing. The gospel calls us to a full response. We are to be perfect, striving for love for God, love for neighbor, orthodoxy of faith. For the hermit this means living in desert silence and solitude for the glory of God and for the salvation of the world. Anthony to renounce the world and serve You in the solitude of the desert. By his prayers and example may we learn to deny ourselves and to love You above all things. Anthony, January 17 Today, in our times, we are experiencing a new phenomenon in the Church throughout the world; that is, a return to the desert. In the ancient Church the reasons for flight into the desert were: The spirituality of the desert was not limited to a system of practices or doctrine that could be learned and applied to daily living. The spirituality of the desert was caught, not taught. It was a whole way of life and was the hard work of a lifetime of lived experience in and of the Lord. It was a holistic approach to spirituality, of striving to direct every aspect of body, mind and soul to God. The desert fathers accepted the challenge of the Gospel with generosity and singleness of purpose. They responded to it with their entire being without compromise. They strove to be obedient to the word and spirit of the Gospel with

their entire lives. The orientation of the whole person toward God was effected by continual prayer. That is the great struggle. The Westminster Press, Because the hermit life is rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and lived in the tradition and spirit of the desert fathers of the early Church, each hermit pays special attention to their writings and teachings. These early Christians desired to focus their lives on the love of God which drew them to Himself. By living their lives through, with and in Him, they reflected His radiance to others. The desert writings and teachings are based on stories about the desert fathers and their sayings. These writings were originally meant for specific individuals who came to the desert seeking guidance. As in the case of St. Anthony, the sayings were later written down and shared with others. Often the desert fathers related stories to teach a point integral for the living out of the Christian vocation. The wisdom of such sayings is still relevant as it communicates the essence of living in and for God. Withdrawing from the world to seek God more intimately, these early desert fathers drew on the rich blessings of their relationship with God. The contemporary hermit has withdrawn from the world to seek God more intimately. Drawing strength and wisdom from the Scripture and the desert writings and teachings in prayerful silence and solitude, the hermit hopes to share with others, through desert hospitality, the depth and beauty of communion with God. This ancient tradition is being restored through the canonical establishment of the Hermits of Bethlehem as a Laura of Consecrated Hermits of Diocesan Right, an eremetical contemplative group of Catholic men and women under the ecclesiastical authority of Bishop Arthur J.

Chapter 4 : The Practice of Silence and Solitude

Solitude and silence with God is about more than purifying peace and hearing God's voice, it's about being empowered to maintain our focus on God continually, to live conscious of and interactive with God's presence moment-by-moment as we go about the activities of our day.

What do you think about silence and solitude? How good are you at being alone? How about silent, listening, not speaking? How can these things be considered a discipline that can bring us closer to knowing God? I want to tell you a story real quick here, before we get into this too far. When I was a kid, we used to go to church in Markleville in a little trailer. It was about God talking to Elijah on the mountain. There was great wind and an earthquake and fire. But God was not in any of these things. I think I remember this because we had an apple tree out in front on the church, and I was probably hungry. I also remember when Dad would preach. I loved that part, because it made sense. I could understand what he was saying. He used to do this thing where he would look up the word in the dictionary, to help us understand it better. Moses went alone to Mount Sinai to talk with God Exodus Paul, in Galatians 1: Jesus often went away to a mountain or a quiet place to talk to God Matthew 4: Why do you think He did this? Dan Gilliam notes some things about silence and solitude in his book, *God Touches: Finding Faith in the Cracks and Spaces of Life*. While there is a common assumption in church circles that God speaks most frequently and the clearest through singing worship and heart-enlivened sermons, I find the context of speechless tranquility to be a more common ground for God-messaging than any activity with noise, no matter how holy the words. From all I have read and learned about God, His greatest desire is to share space and consciousness with us through conversation and friendship. In these moments of stillness found in early morning cemetery walks, a minute bicycle ride or late night prayers from a screened-in porch, I am reminded that these sacred segments are precious and scarce in an increasingly busy and populated society. Silence is not the widened way of this world; it is a slender, rough-cut trail up the backside of the mountain that few dare to travel. In times of stillness we are saved, not from sin or hell, but from ourselves and all the petty worries, fears and ego ideas that often run us around like a puppy chasing its short and insignificant tail. In this quiet salvation, God again becomes God of our lives and we are relieved of our need to compete with Him for the Universal throne. Because of its otherworldly characteristics, the mystical experience of individual and collective silence, over the centuries, has been a regular practice and core value of the Christian community, a passageway into the divine present practiced by both would-be saints and everyday believers alike. Part of the lure of the monastic life has always been the opportunity for a deeper walk with God through the life of solitude that a cloistered society provides. I have yet to meet a spiritually minded man who has not, at one time or another, fantasized about living the life of a priest or monk. While it is difficult to imagine living without the conveniences and luxuries to which we have become accustomed, the idea of having hours on end to read, pray and tend to dumb animals while making wine, cheese or candles has never lost its appeal. In modern times, the way of silence and solitude can be likened to the course of a salmon swimming upstream, going against the spiritual grain of a culture that lives and breathes accomplishment and the acquisition of material belongings. This way of stillness, not commonly found or talked about in 21st century America, is not for everyone. It is, however, available to all those who are unwilling to wait for the ethereal mists of heaven to get their hands on the keys to the kingdom. Silence and solitude are for those who desire to hear God speak and watch the Spirit move in the cracks and the spaces of life. It should come as no surprise to anyone new to the discipline of silence that it does not come easy. One would not normally expect to be a great musician or athlete without practice except for golfers who all expect to be good without working at it, so the same measure should apply here. While practice can sometimes make perfect, other times, it simply makes practicing easier. For two years, I was gifted with an opportunity to live, work and play among some evangelical Quakers in Oregon. While they were not as simple or removed from society as the Amish, the Quakers, also known as Friends, taught me much about shared silence and listening for the sense of the group. Sure, I had many times when I was alone or with people and just not talking, but it was never with an intention of listening to what God might say to me in the moment. In my early experiences

of unvoiced worship I was pleasantly surprised to discover that shared silence was much easier to enjoy than any of my solo attempts had been. Most people understand the difficulty of quieting the mind in attempts at meditation or quiet reflection and I was no exception. However, in a group of people all trying to connect at some level with Christ, the Present Teacher, there is a common energy that almost gives you the feeling of your mind being weighted down. A group gravity of sorts helps your mind to stay focused and not wander so much. It is an interesting phenomenon that, once you experience it, you find yourself wanting more because of the fellowship with God and others that become so accessible. I like this, maybe because it appeals to me, like he has it right. He is of the aging hippie persuasion and just fun to be around and listen to. I like the monk idea, but, as I have said before, I think it is cheating. I think that God calls us to love Him and to love our neighbor and, if we have no neighbor, well, you get the point. I think God calls us to follow Him in community, around others, in the struggle. The point I am trying to get at is this: They usually follow a rule laid out by their abbot or by the founder of their order. I have this one called The Rule of Saint Benedict. You cannot let life sweep you along, like a salmon that has given up on the mating ritual. You have a choice. You dictate how you spend your time. Sure you have things that you have to do, but you can always make time if there is something you want to do or feel is important. Silence and solitude are important. In the world of noise and clutter, these things can quiet you enough to hear that still, small voice. What happens in this verse? Jesus went away to hear the still small voice and received the answer to His question: How are you at being alone, being quiet? What about in your mind, can it be silenced, or slowed and quieted enough to listen? Think about when someone you know is telling you a story or giving you some information that you want to hear. You are focused on them, you know are quiet, waiting to hear what they are saying. The same holds true, I think, in listening to God. When you hear from God, will you accept it? Will you listen and obey? This may be the hardest part, but also the most rewarding. I think you know what I mean, but there are times when God will bring something to your mind, something you need to do or someone that needs prayer or encouragement or whatever. If you desire to hear from God, you have to listen to His voice and follow where He leads. Silence and solitude are ways to slow down, to listen, to hear again. They help us to know God, what He desires, who He is and give us the opportunity to hear, trust, and obey. That hymn has it right, I think: So, in practice, maybe it looks like this: Maybe late at night you sit alone in silence. Where ever it is, get some time to be still and know that Jehovah is God. Next time we will learn about sacrifice and also stewardship. Think about it, spend time alone with God this week, talking with Him and listening to what He has for you.

Chapter 5 : In the Silence of Solitude: Contemporary Witnesses of the Desert by Eugene L. Romano

An atmosphere of silence and solitude is essential to our life of prayer. In solitude, we learn to surrender to the work of God, to know God's presence in a deep and intimate way, and to rest in that presence.

Our so called time saving technology such as smart phones and high speed internet access relentlessly remind us that we can get more done in less time so we have more time to get even more done. As a result we are addicted not only to noise, but to hurry. Hurry is a disordered heart. I suggest 8 benefits of building this discipline into your life. I can attest to that. Yet, God does not want us to be controlled by nor conform to the noisy, hurried life that our culture and churches often push us towards. Some of the greatest spiritual leaders and influencers of the past said much about this practice. We may lay it down as an elemental principle of religion, that no large growth in holiness was ever gained by one who did not take time to be often long alone with God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few. He was busy but was never in a hurry. Silence and solitude was Jesus place of strength. Luke 4 " Before he chose the 12, He spent the night praying to God. When evening came, he was there alone. They both go hand in hand and without silence, solitude has little effect. In essence they are practices of not doing something"not interacting with society and people and withdrawing from human contact, voice, noise, phone, TV, radio, newspaper, etc. When I speak of silence and solitude below, I will speak of them as one thing. The practice of temporarily being absent from other people in isolation or anonymity and other things so that you can be present with God. The practice of voluntarily and temporarily abstaining from speaking so that certain spiritual goals might be sought. Silence and solitude is a tool God uses to restore our souls by breaking engagements with the world. It is really more of a state of heart than a place. Granted, it does include awayness from others, but as you mature you can even be in a huge crowd and experience the rejuvenating power it offers. On the other hand you can become a hermit and never experience its power. And then perhaps he or she would be better able to do the right thing. It helps renew our souls. In addition, at least once a year it must be taken apart to remove the dirt clogging it, straighten out bent parts and repair those worn out. Finally, at least once a year he must take it apart and examine every piece in detail, that is every affection and passion, in order to repair whatever defects there may be. He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be shaken. It reminds us that life will still go on without us It interrupts the cycle of constantly having to manage things and be in control. It breaks us from a sense of being indispensable. It clears the storm of life and mind for wise decision making and planning. And when day came, he called his disciples to him; and chose twelve of them, whom he also named as apostles. It creates inner space to hear the voice of God. God spoke to the prophet Elijah right after he had come from a power encounter with the Baal worshippers on Mount Carmel. He had fled because he heard that Queen Jezebel had placed a price on his head. He hid in a cave and God asked him what he was doing there. Then God told him to leave the cave and that He would speak to him. Elijah saw a storm and then wind and then an earthquake and then fire. Yet God was not in any of those. Rather, God spoke in a gentle whisper 1 Kings We are usually surrounded by so much outer noise that it is hard to truly hear God when he is speaking to us. It allows us to disconnect from the world and deeply connect with our soul. It helps us control our tongue. Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. When we are silent and yield to the advice in James, it becomes more difficult to manipulate and control the people and circumstances around us. When we practice silence we lay down the weapons of words. We find that God can manage situations just fine without our opinions on the subject. It helps us with the other disciplines. When we include silence an solitude it enriches prayer, Bible reading and fasting. What would you add to this list of benefits of silence and solitude? This post was originally published on CharlesStone.

Chapter 6 : 8 Steps to Meeting God in Silence and Solitude

Creating silence and solitude. As noise amplifies, so does our need for a space to take a breath, refresh, and approach our digital lives more mindfully.

Pinterest0 Have you ever spend some time in silence or in solitude? Parents punish their kids by putting them in solitude which leads to this behavior. Remember that I told you that you should forget about the looks and read some books? This combination is freaking dynamite. The power of silence and solitude: People get extremely uncomfortable. So these people perform subtle forms of escapism. They start texting, ask to turn on the radio. But what makes silence so uncomfortable? Because silence turns your brain on. I try to spend at least 30 minutes per day in silence and solitude. I focus on breathing in this meditation session. This makes random thoughts pop up in my head. That pain should be your fuel. What can I say? The third meditation session occurs 10 minutes before I fall to sleep. I just focus on my breathing and do a lot of visualization. This means that I focus on what I want. I can actually see it. I sleep really well when I do it like that. Sometimes they might even solve a certain problem but I solved most of my problems by spending time in silence and solitude. Over time you just get better at tackling problems in life, sports and so on. Are you afraid to meet the real you? That would be pretty confronting right?!

Chapter 7 : Silence in Solitude (Roads of Heaven, #2) by Melissa Scott

The words silence and solitude themselves have become somewhat archaic. At least our practice—or lack of practice—of them would seem to confirm this notion. In the West, we have simply become uncomfortable with silence and, to a lesser degree perhaps, with solitude.

Dings and voices and music and words, words, words. My brain is never mute. My mind races on and on. So I sign up for another weekend of silence. I walk into the monastery on a cold February night. The sisters here respect our silence. They quietly prepare our meals, arrange our bedding for the weekend, make space for us to wander their grounds. But silence is one thing. And solitude is another. We can be quiet in the middle of a crowd. Silence is not making noise. Solitude is being alone because you want to be. On this weekend, I want to welcome both. For these two nights, solitude means I drive away from home to sleep in a room alone, eat my meals alone, walk the trails alone. And silence requires even more sacrifice. It means more than not having a conversation with a neighbor. In solitude, we learn to be present. His still, small voice is amplified in the silence and solitude. His presence is thick. His love is encircling. I listen more closely. I look up more often. I breathe in more deeply. And then I drive home. And I wonder how to maintain the silence and solitude out here. It requires no monastery. But to find a time and place to quiet my thoughts and be alone with God, even if only a few minutes each day, requires some sacrifice, some intention, some motivation. To listen more keenly and give God more of my full attention, I must. It means fasting a little more—of time, of thoughts, of activity. But fasting from noise to feast on God is a practice worth pursuing. Which is harder for you: Please share in the comments.

Chapter 8 : How to practice silence & solitude – Val Marie Paper

Read this overview. Week 5 introduces the ancient practice of lectio divina, or "spiritual reading." Lectio divina is not a new method of Bible Study. Whereas study of the Bible sets its focus on learning, lectio divina is an ancient time-tested method of meeting God in the Scriptures.

May 19, at Living alone, I am used to silence. Praying the office daily, I am used to prayer, sometimes with the words inside my head, sometimes just being here with my God. Yet, mindfulness does not automatically come with the physical setting or the being alone, or even with the habit of prayer. It also takes intentionality, patience, a willingness to leave behind for a time the chronos of daily life, and enter into that kyros that is the time of both now and forever. Sometimes, often even, I am moved to tears by the beauty of the communion of saints I experience at such times. This sort of prayer seems to be open to me with a practice of prayer, yet I cannot make it happen. I pray with open hands. God deigns to allow me sensible grace at times. Let us joyfully enter into that silent space where we can hear God whispering to our souls! Tina May 19, at 2: We are not aware of this because our brain stitches it all together seamlessly. Try blinking voluntarily the next time a thought intrudes. A number of meditation teachers suggest it, including Thich Nhat Hanh. Keeping awareness on the lotus of the heart for 12 seconds Ramon: Blessings, R May 19, at 3: At the very end of my day I set aside time to listen for God and to listen to his will. Sometimes I hear immediately, but sometimes I do not hear for awhile. It is a hard discipline, but is it something I am convinced we must do. May 19, at 4: So when I found a small dead bird on my front step the other day I was jerked out of my self importance with the need to bury it. I think usually that still small voice speaks to me through the natural world. Prayer is not really easy for me. Claudette Warlick May 19, at 5: I grew up in the high desert in New Mexico, live in the Northwest, but vividly understand the presence of silence or at least silence from human-created noise in desert. Or worrying about my juvenile court clients. Or worrying about lots of other things. I feel blessed when that still small voice can cut through the anxiety noise.

Chapter 9 : The Practice of Solitude and Contemplative Silence | Paul Bane

Incorporate silence and solitude into your life regularly. Choose a regular time and place to get away from life as usual and spend at least 10 minutes in silence and solitude as often as you can.

The Practice of Silence and Solitude Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect. Introduction We need, especially in our day and age, to find a practical and workable response to St. Now to come up with a response to this challenge that St. Paul makes, we can begin with a story told about Abba Arsensius. He was a well-educated Roman Senator who also worked as a tutor to the princes of the Roman Emperor Theodosius. Eventually he became dissatisfied with his life in Rome, and so while still living in the palace he prayed to God in these words, "Lord, lead me in the way of salvation. Now we have already discussed the importance and necessity of prayer in a previous conference. And so today, we want to concentrate on what it means to flee and be silent. In other words, we want to delve into the meaning and importance of solitude and silence and their role in the spiritual life. For solitude is the goal of all who flee the world, and it is closely connected to the practice of silence. In fact, we can say that solitude is the indispensable condition for silence. In other words, without spending at least some time in solitude, we will not be able to grow in the practice of silence. For as the Imitation of Christ explains, "unless you like solitude it is not safe for you to appear in public" Bk I, ch. We must, then, try to develop a love of solitude and a love of being alone with God. It is unfortunate therefore, that so many people see solitude only in negative terms, almost as a kind of punishment. For example, solitary confinement in prison is seen as one of the worst things that could happen to a person. But many priests who spent years in solitary confinement in communist prisons behind the iron curtain, later confessed that that was the richest and most blessed period of their spiritual lives. Solitude, however, should be seen as a friend and as a companion and the precious means by which we can find God and listen to his voice. The Fathers of the Church, for this reason, have been loud in their praise of solitude. O solitude which produces the firm rocks with which the city of the Great King is constructed. O barren waste, rejoicing in familiarity with God. Basil says of solitude: It is a paradise of delights which emits the perfume of virtue. For there the roses of charity are enveloped in crimson flame and no sudden squalls are able to destroy the violets of humility. There the myrrh of perfect mortification diffuses itself and the incense of constant prayer hangs heavy on the air. For the voice of God does not speak amid the din and bustle of the world, nor is it heard in any public gathering. Rather secret counsel seeks to be heard also in secret. And so because of this, happiness will be given to us if we listen to God in solitude. We should feel like the psalmist who wrote: However, making the effort to seek and find solitude may require a great sacrifice on our part. Bernard points out, "we must also in a sense flee from our friends, relatives, and neighbors, if we want to be saved in solitude. For our salvation may well depend on our doing this. And so because of this we should always keep the words of St. Augustine in mind, who once wrote: Christ himself told his apostles and disciples to pray in the solitude of their room and to "come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while" Mk 6: We must, then, make time in our daily routine for a period of time where we can withdraw into a place of solitude, even if it is only in our heart. Francis de Sales, in his Introduction to the Devout Life, points out: Calvary, or in the wounds of our Lord, or in some other place near him, as a retreat to which we may occasionally retire to refresh and recreate ourselves amidst our exterior occupations; and there as in a stronghold, defend ourselves against temptation. And it can be used anytime, anywhere. Francis points out here that when "the parents of St. Catherine of Siena had deprived her of the opportunity of a place and leisure to pray and meditate, our Lord directed her, by his inspirations, to make a little oratory within her soul, into which, retiring mentally, she might, amidst her exterior occupations, enjoy the spirit of a holy solitude" Bk II, ch. And so we too, like St. The value of solitude, then, we can say is priceless. For whoever finds it, finds life, and the peace and joy of the Holy Spirit. And so this explains, as the Imitation of Christ notes, why "the greatest saints avoided the company of worldly men as much as possible. For they preferred to be alone with God. As one man said "as often as I have been among men, I have returned less a man" Bk. A good example that proves the truth of this

observation is the life and history of the Carthusian Order. The Carthusians are an order of hermit monks that live in perpetual silence and solitude. They were founded in Grenoble, France by St. Columbanus. Yet to this very day, they have never needed to be reformed. Remarkably they have retained their original fervor. In fact, they are the only monastic order in the history of the Church "to preserve faithfully the true monastic ideal in all its perfection during centuries in which the other orders fell into decay. And the fact that the Carthusians have never needed a reform has long since become proverbial: Silence So much for solitude. Now to discuss silence. Silence, it has been said, not only "completes and intensifies solitude," but it also is the "way to make solitude a reality. The book of Proverbs, for example, tells us not only that "where words are many sin is not wanting" Prov 10:19 It is in the New Testament, however, where the doctrine of silence and the control of speech is more fully developed. James goes so far as to state that "if anyone does not fall short in speech, he is a perfect man" Jas 3:10 And Christ himself gives us a frightening warning when he tells us: For by your words you will be saved, and by your words you will be condemned" Mt 12:37 Silence, therefore, has always been highly regarded by the saints and holy people. Once Mother Teresa was asked, "Mother what do you consider the most important thing in the training of your sisters? Interior and exterior silence. Silence is essential in a religious house. The silence of humility, of charity, the silence of the eyes, of the ears, of the tongue. There is no life of prayer without silence. She explained that "we need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. See how nature, the trees, the flowers and the grass grow in perfect silence. His language is silence. And he requires us to be silent to discover him. We need, therefore, silence to be alone with God, to speak to him, to listen to him and to ponder his words deep in our hearts. We need to be alone with God in silence to be renewed and to be transformed. For silence can give us a new outlook on life. In it we are filled with the grace of God, which makes us do all things with joy. Lewis in his Screwtape Letters puts some words in the mouth of the devil that bring out this truth more forcefully than a library of books ever could do. This is what he has the devil say: We will make the whole universe a noise in the end. We have already made great strides in this direction as regards the earth. The melodies and silences of heaven will be shouted down in the end. For the devil has been extraordinarily successful in making noise and spreading it over the face of the earth. We cannot walk the streets without hearing the deafening roar of trucks and motorcycles and construction equipment. It is no wonder, then, that mental illness and suicide are on the rise. People need silence and solitude to rest in the peace of Christ, to recover their psychological and spiritual equilibrium, to think, to meditate, to plan, to contemplate the mysteries of God and the richness of the Faith. But only a relatively few fortunate individuals can do any of this because the majority of men and women are assaulted day and night by deafening demonic Noise. Pope Paul VI hit the nail on the head he wrote: And so because of this he lacks silence with its genuine voice speaking in the depths of his being: For "we need this wonderful state of mind, beset as we are by the cacophony of strident protests and conflicting claims so characteristic of these turbulent times. Joseph as our examples in the silent life. It is this silence of acceptance of the Word," he stressed, "this ability to meditate on the mystery of Christ that Mary passes on to believers. And in a noisy world filled with messages of all kinds, her witness enables us to appreciate a spiritually rich silence and fosters a contemplative spirit. Joseph, on the other hand, the Pope says, "is presented to us as an incomparable witness of that contemplative silence, full of listening to the word of God, which emanates from the Gospels as the characteristic atmosphere of the house of Nazareth. But this attitude is not pleasing to Christ who was "silent and opened not his mouth" when he was insulted and treated unjustly. For Christ suffered for us, as St. Peter tells us, and left us an example to follow. And when he was made to suffer, he did not counter with threats" 1 Pt 2:23 John of the Cross makes a very strong statement about complaining. He states "anyone who complains or grumbles is not perfect nor is he even a good Christian.