



“Be still and know that I am God.” Psalm 46:10

What happens when I pause to attend to God, to listen, to simply be still before God?

What might occur if I did not control my conversation with God with a multitude of words (however meaningful and important)?

When the inevitable onslaught of distraction comes what would emerge if I turned my attention to God, again and again?

If God is inviting me into silence how do I even begin... even if it is only two minutes at a time?

SILENCE

“Leaning into the stillness with God”

We enter into silence with God for the sake of listening and being present to the One who loves us. In the stillness we come to know God more fully and we become more aware of our own heart.

1. **Prayer Word** – I choose or ask God for a prayer word (or phrase). A prayer word historically provides an *anchor for stillness*. There are many favorites - the name of *Jesus, Abba, come Lord Jesus, Lord Jesus have mercy on me, etc.* A few years ago I settled on *“Just You.”* For me, that phrase represented the invitation to anchor in God above all else. As I enter the stillness and distraction comes (i.e. I remember I need to stop at the grocery store, I wonder if I took the laundry out of the dryer, or I am worried about a friend, etc), I repeat the prayer word, and I bring my attention back to God.

2. **A Thousand Surrenders** - A story was told in spiritual direction training for which I no longer remember the details. This is what I remember: a woman, perhaps a nun, was at a retreat and was seeking to practice stillness and silence. The distractions in her head were relentless, and she was growing discouraged. The leader invited her to see each “letting go” of a distraction as a surrender. Each surrender mattered, even if there were a thousand.

3. **Non-judgment and Release** - What is important in the practice of silence is to continue to bring my attention back to God. If I fixate on the distraction or judge my distraction as failure I tend to give energy to the distraction. In contrast it is more beneficial to notice the interfering distraction, release it, and then bring my attention back to God and to a place of stillness.

4. **Practice** - I will increase my capacity and attention as I practice and train my mind to slow down. As a culture we have become undisciplined in our minds: busy and driven, fast paced with crowded schedules, multiple technological devices and immediate access to worldwide information. These cultural patterns bring chaos to our minds and hearts. We need to set our intention and make a choice to value silence and stillness.

5. **Let the Spirit be your teacher** – I am not alone. If you have sensed God inviting you to greater stillness and silence trust that the Spirit of God will teach, empower, and equip you. Ask God for help.