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Dear Friends,



*In repentance and rest is your salvation,
In quietness and trust is your strength...*

Isaiah 30:15

Be still, and know that I am God...

Psalms 46:10



What do you think about your thinking? Have you ever thought about that? Researchers tell us that each individual has on average about 6,000 thoughts per day. That number varies. Depending on what researcher you read, it can be as high as 70,000 thoughts per day. You may think the thinkers in that category are on speed, but speed freaks may not produce that many actual thoughts. They may just constantly recycle the same ones. Fairly trustworthy psychological research reports that the average human brain carries about four sextillion thoughts - at least potentially.

Okay. At this point, we are merely playing around with mostly useless number games. The final conclusion of those who think about this capacity for thinking is that we have an *infinite* capacity for thoughts. So what then? For beings who technically have such capacity, we sure don't seem to use it very well! So let's go another direction: a scripturally guided one. How do we steward our minds wisely? I'm not really interested in the long term examining of what my mind is numerically capable. It is far more important to me to consider what my mind is doing. What is it perceiving, inventing, anticipating, conceiving on the day by day, moment by moment, levels? What am I discerning, and what actions am I to take in wisely and compassionately responding to life around me and those I care for? Mixed in with that may be shallow calculations, like the best gas prices near me or that the trash needs emptying. But the art of thinking... that has to be crafted and protected.

The place to begin this effectively is with silence. Many folks nowadays think silence is just less noise. For too many of us, quiet is merely fewer electronic distractions. No. I'm referring to a nearly total (I say nearly, for it is harder and harder to achieve total silence) freedom from the intrusion of sounds. This includes sounds that are designed to erase silence, and then replace it with a thousand inane suggestions. They don't have to be meaningful. On the contrary, the more mindless in nature they are, the better for producing meaninglessness, which results in time-wasting fruitlessness. And please do not misunderstand me, I do NOT mean the sounds of nature. In fact, such things as birdsong, crickets chirping, water flowing, waves crashing, leaves crunching under your feet, can all make for a great backdrop that leads us into silence.

Silence is frightening to many of us because it strips us like nothing else does. **As Dallas Willard says, "It reminds us of death, which will cut us off from this world and leave only us and God."** In true quiet, what if there turns out to be very little to being aware of when it comes to just you and God? What if you have filled a place in your life in which God was drawing near to you in order to be with you as a healing Presence, but you quickly filled that place with a constant cacophony of sounds? And it may be good sounds, such as a recorded sermon, or one Christian conversation after another, or your favorite music, or an important news broadcast. And there are certainly right times for those. But not in the place where The Real Presence is ready to draw near. At that moment, the good stuff has become a distraction, keeping you from Real Life.

If this is a new thought to you, or even if it is a once treasured practice that you have allowed to fade from you, it may sound attractive. For you may have become hungry for a return to silence as you have become conscious of how exhausted you are from all the flood of 'necessary' sounds. But in order to regain the lost treasure of holy silence, it may take some real work on your part. **"Think what it says about the inward emptiness of our lives if we must *always* turn on music or the radio to make sure something is happening around us."** (Dallas Willard)

At a time when communication is becoming shrill in its immediate urgency so that there is a constant siren sound invading every moment, the greatest need may be the sound of a sacred silence. For it is not the mere absence of sound that is needed. It is to be made wordless by the awareness of the Presence of The Living Word, who is patiently waiting for us to make room for Him.



Learning to be Still

The reproduction of the Christ-life is not done in an instant... He is patient with you and He wants you to be patient with yourself in all the unfinished work which is still so in evidence in your life... Are you one with God? All the rest is the Lord's work. The trouble is that you worry; that you distrust Him and condemn yourself; that you resist His discipline because you know not what He is doing. But the Lord goes on rejoicing over you while He works away at you, and He wants you to learn the lesson of just being still in His hands...

(Elizabeth Baker)



Movie Review: The Forge



Remember a film that came out a few years ago called **War Room**? It is a story about the importance of spiritual warfare and intercessory prayer. Unlike many Christian films, this one was well-crafted and effectively communicated. No, it was not for a wider audience, but aimed at believers to enhance their vision of the subject, and they did it very well. **The Forge**, again by the Kendrick Brothers, is produced in that same format. It is a bit formulaic, (I wish discipling a fatherless teenager was as smoothly accomplished as it is in this film) but all the truth needed to get the message across has to be done in a two hour format. So I will not be too picky about the lack of reality at times. I bless them for a good effort that is worth your time.

Closing Thoughts...



Are the words we write to you in **Nightlight** life-giving? Only if they are birthed out of a holy Silence. I am increasingly aware of how easy it is to flip off my opinions to you. God helping me, I pray I do not. Meaningful communication emerges out of worshipful silence. We have a lot to say and a lot to do. Pray for us as we return periodically before the Lord in a waiting dependent silence.



In His Presence, Clay & Mary

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