



**The Week of February 20, 2022**  
**God Is... Slow to Anger**  
**Conversation Guide**

### **This Week's Take-Aways**

- **About God:** (1 Corinthians 8:6) I believe there is one God who exists in 3 persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God is perfect in all things. He is the creator of all things. He has made humanity in his image and he desires a personal relationship with each one of us.
- **Patience:** (Romans 15:5) I am patient with other people because God has been patient with me.

### **How did it go with last week's Next Steps?**

- Where you able to incorporate Silence & Solitude into last week? Share what that taught you about God.
- How did it go with showing compassion and graciousness to the person you thought of last week?

### **Intro Questions**

- How do you know someone is angry even when they are unaware?
- What are your pet peeves? What makes you lose your church face?
- How easily do you get angry and how long does it take you to get over it?
- How close you are with another person affect how angry you get?
- *Optional: Play the RightNow video on God's characteristic "Slow to Anger." In RightNow browse for "Character of God." The fourth video is Slow to Anger (5 minutes).*

## God's Anger

Have someone read out loud: Exodus 34:6

*The Lord passed in front of him and proclaimed: The Lord—the Lord is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love and truth,*

- How has God been patient with you?
- Have you angered God and what is His response?
- How quick are you to anger with those you love?
- How has your compassion checked your anger?
- How is God's anger different from your anger? (see James 1:20, Numbers 14:18)

Have someone read out loud: 2 Peter 3:8–10

*Dear friends, don't overlook this one fact: With the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance.*

*But the day of the Lord will come like a thief; on that day the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, the elements will burn and be dissolved, and the earth and the works on it will be disclosed.*

- What does this passage tell you about God's transcendence over time and space?
- How does our time table differ from God's in a world of instant gratification?
- Which is more important to God: Your transformation with character development or all your desires and needs being met?

Have someone read out loud: Romans 2:4–5

*Or do you despise the riches of his kindness, restraint, and patience, not recognizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?*

*Because of your hardened and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment is revealed.*

- Do you take God's patience for granted?
- What would be the outcome if God judged instantly instead of showing His patience, kindness and compassion.
- Do you fear God's wrath? What causes wrath to be stored up for a person?
- When is the day of wrath?

Have someone read out loud: Romans 9:22–23

*And what if God, wanting to display his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much patience objects of wrath prepared for destruction? And what if he did this to make known the riches of his glory on objects of mercy that he prepared beforehand for glory—*

- Who is God talking to through Paul's words?
- Who are the objects of wrath and the objects of mercy?
- What is God's purpose?

## **Our Response to a Compassionate and Gracious God**

Have someone read out loud: Lamentations 3:22-26

*Because of the Lord's faithful love  
we do not perish,  
for his mercies never end.  
They are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness!  
I say, "The Lord is my portion,  
therefore I will put my hope in him."*

*The Lord is good to those who wait for him,  
to the person who seeks him.  
It is good to wait quietly  
for salvation from the Lord.*

- What does this passage tell you about God's love and mercy?
- How often is it renewed?
- What is the correct response when one encounters a loving, merciful, slow to anger God? Make a list of what this passage tells us we should do?

Have someone read out loud: James 1:19-20

*My dear brothers and sisters, understand this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger, for human anger does not accomplish God's righteousness.*

- List out the three steps for how to respond correctly when the situation presses you?
- How does this demonstrate a Godly use of anger without sin? (Ephesians 4:15, 26)
- What is implied if we respond in the opposite way?
- Is our anger righteous?
- Give an example of righteous anger expressed in a God honoring way.

Have someone read out loud: Romans 12:16-21

*Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud; instead, associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own estimation.*

*Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Give careful thought to do what is honorable in everyone's eyes. If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Friends, do not avenge yourselves; instead, leave room for God's wrath, because it is written, Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay, says the Lord. But*

*If your enemy is hungry, feed him.*

*If he is thirsty, give him something to drink.*

*For in so doing you will be heaping fiery coals on his head.*

*Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.*

- How does knowing God has the final word in His time make you freer to love and serve others without worrying about the outcome?
- Make a list from this passage of how we treat others, friend and foe, in a Christ-like way.

## Next Steps

- Spend time in prayer thanking God for having patience with you and giving you grace.
- Think of someone this week that you can demonstrate God's patience, mercy and compassion.
- Think of someone who is at odds with you and find ways to prayerfully serve them.

# Silence and Solitude

## Knowing God

John 17:3

*This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God,*

Psalms 46:10 (Amplified Bible Classic)

*Let be and be still, and know (recognize and understand) that I am God.*

God created us to be in relationship with Him and know Him for Who He is. Adam and Eve had fellowship with God in the Garden of Eden in ways that is hard for us to comprehend. The first Adam through an act of disobedience severed that relationship with a holy God. The second Adam, Jesus Christ (Romans 5:12-20), restored that relationship between us and God as only He could (John 14:6). Although salvation begins in the moment that we truly believe in Jesus and commit our lives to Him, working out that salvation is a journey of a lifetime of learning to walk with God and knowing Him more and more (Philippians 2:12).

To accomplish this, Christians have engaged in activities that were modeled by Jesus and the early church to help us grow spiritually. Being children of the first Adam through our first birth, we are trapped in patterns of this world that steer us away from God and His ways. Through our second

birth, we work in cooperation with the Holy Spirit to develop new patterns of responding that draws us into a deeper relationship with God and the ability to live out the commands of Christ (Philippians 2:13, Romans 12:2).

These new patterns of life are called spiritual disciplines. A definition of discipline is “any activity within our power that we engage in to enable us to do what we cannot do by direct effort.” For example, an old pattern you may still respond with is inappropriate anger. If you try to change it merely by your own willpower or good intentions, it will last about 72 hours and then you will be back to your old ways! If you instead use appropriate spiritual disciplines, you can have the reaction of grace, prayer and kindness that Jesus says will be reflective of a kingdom person (Matthew 5:43-48).

There are two types of spiritual disciplines that are practiced: Engagement and Abstinence. Some common types of abstinence: solitude, silence, fasting, frugality, chastity, and secrecy. Some common types of engagement: Bible study, worship, celebration, service, prayer, fellowship, and confession. Solitude and silence are foundational disciplines for all the other disciplines and are desperately needed in our hectic, frenetic lives.

## What is Solitude?

We purposefully abstain from interaction with other human beings, denying ourselves companionship and all that comes from our conscious interaction with others. Though often unaware of it, we have a need for solitude and silence. Jesus calls us from loneliness to solitude. Loneliness is inner emptiness and often the fear of it drives to noise and crowds. However, solitude is inner fulfillment, a state of mind and heart, and not a place necessarily but a portable sanctuary of the heart.

*Let him who cannot be alone beware of community....  
Let him who is not in community beware of being alone....  
Each by itself has profound pitfalls and perils.”*  
-Dietrich Bonhoeffer

## What is Silence?

We close off our souls from “sounds,” whether those sounds be noise, music, or words. Silence is hard for us to do because it makes us feel helpless. Who is going to speak up for us if we do not? How are we going to make others do what we want them to do unless we tell them until they do it? How are others going to know how to interpret my actions unless I tell them what I meant by what I did? Silence is intimately related to trust! Can you really trust God is in control and give up your control? As James warns us to cease the flow of words: “If anyone thinks he is religious without controlling his tongue, then his religion is useless and he deceives himself.” (1:26)

*“Real Silence, real stillness, really holding one’s tongue  
comes only as the sober consequence of spiritual stillness.”*  
-Dietrich Bonhoeffer



## Steps to Take

1. Little moments of solitude to begin and during our day. Start small and build incrementally. See the following journal for a suggested plan if you are just starting out.
2. Find or develop a “quiet place” to separate yourself from distractions. You need to eliminate what may visually or audibly keep you from focusing on God and His word. Practically speaking, that means you need to be alone, put your phone on “airplane mode,” turn off sources of sounds or alerts and, when able, shut the door.
3. Monthly, quarterly, or annually, it is powerful in the life of the follower of Christ to have a personal retreat. Start with 3-4 hours at a place where you can get away in nature or a retreat like setting to spend time uninterrupted. Combining with prayer and meditating on truths from the Bible, bask in His loving presence attune to whatever He is telling you in His “quiet whisper.” (1 Kings 19)

*“It is in deep solitude that I find the gentleness with which I can truly love my brothers.  
The more solitary I am the more affection I have for them....  
Solitude and silence teach me to love my brothers for what they are, not for what they say.”*  
-Thomas Merton

- On RightNow Media search for the “Being Challenge” for teaching on engaging in the spiritual disciplines that Jesus modeled. Session 5 is on Solitude. Also, search for “Be Still” for a complete study on the topic. If you don’t have an account, go to the church website ([icelebration.org](http://icelebration.org)) Choose “Watch” from the top menu and then scroll down to the RightNow sign-up section.
- Dr. Donald S. Whitney – “Should I practice silence and solitude”: [youtu.be/cx9Oe3W4A6M](https://youtu.be/cx9Oe3W4A6M)
- Doable Discipleship: Silence and Solitude YouTube video/podcast: [youtu.be/pUpmMQW5Xpw](https://youtu.be/pUpmMQW5Xpw)
- Article from Curate ministries: [curateministries.org/curateblog/2020/1/9/silence-and-solitude](https://curateministries.org/curateblog/2020/1/9/silence-and-solitude)
- Article from Outreach magazine: [outreachmagazine.com/features/discipleship/32086-8-benefits-silence-solitude-leaders-life.html](https://outreachmagazine.com/features/discipleship/32086-8-benefits-silence-solitude-leaders-life.html)

## How To Begin A Daily Quiet Time To Practice Silence And Solitude

### 1. Select A Specific Time

The best time to have a quiet time is when I am at my best to spend time alone with God. Many believers find that an early morning quiet time works best. Examples from the Bible include Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Hannah, Job, Hezekiah, David, Daniel, Jesus, etc. It seems logical to begin the day with it. “The best time to tune your instruments is before you play the concert, not after!” It demonstrates that meeting with God is your first priority. You give Him the first part of your day. Whatever time you set, make it a priority, and persevere because eventually you will face opposition and obstacles. Be ready to restart and continue. Remember, it takes 21 days to make it a habit.

How long should it be? If this is new to you, start with 3 minutes and let it double weekly. But do not watch the clock. Emphasize quality, not quantity.

## **2. Choose A Special Place**

Jesus' practice is clear in what he modeled and practiced. "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went to a solitary place, where he prayed." (Mark 1:35 NIV) "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." (Matthew 6:6 NIV). Whether it be a room you can be alone in at your house, your back porch, or an office before other employees arrive, seek that special place.

## **3. Have A Plan**

For the practice of silence and solitude, you will want to quietly meditate on Biblical passages, pray quietly to God and just sit in silence in His presence. Prepare for your time in advance by having appropriate Bible passages in print or electronically to meditate on. The current messages on God's character will be a great source to think about God in deeper ways (see the weekly Conversation Guide on the App or website). A notebook or pad to write down what the Lord speaks to you about, add to your prayer list or jot down things that come to mind that you need to deal with later.