

## SPIRITUAL FORMATION TOOLS · NO. 7

# Silence and Solitude

Mark 1:35 · Getting away so you can actually show up.

I own a motorcycle specifically so I have a reason to be alone with my own thoughts for a few hours at a time. That probably tells you something about how hard silence is for me to find any other way.

We don't lack access to quiet. We avoid it. Noise is comfortable — a podcast, a show in the background, a notification that gives us somewhere to point our attention besides inward. Jesus, who had every legitimate excuse to stay busy — crowds needing him, people to heal, a kingdom to announce — kept slipping away before dawn to be alone. If he needed it, I don't know why I've spent so many years convincing myself I don't.

This is the seventh tool in our spiritual formation series at Restoration Church. Silence and solitude aren't about escaping people. They're about getting away from the noise long enough to hear what's actually true — about God, and about yourself — instead of whatever's loudest in the moment.

Five movements: Withdrawal, Silence, Attention, Presence, Return. You don't need a cabin in the woods. You need a door you can close and the willingness to sit in the quiet without reaching for something to fill it.

*“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.” — Mark 1:35 (NIV)*

## HOW TO USE THIS

Start with fifteen minutes. A car, a porch, a room with the door shut, a trail if you have one nearby. No phone — actually no phone, not face-down-on-the-table no phone. Move through the five movements below at whatever pace the silence asks of you.

This will feel uncomfortable before it feels good. That discomfort is worth paying attention to, not avoiding.

## 1. Withdrawal — Where and when will I get away?

### WHY

Jesus didn't wait for solitude to find him. He got up while it was still dark and went looking for it. Silence rarely happens by accident in a full life — it has to be chosen and protected on the calendar like anything else that matters.

**HOW**

Pick an actual place and an actual time — not “sometime this week,” a real slot. Somewhere you can close a door or get far enough from other people that you're not performing stillness for anyone.

**PAUSE AND PRAY**

*“God, the time and place I'm setting aside to be alone with you is \_\_\_\_.”*

## 2. Silence — Can I sit without filling the quiet?

**WHY**

This is the hardest movement and the whole point. Most of us fill silence within thirty seconds — music, a scroll, even prayer said fast enough to avoid actual stillness. Silence asks you to just let the quiet be quiet, uncomfortable as that is.

**HOW**

No music, no phone, no scripted prayer to hide behind. Just sit. When your mind reaches for something to fill the space — and it will — notice the reach, and let it go without acting on it.

**PAUSE AND PRAY**

*No words needed here. If you want one: “I'm here. That's enough for now.”*

## 3. Attention — What surfaces when the noise stops?

**WHY**

Once the noise clears, something always comes up — a worry you've been outrunning, a truth you've been avoiding, a feeling you buried under busyness. Solitude has a way of surfacing what constant noise keeps submerged. That's not a malfunction. That's the practice working.

**HOW**

Let whatever surfaces actually surface. Don't rush to fix it, explain it away, or distract from it. Just notice it and name it honestly, the way you would to a friend who asked how you're really doing.

**PAUSE AND PRAY**

*“God, what's surfacing in the quiet is \_\_\_\_.”*

## 4. Presence — Can I simply be with God, unproductive?

**WHY**

Let's be honest: even our devotional time can turn into another task to finish. This movement has no output. No insight required, no verse to apply, no takeaway to write down. Just being with God the way you'd sit with someone you love, with nothing to accomplish.

**HOW**

Resist the urge to make this productive. Don't journal yet, don't plan yet. Just remain — aware that God is with you, without needing the time to produce anything.

**PAUSE AND PRAY**

*“God, I'm not here to get anything from you right now. I just want to be with you.”*

## 5. Return — How do I carry this stillness back into noise?

**WHY**

Solitude isn't meant to be permanent — it's meant to change how you show up when you're not alone anymore. The goal isn't to escape your life. It's to return to it steadier than you left it.

**HOW**

Before you pick the phone back up or step back into the noise, take one breath and name one thing you want to carry forward from this time — a sense of peace, a piece of clarity, a decision to make differently.

**PAUSE AND PRAY**

*“God, as I go back into the noise, help me carry \_\_\_\_ with me.”*

## This Week's Invitation

1. Schedule fifteen minutes of real silence and solitude, phone away, three times this week.
2. Notice what your mind reaches for to fill the quiet. Write it down without judging it.
3. Pay attention to how you show up differently in your normal noise after each time away.

Start there.

## A Simple Prayer

*God, quiet me down enough to hear you. I don't need to fill this space — I need to let you fill it. Meet me in the silence, and steady me for the noise waiting on the other side of it. Amen.*