Practicing Jesus’ Way: Stillness

*“Setting ourselves apart to be fully present with God”*

***Jesus’ Way***

 **Setting himself apart to be with God in stillness.**

Jesus modeled and taught the disciples a regular practice of escaping the commotion of daily life to be alone with God – in silence, in solitude and in stillness. We see him practicing this numerous times in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. It inaugurated his ministry (Mark 1:12-13) and shaped his life.

* Some Old Testament examples: Moses (Exodus 24); Elijah (1 Kings 19); Samuel (1 Samuel 3).

 **Intentional & Natural.**

Jesus modeled an intentional, regular practice of setting himself apart to God in stillness. The result of that practice was that Jesus was not only fully present with God in stillness, he came out of the stillness and *remained* present with God in the course of daily life. This is the *way* we want to follow, becoming increasingly present with God despite the noise and commotion of life, the tactics of the devil against us, and the chaos of our own thoughts and emotions (Mark 1:12-13). But even as we become more present with God in daily life, we continue embracing Jesus’ way – the intentional, regular practice of setting ourselves apart to be with God in stillness.

***Embracing Jesus’ Way***

 **Frequency.**

Christians who follow Jesus’ practice of stillness often suggest its ***daily*** practice. This seems like a good *intention* for us today. However, none of us is likely to achieve this ideal. This is perfectly fine. If our intention is to set ourselves apart to God in stillness every single day and we actually only practice this 3-4 times each week, that is wonderful!

 **Duration.**

A suggested timeframe is one 20 minute period each day (or morning and evening). This can be adjusted as we grow and develop in the practice. It can also be adjusted based on the time available on a given day or shortened in response to unanticipated disruptions.

 **Getting Started.**

* Stillness can be very challenging at first – our inner “noise” even more than outer. Don’t worry. It’s like anything else worth doing in life – we start off bad at it and then quickly improve.
* Find 20 minutes in which you can set yourself apart from noise, activity, and other people.
* Consistency (same time/place each day) is recommended.
* If your mind is really racing when you sit down, it can be helpful to take a couple minutes to write down your concerns, your to-do’s, and whatever you can’t get off your mind. Then put your list in an envelope labeled “Trust” and leave those things in God’s hands while you’re quietly with Him.

 **Keys to remember:**

* Stillness is often recognized as the most significant practice leading to renewal and transformation. It’s worth the investment.
* Practicing stillness is something Jesus did that we *can do* on purpose in faith that God will meet us along the way anddo what *we can’t do* for ourselves.
* There is ***no guilt/condemnation*** on our bad days when we fall short of our intentions in embracing Jesus’ way. There is also ***no pride*** when things go just as intended.
* Jesus said, “Follow me.” In practicing stillness, we’re just taking action to do so.
* Stillness is not time to read. It’s not a time to talk (even to God). We’re just quietly setting ourselves apart to God *without expectations.*
* Avoid the temptation to judge or evaluate your time of stillness. It’s for God, not us.