

Sometimes God Is Silent

God, do not keep silent; be not quiet, O God, be not still.
—Psalm 83:1

Oswald Chambers once asked a provoking question: “Am I close enough to God to feel secure when He is silent?” In other words, must I have constant two-way communication with God to feel approved and loved by Him? We must develop a maturity that does not panic “between the times”—to use a helpful phrase from Richard Bewes. In season is a time of refreshing when God clearly manifests Himself. Out of season is when He seems to hide His face from us, those times when He is silent.

God wants us to learn as much from His silence as we learn from His absence. For example, often we learn more about ourselves when God hides Himself than in times of conscious blessing. His silence is like taking an examination in which we must demonstrate how much we have learned about His “ways.”

An intimate, unique experience of some kind with God is important for each of us to have. It can be the best thing that can happen to us—but it can also be dangerous. After such an experience we can express a spiritual arrogance and pride that exalt us, in our own eyes, above other “less special” believers. If that happens, perhaps the only thing that can bring us back to a humble awareness of our spiritual position is for God Himself to desert us momentarily.

People who suppose they have this sort of relationship with God lack in both teachability and accountability. They sometimes think they are spiritually superior to all who try to help them. The only thing that will possibly help them is for God Himself to “stay behind” while they carry on in their presumption.

It happened to me as I described above. It hurt very much, and I couldn’t understand it for a while. God appeared to betray

me. Not that I noticed it at first.

It happens, I believe, to nearly every person who has had an authentic experience with the Holy Spirit. God hides His face—suddenly without notice. No apology. Just silence. The explanation comes (usually) much, much later.

Excerpted from *The Sensitivity of the Spirit* (Charisma House, 2002).