

To Survive the Summer, Do This 1 Simple Thing

When I was a wee boy I loved to visit my grandparents who lived in a tiny fishing village in the north of Scotland. Their home was very small, and my brothers and I slept upstairs in bedrooms with sloped ceilings. Lying in bed I loved to hear the sound of the rain on the skylight which was the only window in the bedroom.

When the rain and wind stopped I could hear the sound of the surging sea only a few yards away. The other common sound was the noisy screech of the herring gulls. Even today these sounds bring back fond memories of my boyhood vacations.

Other than the sounds of the rain, the wind, the sea and the birds, there were not many other noises in the village. This was long before the invention of cell phones. Even the boom box was a foreign concept! So in a sense, we were forced to listen to the noises of nature.

My life now in south Charlotte is very different! It is true I still hear birds chirping outside my home, but when I get into my car I automatically put on Sirius radio to listen to CNN or FOX or BBC World News. When I stop at a traffic light I often hear the loud beat of rock music from someone's car, and on the few occasions when I go shopping the music blares not only within the store but from speakers outside the store. When I pump gas, I am surrounded by voices and music. A few feet away someone may be talking loudly into her cell phone.

There is no escape from all the noise.

One of the joys of summer is getting away from it all. While I love people, I also love solitude. It is tough to think or meditate or strategize in the middle of noise. I realize that God is so powerful His voice can be heard in the middle of a

thunderstorm, but often I am so busy and living in such a noisy world (much of it of my own doing) that I don't take time to listen to God. One of my goals this summer is to spend more time not only away from noise, but listening to God as I read His Word and pray.

On one occasion in the Gospels, the Lord rose very early in the morning and went to a desolate place where He prayed. The disciples tried to get Him to return to the town to heal people, but our Lord, whose love for people is infinite, knew the importance of solitude, of prayer, of communing with His Father and His God.

So during the summer be more intentional in seeking times of solitude and quietness. These times will renew and refresh us. Then we will be less likely to be irritable or anxious. In the middle of our noisy world may we hear the Lord, as well as listening to the voices of those around us who need an encouraging word and a helpful hand. "Be still, and know that I am God" (Ps. 46:10).

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