

You'll Want to Accept This Golden Invitation From God

Before the sun even has a chance to rise, the noise of the world has begun—or continued, rather—warning of the busy day ahead. Amidst sleepy eyes and dissipating dreams, sluggish morning movements give way to the familiarity of the Monday-morning routine.

It's 5 a.m., and the noisy streets are as quiet as they will get. The sound of rubber tires running over concrete becomes the city's soundtrack.

By 6 a.m., taxis are already honking. The subway roars nonstop beneath the sidewalk of constant succession. It's rush hour. The bus groans, adjusting its height for seniors' hardened heels to hit the pavement. Parents coax their slow-moving children. Vendors greet morning patrons, while a man shakes his coins in someone else's old coffee cup, desiring money. Another man mutters to himself, while another yells out the day's headlines from the paper he pushes into the hands of any receptive passerby.

This is life in the city. Or rather, it's just life—loud, active, around-the-clock.

The earth is continuously spinning on its axis, its movements never ceasing. And for some reason, humans attempt to keep the same pace, running on a 24/7 schedule, producing noise and a flurry of activity in order to accomplish ... more.

And with the continuous movement comes the busyness of life and the pressure to keep up and maintain hectic schedules of constant communication and insurmountable tasks. Messages fly around us from our phones, radios, family members, apps, coworkers, TVs, causing our synapses to fire. Our children need their homework. Our spouse needs to know the evening

schedule. Before we've checked off any tasks for the day, we can be overwhelmed by the rush of life itself.

And yet it's not the noise without that proves deafening. Instead, it's the flurry within that distracts and makes the choice of autopilot seem like a wise one. The noise of the world becomes background music to the thoughts within that unsettle and pressure: *Move faster! There's so much to do today. The next train arrives in seven minutes; hurry! Walk faster, faster. Don't miss the train!* The internal monologue proves to be louder than the world's noise.

In this day and age, silence is a rarity. But as Solomon put it, there is "a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak" (Eccl. 3:7). And if we stop and listen, we can hear from within all the noise the same kind and relentless invitation: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and *I will give you rest*" (Matt. 11:28, emphasis added).

The Lord still waits for us to join Him in the place of responding to His invitation. The Lord loves to hear our words. They truly matter to Him. And He also knows how He made us and what we need. Like a loving father who sees his toddler careening toward unstable ground, the Lord invites us to return to Him and remember who He is and who we are to Him.

The one who is slow to anger and abounding in love, the one who is gracious and kind desires to give Himself to us, to fill us to the overflow in His presence. This is our Good Shepherd, who leads us beside still waters and restores our souls.

More than a time without words, there is an invitation to just be and enjoy, to settle down and relate to the one who never grows weak or weary. Like a newborn baby resting and responding to the love he's receiving, we too can enter into that place, free from worry or seeking to accomplish the

things that will only be important in this age.

In the quiet we're reminded of truth: He is so unlike anyone we know, so different from those who speak of love and have yet to sacrifice. "But the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him" (Hab. 2:20).

His words sculpted galaxies. His mind constructed the redemption of history. His hands stretched wide, and His heart beat through death and into glory. And He just wants to be with you. He just wants to love and relate closely to His children.

In silence, we can clearly see the one who desired us and chose us when we were far off and in need of salvation. His ways are not our ways, and His thoughts are so unlike our own (Isa. 55:9).

The moments of silence that can make many feel uncomfortable are the breeding ground for intimacy, as He relates to us based on who we are, not on what we can do or say or accomplish in our time with Him. In response, we do the same, relating to and enjoying our God because of who He is, not just because of what He's able to do.

We're reminded that this wonderful Creator and all-sufficient perfect leader, who has everything, still opens His holy heart to fellowship with the weak and broken, the stained and dirty, and He loves us into wholeness.

Marvel at Him.

He's good, He's gracious, He has supplied every need, and He is more than willing to share His secrets. In His presence we become firmly planted, growing in a vibrant and healthy relationship with our Father. We're better able to see how much He has sacrificed and how deeply He loves and desires to satisfy His children.

In silence we receive. In silence we grow. During these precious moments we come to know our God and are strengthened to love Him more. Whether it's 5 minutes or 15, the work He does within settles and draws us deeper into the unwavering truth of His character, as well as our place before Him. As we gaze and marvel at who He is and how thoroughly He loves us, the inner turmoil and dialogue are halted by His peace that surpasses all understanding.

More than a location, a time of day, or an ideal situation, silencing ourselves before the Lord allows us to find our place of rest. We find our Creator, Savior and Friend, who sees all and knows all and loves us deeply.

*Be still and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth.*

*The Lord of Hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah (Ps. 46:10-11).*

What do you find is hindering you from taking the time to get silent before the Lord?

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