Solitude: Discovering Who You Are and What Is Yours to Do

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hzE2kkaKEs

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Primary Scripture: Mark 1:32–39

Solitude loosens the grip of other people's expectations so we can recognize the Father's love, our identity in Christ, and our particular calling. Jesus withdrew while people still needed him—and returned knowing where he needed to go next.

1. Retreat and Return

After an evening of healing and deliverance, Jesus rose early and went to a solitary place to pray. When the disciples announced, "Everyone is looking for you," he chose to move on to other villages.

- Demand did not determine direction. A good opportunity did not automatically become his assignment.
- Withdrawal made room for communion; returning brought that communion into service.
- Solitude and community support one another. We need both.

"Learning to hide is an essential discipline of apprenticeship to Jesus."

Consider: *Where have I confused being needed with being called?*

2. Identity: More Archaeology Than Architecture

"We behave who we believe we are."

Christian identity is received and discovered in relationship with God. Solitude gives us distance from the voices that have named us—including our own.

- **"You are not your wound."** Failure, success, family history, appearance, and possessions do not define our deepest identity.
- **"It's less architecture and more archaeology."** We uncover who we are in God rather than continually construct a self to win approval.
- **"The hope of glory is not our true self. It's Christ in our true self."** Transformation is Christ taking expression through our particular lives.

Scripture: Colossians 1:27; Colossians 3:3–4; Galatians 2:20.

Consider: *Which description of myself have I accepted that needs to yield to who I am in Christ?*

3. Calling: Your Particular Burden of Love

"Christ is infinite. You are not."

Christ cares for the whole world. His people participate in that love through particular relationships, responsibilities, gifts, and opportunities.

- **"Jesus will call you to take up your cross, but your cross, not all the crosses of the world."**
- Thomas Kelly's phrase "joyous burden of love**"** describes the particular work of love entrusted to us.
- Guilt about every need can scatter our attention. Discernment helps us serve faithfully within our limits.
- Calling may involve ordinary parenting, work, friendship, creativity, or practical service. It can be costly while still sustained by grace.

Scripture: Romans 12:4–8; 1 Corinthians 12:4–7; Ephesians 2:10.

Consider: *What is mine to carry—and what am I carrying because I fear disappointing someone?*

4. Listening: From Reaction to Response

"The opposite of contemplation isn't action, it's reaction."

- Listening grows through relationship and familiarity with God.
- Scripture, circumstances, inward impressions, and imagination can become occasions for prayerful attention.
- **"God created you with an imagination."** Bring it into communion with him, while testing impressions against Scripture, Jesus' character, and wise counsel.
- **"Our goal is just to make ourselves available to God."** An immediate answer or dramatic experience is not the measure of meaningful prayer.

Scripture: John 10:27; John 14:23–26; 1 Thessalonians 5:19–22.

Consider: *Am I allowing space to listen, or mainly asking God to help me keep up?*

Other Voices Woven Through the Message

The following summarizes how Comer uses these writers and traditions; quotations follow the supplied transcript rather than independently verified original sources.

Voice	Memorable phrase or central contribution
Henri Nouwen	Solitude as "wasting time on God," a "place of encounter," and space to recognize the "inner voice of love."
Thomas Kelly	A "joyous burden of love": Christ's universal love expressed through our particular calling.

Voice	Memorable phrase or central contribution
Thomas Merton / desert tradition	Withdrawal prepares us to see and love people more clearly: “We retreat from the world for the world.”
Simone Weil	“Waiting patiently in expectation” as foundational to spiritual life.
Ruth Haley Barton	Recognizing God’s voice develops through friendship, listening, and attentiveness.
Irenaeus / C. S. Lewis	Human dignity and life in God: “a human being fully alive”; “You have never met a mere mortal.”
Dallas Willard / John of the Cross	Solitude and loving silence have a vital place in spiritual growth.

Put It into Practice: Practical Application

Withdraw → Settle → Receive → Surrender → Listen → Return

Choose a manageable period of quiet. Put away devices, breathe naturally, and read Mark 1:35–39 slowly. Bring your concerns before God without forcing an answer. Record what seems significant and prayerfully discern one faithful next step.

Remember: Spiritual formation moves more like **“the pace of an oak tree”** than an LA freeway.

Prayer: *Father, ground me in your love. Help me recognize who I am in Christ, discern what you have entrusted to me, and release what is not mine to carry. Teach me to listen—and return to daily life ready to love. Amen.*