

# Solitude

## TEACHING NOTES

### KEY VERSES

Colossians 1:10 & 3:1-10  
Philippians 2:12-13

### KEY THEMES

God desires for us to know Him personally  
God's power transforms us

 **True meaning and fulfillment in life will never be found by giving in to what our sin nature desires**

 **God desires for us to know Him personally (Colossians 1:10)**

**Why we need solitude (Colossians 3:1-10)**

**Solitude modeled in Christ's life**

Mark 1:35

Mark 6:31-32

Luke 5:15-16

## Practicing solitude in your life

 **God's power transforms us (Philippians 2:12-13)**

### Lesson Objective:

*To develop spiritual practices in our lives to help us live our lives in Christ and grow our faith in Him*

**PERSONAL STUDY****Study 1****Prepare your heart and mind**

As you begin this study, ask the Holy Spirit to help open your heart so you can become more sensitive to the wisdom and insight of God and what He desires for you.

**Solitude**

Solitude is the state or situation of being alone, secluded, or the absence of human activity. Solitude is a vital part of our faith life. Spending regular time alone with God, away from people and the demands of life, is a great way for us to deepen our relationship with God.

How often do you give God your undivided attention?

What specific things do you let get in the way of your spending time alone with God?

**Read Philippians 3:10**

How have you experienced a growing knowledge of who God is since you first began your relationship with Him?

To know Christ, we have to make sacrifices in our lives. We have to be willing to lay aside a crowded schedule, our friend's approval, and some of our plans or pleasures.

Earlier in this study you identified some potential barriers to practicing solitude with God. What are some small steps you can take to move past them that will allow you to experience a more focused time alone with God?

**Read Mark 1:29-39**

Jesus was in high demand all the time. He was constantly surrounded by people needing something from Him, which meant He hardly had any time alone. But He made a point of making time to practice solitude with the Father. If Jesus saw the value in breaking away for solitude with God, don't you think that is something we should value and practice as well?

After time alone with the Father, how did Jesus engage with the disciples?

What can this teach us?

We see that one of Jesus' takeaways from His time alone was direction in how to fulfill God's purposes. God wants to do the same things in our lives, but often our busyness hinders us from participating with Him. Take time right now to talk to God about what you are pursuing and are consumed with. Ask Him how to become more aligned with Him.

Take some time to reflect on your past week. Think about the different roles you have in life; worker, parent, spouse, friend, etc. What did you pursue within your different roles? How much are you allowing God to speak into the different roles that you have? Use the space below to write down some of these reflections.

Summarize your reflections above into a sentence or two that identifies the primary focus of your life this week.

As Christ followers we should be regularly recalibrating our lives to God's plans and purposes by spending time in solitude. With the demands of life it is impossible to stay in step with the Lord without this practice.

**Prayer time**

Begin by thanking Jesus for the way He modeled the practice of solitude for us. Ask Him to help you develop a lifestyle of solitude that does not come from duty or obligation, but from a desire to have a loving personal relationship with God.

**Key verse**

Using the provided scripture card, work on memorizing Colossians 3:1-2. Place the card somewhere you will see it often during the week and read the verse out loud each time you see it.

**Study 2****The practice of solitude**

As you begin this time alone with God, ask Him to help you push away distractions and focus on Him. Thank God for this opportunity to spend time getting to know Him better by studying His Word.

**Before you begin**

There are a few things you should do to help prepare for this time of solitude with God:

Begin by picking a quiet place and time. This could be in your living room before your family wakes up or after they go to bed, in your car during your lunch hour, or at any special place and time you designate.

Shut out the world's distractions. Turn off your phone and any other technology that could hinder this time. Let those who might need you know that you are unavailable. The things of this world can wait.

**Prayer time**

Begin by thanking God for the direct access we have to His presence through the Holy Spirit. Ask God to help you shut out the world's distractions as you focus on Him and what He has to say in His Word.

**Read Colossians 3:1-17**

As you read the passage, here are a few suggestions to help guide your time:

Feel free to read this passage multiple times.

As you read, what verses stand out to you? Stop and reflect on those sections.

If there is a specific verse that moves you, reread it multiple times. Pray that verse and personalize it.

What is God teaching or revealing to you through this passage? As you read, feel free to underline any words or passages that stick out to you.

Use the space below to write any questions or comments you have about the passage.

**Silence**

Begin to wrap up your time with God today by being completely silent before Him. What thoughts about the passage keep coming to you that God may be impressing upon you? Try to make this time of silence before God last for around three minutes. It may be really hard for you to be still that long but it is a good activity to practice.

**Prayer time**

As you end your time of solitude, journal your prayer below or in your own personal journal. Thank God for this time alone with Him, the gift of His Word, and the ways that He has spoken to you through it.

## PARENT GUIDE

As parents, we want to make sure our children are truly listening to us when we speak to them. We tell them to turn off the TV or put away their electronics so that they can listen to what we need to say to them. In order to listen, we have to quiet our minds and hearts.

Our relationship with God, our Heavenly Father, requires quiet time. This week, talk to your children about the importance of spending time alone with God for the purpose of listening to Him. Discuss with your child why God wants to have time with us.

This week as a family, pick a spot where each of you can spend some time alone with God. To prepare for your time alone with God, make sure you have a pencil, a journal, and your Bible. Below are some scriptures to read during this time. We've provided three passages that you could use on three different days. Have everyone read the scripture passage and listen to what God is saying and how we can apply this passage to our lives. Encourage your children to write down their thoughts about the verse in their journals.

Mark 6:30-31

Psalm 25:4-5

John 10:27-28

After everyone is done, bring your family back together for a time of discussion. Have your children share what they wrote down about the passage. Parents, this is an opportunity for you to help them understand the truth about the passage if they've missed it. End your time together in prayer, asking God to help you set aside regular time to listen to Him.

## ADDITIONAL STUDY

### The practice of extended solitude

This Additional Study will walk you through an example of a time of extended solitude with God.

### Before you begin

There are a few things you should do to help prepare for this time of solitude with God:

Begin by picking a time and location where you can spend an extended time alone. You might choose to carve out an afternoon, a whole day, or even a couple days for this intentional time with God. Possible locations to consider could be your house on a day when the rest of the family is gone, your favorite spot outdoors if the weather cooperates, or reserving a room at a retreat center or hotel for a day or two.

Shut out the world's distractions. Turn off your phone and any other technology that could hinder this time. Let those who might need you know that you are unavailable. The things of this world can wait.

It is important to spend this time with God doing things that help you connect with Him. Below you will find a few suggestions of activities you can do during your time of solitude. Feel free to pick and choose what will best suit your personality. But don't be afraid of trying something new as it might prove to be a great addition to your normal time with God.

### Pray

Beginning your time of solitude with prayer is a great way to start. As you pray, ask God to help you shut out the world's distractions as you focus on Him and what He has for you during this time alone with Him.

Ending your time of solitude with prayer is also a good idea. Thank God for this time alone with Him, the gift of His Word, and the ways that He has spoken to you during your time together.

During your time, you might chart out a few times to specifically pray. You can pray for people, for things in your life, for what you're studying, or for larger issues. On extended retreats, it is best to view your whole time as time with God. You'll spend time praying and listening but have a prayerful attitude throughout. Know that God is with you.

**Read Colossians**

As you read, here are a few suggestions to help guide your time:

Feel free to read the book or certain passages multiple times.

As you read, what verses or passages stand out to you? Stop and reflect on those sections.

If there is a specific verse that moves you, reread it multiple times. Pray that verse and personalize it.

What is God teaching or revealing to you through this book? As you read, feel free to underline any words or passages that stick out to you.

**Memorize scripture**

This time of solitude is a great opportunity for you to memorize scripture. If you didn't get a chance to memorize the verses selected each week during this study, start with one of those verses. If you've already memorized all the verses suggested during this study, find a section of Colossians that has been impactful to you and work on memorizing those verses.

**Journal**

Journaling can be a great addition to your time with God. If your mind is easily distracted during prayer or times of silence, journaling can help you focus your thoughts on God. Another benefit of journaling is that you will be able to look back on previously written thoughts and prayers and see God's faithfulness as He has worked in your life.

Here are a few suggestions for what you could journal about during this time of solitude:

A list of what you're thankful for

Reflections on God's character

Prayer of confession of your sins and shortcomings

Prayer of petition for God's provision or guidance

Verses that have stuck out to you from our study of Colossians

Verses that have been important to your walk of faith

Prayers in the Bible

**Listen to worship music**

You are called to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. (Mark 12:30) A great way to do that is by spending time listening to and singing some of your favorite worship songs to God. As you do, reflect on the words of the songs. Try to be aware that these songs are directed to God in worship, they are not simply for our enjoyment.

Another way to incorporate music into your time of solitude is by looking up the lyrics to one of your favorite hymns. Write out the lyrics. If it won't be too distracting, look up the stories behind the song's composition. Some of the most treasured hymns have a back story that will surprise you and inspire your faith.

**Spend time in silence**

Sometimes silence can be hard if you're just sitting there. Try taking a walk in silence and appreciating that God is with you and His creation is all around you. Or put your hands to good use on some mindless task if it will help you to quiet your thoughts and focus on God.

Use timed periods of silence, but also try to give yourself chunks of time in silence that don't involve watching a clock.