Small Group Questions

Solitude, God’s Whisper, and your True Self

Message #4: Every Person Growing in Christ

1. Discuss this quote from Dallas Willard. Do you agree? Is there something new and fresh to be gained from this quote? ***“As a disciple of Jesus…I am learning from Jesus to live my life as he would live my life if he were me. I am not necessarily learning to do everything he did, but I am learning how to do everything I do in the manner that he did all that he did.”***

1. By thinking about what you know of the life of Jesus, **how did Jesus *become* the kind of person he was?** Can you support your answer with scripture?
2. **Jesus and “the lonely place”** (Greek word: *eramos*, translated wilderness, desert) Read the following passages aloud.

* **Matt. 3:13f**… Post baptism…”Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the *wilderness* to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.”
* **Mark 1:35f**… **35**Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a **solitary place**, where he prayed. **36**Simon and his companions went to look for him, **37**and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!” Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” **39**So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.
* **Mark 6:30,31… 30**The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught.**31**Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, **“Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”**
* **Mark 6:45**… Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. **46After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.**
* **Luke 5:15**… **15**Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. **16But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.**

What was the purpose of this withdrawal into the wilderness? What did it accomplish?

1. How reasonable is it to expect modern Christians to follow the example of Jesus? What would our life look like if we did? What would our life look like if we didn’t.
2. Brian talked about one of the benefits of solitude being the gift of ***differentiation***. (Knowing the difference between your true self and your false self or ‘reflected self’.) In what ways does time alone with God affect our self-image? Think of what happened to Jesus as a result of his solitude and prayer.
3. How are you organizing your schedule to make room for solitude? Encourage one another in this.