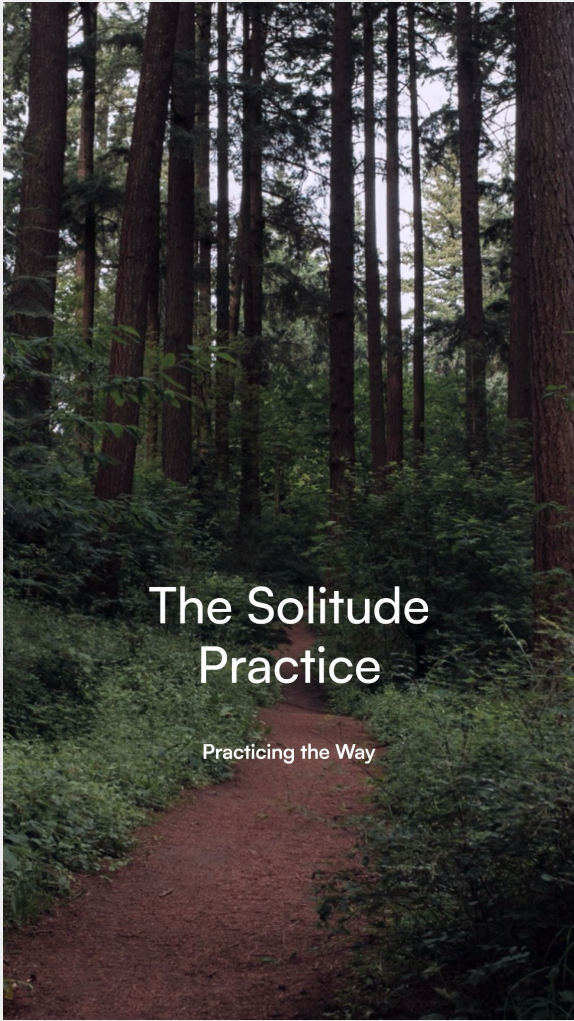


A photograph of a dirt path winding through a dense forest. Tall, slender trees line the path, and the ground is covered in green ferns and other undergrowth. The lighting is soft, suggesting a quiet time of day.

The Solitude Practice

Practicing the Way



The Solitude Practice

Week One:
The Quiet Place

Week Two:
Encounter With Our Self

Week Three:
Encounter With Our Enemy

Week Four:
Encounter With Our God

Practicing the Way



GUIDED PRACTICE: *A Still Path*

I.



INITIAL STILLNESS

Begin with 3 long deep breaths. Inhale God's love. Exhale distractions & worries of the day.

II.



DEEP FOCUS

Focus on where you feel the deepest part of you and place your attention there, where God is.

III.



TOTAL VULNERABILITY

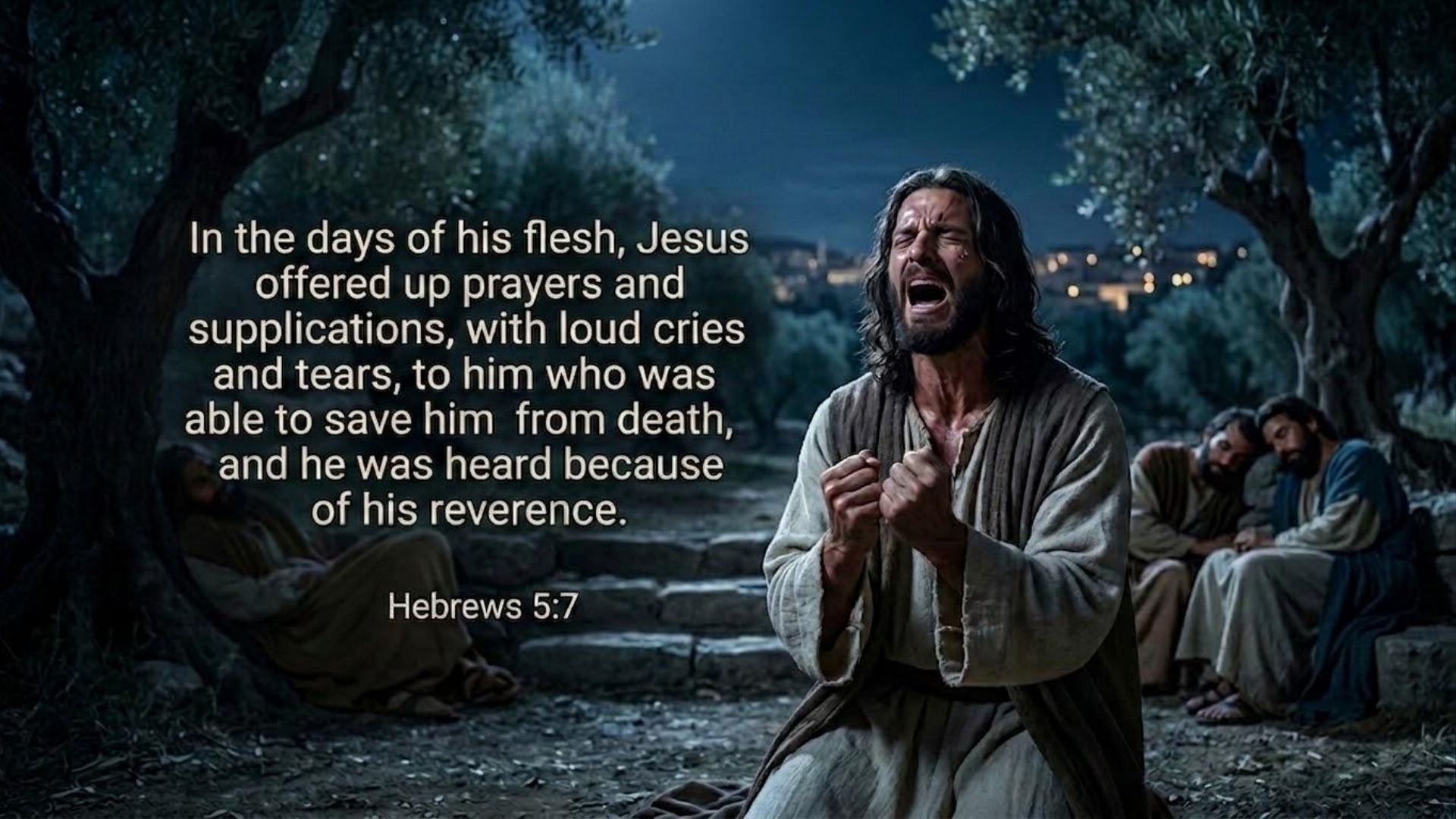
Allow your whole self—busy mind, anxieties, fears, joys and insecurities—to be open, available, and seen by God.



Solitude

Week Two
**Encounter with Our
Self**

Practising The Way

A cinematic illustration of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane at night. Jesus is in the foreground, kneeling and praying with his hands clasped and a pained expression. In the background, two other men are sleeping under the shadow of a large olive tree. The scene is dimly lit, with distant city lights visible on the horizon.

In the days of his flesh, Jesus
offered up prayers and
supplications, with loud cries
and tears, to him who was
able to save him from death,
and he was heard because
of his reverence.

Hebrews 5:7



7 steps to Practicing Solitude Daily



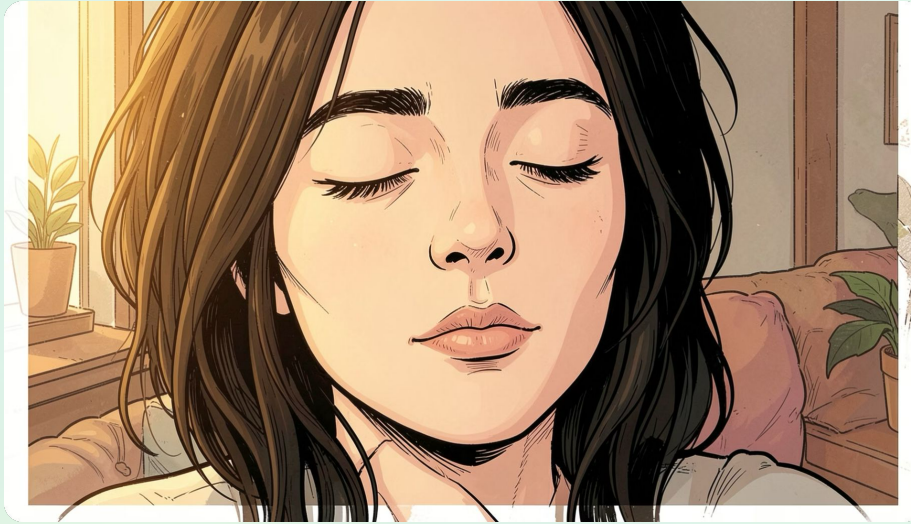
STEP 1

Find a Quiet Place

Choose a space free from distraction — your home, a garden, or any place in nature. Put your phone in another room. Sit comfortably and let your body settle into stillness. This is your time to be present with God.

STEP 2

Focus on Your Breathing



Begin with slow, deep breaths. Breathe from your belly through your lungs — not shallow chest breathing, but full, unhurried breaths that calm the body and quiet the mind.

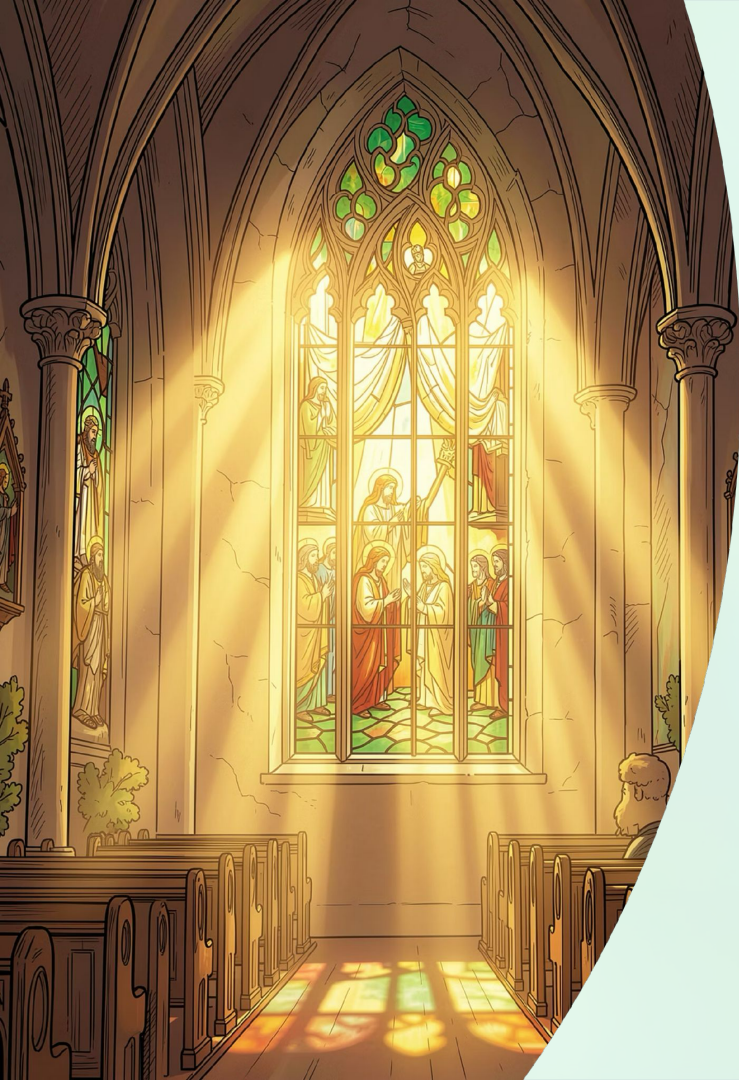
This rhythm is optional — simply breathe in a way that feels natural and restful.

Inhale

Through your nose — 4 seconds

Exhale

Through your mouth — 4 seconds



STEP 3

Invite God's Presence

With each breath, welcome the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Let your breathing itself become an act of prayer.

"Come, Holy Spirit."

"Lord, have mercy on me."

"Jesus."

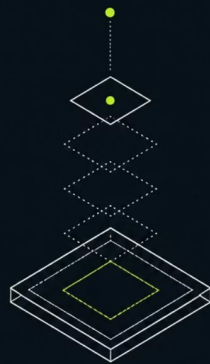
Choose one phrase and return to it gently whenever your attention drifts.

Expect Distractions — and Respond with Grace



When your mind wanders

(thoughts, worries, memories
surface — this is normal
and human)



Then gently return

(come back to your breathing,
return to your prayer word,
refocus without self-criticism)

Your mind will wander. Thoughts, feelings, memories, and to-do lists will surface. This is not failure — it is part of the process.

Do not judge yourself. Do not feel discouraged. Distraction does not mean you are bad at being still — it means you are human.

- ❏ When you notice your mind has wandered, simply return to your breath and your prayer word. No frustration. No self-criticism. Just a gentle return.

A detailed illustration of a single lit candle in a dark, rustic setting. The candle is melting, with wax dripping down its sides. It sits in a shallow, dark metal tray on a wooden floor. In the background, a dark wooden door with a handle is visible. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source being the candle's flame.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Celebrate Small Wins

1–2

Minutes of focus

Even a brief moment of genuine prayer is meaningful and worth celebrating.

10

Minutes of prayerful attention

A significant achievement — be proud of showing up and staying present.

Consistency matters more than perfection. Each time you return to prayer, you are growing in your relationship with God. There is no such thing as a wasted moment of sincere seeking.

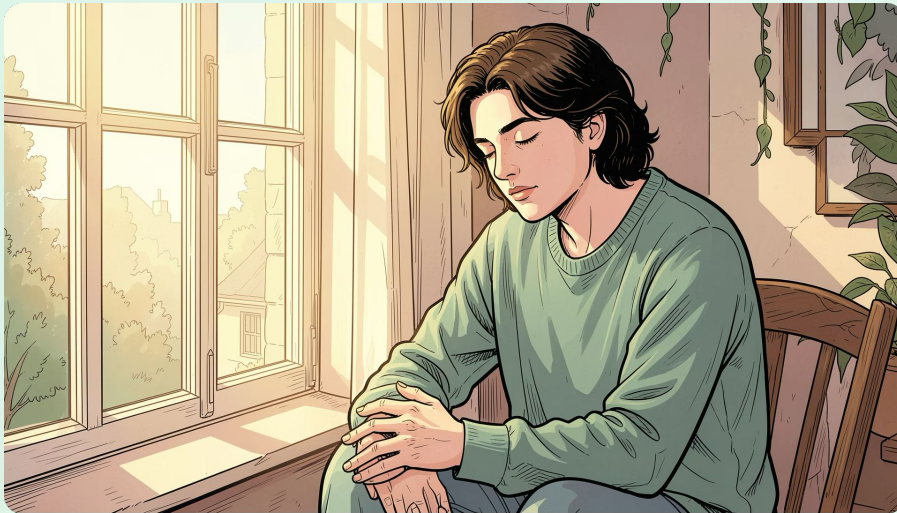
Encountering Our Pain, Our Feelings, and Our Desires

One of the first things that happens in solitude is an unloading

“To get free from our pain, we have to face our pain”

STEP 4

Notice What Is Within You



As you rest in God's presence, gently become aware of your inner world. Notice your emotions, thoughts, and feelings — without needing to fix or change anything.



Become aware

Notice what emotions or experiences are present within you right now.



Allow them to surface

Let thoughts and feelings arise naturally. You don't need to push them away.



Simply observe

Watch what comes with gentle curiosity. God already knows — you are safe here.

“Prayer isn’t a place to be good, it’s a place to be real”

- John Mark Comer

The same can be said of solitude

GUIDED PRAYER

STEP 5

Sit in the Feeling

When difficult emotions rise, our instinct is to turn away — to run in the opposite direction. Instead, turn and face them.

Let it wash over you, and then let it pass you by. Sink into the feeling rather than fighting it. God meets us in the honest places.



Psalm 23:1-3

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters.

3 He restores my soul.

**He leads me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.**

“Many of us are not very good at acknowledging our desire. As Christians we tend to be skeptical and suspicious of desire, for it is not easily controlled... What if I let myself feel my desire and it gets out of control? What if I begin to desire things I can’t have? How do I live with the pain of unfulfilled desire? In many of us, the fear of not getting what our heart longs for has led us to developing an unconscious pattern of distancing ourselves from our desire in order to avoid the pain of its lack of fulfillment. But the truth is that desire is the life-blood surging through the heart of the spiritual life.

You may not realize it, but your desire for God is the truest and most essential thing about you. It is truer than your sin, it is truer than your woundedness, it is truer than your net worth, your marital status or any role or responsibility you hold. Your desire for God and your capacity to connect with God as a human soul is the essence of who you are. But there is an even greater truth: before you were even aware of your desire for God, God desired you.”

- Ruth Haley Barton

Matthew 26:36-39

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” 37 He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. 38 Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.” 39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

Pray the Gethsemane Prayer

Give God Your Feelings

Tell Him what you are feeling — with no filter.

Give God Your Desires

Tell Him what you really want — good or bad.

Give God Your Trust

Surrender your heart again to Him.

Stop grasping for control. Yield yourself to God and His will for your life. Release your grip and open your hands.

Not my will, but yours be done.

You may want to pray Jesus' own words from the garden of Gethsemane — the same prayer He whispered in His darkest hour.

Solitude vs Isolation

“Isolation is a movement away from relationship, solitude is a movement toward relationship” - John Mark Comer

“In solitude, we do not encounter our self by ourselves” - Reese

Solitude is not a replacement for community, it is a companion to community

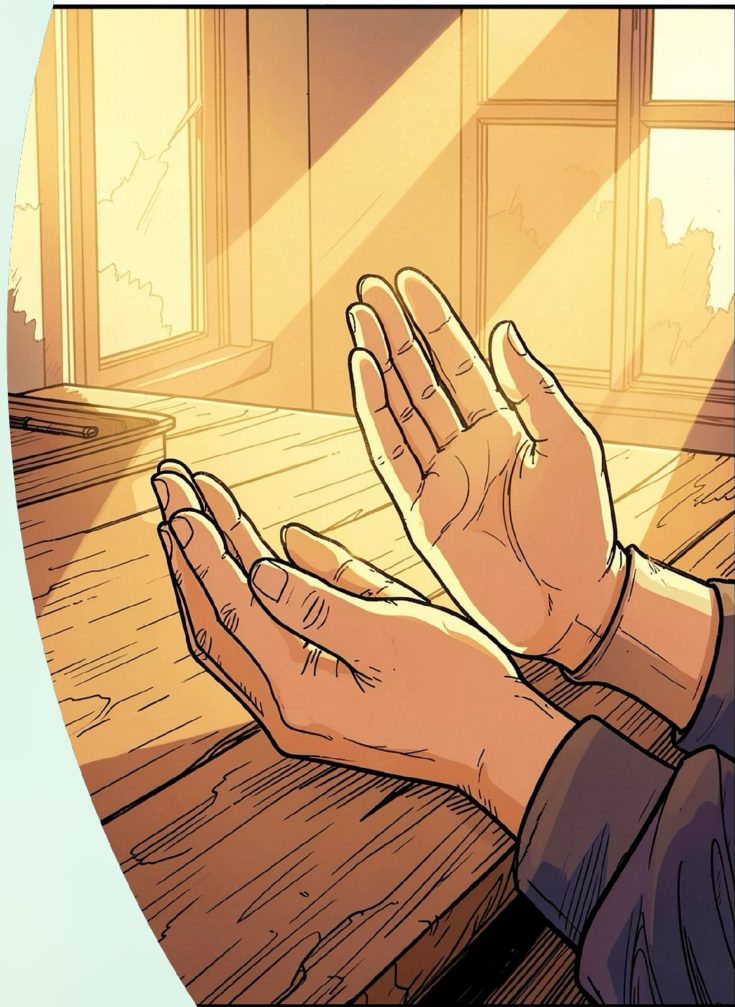
GUIDED PRAYER

STEP 7

Close with Gratitude

Whenever you're done, close your time with a simple prayer of gratitude to God for His presence, love, and goodness in your life.

Even in the hardest moments, His goodness never leaves. Let thanksgiving be the final word.









Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever encountered God in a specific area of moment of pain? What was that experience like?
2. What are the most common ways you distract yourself (or allow yourself to be distracted) from the pain in your life?
3. Jesus shows us how to give God our feelings, our desires, and our trust. What's the one step you could take to surrender that to him?

Solitude

Week Three Encounter with the Enemy

Practising The Way

