

# Melva's Corner



## Peace And Power Through Silence

October 24, 2007

**Central Truth: We can gradually learn to sense God's presence with us in all things. His love. And His peace.**

God is present everywhere and participates in all the circumstances of our lives. It is not necessary to shut down the rest of your life or retreat to a distant mountain top to be with Him. Driving down the highway, in hospital waiting rooms, at dinner, greeting clients – God's presence fills every moment of the day.

The experience we call "spiritual formation" is essentially nothing more or less than learning to be sensitive to the divine presence of God. We can't fix ourselves. We can't find our own way. We certainly can't control life's twists and turns. But we can gradually learn to sense God's presence with us in all things. His love. And His peace. But I confess to having a problem doing that some time.

It was the French philosopher and mathematician Blaise Pascal who said, "All human miseries come from not being able to sit in a quiet room alone." Could he possibly be right? Do we humans need more reflection than we permit ourselves? Time to take our thoughts and feelings seriously? The courage to bring them honestly before God to see what He may want us to learn? To be?

Noise inhibits inward peace by distracting us from spiritual self-examination. It keeps us from discerning our soul's condition. Silence is the spiritual knife which lays open our souls. If we are never silent, we never have to examine the truth about ourselves. This is why monks and Quakers are quiet: so they can discover that which can be found only in

silence. But spiritual self-examination is painful, which is why there aren't a lot of monks and Quakers.

Last week I was forced to sit still on an airplane for two hours. For Type-A personalities, that is nerve - jangling, finger - drumming time! I had a schedule. There were things to do. So . . . the Holy Spirit told me to pray instead of churn. And I did — about a host of things. The time passed quickly. When I was able to get off the plane, there was no haste. Just gratitude for an unanticipated time of prayer. And a sense of peace about what lay ahead.

As a spiritual discipline, silence is the deliberate shutting away of people and things that intrude noise into one's consciousness so that it can be fully attuned to God. It is being still, so we can know that God is sovereign — and we are not. It is refusing to be distracted from the divine presence. It is being quiet, reflective, and open to the very voice of God.

Silence, which almost always requires solitude, is a humbling thing for the powerful. It reminds them that the real power in this cosmos is in the voice of God, not in their instructions for and demands upon their peers. It is also uplifting to the not-so-powerful, for it reminds them that there is only one voice that must be heard. Even in our weakness, God will not abandon us.

Never let the storms of life destroy you. Stay connected to God always through prayer and meditation. Fill yourself daily with His energy, love, joy, light and life. Let your soul be full of love, laughter, goodness and delight. Let your loving acts provide shelter and shade to all who need it. Let even your broken and battered parts grow in new life and new joy.

As you drive home from work this afternoon, leave the radio off and reflect on the presence of God with you or some divine attribute for which you are especially grateful right now. In the quiet few moments before you fall asleep tonight or before you get out of bed in the morning, focus on the Lord and turn over a favorite passage of Scripture.

An artist reminded us that silence sometimes says more than words can. God waits to be our teacher in the still moments we share with Him. Thus He tells us: **"Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10).**

**Scriptural References:**

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