

August 2024

Alone with God

August... The ringing in of this month signals something different for many individuals. For parents and their kids, a new school year has begun. This is always an exciting time filled with opportunity and potential! For some, the return of the school year means a return to the everyday, monotonous norm, which for many is more relaxing than the summer vacation they were blessed to enjoy. For youth ministers (hey!!!), August is a month of exhaling and evaluation after a summer of busyness. For those who are retired, perhaps things stay the same (this is the dream).

Often (at least for me personally), the chaos of the season changes can lead to a life that places my relationship with Christ on the back burner.

STOP and write down/discuss: *What are ways that I allow myself to slip into a lifestyle that pulls me away from my relationship with Christ?*

Isn't it fascinating that amid chaos, Jesus Himself had to intentionally take time to be alone with His Father? Though many of these were mentioned last week from the pulpit, check out a few of these verses.

Mark 6:30–32

[30] The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. [31] And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat.[32] And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves.

Luke 6:12–13

[12] In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. [13] And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles:

Matthew 14:13

[13] Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself...

These are a few (of many) examples of Jesus doing this type of thing. I can't help but wonder: if the Son of God needed to depart, be alone, and pray, why have I not made it an active, present part of my life? Why do we feel a need to make a majority of our spiritual lives a time that is present in a church building?

I wonder, where could we personally invest as Christians to follow this example of Jesus in our day-to-day life?

STOP and write down/discuss: *What are ways that I can intentionally make time to be alone for an extended amount of time with my heavenly Father?*

In all reality, as we process this, we may realize that this takes a bit of sacrifice. It could be time off from work. It could be time away from a hobby. It could potentially take some finances. It could mean your child doesn't get to participate in one more extracurricular activity because you are teaching them that quiet, alone time with the Father is more important than doing more things to fill time on this planet. It could mean that some social life with certain groups of friends has to take a back seat for a week.

Imagine someone looking into your future and saying, "You gave up these things, and in return, you received a stronger relationship with Jesus Christ that helps you resist temptation, reach souls around you, feel guidance from the Spirit when you need to make tough decisions, and more." Would that be worth it?

To end this at home devo, challenge yourself and those whom you are studying with: *What are ways we can hold each other accountable to spending alone time with the Father?*

Let's get out there and spend time alone with God!