



DEEP
roots

W e e k # 3 :
listening

Silence and Turning All the Noise Down

Written by Noreen Sevret

Standing still in the woods on a windy day is an experience that is worth walking the path up through the woods for. We inherited my Dad's farm when he passed away, and it is one of my most favorite places to be. There is a path that goes from one field to another way on top of the hill on the farm. It is probably a quarter mile long going uphill a bit. On either side of the path, which is wide enough for a tractor to drive through, are blackberry bushes. I can remember picking blackberries as a child with our little tin buckets, filling them to the brim with the juiciest of blackberries after sampling some along the way. I like the way you can hear the quiet in the woods. I know that maybe we were simply listening for bears, but the quiet noise heard in the woods is unique. On a windy day you can hear the rustling of the leaves, the snapping of twigs, the noise of the wind, the sound of the planes high above in the sky, and just simply quietness.

Those things would not be heard on the daily road of my life. I have to step away from the "noise of the world" to hear the "noise of the woods". It is a quiet noise that I find myself yearning to hear more often than I do.

The noise of the world and its systems can often become deafeningly loud, choking out the Word of God that brings life to my soul. I find that I need to be intentional to turn down the world's noise so in the silence I can hear the voice of God that is always intentionally trying to reach for me.

I used to have a noisy retail job where I could not turn down the constant noise around me if I tried; instead, I learned to 'tune out' its noise as a way of coping with it. The past couple of years I have had a quieter job where I am surrounded in an atmosphere intentionally created by my bosses so I have quiet to be able to concentrate on many important details. Quite the contrast between the two jobs and the contrast between the "noise of the world" and the "noise of the woods". At home, I prefer the quiet over the constant noise of the tv, music, or even the radio. Whatever environment we find ourselves in, we need to intentionally find a way to hear from God and concentrate on His Words.

I created an acrostic poem that helps me as I envision the value of SILENCE in my life...

Seek Him Hebrews 11:6

Invest my time Psalm 90:12

Lean In Proverbs 3:5-6

Enter His Presence Isaiah 50:4; Jeremiah 33:3

Near to Him Psalm 46:10

Choose Quietness Psalm 131:2, 1. Peter 3:4, Isaiah 30:15

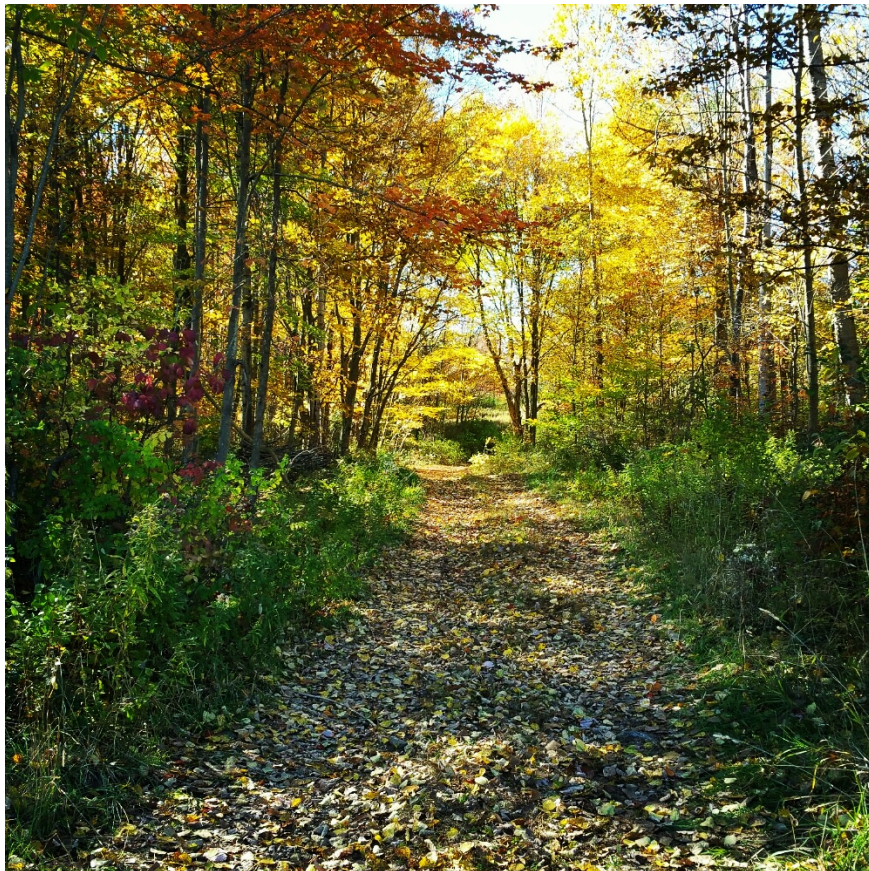
Encourage time in Word Psalm. 9:9-10, Isaiah 26:3-4

As you spend time this week with your family and in the Word, create some time for SILENCE in your life. In the SILENCE, give Him some space to talk to you there. Choose a quiet place to go together and then in that quiet place, listen and hear God in the quiet. Ask yourself and/or your family these questions:

1. What do I hear in this quiet place?
2. How long did it take for me to quiet the inside of me?
3. What do I hear God saying to me as I spend time here?

Spend some time reading His word in your quiet place. Envision SILENCE this week in your life using the acrostic poem above.

Ask yourself, how can focusing in these areas change me as I use this acrostic poem as a tool to put my roots deeper in who God is and who He wants me to be?



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God Calls Us Out of Our Comfort Zone
By Joe Pangia

I have been learning over the past few years how to listen for the voice of God. I needed to learn a few things before I started hearing Him. Spending time in His Word and spending time in prayer were the two most important things I needed to learn and to put into practice before I learned how to hear what He was saying to me. I say “learned how to hear” because I think God was talking to me throughout my life, I just didn't know how to listen.

What I had not counted on was that hearing what God was saying to me wasn't always a soothing, comfortable thing. You see, God wasn't just talking to me, at times he was asking me to do something and often those were things that lay outside my comfort zone. I think you'll agree that venturing outside our comfort zone is not something we are eager to do.

It shouldn't come as a complete surprise to us that God's plan for our lives would require stepping outside our comfort zone. Pastor Mike has spoken of it more than once and we have read examples of it in the Bible.

Moses was content with his life as a shepherd in Midian when God spoke to him and revealed His plan for Moses to lead the people from Egypt. Moses offered 5 different excuses in order to avoid obeying God and having to step out of his comfort zone. God wasn't interested in excuses though, he had a plan and Moses was a part of that plan whether he liked it or not.

God has a plan for all of us, a calling if you will, and it is likely that when we listen to God and follow his direction, we will have to step out in faith beyond our level of comfort. As we grow in faith and draw closer in relationship with the Father, we learn that we can trust in him. 2 Timothy 1:7 (NIV) tells us: “For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.” This is a verse I have come to rely on when I feel God nudging me out of my comfort zone. It reminds me that God will equip me with all that I need to accomplish what he asks of me.

Has God been asking you to do something that is outside of your comfort zone? If so, go to God in prayer and tell him of your doubts and fears. Ask the Father to equip you with all that is required for you to do what He is asking of you. Then step out in faith, trusting that God will use you for his glory.

Prayer:

Father, give me the courage and wisdom to obey your will for me, even if it leads me into situations that make me uncomfortable and unsure of myself. You have a plan that you chose for me, a plan that will bear fruit that will last and I know that by asking you in the name of your Son Jesus, you will guide me and equip me to accomplish all that you ask. I ask this in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.” John 15:16 (NIV)

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How Big is God's Love?
By Kathy Hicks

In John 3 1-21 we hear a story about Jesus and Nicodemus. During this time Jesus is performing many miracles and people are starting to notice. One of those people to notice was Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a Jewish leader of the group called Pharisees. Pharisees were distinguished leaders who were known by their strict adherence to Jewish traditions and written laws. The Pharisees did not believe or follow Jesus' teachings. However, Nicodemus was very intrigued by the miracles Jesus was performing. Nicodemus secretly met with Jesus.

Jesus was prepared to answer all of Nicodemus' questions and ended up discussing how to enter God's kingdom for eternity. Nicodemus was very confused. He did not understand what Jesus meant by being born again. Nicodemus surely as an adult, could not be born again from his mother's womb, he was far too old, and it was just not possible. Jesus explained to Nicodemus that to be born again meant that people would accept God as their Lord and Savior and the Holy Spirit would come from Heaven and fill their bodies; they would be born again being filled with the Holy Spirit. As the wind blows, we can feel it, but we do not know where it came from or where it is going. The Holy Spirit works the same way. We can feel it in our soul when it is with us, but we do not know where it came from or where it was going. Nicodemus left that meeting with Jesus a changed man. He began to question how he was living his life.

How do we measure love? Is it measured by how often you say it? Or how strongly you feel it? Love is measured by how much you give, how much you sacrifice for others. This is true of God's love for us as well.

John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." What does it mean that God loved the world? God created the universe, the world, all things in it including people. Does it mean he loves the people? We live in a fallen world, where we disobey God's laws and abuse His creation every day. Why should God love us after all of that? God is all knowing, and his grace is unending. What an amazing concept. Did you know God loves people, all kinds of people, people who desperately need His love, God even loves people who do not deserve His love at all. God loves ALL people. God's love is infinite, there is no limits to His love. As humans we have limits or conditions or boundaries. God does not.

The true test of love is how much we give, how much we are willing to sacrifice for the one(s) you love. God sacrificed His ONLY son because He loves you! Does that right there give you the gooseys? That love, that sacrifice should humble yo
God gave his only son:
First, by sending him into the world. Jesus left the beauty, perfection, and glory of Heaven to enter the world as a human. Second, Jesus was sent to the world to die on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. What a sacrifice.

We can not enter the kingdom of God to live in the eternity when we hide in the shadows of darkness. Enter the light of God's forgiveness and unfailing love and live in the light of God's obedience. When God says it's our time, we will then enter the kingdom of God for eternity.

Prayer:

Lord, I pray that as your believers we know the ultimate sacrifice you made for us and we know the width, length, height, and depth of your love for us. I pray that we extend that to those in our lives and those in the world, to mirror your image. Amen

Family Activity:

Gather some rulers, measuring tapes, stopwatches, measuring cups etc. As a family measure the following:

1. How thick is the Bible?
2. How long is your shoe?
3. How tall are you?
4. How wide is Dad's hand?
5. How long does it take to jump 20 times?
6. How tall is your chair?
7. How big around is a globe?
8. How many cups of rice are in a bag/box?
9. Find Ephesians 3:18

Talk with your family about all the measurements you took. Read Ephesians 3:18. Can God's love be measured? No, God's love for us is infinite and will never run out.

Jesus got up
and went to
an isolated
place to pray
Mark 1:35b

