

5 LENTEN QUESTIONS

A SERIES WITH BISHOP WRIGHT

Q2: WHAT TO DO WHEN GOD IS SILENT? | FAITH REFLECTION GUIDE FOR SMALL GROUPS/INDIVIDUALS

These reflection guides are designed to supplement the Bishop's videos for use in a small group Bible study. They are created for the leader's ease of use, and with links to free web-based resources.

REFLECTION

Bishop Wright says that silence is really a language for God, and that a mature relationship with God invites us to learn that new language. In real friendship, not every second is filled with words. In deep friendships, silence is not the absence of care, but the presence of intimacy and trust.

ARTICLES

Read about other times in history God has been "silent" (meaning no biblical revelation was given). One was during the Hebrews' time in Egypt: 400 years of silence before a great deliverance.

Another was after the Israelites came back from captivity: 400 years of silence, and then Jesus came, and there was another great deliverance.

<https://www.faithgateway.com/waiting-four-hundred-years-of-silence/#.YDqpb2hKhPY>

Read about what St. John of the Cross called "the dark night of the soul," when God feels absent, silent, or far away, but it is a time God intends to draw you into deeper relationship

<https://www.faithgateway.com/joyful-confidence-god-dark-night-soul/#.YDqIOWhKhPY>

SCRIPTURE

Read John 11:1-44. Mary & Martha had told Jesus of their brother's grave illness, but Jesus was silent. He did not go immediately, but stayed away two days. They are confounded by the Lord's silence. "If you had been here, our brother wouldn't have died." As it turned out, the Lord's silence was not abandonment, but made way for a new revelation of who Jesus was. They knew Jesus could heal. What they had not experienced was the fact that he could make dead things come alive. Jesus' silence led to an even greater experience of God's presence and power.

Read 1 Kings 19:9-18 (for context, check out what just happened in ch 18). God's voice was in the silent stillness, a whisper. In Elijah's time of distress when his enemies were seeking his life, he wanted God to act, in power, but God showed up in the silence. It was the silence that strengthened him for what was next.

TAKE-AWAY

Listen to some music and pay attention to the silences. Listen for when there are rests, when it is quieter. Think about how those times of silence enhance and accentuate the times of sound. Reflect on your own life and thank God for the seasons of "rest" and seasons of "sound".

DISCUSSION

- When have you experienced what felt like God's silence or absence?
- What happened on the other side of God's silence? How was that resolved? What came out of it? What did you learn?
- How might God be using the times of silence you perceive in your life now to invite you into a deeper relationship?
- Which image from the Bishop's video stood out to you and why?
- Which Scripture passage stuck out to you and what might God be speaking through it to your life circumstances today?

PRAYER

A Prayer by St. John of the Cross

O Blessed Jesus, grant me stillness of soul in Thee. Let Thy mighty calmness reign in me. Rule me, O thou King of gentleness, King of peace. Give me control, control over my words, thoughts and actions. From all irritability, want of meekness, want of gentleness, O dear Lord, deliver me. By thine own deep patience give me patience, stillness of soul in Thee. Make me in this, and in all, more and more like Thee. Amen.