



Lifechanging Escapes

“Go out and stand before me on the mountain,” the Lord told him. And as Elijah stood there, the Lord passed by, and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

And a voice said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

1 Kings 19:11-13 (NLT)

“On your left!” I called as I sought to pass a walker... no reaction. I called again, “On you’re your left!” louder this time... still no reaction! Cautiously I rode past and saw them... ear buds.

Further along, a group of riders came... no ear buds. Instead, a speaker booming.

Then another, this one riding his bike while staring at his phone... “Heads up! Heads up!” I yelled. We nearly crashed.

That evening a group arrived at a nearby rental. Car doors slammed, the gear was quickly shuttled inside, then the party began. Pent up, all were starved for escape. Music and drinks... voices got louder... music got louder... voices got louder still... an argument broke out.

Stressed? Exhausted? Need an escape? Sunriver, Oregon presents an answer. Picture miles of bike paths, secluded benches along the Deschutes River, hiking trails winding through quiet pine forests, the snow-caped Cascades nearby... a paradise ripe for those in need of refreshment.

Yet I’m baffled... though seeking it, are people truly being refreshed? There seems an aversion to quiet. Why do we insist on bringing life’s noise with us?

Reflect: Have I an aversion to quiet?

A youth lesson I conducted highlights our affliction. Identifying one to act as God speaking in a gentle whisper, the rest were free to talk, play music and games... to have fun doing the things kids like to do to escape. Nothing wrong with these of course, but when asked about what God had said, their faces were blank.

Hummm... Can you hear the Lord's gentle whisper when you're constantly stimulated?

Elijah fled to mountain solitude, quietly waited... then heard the whisper that redirected his life. The Lord was not in the wind... not in the earthquake... not in the fire...

...We won't hear him amid the noisy activities we prefer.

*Consider: **Solitude is an escape that delivers.***

Most would agree that taking 15, 60 or 90 minutes alone, sitting in complete silence, doing nothing but listening for God's gentle whisper is a good idea... yet we don't do it! Why not?

Is our list of "to do's" simply too long, no time? Are we of the belief that to be refreshed we must get away to "go, go, go!" Could it be that we're afraid of what we might hear so avoid it?

What keeps you from solitude?

Perhaps we've created false hope for our worldly escapes... do they really deliver? Have you experienced the "post vacation blues," an oft felt gloom that descends upon plugging back into life? Having hoped a break would lead to change, often problems have grown worse. Commonly, benefits of an escape vanish within days.

"So the Lord must wait for you to come to him so he can show you his love and compassion. For the Lord is a faithful God. Blessed are those who wait for his help.... Your own ears will hear him. Right behind you a voice will say, "This is the way you should go," whether to the right or to the left." (Isaiah 30:18-21)

How much more lasting might the benefits of hearing the gentle whisper of God be? Could intentional quiet engagement lead to improved life conditions? Done consistently, a clearer path for your life? An awakening of purpose? Could this be an escape that delivers over the long term?

*Imagine: **The practice of solitude resetting my life's direction.***

What might happen if you made escaping to solitude a habit?

"One day soon afterward Jesus went up on a mountain to pray, and he prayed to God all night. At daybreak he called together all of his disciples and chose twelve of them to be apostles." (Luke 6:12-13)

Jesus did... in solitude he communed with the Father and received

direction that, over time, reset the trajectory of the world. In solitude he received guidance to advance his Mission. These times proved to be...

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Go off the grid and ask these questions:

Coach's Questions

- When was the last time I spent a measurable amount of time in solitude?
- What keeps me from spending regular time in solitude? How will I redirect my time?
- When will I take an hour of solitude over the next month?

Spirit Talk

Post this where you will see it regularly.

Jesus tells me to take time in solitude.

Then Jesus said, "Let's go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile." He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn't even have time to eat.

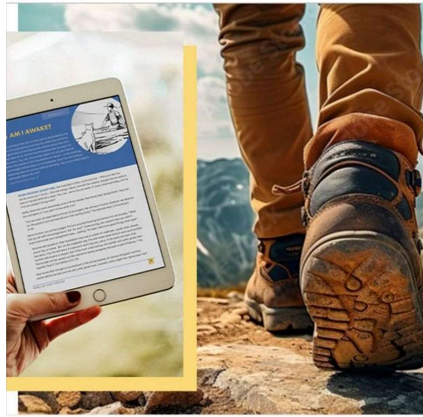
Mark 6:31 (NLT)



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