

JUST HIM AND ME

“The movement from loneliness to solitude ... is the movement from the restless senses to the restful spirit;
from fearful clinging to the fearless play.”

— Henri Nouwen

Take a minute to play a mental movie of one-on-one time with your favorite person when you were a child. Maybe you remember a day fishing with your grandfather, or going to the circus with your mom, or a dress-up date with your dad. **What made those “just me” times with that person so special?**

When we invite children to spend “just him and me” time with God, we are offering them the chance to enjoy the undivided attention of Creator God. Let that sink in. The practice of solitude is when we are most known, and we know it —

because there are no distractions to draw us away from enjoying him. **Solitude is when we are the least alone. It is when we are with the One who made us, knows us, and loves us.**

If we recognize the wear and tear imposed on the souls of our children as they navigate the intensely un-Christian culture that surrounds them, we will recognize their need to be refreshed by solitude. The wisdom of Oswald Chambers is ageless: **“Solitude with God repairs the damage done by the fret and noise and clamor of the world.”** Our children need quiet space to process, reflect, and wrestle with life. And they need to do that in the company of the One who loves them unconditionally, with the comforting, instructing whispers of the Holy Spirit in their ear. Solitary time with Jesus will repair them and refresh them — just as it does for us.

Abundant life comes, for us and for our children, when we follow after the words of Jesus and the ways of Jesus. Jesus often practiced solitude (Mark 1 and Luke 4). **He needed to refocus on heavenly priorities and be saturated in heavenly purposes.** He needed the familiar, solitary companionship of God the Father. And we need the same things. That’s why he invites us, as he did his disciples, “Let’s go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile” (Mark 6:31).

If we are not taking breaks for solitude, we are robbing ourselves — and the children we care for — of vital spiritual rejuvenation.



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INVITATIONS TO ENGAGE

Start the conversation with your child!

Let's take a minute to talk about why God tells us, "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). And we'll talk about how we can be still and know who he is.

EARLY CHILDHOOD (2-6 years old)

Read Psalm 46:10. "There are different ways to be still." Have the child sit alone facing a corner — silent and still, on a hard chair where her feet don't touch the ground. Ask her how long she would enjoy sitting there. Next, have the child sit in the corner (facing outward) on a cushion, with soft pillows around her to lean on and cuddle with.

Ask her to compare this way of being still to the time sitting on the hard chair. "Be still" time alone with God is like this. He loves to be with just us! He cushions us. He loves us.

Sit still here by yourself with God and say, "Be still and know I am God." Very, very slowly — once for every birthday you have had. Then thank God for spending time with you.

ELEMENTARY AGE (5-10 years old)

Read Mark 6:31 together. Jesus said, "Let's go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile."

Talk about where to make a "Him and Me" location in your home — turn a chair toward a window with a view, or place large pillows in a quiet corner. Plan together what would make this a place where anyone in the family could have some alone time with God. Work together to arrange that spot.

Ask the child to use Scripture to write a prayer of blessing. **Then have a family blessing time to ask God to use that meeting place as a place of solitude where you will all find grace and peace.**

PRETEEN/EARLY ADOLESCENT (10-14 years old)

Take your Bible to a quiet place where you can meet with God all by yourself. Ask God to show you what you need to pay attention to.

Slowly read Psalm 46. Write verse 10 in big letters in the middle of a page in your journal. Then all around that verse write other words that you find that describe what kind of things were going on when the psalm was written. Ask God to help you be still and learn from him.

Then with a different color of pencil, add words that describe things that are occurring around you. Tell God how you feel about what is happening where you live. Read the psalm one more time. Thank God for being with you in this special place.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Invitation to Solitude and Silence, by Ruth Haley Barton

Spiritual Disciplines for Children (Chapter 6), by Vernie Schorr Love