

Still

a three-week study by Amanda Brown

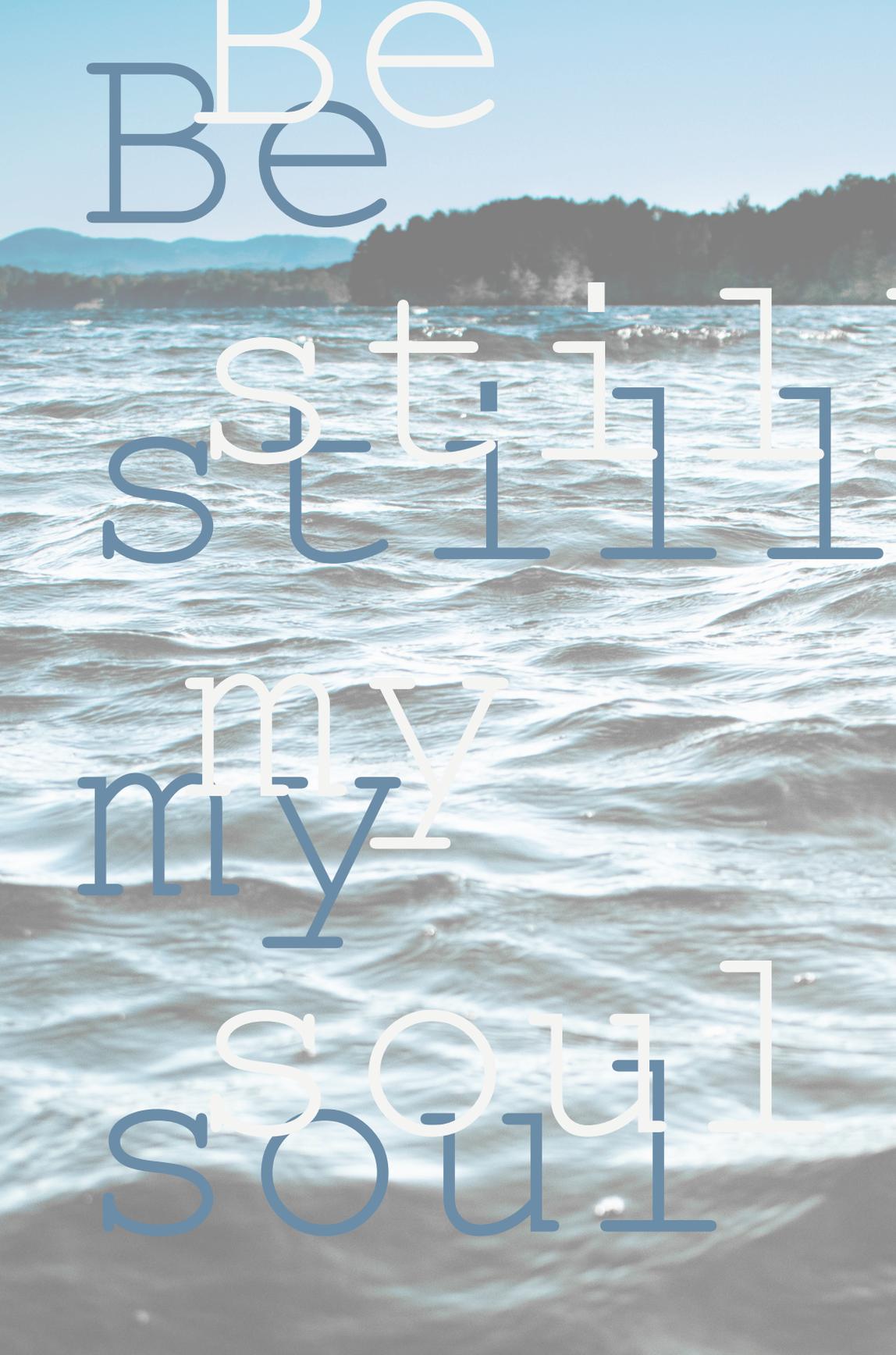
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Ohbelovedone.com



Be
Be

still
still

my
my

soul
soul

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We live in such a loud world. There's always something we could be watching, doing, clicking on, or scrolling through.

We are scared of the silence.

And maybe that's why we're all just so tired.

This is your invitation to embrace the silence. To close your eyes and just feel the Spirit of God. To be okay with your inner dialogue that scares you at night.

This is your invitation to be STILL.

how to use this devotional

The Bible doesn't command us to devotions in the morning, but there's something about the SILENCE in the morning that goes along perfectly with our study.

There are 24 devotions included in this book. That means you can do one every day for about 3 and a half weeks, or you can make it last for a while by doing it 5 days a week and something else on the weekends.

For about the first week, you'll get to look at a Bible character and how they were good examples of choosing to be still.

For the rest of the study, you'll be looking at passages and gaining information that will help you cultivate a life of stillness and understand the true qualities of stillness, peace, and true "silence."

about the author

Hi there, beloved! I'm Amanda Brown.

I'm absolutely obsessed with yellow, Emily Dickinson poems, and crime shows. I hate painting my nails because I'm too impatient to let them dry, and I'm extremely forgetful when it comes to birthdays but I'll remember your biggest hopes and dreams.

I started *Oh Beloved One* in 2012 out of my love for writing. When I grew out of the *American Girl* magazine, I was so disappointed that there wasn't a good alternative. So I decided to start my own magazine.

Now *Oh Beloved One* is a blog and print magazine. We also provide resources (such as this book) to help broken girls heal and Christian girls grow. Our ultimate goal is to remind you that you're beloved.



Please show me
now your ways
that I may know
you in order to
find favor in
your sight.
Exodus 33:13

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BIBLICAL
FASTING



S T I

Day 1

First off, we must take a look at what this “still” means. The word in Hebrew is *charash*. Exodus 14:14, our main text for this verse, translates the word as “still” in the NIV but “silent” in the ESV.

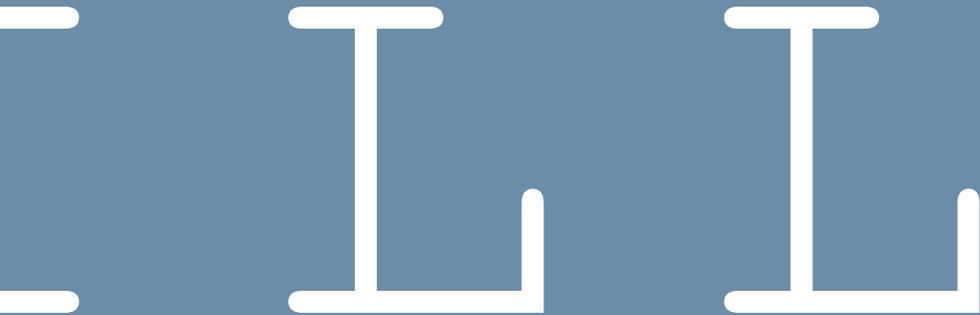
The overall idea is peace. Peace is such a broad concept, and honestly that’s okay. It’s the idea of being, keeping, and remaining silent. Some of these words may seem the exact same, but I beg to differ.

Being silent is being in the moment. Turning everything else off, begging God to mute the dialogue in your head, and meditating on His truth instead.

Keeping silence is a specific choice. It’s being faced with a decision or trial and not running to someone to ask advice, falling backwards in fear, or locking yourself away to make plans. Instead, it’s choosing to bow your head in prayer and admit to God that you are dependent on Him and need His help and wisdom to stay in His will.

Remaining silent is a constant choice. It’s choosing to keep silence over and over again. It’s living a life characterized by peace.

Another important aspect to this is that it’s a voluntary silence. God doesn’t force us to be still or at peace; that is counterintuitive. The idea of peace is a letting go, not a clenching of fists. It’s choosing by releasing.



Q's

1. What's your definition of peace?
2. Do you think your life is characterized by this idea of being still?
3. Which one is most difficult for you: Being, keeping, or remaining silent?

Applications

Write down the definition of "still" and post it on your wall to remind you of your commitment to learn how to be still.

F E A R / S T

Day 2

Person: Moses

When: Crossing the Red Sea

If I had been Moses in front of the Red Sea, you better believe I would've been hurry-scurrying around like a chicken with my head cut off. He wasn't quick to give up and command everyone to head back to Egypt; he didn't full-out freak out.

Instead he gives the people three simple commands, probably rooted from how his own heart was dealing with the seemingly impossible circumstance:

1. Fear not
2. Stand firm
3. See the salvation of the LORD

Sometimes we just need to let God be God. This is a really difficult balance because a lot of people in our culture nowadays have the infamous "let go and let God" approach to life.

The Christian life is all about balance. It's about knowing when to charge into battle . . . and when to stand in front of the Red Sea, arms raised in prayer to God. At this point, there was nothing Moses could do. God wanted a chance to show His power without interference from man because He knows (just as we do) that man is quick to take the credit for anything amaz-

AND / SEE

ing that happens.

But this was all God.

Note that the Israelites still had to take that step of faith (literally) and head into the Red Sea. It's a beautiful pass of the baton, a beautiful two-person dance that goes back and forth and sometimes is a partnership between to people giving all their effort.

Q's

1. What are three of your common reactions to difficulties (in contrast with Moses' commands)?
2. When was the last time you took a step of faith?

Applications

Identify your own current Red Sea. How can you fear not and stand firm?

Reflect on how you've seen the salvation of the LORD in the past.

W A F F

Day 3

Person: Job

When: During his terrible trials, recorded in the book of Job

I really relate to Job. At the onset of a trial, he responds admirably. But, as the days pass by and there's no relief (and, in fact, things just get worse), he loses his steam.

I'm a lot like that. I start out well, putting in extra time with my Bible and notebook, doing word studies, asking for prayer, being really "holy" about the whole thing.

But then reality hits. More trials pile on top, answers are nowhere to be found, and suddenly every tiny little thing becomes apocalypse-level. I'm ready to hit the big red STOP button.

Job waffles between being in absolute turmoil and finding peace in stillness. Notice how he riles himself up, whether he's having a discussion with himself or complaining to his friends. There's little or no affirmation of biblical truths, which is where he fails.

It's. Okay. To. Hurt. We are humans. It's okay to ask questions or cry. But we have to counteract that with solid biblical truth. Even if you don't fully believe it right away (we've all been there at times); keep telling yourself what

L I N G

you've known to be true and God will grow that tiny mustard seed of faith.

It is only when Job is quiet and listens to God's still small voice that He is aware of God's presence, power, and peace. Neither Job nor God lists how things are going to be okay. Instead, there's a definite focus on God's attributes and deeds. And this soothes Job's soul like no other balm.

Also note that Job's friends had it half right. They demand he be silent multiple times . . . but only so he can hear their "advice" which is both obnoxious and unbiblical. Let's not be friends that are insensitive! Let's not be friends that rate our advice over the Bible (ah . . . this one hits more home for me). Let's be friends that point people to God in their silence.

Q's

1. Have you "lost your steam" in trusting God?
2. Are you scared of hurting?
3. How do you comfort friends going through trials? Do you point them back to God?

Application

Be in the Word every day to cultivate a life of more consistent peace.

Memorize verses to quote in moments of hurt.

Point friends back to God's truth instead of your own.

DELA

Day 4

Person: Israelites

When: While Moses was getting the commandments from God

So often God has called me to wait but instead I charge ahead. I see a reflection of this in Exodus 32. Moses is up on the mountain, getting commandments from God . . . and he's been up there a hot second.

No doubt the people began growing anxious. Then, they probably grew restless and ceased caring.

The ESV says “When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain.” They took things into their own hands. They probably thought Moses and even God would be proud of their “proactiveness.”

Aaron's solution was to make. Just one chapter before, God commanded Bezalel and Oholiab to make, but this was God-directed and Spirit-empowered.

Instead of borrowing from God's resources, we grab at the golden earrings and jewelry of the world and melt them down into our own golden calves. Instead of asking for God's opinion, we listen to the voices surrounding us .

Y E D

. . or our own sinful inner monologue.

Who knows how long they would've had to keep waiting for Moses? Maybe a couple more days. Maybe even a few hours.

But, because of their impatience, three thousand men died. Because of our impatience, we may lose out on blessing, be a bad testimony to others, or find ourselves stressed because of a lack of results. Do we trust God to work in waiting?

Q's

1. Is patience often difficult for you?
2. What are you waiting for right now?

Application

Choose small ways to be more patient. Use the oven instead of the microwave. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Write something down on paper instead of on your phone. Silly items, perhaps, but powerful.

PRIN

Day 5

Person: Jesus

When: All the time

We can't skip the Prince of Peace, but of course! Jesus was the perfect mix of quiet and powerful. His strength was His ability to speak at the right times.

Take a look at His example of stillness in Matthew 26:63.

But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."

The high priest is interrogating Him, belittling His identity as the Son of God. My response in situations where I'm being wrongly labeled is to fight back; to formulate the perfect response that will have the offender begging for forgiveness because of my elite rebuttal skills.

But Jesus "remained silent." He was not quick to speak or make excuses. Even in the garden, He chose to be still and pray to God. He didn't bask in fear or talk it out with the disciples. He knelt down and took it to the One who can really make things happen.

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Q's

1. Do you tend to speak too quickly or instead keep everything inside?
2. What is your response to situations where you're being belittled?

Application

The next time something bad happens and you want to pick up your phone to text someone about it, instead power off your phone and pray to God about it. This doesn't have to be a well-thought-out or long prayer, but you can bet God has a better solution than any friend.

PLAN

Day 6

Person: Solomon

When: The Proverbs

It's no coincidence that the wisest man in history had a lot to say on being still. In Proverbs 4:26, he implores that we "Ponder the path of [our] feet; then all [our] ways will be sure."

It's okay to get introspective. It's okay to stop everything and ponder where we're going, who we're going with, and what we're doing to get there. It's okay to ask ourselves why we do what we do.

Proverbs 5:21 says, "For a man's ways are before the eyes of the Lord, and he ponders all his paths." God knows what we're doing, so we'd better take time to be still and consider what He thinks of our paths before we set out on them.

One time I was searching for new writers for our magazine. I emailed a girl and was amazed at her response. She said that she was interested but needed to pray about it. Pray about writing for a Christian magazine? I never would've even thought to do that. Surely, since it's Christian and I love writing there could be nothing God wouldn't approve of . . . right? This really rebuked me and got me thinking. As Proverbs 15:28 says, "The heart

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of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.”

Agreeing to write for *Oh Beloved One* magazine may not be inherently evil. But if it takes away from time you could be in church or with your family, or if you do it instead of homework, there’s a problem. Do we take time to ask God what He wants instead of jumping into things?

Q’s

1. Are you comfortable with being honestly introspective sometimes?
2. Do you often ask God’s opinion before making choices or plans?

Application

Save a small chunk of time on Saturdays to be honestly introspective. How did you do this week? Did you grow spiritually? Is there anything you need to work on? You may want an accountability partner.

Ask God’s opinion the next time you start planning something or making choices.

POND

Day 7

Person: Mary

When: learning of her role as the mother of Jesus

Mary didn't start sobbing or freaking out (as I may have done). She didn't post on her Facebook and ask for prayer. She didn't even run out the door to seek counsel.

Instead, she “treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart” (Luke 2:19). Right after the news, we have record of a beautiful prayer. Mary grew a spirit of stillness as she chose to ponder what she had learned. Yes, there were fears. Yes, her mind probably was tempted to consider all the consequences of being pregnant as an unmarried teenager.

But she stilled her mind by praying. Read her prayer in Luke 1:46-55.

And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.
For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for he who is mighty has done great things for me,

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and holy is his name.

And his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;

he has brought down the mighty from their thrones

and exalted those of humble estate;

he has filled the hungry with good things,

and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,

as he spoke to our fathers,

to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”

Q's

1. What are the attributes of God Mary mentions in her prayer?

2. What are specific deeds of God that Mary mentions?

Application

Write a prayer praising God for His attributes and deeds. Save it for moments when it's hard to trust.

M E D I

Day 8

Person: Joshua

When: God giving His people a promise

In this conditional promise (Joshua 1:8), God commands that “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”

Meditating is a good way to create a habit of stillness in your own life. This flourishes in our lives when Scripture is our constant companion.

It leaks out of our mouths, in our advice to others and in our blessings for their lives. It constantly runs through our minds instead of worries, meaningless plans, and evil intents. Because of this, we live out the Scriptures. They flow in us, through us, and out of us because we constantly choose to let them flow into us.

And as if living a life characterized by this isn't enough, God gives extra benefits: our ways will be prosperous and we will have true success.

This is the price of a life of stillness. This is the *prize*.

TATE

Q's

1. List out common topics that occupy your mind.
2. Have you ever tried memorizing Scripture before? What tactics helped? For additional assistance, see Appendix A (page 60).

Application

Commit to starting your days with five minutes of meditating on Scripture.

Take a look at the topics you wrote down that you think about a lot. Which ones could you get rid of? What could you replace it with?

Commit to memorizing twelve verse passage over the next year. Take it one month at a time. For ideas on verses to memorize, see Appendix B (page 65).

FAST

Day 9

Person: Esther

When: preparing to speak to the king

If you ask a little girl who her favorite Bible character is, there's usually a tie between Ruth and Esther (not that they understand either of the stories totally, but they're solely about women so hey why not).

Esther is one of my personal favorites. Before I began my study on being still, I never considered how Esther had a spirit of stillness.

When I decide to do something big, something radical, I jump right in. It's loud and passionate . . . but sometimes we need a bit of a more calculated approach.

When Esther decided to speak to the king in an effort to save her people, she didn't immediately march into his throne room and demand an audience.

She instead fasted and invited her own people to fast. This itself invokes a culture of stillness because, without the distraction of food, you are more in tune with your own emotions and spiritual battles. This is no easy task, of course, and requires self-control.

TERROR

Day 10

Passage: Exodus 15:16

*Terror and dread fall upon them;
because of the greatness of your arm, they are still as a stone,
till your people, O Lord, pass by,
till the people pass by whom you have purchased.*

First off, we have to do a little digging because this passage is a bit out of context. So who's the "them"? Who is terror and dread falling on? Specifically, this includes the chiefs of Edom, leaders of Moab, and inhabitants of Canaan. Basically, this is means the enemies of God.

Too often we live lives of terror and dread, but that's not what we are called to. The greatness of God's arm is a comfort to us but a terror to those who are against Him.

Now, where are God's people passing by? This refers to the Promised Land. We're all in search of a Promised Land, a place we can truly be still. But maybe the Promised Land is a place that's constantly traveling; maybe we can attain it in the stillness. Maybe it's a state of mind, an awareness of

& DREAD

God's constant presence and peace, instead of a location or a job or relief from health.

I love verse 17 because, in contrast with that dread and terror, we have the results of peace: God himself will bring us in and plant us in His mountain, established by His own hands, indwelled by His own presence.

Q's

1. Is your life characterized by terror and dread or peace?
2. Do you feel like you're too concerned about your destination rather than the journey?

Application

Pray and ask God to help you live a life of remembering that you have been purchased by God. Remind yourself that the Christian life isn't one of fear and dread.

B R I

Day 11

Passage: Joshua 3:8, 13

(God speaking) *“And as for you, command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, ‘When you come to the brink of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan.’”*

“And when the soles of the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off from flowing, and the waters coming down from above shall stand in one heap.”

What I think is fascinating about this passage is the location. God commands them to come to the brink of the waters; this means the men were actually standing in the water. This required faith, of course. It’s much easier to stand outside of the river and watch God part it instead of standing in the water that God promised He would part.

This required a belief. A trust that God would indeed part the waters.

God also commanded them to stand still. They weren’t to attempt to cross

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it by themselves. They weren't to stomp around and make a fuss and do a dance and then God would work.

But, when we're standing still, we allow ourselves to see God work . . . and give others opportunity to grow their faith in God.

Q's

1. When is the last time you took a leap of faith?

Application

Dare yourself to do a trust fall with God. When there's a situation where you could take control and perhaps get mediocre results, instead put it in God's hands and just let go of all your Plan A's, B's, and C's.

AWA

Day 12

Passage: 1 Samuel 12:7

Now therefore stand still that I may plead with you before the Lord concerning all the righteous deeds of the Lord that he performed for you and for your fathers.

I was never so aware of God's presence in my life than the season that I went through depression. Depression forced me to be in the Bible more and meditate on God's Word to drown out the lies constantly circulating around in my mind.

Because of this, I saw Him working in every small way, whether that was giving me all green lights on a day I should've been late to school, inspiring my teacher to bring a cookie cake to class on a difficult day, or allowing my sister to check her phone to see a text I desperately needed her to answer (my art project which was due in five minutes was locked in her car . . .).

Sometimes, to see God work, we must be silent. Here, Samuel implores the people to be still and listen to him while he recounts what God has done for Israel.

This is his farewell address; he had just appointed a king and, in his last days, was worried for the people's hearts.

If he could leave them with one thing, it was to never forget what God had

RE

done. In every culture there's always distractions. Especially in our modern-day culture. We can "turn off our brain" after a hard day with tv shows that go on for nine seasons or social media feeds that never stop refreshing with new content.

Try turning off your brain so you can meditate on what God has done instead what others are doing. See Him move.

There was also a history of goodness ("righteous deeds . . . performed for you and for your fathers"). Take time to reflect on past righteous deeds of God, especially when you need to reset yourself to trust Him for the future.

Q's

1. Do you feel aware of God's presence in your life, or do you feel He's silent right now?
2. What are some "righteous deeds" God has performed for you recently?

Application

Share with a friend what deeds God has done in your life and ask them to share with you. This encourages both of you!

The next time something small happens (finding a parking space, the light turning green when you're in a hurry, getting a free drink at Starbucks) thank God.

ALLI

Day 13

Passage: 1 Samuel 12:16

Now therefore stand still and see this great thing that the Lord will do before your eyes.

If the people were standing still, then it was obvious that this had all been God. We often want to get some of the credit for the great things God does, especially when we had even the smallest of roles.

God's glory is our ultimate concern. Pointing others to His goodness is impossible if we're stealing the spotlight. It's also impossible if we're constantly on the move, constantly doing. We'll miss the things God is doing for us.

I encourage you to find a journal and begin recording ways God is moving in your life. These can be both big and small: answers to longtime prayers, answers to small requests, "coincidences," opportunities, seeing the puzzle pieces of your life moving together, etc. I have one and call it my Miracle Journal!

Q's

1. How have you been taking credit for how God moves?

H I M

2. Do you have any friends or family that do a great job of recognizing what God does in their lives?

Application

Grab an empty journal (or an old book; that's what I use! I write in the margins) and begin writing down things God does in your life. Date them and reflect on them often!

COLOR OF

Day 14

Passage: Job 4:16

*It [the spirit of God] stood still,
but I could not discern its appearance.
A form was before my eyes;
there was silence, then I heard a voice:*

Silence can be scary, especially if you are or have dealt with anxiety and depression. In the silence, we are forced to think about big, deep things.

It's almost as if, in the noise, we have a barrier and can think only of the next few hours. Everything is light and fluffy.

But, in the dark, in the silence of night, we worry. We think about what will happen if this person dies; if we don't get better; if we don't have enough money; if we don't get a boyfriend.

And those thoughts are scary. It's easier to not face them. So, we avoid the silence.

But silence not only makes us think . . . it makes us hear. It doesn't have to be scary. One of my favorite passages, Psalm 63, gives us an alternative

SILENCE

nighttime scenario: “My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips, When I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night; for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy. My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.”

We can be satisfied in the silence.

Q's

1. Does silence scare you?
2. What scares you in the silence?

Application

Write down your deepest, darkest (maybe even silliest) fears. Then choose a different pen color and write next to it why you don't have to fear. This could be common sense or biblical principles. Then, if you wanna get real fancy, grab another color pen and look up specific Bible references to nip those fears in the bud.

BUT

Day 15

Passage: Job 4:16

By his power he stilled the sea; by his understanding he shattered Rahab.

You know what's embarrassing? Inanimate objects—creation—obeys God better than we do.

God looks at something we could be swept away by, the sea, and says “Be still.” The sea doesn't argue or ignore Him. It's still. Easy. Simple.

But us? Oh, no. Never! God looks at us and says “Be still” and we say “But . . .” We begin a list of complaints. We forget that He has a perfect past record with us. We only see a skyscraper, not the elevator.

In one of the most famous Psalms (you knew I would pull this one out when the word “still” was mentioned), we are commanded to be still. “Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” (Psalm 46:10)

Sometimes we want to know that He is God before we are still. We have

a head knowledge, but we need that heart knowledge. And in that aspect, we're correct: we do need the heart knowledge. But it may not come until we choose to be silent.

It's another act of trust. Another silencing of our inner skeptic. That takes self-control and dependence on the Holy Spirit. It's a good thing the God who can still the oceans is on our side.

Q's

1. What are your common reasons for not allowing God to still you?
2. We are commanded to be still; how does that change your idea of being still?

Application

In a moment of panic or disbelief, allow God to still your soul.

Turn on "Be Still, My Soul" and reflect on the words.

Read a couple of Psalms to still your soul. Note how David often details his fears, accepts them, and then talks himself back to truth by reflecting on God's power and presence.

SYMPT

Day 16

Passage: Job 30:27

My inward parts are in turmoil and never still; days of affliction come to meet me.

We've been talking a lot about the positive aspects of being still. But what happens if we aren't still? Depression and anxiety run amuck in our culture. These are ultimately symptoms of not being still.

Turmoil has this never-ending ring-around-the-rosies feel to me. It's like a dog chasing its tail repeatedly. It's a rushing, a racing, but the kind that makes you sick and dizzy and disillusioned.

When we are met with trials or we slide into anxiety again, instead of distracting ourselves with food or people or movies, we have to do something totally counterintuitive: be still. Turn everything off, hole yourself away with a Bible, a pen, and the presence of God Himself.

We have to be okay with the silence because that's where we reset and refocus.

In this verse, Job's focus is days of affliction. I had hoped that those "days of affliction" would end . . . but often, they don't. Sometimes they get worse. Sometimes they require we first get a grip on our own spiritual lives.

TOMS

But the answer to depression? The answer to turmoil? Not an ending of the affliction. Instead, it's a focus on who God is and what He does. Take a look at 2 Corinthians 4, particularly verses sixteen through eighteen.

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Paul's focus is the unseen: Heaven. God's presence. An army of angels on our side. That's how we refocus. That's how we beat affliction.

Q's

1. What are some other negative aspects of a life of turmoil?
2. What is your focus?

Application

Make a list of all the great things about Heaven. Read descriptions of it and God's promises regarding it. If you play a musical instrument, try playing some Heaven-themed songs (Spirituals are fabulous! I love "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot").

U N L I

Day 17

Passage: Psalm 8:2

Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.

The last thing I'd choose to defeat my enemies would be babies. But our God uses the unlikely (thank goodness for us unlikely people, right?).

Stillness can be both positive and negative. As Christians, we can be still in trials by the peace of God. But God also stills His enemies. This is the paralyzing power of defeat, of hopelessness.

This is why depression and suicide are so common in our world today. Without God, we may be still . . . but in shock. In fear. When given the choice between fight or flight, we choose freeze because God is the one that gives us the ability to even move.

As Christians, we have the perfect, comforting stillness of God!

KEELY

Q's

1. Is being still always a good thing?
2. How does God still His enemies?

Application

Write down situations or people that are trying to still or silence you. How has God given you the victory over those things?

W A T E R

Day 18

Passage: Psalm 23:2

He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.

If you ever need a good read, I highly recommend *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*. Because we aren't acquainted with shepherding, we miss out on some fascinating observations that only a shepherd would find in Psalm 23!

The author, Phillip Keller, points out that the waters God leads us by are still. That's because sheep are scared of everything. They also would sink like a rock due to their heavy wool. He doesn't put us in a place where we could drown; He keeps us safe from things we don't even know are hazards.

That's why the idea of still water is so interesting. I always hear about how water currents are so powerful but I don't truly understand it until I'm standing in the ocean. I can't help but pause and think about the footage we see of floods easily moving cars and damaging buildings.

RS

Still waters are ours for the taking if we let God guide where we graze.

Q's

1. What are some other ideas in Psalm 23 that have the idea of being still?
2. Why else might God give us the image of a sheep walking by still waters?

Application

Read *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*.

WAIT

Day 19

Passage: Psalm 37:7

Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!

I am an obsessive doer, so the word “wait” makes me want to scream and run off into the horizon. But a lot of the Christian life is characterized by patience.

We are waiting for Christ’s return; we are waiting for our sanctification. We are waiting for justice, for relief, for answers.

Life, period, is characterized by patience. We’re always waiting for something. And if we aren’t careful, we can label every chapter of our lives as a waiting season.

Waiting for our room to finally be aesthetic. Waiting to publish that book. Waiting for him to actually acknowledge my presence on the earth. Waiting, waiting, waiting.

I N G

But God is in the waiting. In Exodus 23:30, God doesn't say "Today I'm driving the people out and you're going to march in and conquer the Promised Land." He says, "Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased and possess the land."

Little by little. Ick! More waiting. But God knew that conquering Canaan in parts would be best ultimately.

So, be still in your waiting. Don't be anxious or fear. God works in waiting.

Q's

1. What are you waiting for?
2. Why do you think God is so big into patience?
3. What are other Bible stories or characters that deal with patience?

Application

Write down the words "Little by Little" and display it on your desk or tape it to your car's dashboard to remind you that God works in waiting.

ACT I

Day 20

Passage: Psalm 83:1

O God, do not keep silence; do not hold your peace or be still, O God!

Unlike us, God never needs to be silent or still. He is a God of action, constantly working in the lives of His people.

Sometimes we're afraid because we don't sense His presence. But He's still there! He's not truly silent. It's up to us to seek Him.

Likewise, sometimes we keep asking for the same thing over and over again but can't seem to see Him working. Is He really still? Does He refuse to move in our interest?

God does. He created the world by moving over the face of the waters, by speaking. He makes civilizations rise and collapse, brings people to Himself, and keeps His people safe.

In my Bible, I use a blue highlighter to emphasize everything that God does.

O N

I'm always amazed by how much blue is on the pages, especially in the Old Testament.

Let's pray that God opens our eyes to allow us to see Him moving.

Q's

1. What are some of your favorite stories in the Bible about what God has done or will do?
2. What are the most amazing things God has done in your life?

Application

Begin emphasizing or recording deeds of God in the Bible. When you come upon one, you could underline it or highlight it, or if you don't want to write in your Bible you can purchase a binder and collect them there.

DOIN

Day 21

Passage: Isaiah 42:14

*For a long time I have held my peace; I have kept still and restrained myself;
now I will cry out like a woman in labor; I will gasp and pant.*

So, is choosing to be still always a good option? Absolutely not! In this verse, Isaiah is choosing to act now. There is a time to be still . . . but there's a time to act.

Let's be listeners, more than anything. Let's listen to God so we know when is the time to be still and when we should act.

When bad news comes your way, maybe you first need to hang up the phone, go to your bedroom, and pray. But if you're at the hospital, maybe instead you need to go grab something to encourage the patient.

As we allow the Holy Spirit to direct our lives, these decisions will become more intuitive. Often, this must be a split second decision.

G

Complain or conquer. Run or resist. Pray or pursue.

We don't have to do it all by ourselves. But we also don't hand the sword to God, grab some popcorn, and sit on the bleachers with a fluffy blanket.

Q's

1. What are ways you can be "listening" for how God wants you to respond to situations?
2. In what current situation do you need to take action?
3. In what current situation do you need to be still?

Application

Say a prayer asking God to help you to hear His commands better and respond in a way that pleases Him.

Take action in a situation you've been still for too long (ex. praying more consistently for an unsaved family member).

Be still in a situation you've been overly active in.

PRES

Day 22

Passage: Luke 7:14

Then he came up and touched the bier [coffin], and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, arise."

Were those bearers standing still in amazement? Wonder? Curiosity? Did they recognize Jesus?

While we don't have the answers to those, the fact of standing still in the presence of Jesus is quite interesting. When God does amazing things, is our response to watch and be awed? Or do we quickly move on?

Too often I ask God for things, see Him answer, and forget to thank Him. How could we forget to thank the King of the universe for doing wonders for us? How could we be so proud as to subconsciously believe we deserved it anyway?

E N C E

Thanking God for what He's done gives Him the glory, which is His reason for doing things in our lives anyway.

Q's

1. What is your attitude at church? In prayer? During devotions?
2. Do you live a life of thankfulness?

Application

Tape a piece of paper to your room and write down three things you're thankful for. You could do this for a week, a month, or a year. You'll be amazed at all that God has given you!

Say a prayer and thank God for what He's done and given you.

ALL

Day 23

Passage: Exodus 14:14

The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.

We've saved the best for last. This is the verse that originally inspired this study.

I usually read KJV and ESV, which translates that last word as "silent." But I was captivated by another translation (NIV): "still." STILL.

It's a word that has been circling around my brain a lot. I noticed that I'm always DOING. I can't even just work out; I must be watching a show or listening to a podcast. While I eat my breakfast, I get on Instagram and plan a new caption or story. During classes, if I can maintain my grade and participation grade, I work on other projects.

In a way, it's great I'm using life to the best of my ability and not wasting a second. However, this spirit of multitasking follows me into sacred places like church, chapel at school, and even times of listening to others.

- When I should be encouraging and uplifting, I'm googling macronutrients and designing layouts for the magazine.
- When I should be participating in prayer at church, I'm outlining my Monday and trying to fit everything together.
- When I should be paying attention in chapel, I'm brainstorming ideas for an upcoming project.

H I M

- When trials come, my mind goes a million miles an hour. I plan, I condemn, I try to figure out how to eliminate or lessen the “side effects,” if you will. I am anything BUT still.

And God looks at me from Heaven and shakes His head and says, “I am SO willing to fight for you. In fact, I need to because you can’t do this alone. You’re just going to run around in circles until you’re too tired to keep going. Then you’ll come to me . . . but why not just come to me first? Just be silent, dear one. I will fight for you.”

Q’s

1. What are your biggest takeaways from this study?
2. What are the differences between “still” and “silent”?
3. What are ways you fail in being still? What distractions do you need to get rid of?

Application

Get rid of things that get in the way of you being still. Set up times of being still: times you can pray, meditate, and do devotions. Set up longer times (perhaps over the weekend) for deeper times of silence.

Cultivate a life of prayer based on a dependence on God and a quiet spirit.

Challenge yourself to fast.

LIST

Day 24

The words to “This Is My Father’s World” by Maltbie D. Babcock give me such a sense of calm.

This is my Father’s world,
And to my listening ears
All nature sings, and round me rings
The music of the spheres.

It’s like the author is walking through creation, just breathing in the sights around him. He mentions his “listening ears”; we too often don’t listen. Because we don’t listen, we can’t truly see.

The author mentions rustling grass, white lilies, birds, and light. We are given a beautiful picture of the gift of experiencing God’s creation.

Look up the words to this songs and reflect on them!

E N

Q's

1. What are your favorite aspects of creation?
2. When is the last time you were amazed by creation?

Application

Read the creation account (Genesis 1-2).

Go on a nature walk (this could even just be in your neighborhood). Pray as you walk and truly listen and see.

Read the words to "This Is My Father's World."

ALLI

Day 25

Music is a great way to still your soul. Dedicate some time to look through (or play through) a hymnal and find some songs that still your soul. Some of these songs can become prayers when you sing them honestly and the words really speak to your soul!

Songs are so great because the text itself could be a devotional. Just look at the words of some of my favorites: “Be Still, My Soul,” “Like a River Glorious,” “Be Thou My Vision,” and “God Makes No Mistakes.”

Find some banner songs; create a Spotify playlist that you can use to reset yourself if needed.

You could even ask some friends what their favorite songs are in this season. Sometimes God uses verses or passages or Bible passages or people to encourage us, and sometimes it’s a simple song.

(Hint: Look at the last verse of “Like a River Glorious”; pure gold!)

H I M

Q's

1. What are songs that have really hit you recently?
2. If you had to choose a hymn that you relate to right now, what would it be?

Application

Create a Spotify playlist with your favorite "still-themed" songs.

Read the words of hymns and reflect on the messages.

APPENDIX



1. The index card method

This is by far the best method I've discovered to date. A year ago, I wanted to memorize three short passages. I wrote them down on index cards (one at a time . . . I'm not about to memorize three passages at the same time haha), underlining separate phrases I was planning on conquering.

Then I placed it in either

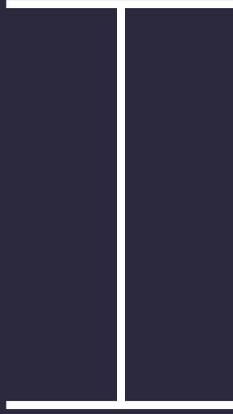
- My pants pocket (if you wear the same pair of pants a lot or can remember to transfer it) or
- My phone case. The phone case idea is ingenious because you'll always have it with you and can just pop it out any time you have a free moment. I did this a lot during my break at work.



2. The art method

Now, not everyone is a Graphic Design major and can just pop over to Adobe Illustrator and draw up a super cool verse-related graphic . . . BUT anyone can make a free account on Canva. Figure out the size of your cellphone wallpaper, or use the already-set desktop background maker and design a graphic with the words to the verse(s) you're trying to memorize. They have lots of pretty free photography and graphics that'll be super cool. If you're a little scared about going free, you can always use their free templates as well.

Every time you open up your phone or power up your laptop, you'll be reminded of your verse. You can take a few seconds to just look over it and add a few more words to your memorization.



3. Scripture typer

I used this free online service to memorize verses for a class at school, actually. It was weird: it helped me on some verses, but others I just had to straight-up memorize the old-fashioned way.

4. Write it down

My memorizing usually goes like this

I get the first part down easy,
then struggle with the middle,
then literally cannot get the end,
then totally forget the first part,
then mess up the middle,
then it just all goes out the window.

Sometimes writing the verse down from memory helps. You'll be surprised at where you hit a blank spot . . . and that's the part you know you need to keep memorizing. Sometimes we just keep looking at the verse and memorizing it but as soon as it's gone and we have to actually write it/prove we know it, BAM: it gone.

So, those are my very practical, test-driven, **PROVEN** ways to memorize Scripture. I've also heard some people are literal machines and can memorize the first letter of each word and piece it together that way . . .

Um . . .

NAW. (If you're one of those people, let me know in the comments below and I'll shower you in praise)

2 Corinthians 4:7–18
Romans 8:31–39
Psalm 1
Psalm 23
Psalm 84
Psalm 34
Psalm 139
Lamentations 3:19–25
1 Corinthians 13
Matthew 5:1–12
Ephesians 6:10–20

Podcasts

Fasting and Feasting: <https://www.revive-ourhearts.com/podcast/revive-our-hearts/fast-ing-and-feasting/>

Blog Posts

How God Used Fasting to Change My Heart: <https://wellwateredwomen.com/when-banana-pudding-did-me-in-how-god-used-fasting-to-change-my-heart/>

Should I Be Fasting?: <https://www.revive-ourhearts.com/true-woman/blog/should-i-be-fasting/>

A Modern Woman's Guide to Fasting: <https://www.reviveourhearts.com/true-woman/blog/a-modern-womans-guide-to-fasting/>

That Weird Thing Called Fasting: <https://thebudco.org/blogs/news/that-weird-thing-called-fasting-more-than-a-detox>



are
you
still?

or are you still
hurting
fighting
complaining
floundering