

[questions]

Is God silent?

Is God distant?

Does God care?

1 Kings 19

noise

Why is silence so hard to deal with?

138 million people are regularly exposed to noise levels labeled as excessive by the Environmental Protection Agency

Do you have a cell phone?

Voice mail?

Do you have a cell phone with voice mail, email, and texting?

Do you have a TV?

More than one TV?

Do you have a radio on all day?

On at work, in the car, at home?

Is there such thing as visual noise?

Do you wish there were more billboards along the roads you drive?

Is this silence difficult for you?

Do you feel like God is distant?

Do you wish God's voice would be louder in your life?

Is there a connection between the amount of noise in our lives and our inability to hear God?

Vehicles now come with separate stereos and DVD systems for the back seats.

You can buy wired clothing now.

Coats, jackets and hats equipped with cell phones and MP3 players.

Most of the backpacks that are sold to school children have a pouch for an MP3 player and a hole to run the earphones out of.

Try this.

Make yourself comfortable in your chair and begin breathing slowly as you read.

Be silent, O Israel, and listen!

-Deuteronomy 27.9

search your hearts and be silent  
-Psalm 4.4

Let all the earth be silent before Him.  
-Habakkuk 2.20

Come to me and I will give you rest  
-Jesus in Matthew 11

If I am not still, and if I don't listen, how is Jesus going to give me rest?

Why is it so hard to be still?

Why do you feel such a need to feverishly try to write these things down, rather than being still and listening?

Why do we feel like we have to be so busy?

Have you spent the same amount of time worrying and talking about your difficult, confusing situations as you have spent in silence, listening to what God might have to say?

Why is talking so much easier than listening?

But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.  
-Luke 5.16

These were regular disciplines that Jesus had.  
Silence.  
Solitude.

When was the last time you were in a solitary place?

What is it about silence that is so difficult?

Why is it easier to surround myself with noise and keep moving than to stop, be silent and listen?

How much noise do I voluntarily subject myself to?

Does my schedule, my time, my life look like that of a person who wants to hear God's voice?

Maybe the healing and guidance we desperately need is not going to come from one more meeting or therapy session

or sermon or self-help book

but from simply listening for the voice of God.

Do you really believe that God's voice is more interesting than the voices around you?

Is it possible that you have been searching for God in the winds,

the earthquakes and fires

and He is waiting to speak to you in the silence?

silence

Jeremiah 29.13

John 10.3-5

Genesis 28.16

Acts 17.11

God usually addresses individually those who walk with him in a mature, personal relationship using this inner voice, proclaiming and showing forth the reality of the kingdom of God as they go.

-Dallas Willard (Hearing God)

Neither the wind, earthquake, or fire happened apart from God's knowledge or permission. In fact, God used these repeated demonstrations to prepare Elijah for an encounter with himself. And like an echo, God often uses the repetitive events and themes in daily life to get my attention and draw me closer to himself.

I call them sacred echoes because I've noticed that throughout my relationships, daily life, and study, the same scripturally sound idea or phrase or word will keep reappearing until I can no longer avoid its presence. Is this mere coincidence or is there something more?

The sacred echo reminds me to pay close attention; something important may be going on here. The sacred echo challenges me to prayerfully consider how God is at work in my own life as well as the lives of those around me. The sacred echo is an invitation to spiritual awakening.

-Margaret Feinberg (Sacred Echoes)

[big questions]

Are you paying attention?

What might be getting in the way of you being able to really listen?

Are you learning to recognize His voice? How?