

"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

Learning to Be Still and Know God

Our lives are busy. Lots of stuff to pack into a day: work, chores, travel, eating, sleeping, and, of course, Tigers baseball games. It can feel downright overwhelming and lonely. Too often, overstuffed agendas take precedent over building relationships. Life gets disconnected. We get disconnected. Everything begins to morph into a whirr of anxiety and stress.



So where do we begin to find this "abundant" life Jesus talked about?

We begin by making a conscious effort to BE STILL. That means carving out time during our busy days to cease striving: stop making so much "noise", tune out of the "noise" all around us, and tune in to the "whisper" of God's love and direction. Here are some things you can do to learn to be still and know God (and yes, YOU can do this...):

Breathe. Something as simple as paying attention to breathing can help. Notice how your breathing changes when stressed or relaxed. Work on regular, deep breaths. "Spirit" and "breath" are the same words in the Bible. Practice calmly breathing in God's love and presence for you. (*Genesis 2:7, Psalm 33: 6, John 20: 21-23*)

Expand your vision (awareness without judgment). When we are stressed, our view of life gets restricted and narrow. It's like looking at the world through a narrow pipe. Our life "story" gets very small and wrapped up tightly in our fears. Trusting God means trusting He has a bigger vision or "story" to show us. Let the Holy Spirit show you that bigger picture. (*2 Kings 6, 2 Corinthians 4: 16-18*)

Surrender your expectations. Expectations aren't bad but often we tend to clutch them rather tightly. Like white-knuckle tight. Surrendering them doesn't mean flushing your dearest dreams or hopes down the toilet. It means you are handing them over to the nail-scarred hands of a Friend who now has your permission to take charge of giving you the deepest desires of your heart. Practice identifying your expectations of yourself or others or life, and then intentionally give them into Jesus' direction and care. (*Psalm 37: 1-11, John 12: 24, Philippians 2: 1-18*)

Transform your thinking. Much of our anxiety comes from uninformed and unrenewed thinking. We live in our own self-serving illusions of reality and then throw tantrums when it comes falling down like a house of cards. There's a better way. Find out how God's mind works then imitate.

(OVER)

Simple, right? OK, it's simple *but not easy*. Begin to take steps to study how God operates by paying close attention to Jesus' life & teachings, then how that Life is lived out in the world around you. Baby steps! Slowly, you'll find your life aligning more and more with the abundance we call God! (*Proverbs 3: 1-5, Romans 12*)

Institute times of rest (Sabbath). Finding refreshment and wholeness in rest can be pretty challenging. Jesus set the viewpoint on this by viewing the Sabbath (Saturday) as a gift from God to recharge our batteries. However, it doesn't have to be a set day or time but can be any time when clear your agenda to enjoy God's simple presence. It may be reading, walking with a friend, gardening, fishing, or whatever. A spiritual discipline of rest will enable you to more effectively tackle the "active" stuff. (*Psalm 131, Matthew 11: 28-30*)

Listen to your heart. Biblically, the "heart" is the center or core of your being. Your heart thinks, feels, and connects with God's Spirit. Listening to your heart means learning to be more aware of your own feelings, disappointments, desires, weaknesses, addictions, and all the other components that make you, YOU. It also means becoming more conscious of how God is working with you in those deep parts. And once you start hearing your own heart activity, you will be more sensitive to other's hearts (even God's). (*Proverbs 3 & 4, Ephesians 1*)

Look for God in difficult places. This one's tough. We tend to buy into the Old Lie that God has abandoned us when we suffer. God countered that Old Lie on the Cross, where Jesus demonstrated that God's Relentless Love absorbs all of our pain and brokenness and suffering. That means he right at the center of our suffering with deep understanding and deep healing. So when we step into those dark places where our muscles tense up and where the monsters live, we know we are never alone and that God will bring us through to the other side. Guaranteed. (*Psalms 23, 91, 169*)

Anyone can get to know God intimately. However, it is much like getting to know another human being, requiring quality time, real listening, vulnerability, and an open mind. To do these things, we have to develop a quiet mind. Like Jesus, we learn to say to the storm, "Be still!", only this is the swirling storm in our head. With practice (and patience) comes a growing peace and confidence to meet any and every challenge before us. And, of course, there's the JOY: that faithful ember of light and heat that warms even the coldest of nights.



Lighthouse Christian Church

Scott Danforth, Pastor
P.O. Box 40
Drummond Island, MI 49726
www.lighthousechurchdrummondisland.com

Telephone: (906) 493-5233
E-mail: lighthousechurch906@gmail.com