

A Still Small Voice

Name: _____

After triumphing over the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, the prophet Elijah traveled to Mount Horeb when his life was in danger from Jezebel and King Ahab. On the mountaintop, Elijah spent time in silent prayer, speaking and listening to God.

He brought his fears, worries, loneliness, and doubt to God. Despite his pleas to God, Elijah believed he had not received any answer.

Reread the passage from 1 Kings 19 on page 199 of the Student Text and answer the following questions.

List the three natural events in which Elijah sought God's presence on the mountaintop. (Hint: see verses 11-12.)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

But God was not in any of these great and powerful events. **In what did Elijah find God on the mountaintop?**

We sometimes expect God to speak to us in dramatic ways, just as Elijah sought God's voice in the strong wind, earthquake, and fire. But in reality, God speaks to us gently and peacefully in the silence we offer to him in prayer.

God could communicate with us through angels appearing to us or through visions and dreams. But most often, God chooses to communicate with us in a more interior and intimate way. He chooses to speak with us through our thoughts, consciences, and the desires of our hearts.

To speak to God effectively and hear his "still small voice" speaking within us, we must learn how to be silent. Learning to be silent requires (1) practicing silence when we pray and (2) developing the ability to sit in silence for extended periods.

What changes must you make to your schedule to find time for silent prayer? What changes do you need to make to the places you pray to make it easier to spend time in silence?

The second thing we must do to hear God better in the “still small voice” of our hearts is to train ourselves to sit in silence for an extended period.

This ability is challenging to develop today because of the fast-paced nature of our society. Thousands of things compete for our attention, such as social media posts; advertisements; new songs and apps; favorite teams, athletes, and entertainers; our phones and tablets; and even our teachers, friends, and family. All this activity can make it difficult for us to find time to “unplug” and rest in silence for a few minutes.

Consider someone who spends hours at school during the day talking with people and listening to teachers. Then on his way home, he listens to loud music. When he gets home, he scrolls on social media, watching videos for a couple of hours. Then he talks on the phone with friends and watches TV with his family at night. This person might have difficulty praying in silence because he has become used to constant noise and distractions.

Listening to music, talking with others, and watching videos are not bad activities. But we must learn to limit these sources of “noise” in our lives. Only then can we develop the skill of sitting in silence with our attention focused on praying and listening to God.

What habits in your life may be training you to become used to too much “noise”?

How can you limit or change these habits to make sitting in silence easier?

Write down two to three goals to help you (1) spend more time practicing silent prayer and (2) develop the skill of praying in silence.
