

Alone with God in My Truck
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Big Idea: Your truck can be a silent and solitary place to be alone with God.

Main scriptures: Mark 6:31 and Mark 1:35

I am a fifth-generation Texan born in Tolar, Texas. I received Jesus as my Savior at age 11. I attended TCU and then A&M medical school and chose to practice emergency medicine as my career. Noise, hurry, and distraction, along with shots of adrenaline, defined my life for many years. Although prosperous and successful in the world's eyes, there was a discontent within me that I could not ignore. Ten years ago, I stepped back from that lifestyle, thinking that life on the family farm was the solution to my "season" of discontent. By God's grace and mercy, He showed me that contentment could only be found through an abiding relationship with Him. He used alone time with Him in the silence and solitude of first a tractor and then many trucks to restore our relationship. I believe He will do the same for you.

Jesus was alone with His Father.

As believers in Christ, we are called to be imitators of Him. He sets our example in all that we do. Jesus did nothing without hearing from His Father, evidenced by the many times he withdrew to be alone with his father. To think that we are in some way able to live our lives apart from Him and to know and do His will would be to set ourselves above the teaching of the Bible and Jesus. We need alone time with God to know God. Relationships must be intentionally developed. Our natural experience tells us that being alone with someone is the best way to get to know them deeply. Our relationship with God is similar. God already knows you. He knew you before the foundations of the earth. He wants you to know Him, and intentional alone time is one aspect of this supernatural knowing. As we know Him, we can imitate Him and be his image bearer on earth to a world that needs to know Him.

Jesus was alone in the eremos.

The world in which we live is not a place of silence and solitude. Although we can encounter God anywhere and at any time, we find in scripture that Jesus withdrew to be in a desolate place alone with God. The word used for desolate, wilderness, or solitary in the Bible is the Greek word (eremos). It can have multiple translations, but I want to concentrate on solitary. Jesus often sought His Father's voice in a solitary place so He would know His will. We should do the same. The challenge then becomes finding a place of silence and solitude to connect with God and hear His voice. I believe that with a few simple adjustments in our habits, that place can be in our trucks. Most of us have some time alone in our trucks many days of the week. There are probably as many, if not more, distractions competing for our attention in our trucks as anywhere else we find ourselves. However, when we are alone in our trucks, we can control many of those distractions and practice being alone with God. I found turning off the competing voices of talk radio, secular music, and podcasts to be helpful. Phones and radios have off buttons. This could be our only moments of silence and solitude during the day. Let's not miss out on an opportunity.

It is strangely silent and solitary.

I found silence quite strange at first, but with repeated practice, it became more natural to sit in a silent place. With the advent of the smartphone, our minds have been programmed to crave distraction. Research and clinical data show that the apps on our phones are designed to create addictions by triggering dopamine to be released. Our attention spans over the last two decades have decreased to an astounding 8 seconds. Neural pathways are formed and reinforced with repeated use. New neural pathways can be formed, but it will take intentional time and effort to transform our brain to desire silence and solitude with God. Once we created a silent place in our trucks, our minds quickly became our worst enemy in our effort to be alone with God in silence and solitude. We must take every thought captive and not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of our minds. The first step in this process is being present.

Being in the present.

When we get to a place of silence and solitude, our minds will want to wander. Most of this wandering of our mind will be about the future or the past, and we need to be focused on the present to encounter God. We are not promised tomorrow, and God already knows the plans he has for us, so we can leave that in His capable hands. We should learn from our past. As believers, dwelling on our past in regret or condemnation is agreeing with our enemy. The devil schemes and lies because he is the father of lies. The truth is that if we have repented of and confessed our sins, they are forgiven and forgotten by God. When past sin comes to mind that we have not confessed, take that to God in repentance and confession and move on, thanking the Holy Spirit for bringing it to your memory. Jesus paid for and forgave all our sins (James 5:16). It is equally important to be free of worry about the future. We are not promised tomorrow, so a great deal of fear about what might happen is a waste of our energy. God knows the plans that he has for us. As we believe in and trust in Him in a real relationship, the plans he has for us will come to pass.

Breath Prayer.

I find "Practice of Breath Prayer" to be very helpful in my silence and solitude time, as well as many other times throughout my day to bring me back to the present when I wander into the past or future. It may sound weird at first, but it really helps. Breathing is largely automatic, but we also have a high degree of control over this most basic bodily function. Taking control of our breathing connects us to the present moment. As we control our breathing, our parasympathetic nervous system is activated, which calms our minds, taking us from a fight or flight mode to a restful mode for our mind and body. Connecting our breathing with God's word or His name connects us with God. I first take control of my breath by taking 3 intentionally slow breaths. Breathing in for a count of 8 seconds and then out for about 12 seconds is comfortable for me (find the timing that works for you). Pay attention to the air that you are breathing, passing in and out of your lungs. To connect this with prayer, replace the count with one of God's many names or a short verse of scripture. I tend to use Psalm (37:4, 46:10, 34:4) depending on how my mind wanders. Every name of God is mighty; in fact, His name is above every other name, so choose your favorite name of God and connect His name with your breath. I sometimes rotate through the names of the Trinity. Explore this ancient practice and find your own breath prayer. I find it helpful to begin my time of silence and solitude in this practice. As my mind

wanders, a couple of prayerfully controlled breaths bring me back to the present moment with God and free me from past regrets and worries about the future.

I'm alone with God. Now what?

As we spend time alone with God, we should be ready to receive. I find it helpful to picture Jesus riding along in the passenger seat. Here are some ideas you can try.

- Have a journal handy to write down what God has for you in these times. Pull over for this, please.
- Ask Him specific questions.
- Ask for supernatural solutions to opportunities you face.
- Pray for the people in your life who don't know the Lord as their Savior and Lord.
- Pray for the sick who need healing in their body.
- Ask Him what His agenda is for your day.
- I find it helpful to pray in tongues and allow the Holy Spirit to do the praying for me, particularly in cases where I don't know the needs of a specific person or situation. (No worries if you don't speak in tongues).
- Spend more time listening for God to speak to you than you do praying to him. As we position ourselves in silence and solitude, His voice will be clear.

An encouraging confession.

I love to learn from others as they preach and teach from scripture. As I prepared to write this guide, I realized I had fallen away from being alone with God over the last several months. I had chosen voices of sermons and podcasts over silence and solitude with God. As a result of my decreased time and intimacy with Him, I wasn't hearing from Him as well. What should you do if you find yourself, as I did, in a season like this? Confess, repent, and seek Him and His voice. Turn off the other voices competing for your attention, even if they are good, and tune in to the best voice you can listen to. He is always right there in the passenger seat waiting for you as He was for me. As I reconnected with God in the silence and solitude of my truck, I received the words you are now reading. Asking and receiving His words for you on a topic that is near to my heart.

Receive God's grace.

Let's not be easily discouraged as we begin to sit in silence and solitude with God. Being present in silence and solitude is difficult and requires practice. Start with short intervals of time but make frequent attempts. As you grow in this ability, try longer lengths of time. You will hear more of God's plans for you as you spend more time with Him. Our Heavenly Father knows our hearts and sees our efforts to connect with Him. He is a good Father. He is not disappointed with us. He is there to encourage us. He is excited to see our effort and tells us good job, I'm proud of you, now come spend time with me.

Community is important.

We are meant to practice our faith in community. Ask a fellow believer to commit to practicing silence and solitude with you. Share what you are hearing from God in your alone time in your

truck. This will serve as a great encouragement to you and a fellow believer, as well as serve as a reminder to stay engaged with the practice.

My prayer for you.

I pray that as you spend time alone with God in the silence and solitude of your truck, you hear Him clearly, know His will, and bring His Kingdom to earth now as it is in Heaven.