



## PRAYER HABITS

## CONVERSATION #3: SLOW DOWN

### ICEBREAKER: THREE-MINUTE SILENCE

For the next three minutes, we're going to do something very simple - and very rare. Set a timer for **three minutes**. When the timer starts, put your phone face down, sit comfortably with your feet on the floor, rest your hands in your lap, and lower your eyes or close them. For these three minutes: don't talk, don't plan your next step, don't try to solve anything, don't do anything. If your mind drifts (it will), just notice it and bring your attention back to sitting here. You don't need to accomplish anything. This is just a pause.

*(Start the timer. Say nothing until it ends.)*

- How did that experience make you feel?
- What did you notice your mind trying to do while you sat there?
- What did you want to do instead of sitting still?
- How often do you avoid this kind of pause in everyday life?

### STUDY: BE STILL

Whether you love silence or avoid it at all costs, this exercise sets the stage for what we're going to focus on next. Most of us live at a pace where noise, opinions, and urgency constantly demand our attention. We're used to reacting quickly, filling every pause, and looking for answers while everything keeps moving. But clarity rarely comes in chaos - it usually shows up when we slow down enough to notice what we've been missing.

That's why Psalm 46:10 says, "*Be still, and know that I am God.*" Let's take a second to break each part of that verse down.

**BE STILL** – This directive doesn't mean "do nothing" or "empty your mind." It means to stop striving, stop reacting, and stop trying to control the outcome. It's an intentional pause - a choice to put down our urgency and step out of constant motion. For many of us, stillness feels unproductive or uncomfortable because it removes our usual distractions and coping mechanisms.

**AND KNOW** – To "know" in this sense means to notice, acknowledge, and become aware. It's the difference between information and experience. Stillness creates space to actually pay attention to what's happening inside us, around us, and beyond us. Without slowing down, we may hear words but miss understanding. Knowing takes time, attention, and presence.

**THAT I AM GOD** - This part recenters reality. It's a reminder of who is in control - and who isn't. When God says, "I am God," He's not just stating a fact; He's inviting us to let go of the pressure of trying to manage everything ourselves. Stillness helps us remember that the weight we're carrying may not belong to us in the first place. Clarity comes when we stop acting like everything depends on us and start trusting that it doesn't.

If stillness comes before clarity, then learning to hear God isn't about trying harder or saying better prayers - it's about slowing down enough to actually listen. To get a better idea of what that might look like we need to meet a man named Elijah.

Elijah was a prophet and served God faithfully for years, but eventually, Elijah got to a breaking point. He wasn't looking for a new strategy or a quick fix - he was desperate to hear from God. So, he went back to a place where God had spoken before, a familiar space marked by God's presence and faithfulness. Take a moment to read about Elijah's encounter with God.

### **READ 1 KINGS 19:1-13**

- What do you notice about all the ways God *didn't* speak before He finally did?
- Why do you think Elijah might have expected God to show up in something loud or dramatic?
- What kinds of noise or activity might make it harder for you to notice a quieter voice?
- What would it look like for you to make time and space to slow down and listen for God's voice differently?

As we wrap up, it's worth naming this truth - our lives are loud. Noise, notifications, opinions, schedules, and pressure compete for our attention from the moment we wake up. We're constantly reacting, scrolling, fixing, and moving, often without ever slowing down long enough to notice what's happening inside us. In that kind of environment, it can feel like God is quiet or distant. But here's the reminder to hold onto: God isn't silent. We're often just loud.

- What are the loudest things in your life right now that tend to drown out quiet or reflection?
- What is one small change you could make this week to turn the volume down and create a little more space to listen?

### **CHALLENGE: IN THE MORNING**

This week, practice starting your day by quieting your heart and mind before God. Start each morning by finding a quiet place when you wake up and read Psalm 5:3 slowly. Then share one concern or thought with God, and then sit quietly for one minute without talking, scrolling, or planning. Before moving on, write down one sentence about what you noticed. This challenge is about beginning to create a simple habit that helps you slow down, listen, and begin feeding yourself spiritually at the start of each day.