



Solitude and Silence are spiritual disciplines intended to force us out of our comfort zones. To borrow a line from Ruth Haley Barton, it is as if we are like jars of river water all shaken up, and this allows the sediment to settle and the water to become clear, so we can see what needs to be seen. The story of Elijah shows us the power of meeting God on his terms...in stillness.

These questions are intended to deepen your experience of the message. Use them for your personal or family study time, or with an open Bible as you share the good news with your neighbor.

**Group Ice-Breaker:**

- (1) Try being completely silent for 1 minute. Why is this uncomfortable for us?

**WE FIGHT AGAINST WHAT WE NEED**

**THE MOST .** Read Acts 26:14. To “kick against the goads” is to resist a stronger will, fighting a futile war. Why do children fight against what they most need (brushing teeth, baths, going to bed, eating healthy food, etc.)? Pascal argues that happiness “consists only in rest, and not in being stirred up.” Why are we so overcommitted, so busy, so tired, and think that is both good and normal?

**THE STORY AS WE REMEMBER IT.**

**Review 1 Kings 19:1-18. Compare Exodus 34:1-8 (what Elijah expected).** Identify with Elijah. What is it like when God doesn't seem to be present? What is it like when God doesn't show up in the way we expect? What is it like when God doesn't answer our prayers the way we imagined? What is it like when God gives us direction we didn't anticipate?

**THE STORY AS GOD REVEALED IT.**

**Read 1 Kings 19:1-18.** Identify with God and with the story God tells. Elijah was too tired and worn out to find God. Elijah learned there are no quick fixes to finding God (since he spent 40 days in the wilderness and God had still not made himself known). Elijah learned that God may not show up in the ways he most expected. Elijah was both too optimistic and too pessimistic. Discuss.

**APPLYING THE SPIRITUAL PRACTICE OF SILENCE AND SOLITUDE.**

Willard says these “are the most radical of the spiritual disciplines.” How do these challenge us at every level? How can silence allow the waters of our soul to settle, so that we can see what needs to be seen? Why is this important? Go back over “The story as God revealed it.” How can each of these apply to our spiritual practice of silence and solitude?