



Stillness in the Seasons of Life Bible Study

[**Please provide:** Bibles and copies of the first six pages of the Bible study for attendees. The last five pages are a Leader's Guide.]

Stillness. Each season of life provides its own kind of stillness.

As **children** we had no problem experiencing stillness if adults allowed it. Adults often turn on the radio or television so children have "company" at all times, but children do not need it. Some will play contentedly for quite some time without any outside stimulation. If they have a friend or sibling with which to play, they can be content even longer. Jesus spoke about children.

Read Matthew 18:1-6 and Mark 10:13-16.

What do you think Jesus meant when He said we need to "*become like children*"? _____

When you think about stillness and a child's heart, how would a child relate to God differently than an adult?

As we grow from childhood into the **teen years**, the world invades our peacefulness and we become less content. As teens, we often run away from stillness when it is the very thing we need. We feel we need to run faster, be busier, or multi-task. What will happen if we just do nothing? We will miss out, get left behind, or have to think about things that are deeper than we want – scary things like the future, responsibilities, or decisions to be made. Jesus understands these fears. He lived through very difficult times.

Read Matthew 14:8-14.

What did Jesus do when He received the very sad news of the death of His friend, John?

What did Jesus do when the crowds found Him and brought their sick to Him?

Jesus was able to put aside His grief and care for the crowd. How might His time spent alone affected His decision?

Read Luke 22:39-44.

Jesus was aware that the crucifixion lay ahead of Him. He was obviously in great distress. What was His way of dealing with the stress?

Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.

Paul has a message for those who are very busy, especially with things that do not lead them anywhere in particular. What is that message?

Young families must take quiet time in small increments, whenever they can get it. It may be when a little one is awake in the middle of the night and mom has the privilege of sitting in the stillness, cuddling her little one, with no other sound around. It may have to be time stolen with an extra five minutes in the shower. It may be mom and dad sleepily and quietly conversing and praying together after the little ones are finally in bed.

Read Matthew 14:13 and Mark 1:35.

Jesus had many demands on Him. People constantly pursued Him for healing and for guidance. He surely understands the demands and stresses that young parents feel. What do you think Jesus would recommend to young parents of today for dealing with their stress?

But life is crazy! Brainstorm ways to find the time for these stress relievers.

Read Psalm 4:4.

Even if you feel like the only time you have is at bedtime, try to be diligent in talking to God for a few minutes, and listening to Him, before you fall asleep. Consider kneeling beside your bed to help you stay focused.

Parents of school-aged children may have to plan stillness – family dinner (or breakfast) time, prayer with children at bedtime, time together as a couple – whenever it is available. Family time usually will not just happen, but must be intentionally made. In fact, God commanded we make that time.

Read Deuteronomy 6:6-9.

When can you teach His commands to your children?

Jesus set an example of finding stillness with friends and family during His life here on earth.

Read Matthew 9:9-10.

Read Matthew 26:6-7.

Read Luke 22:14-15.

With whom did Jesus “recline at table” in these passages?

Jesus made time to sit down and connect with people, many of whom would have been ignored, much less shared a dinner table, by most people of His time – people, nevertheless, who really needed to connect with others. Taking the time to connect with family and friends is a way of being still before the Lord. Leaving the hustle and bustle of the world long enough to “recline at table” allows the Lord to work through you and those around you to further His work.

Personal quiet time will not just happen either, but, as we read earlier, Jesus made quiet time with His Father a priority. Finding those moments in the car, before the children get up, or after they go to bed will be well worth the effort as your relationship grows with Christ.

As the children become teenagers and then move into the college years, parents may find that quiet time alone comes more frequently, but they have forgotten how to use it. Using this time to reconnect to one another and to the Lord can be a great benefit to their marriage and family.

Read Genesis 2:18, 21-24.

As God created the earth and all that is in it, one phrase was repeated over and over, *And God saw that it was good* (Genesis 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31).

However, when God saw that man had no helper, what was His comment?

God did not create mankind to be alone. We are meant to share our lives with someone.

If you are married, taking care of that relationship is important. This can sound like a daunting task to some who are in the midst of child-rearing and the busyness that entails. Date nights are great, but building relationships can happen in snippets of time stolen here and there, too. During those seasons when you're "passing in the night," a note, perhaps jotted on a Post-it® Note and strategically placed for your spouse to find, can bring a smile and build relationships.

Brainstorm other ways couples can connect, and find the "stillness" that comes from a strong marriage, during this season of life.

Empty-nesters suddenly have stillness thrust upon them. Some tend to resist the stillness. They are often not comfortable sitting in silence. If they find themselves in silence, they turn on the radio or the television, or sit down at the computer. It may be difficult for them to be at peace with life without children at home. They may respond by finding things to keep themselves busy. It is good to find new activities so as not to grow stagnant and feel insignificant without the day-to-day responsibilities of parenthood. It is also good to embrace the stillness, for God's Word says "*Be still, and know that I am God*" (Psalm 46:10), and He is known through His Word of grace and forgiveness because of Jesus Christ. Thus, stillness can be a blessing for Christians.

Read John 14:27.

What does Jesus promise us if we stay close to Him? _____
To find out how we can find that peace, read Psalm 46:10.

What is the result when we draw close to God in stillness?

In the NIV version of Jeremiah 31:3, God tells us *“I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.”* He draws us close to Him through His Word.

The empty-nest season is a great opportunity for drawing close to God, while still having the energy and ability to actively serve Him.

Read Proverbs 17:6.

Grandmas and grandpas are blessed with an awesome opportunity to touch young lives for Christ. Sharing an attitude of “stillness” with children and grandchildren will provide great opportunities to witness for the Lord. The wisdom of age is priceless, providing a perspective completely different from that of young parents.

Read Titus 2:1-5.

Today’s world is not very accepting of some of the ideas in this passage. How would you approach relating these thoughts to today’s young mothers? (Consider Ephesians 5:21-33.)

Though getting older has its challenges, God does not forsake us in our later years. Stillness is more readily available in these years, and through it God sustains us through the power of His Word. We can and should continue to serve Him in whatever capacity we are able. We can serve physically, and when we can no longer do that, we can still tell others about Him and His love for us as long as we have breath.

Read Psalm 71:17-18.

Read Psalm 73:26.

What opportunities might be uniquely available to the elderly to serve the Lord through the stillness He provides?

Each season of life offers its own challenges for finding stillness with the Lord. As we strive to grow closer to Him through each season, may we seek out, and recognize, the opportunities for stillness He provides.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, we thank You for the seasons of life. You have set everything in motion so that each of life's seasons provides us with different opportunities for serving You. Help us to find the stillness in each season and use it to grow closer to You, as well as bring others to a relationship with You, for in You is a stillness that we can find nowhere else. We pray in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Stillness in the Seasons of Life
Written by Kris Osler, Andover, Kansas
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Bible Study – Leader’s Guide

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As **children** we had no problem experiencing stillness if adults allowed it. Adults often turn on the radio or television so children have “company” at all times, but children do not need it. Some will play contentedly for quite some time without any outside stimulation. If they have a friend or sibling with which to play, they can be content even longer. Jesus spoke about children.

Read Matthew 18:1-6 and Mark 10:13-16.

What do you think Jesus meant when He said we need to “*become like children*”?

Children are less likely to have become hardened by life and its sin, willing to learn, not prideful, have quiet hearts.

When you think about stillness and a child’s heart, how would a child relate to God differently than an adult?

"Children are often less jaded by life and thus are not as likely to dismiss God's incredible statements as unrealistic."

As we grow from childhood into the **teen years**, the world invades our peacefulness and we become less content. As teens, we often run away from stillness when it is the very thing we need. We feel we need to run faster, be busier, or multi-task. What will happen if we just do nothing? We will miss out, get left behind, or have to think about things that are deeper than we want – scary things like the future, responsibilities, or decisions to be made. Jesus understands these fears. He lived through very difficult times.

Read Matthew 14:8-14.

What did Jesus do when He received the very sad news of the death of His friend, John?

He went to a desolate place by Himself.

What did Jesus do when the crowds found Him and brought their sick to Him?

He had compassion on them and healed their sick.

Jesus was able to put aside His grief and care for the crowd. How might His time spent alone affected His decision?

He spent time in prayer, gathering his thoughts and emotions and receiving strength from His Heavenly Father.

Read Luke 22:39-44.

Jesus was aware that the crucifixion lay ahead of Him. He was obviously in great distress. What was His way of dealing with the stress?

He prayed.

Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.

Paul has a message for those who are very busy, especially with things that do not lead them anywhere in particular. What is that message?

They should run with a purpose, stay focused on the goal of following Jesus, and strive for the “prize” that lasts – eternal life.

Young families must take quiet time in small increments, whenever they can get it. It may be when a little one is awake in the middle of the night and mom has the privilege of sitting in the stillness, cuddling her little one, with no other sound around. It may have to be time stolen with an extra five minutes in the shower. It may be mom and dad sleepily and quietly conversing and praying together after the little ones are finally in bed.

Read Matthew 14:13 and Mark 1:35.

Jesus had many demands on Him. People constantly pursued Him for healing and for guidance. He surely understands the demands and stresses that young parents feel. What do you think Jesus would recommend to young parents of today for dealing with their stress?

Recommended would be prayer, time in the Word, time with friends in fellowship.

But life is crazy! Brainstorm ways to find the time for these stress relievers.

Driving in the car – tune in to Christian radio, or shut it off and pray in the quiet; plan dates with spouse – take the time to pray together (even five minutes makes a difference!); form Bible study group with people who have children about same age as yours – for younger kids, parents can take turns doing the babysitting, let the older kids play, you de-stress!

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When can you teach His commands to your children?

Answers will vary.

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Read Matthew 26:6-7.

Read Luke 22:14-15.

With whom did Jesus “recline at table” in these passages?

Jesus was with a tax collector, a leper and a woman, and His disciples – those closest to Him.

Jesus made time to sit down and connect with people, many of whom would have been ignored, much less shared a dinner table, by most people of His time – people, nevertheless, who really needed to connect with others. Taking the time to connect with family and friends is a way of being still before the Lord. Leaving the hustle and bustle of the world long enough to “recline at table” allows the Lord to work through you and those around you to further His work.

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Read John 14:27.

What does Jesus promise us if we stay close to him? Peace

To find out how we can find that peace, read Psalm 46:10.

What is the result when we draw close to God in stillness?

We find peace and God is exalted.

In the NIV version of Jeremiah 31:3, God tells us “*I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.*” He draws us close to Him through His Word.

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