

# **Unanswered Prayer in The Quiet Place**

*Discovering insights and finding encouragement when you struggle with the issue of Unanswered Prayer.*

**By John Krohn PhD**

© 2015

# **Unanswered Prayer in The Quiet Place**

## **Chapter 1**

### **Where is God when I need a Miracle?**

Why do miracles happen for some people and not for others? In life, there are simply times when no matter how hard we pray, how long we choose to fast, or even how many other faithful friends steadfastly pray about something, our circumstances may not change or even get better. In fact, to our dismay, they might even get worse.

Miracles do not always happen that change our circumstances, no matter how much faith we may have. In fact, the Scriptures teach us that when there is no miracle, that does not mean that God does not have a plan. They also teach us that having our way, is not always a good thing (See Numbers 11; Psalm 106:15).

Our request for a miraculous change in our circumstances may not be granted. Some stubbornly refuse to let go of a request for God to intervene and heal or deliver someone we love, from a tragic set of circumstances. Over time, one can become disillusioned in the prayer of faith, and God's faithfulness to act on our behalf when we need Him the most.

### **The Lord's Prayer and God's Sovereignty**

Jesus spent much time alone so that He could pray to God the Father and have His own Quiet Place. It is a model for personal time with God that provides insight into how He lived His earthly ministry under God the Father's Sovereignty.

#### **He made Time for The Quiet Place**

*“After He had dismissed them, He went up on a mountainside by Himself to pray. Later that night, He was there alone.” Matthew 14:23*

*“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed.” Mark 1:35*

### **He found a Quiet Place to be Alone**

*“One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.” Luke 6:12*

*“Yet the news about Him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses, but Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.” Luke 5:15-16*

### **His Priority for The Quiet Place**

It is insightful that no matter how busy and exhausted Jesus became, He always found time to go to The Quiet Place to meet with His Father.

The time or place was not significant. He found the time and He made a place. What an encouraging example this is to make time for The Quiet Place no matter what is happening in our lives.

### **Yielding to God’s Will in The Quiet Place**

The Lord wanted his disciples to really grasp the reality that life for them as His followers was not about maneuvering God’s will to fit their plans, but rather submitting to God’s Sovereign authority to discover how to live under His plan.

He taught them what to center their prayers upon as they sought God and served Him in days to come.

*“This, then, is how you should pray: “‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” Matthew 6:9-13*

They would later be Apostles who would wield miraculous power and authority as the New Testament Church was established. They all would suffer, and many would die painfully. Their plan had to give way to His plan.

*"Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven." Matt. 6:9b -10*

There is a critical step in this model prayer that directs us to humble ourselves and bow the knee in reverential submission to the Sovereign will of our Heavenly Father.

### **God's Will must Reign over ours in The Quiet Place**

We all have a tendency in life to want everything to go our way. In The Quiet Place God wants each of us to learn that our way may sometimes be in direct conflict with His will. Our life will sometimes have seasons of difficult trials, discouraging disappointment and painful devastating suffering. Regardless of our feelings, our circumstances or our dreams, His will must reign over our will.

*"This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: "In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it." Isaiah 30:15*

### **Christ Submitted His Will to God's Sovereignty**

Jesus later modeled this truth at a time when He was soon to face the greatest test of His earthly ministry. He prayed to His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane, knowing the horrific circumstances that were to come as He prepared His heart for the coming agonies of the cross.

We will never know the sweetness of precious worship and intercession with God until we are brought to a place where we kneel alone before His Glory and Majesty as our Sovereign Father. It is often in the darkest hour of sorrow and suffering that the Holy Spirit makes His presence known and we fall prostrate before His Holiness.

### **Christ went to The Quiet Place to Commune with His Father**

Christ had but one place to be on that terrible night in Gethsemane, and that was to seek out His Father and shut out the world around Him. The only way in suffering that we can rise above the pain, and despair, is to draw near to God, and share our heart with Him alone.

Try to picture that night in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus knew He was about to be thrust into the horror and anguish of the crucible of the cross.

Jesus, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, would now humble Himself and die as our sacrificial atonement as The Lamb of God (See Phil.2:6-8).

He was about to give His life, and take upon Him the sin of the world, as mankind's only atonement for sin. He was about to die for all of us. You and I were in His mind and on His heart at that very moment in time (Luke 22:41-43).

He sought first of all a private place apart from others where He could lay down His heart and will before His Father in Heaven.

*"He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them," Luke 22: 41a*

He bowed His knee to His father in Heaven as an act of complete submission to His Father's Sovereign will and purpose.

*"He knelt down..." Luke 22:41b*

He brought His desire and request before God as a separate singular issue.

*"He ...prayed..." Luke 22:41c*

He acknowledged that His Father alone had the authority and therefore the power to grant His request or to choose not to grant it.

*"Father, if you are willing..." Luke 22:42a*

He specifically requested for a deliverance from the tragic and horrific circumstances that were about to come to pass.

*"... take this cup from me..." Luke 22:42b*

He submitted to His Father's will with reverence and obedience.

*"...yet, not my will, but yours be done." Luke 22:42c*

It comes down to this for each and every one of us: God has the right, and does not need our permission, to rearrange our life to achieve His purposes. In the blink of an eye, anyone's whole life can get turned upside down and, like the Old Testament example of Job, you may not be able to make sense of it, others may judge you because of it and, it even may get worse before it gets better.

**It is not easy to give God our Desires and Dreams**

For that to be so, we must come to trust Him as Lord above all things. He must have uncontested authority over our hopes, dreams and our plans. This is so easy to say and so difficult to practice. This issue will be tested every single day of our lives. His Sovereignty alone must dictate how we respond to suffering and hardship and everything else in our lives.

Joni Erikson wrote the following insight, reflective of her life and the hardships that she experienced,

*“The best we can hope for in this life is a knothole peek at the shining realities ahead. Yet a glimpse is enough. It's enough to convince our hearts that whatever sufferings and sorrows currently assail us aren't worthy of comparison to that which waits over the horizon.” Joni Erickson Tada*

### **Hope must be Rooted in God's Sovereign Will**

His Father did not grant His request. Let's pause for a moment and reflect upon this staggering truth: His Father did not grant His request. It is without question that His Father heart would be torn and broken by the events that were soon to come upon His beloved Son.

Even at the expense of His Son's suffering, knowing Jesus would have to experience humiliation, torture and mutilation before a godless sinful angry crowd of people...God the Father did not grant His request.

The Father would seemingly step back and witness such horrific events take place. His Father also knew that His Son, amidst the evil darkness and unimaginable wickedness and unholy sinfulness that was placed upon His Son, that His Son would cry out from the cross in anguish and confusion that His Father had not come to His aid and rescued Him.

*“About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"—which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Matthew 27:46*

Sometimes the silence of God can be misunderstood as the uncaring negligence of God to help us with whatever it is that we are in anguish about. However, the apparent silence of God may be because He alone knows that deliverance from a difficult circumstance is exactly what we do not need.

*“God had one Son on earth without sin, but never one without suffering.”  
Augustine*

Some have reflected that God is not interested in our happiness but in our holiness. That is true. However, let's take this truth to a deeper core truth: God is not interested in our happiness...He is wanting us to be His.

*“I'm not sure God wants us to be happy. I think he wants us to love, and be loved. But we are like children, thinking our toys will make us happy and the whole world is our nursery. Something must drive us out of that nursery and into the lives of others, and that something is suffering.” C. S. Lewis*

*"You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever." Psalm 16:11*

Does God want to bless us, provide for us, and prosper us? Of course He does and the Scriptures are full of His promises to substantiate just that. He also has a Sovereign plan for each of us and sometimes that plan will lead us to unhappy times where it is His Joy that flows through us, and not our circumstances that provide transient happy feelings.

### **When there is no Miracle we need His Strength to Endure Suffering**

We need strength during tough times. Weariness breaks us down. It is God's deepest desire that we experience that strength as we yield in The Quiet Place to His Sovereignty and trust Him. It is only then, that His peace will flow to our troubled heart, and His joy will give us strength to endure.

*"Do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." Nehemiah 8:10*

Perhaps you are facing your own Gethsemane in your life right now. You know that to obey and trust God on a matter, will bring about consequences and perhaps suffering that is unavoidable. In that hushed moment when we are transparent and open before God, His love and glory will flow through us, and His peace will sustain us under severe trial, for the pathway to the Throne of Grace is found in the The Quiet Place.

*"Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4:16*

It is beside the still waters, in The Quiet Place, where The Good Shepherd waits to meet with you and restore the weariness of your soul.

*"The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul..." Psalm 23:1-3*

### **Pathway Principles:**

1. A common definition of the word miracle is defined as, "An effect or extraordinary event in the physical world that surpasses all known human or natural powers and is ascribed to a supernatural cause." (from Dictionary.com)

Does this definition open up miracles to any and all kinds of supernatural phenomena, and if so, according to this definition, can a miracle be ascribed as being wrought by God, when it could have other origins? If so, what origins apart from a direct action from God could a "miracle" come from?

2. A definition for miracle that is more Biblically based would be that, "A miracle is a less common kind of God's activity in which He arouses people's awe and wonder and bears witness to Himself.? He justifies this definition by awe, or amazement in such a way that God bears witness to Himself (*Systematic Theology*, chapter 52)

The principle here clarifies that all of God's dealings with mankind are miraculous. A miracle therefore would be a "less common kind of God's activity..." with a focus to, "...bear witness to Himself."

In this definition of the word miracle, comment on how most people believe and hope that God would act, and why so often they are disappointed?

What is their goal most often?

3. Have you sought for God to act on your behalf to change something in your life or circumstances, and if so what was it you desired to have happen?

If a miracle did not happen, how did you respond to that, and how would you give a present perspective on how God's Will overruled on the request.

4. Write a prayer to your Heavenly Father concerning an issue that you desire to have Him change in your life as in a miracle, that embodies principles from Christ's prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:41-43)

### **Daily Meditation Scripture**

*"Pray, then, in this way:*

*'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.<sup>10</sup> 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.<sup>11</sup> 'Give us this day our daily bread.<sup>12</sup> 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.<sup>13</sup> 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'* NASB

# **Unanswered Prayer in The Quiet Place**

## **Chapter 2**

### **Grappling with the Silence of God**

The Silence of God has always been perplexing, and very difficult for any of us to understand. We long for a whisper of God's wisdom, to gain some insight into His purpose in allowing pain and suffering to cast a gray shadow upon our daily lives. There is no sound that burdens the sufferer more than the Silence of God.

The psalmist found himself near complete collapse as he faced a series of setbacks, enemies that sought to harm him and the cruel ridicule of others. Nothing seemed to help and God seemed to be absent and silent. Feel the painful desperation in his voice as he writes...

*“Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in the miry depths, where there is no foothold; I have come into the deep waters; the floods engulf me. I am worn out calling for help; my throat is parched...My eyes fail, looking for my God.” Psalm 69:1-3*

### **The Silence of God Tests our Faith**

There is a time in the midst of severe testing, when human endurance, one's ability to cope, unending physical pain, the weariness of depression, and the overwhelming fatigue that goes along with suffering, take a dreadful toll upon one's life.

While suffering is an inevitable dimension of life, it seems foreign and unnatural....out of place when linked to a loving God, full of mercy and compassion. In reality, it is not possible to develop Christ like character and spiritual depth apart from experiencing seasons of personal suffering.

### **God Works throughout our Lives Silently**

Each stage of our lives is woven as an immense personal tapestry, with a myriads of threads reflecting our own individual pilgrimage upon the pathways that we have taken. One cannot truly see or understand the true story behind the tapestry until it is turned over, and then the kaleidoscope of threads reveals a progressive work of infinite beauty.

Over our lifetime, God's skilled hands weave the tapestry, knowing what it will one day become. Others, even ourselves, cannot make any real sense of the myriad of threads, especially when suffering and heartache, edge the rough borders of the pattern.

Only God is able to select each thread that is needed at a specific time in our pilgrimage here, and weave it into our lives, be it the first experience of feeling loved, difficult challenges in high school, depression, sorrow, the birth of a child, loss, success, failure, anxiety, illness and ultimately death.

*“Part of every misery is, so to speak, the misery's shadow or reflection: the fact that you don't merely suffer but have to keep on thinking about the fact that you suffer. I not only live each endless day in grief, but live each day thinking about living each day in grief.” C.S.Lewis*

### **God's Silence does not mean He is not Present**

All along the pathway through an infinite, all knowing, all powerful and ever present God, has been at work in our circumstances with the primary purpose to lead us to His heart, and so that we can become a display of His Glory and Majesty to a fallen world.

*“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.” Ephesians 2:10a*

### **When God is Silent in The Quiet Place**

There are numerous examples in Scripture where God made His will known during difficult times of testing. His purpose was often made known in where He could reveal His will to each servant individually. We are eager for quick answers and He is desirous that we trust His Word, and learn to walk by faith and not by sight. Some of God's answers can only be heard in our own personal Gethsemane.

On some of those occasions, the individual being tested, was expecting God to disclose His purposes differently. Abraham, Moses, Joseph, David, Jeremiah and many other Bible characters struggled with this very issue. There is a principle that is universal to life:

*The natural man must see in order to believe, but the spiritual man must believe in order to see.*

During a time of great struggle, the psalmist could reach through the agony of his torment, cling to God in faith, and eventually trust in the reliability of God's faithfulness and the complete reliability of His Word.

*“My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, “Where is your God?” Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.”*  
*Psalm 42:10-11*

### **God Speaks to us in the Midst of Suffering**

God may seem to be silent, but He is speaking through His Word. The experience of suffering does not produce spiritual depth in our lives in and of itself. It is how we react to suffering that determines one's spiritual growth through sorrow and pain.

The discipline of suffering has a primary purpose to accomplish within each of us: God wants above all else for us to be His.

We discover that when we are thrust into trials that are filled with sorrow and hopelessness, that He alone understands. He draws near to nurture and comfort us, and He is desirous to heal our broken heart more than our physical pain.

*“This is the purpose of pain for the redeemed: it is one of your Father's ways of speaking to you; it is the evidence of His limitless love, by which He would draw you farther from evil and closer to Him, the divine remedy which can cure you of pride and help you lean more trustingly on the Lord.”* Walter A. Maier

### **When God is Silent - Listen with your Heart**

In the midst of suffering, we discover a rare and blessed intimacy with God that is comforting, and slowly the emotional or physical pain gives way to a sweet song of worship and praise. God's grace is most present in the lives of the weak, the humble, the downtrodden, the weary, and those who are broken. God may seem to be silent, but He speaks through His promises that are scattered like diamonds throughout the Scriptures.

*“Come near to God and he will come near to you...”* James 4:8

When we reflect back in the past, upon the many times where God provided grace and strength to us, we are reminded that He has always been faithful. He is the God

of all comfort, who comforts us in the midst of sorrow with a nurturance and care that only He can provide (See II Cor. 1:2-4).

We remember that He came near to hear our cry, and he reached forth and healed our wounds, but did not remove the scars. Our scars have the capacity to remind us that the past was real, and rather than reminders of our suffering, they become memorials to the grace and glory of God.

Ideally, when a child is hurting and afraid, he runs to his father, and the immediate response of the father is to open his arms and embrace him. So it is with our Heavenly Father. His desire is to bring comfort to us and sooth our tears with His love. In His arms, the silence gives way to the sound of His heart beating against ours, and we become one with Him in the fellowship of His sufferings (See Phil. 3:10).

*“The suffering of sickness and the suffering of persecution have this in common: they are both intended by Satan for the destruction of our faith, and governed by God for the purifying of our faith... Christ sovereignly accomplishes His loving, purifying purpose, by overruling Satan's destructive attempts. Satan is always aiming to destroy our faith; but Christ magnifies His power in weakness.” John Piper*

### **God Allows Suffering to call us to Stillness**

The Quiet Place is often bathed in the tears of God's people, for it is the very dew that covers the pathway to the heart of God, and it is precious to Him. God sometimes silently and purposefully shuts the door to a relief from our sorrow and suffering. We hear the click of the door to our freedom from pain, and he closes us in where only He is present. He may seem far away, but He is always there beside you, as He has promised in His Word that He would be.

(See Deuteronomy 4:31; 31:6, 8; Psalm 27:10; 37:28; 94:14; John 14:18; Matthew 28:20)

He does this so that He may speak in the midst of our grief and pain, and softly whisper precious promises to us again; the promise of His abiding presence.

*“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” Psalm 34:18*

*“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” Psalm 147:3*

That is His most cherished gift to us in the midst of the storm. He commands the storm to be still not to prevent our boat from sinking, but to enlighten us who need to see in order to believe, that He has been there with us in the midst of the storm all the time that we huddled in the bottom of the boat.

## **God's Silence and Unanswered Prayer**

One of the realities of unanswered prayer, in the midst of difficult trials and suffering, is to learn to be obedient, regardless of any change in our circumstances. The book of Hebrews reveals to us that Christ Himself learned obedience to His Father through the crucible of suffering.

*“During the days of Jesus' life on earth, He offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverent submission. Although He was a son, He learned obedience from what He suffered and, once made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him.” Hebrews 5:7-9*

## **God is not Silent - He is Speaking in the Quiet Place**

It is very tempting for a Christian to become bitter in the midst of suffering by hardening his heart toward God for allowing his suffering, and for not delivering him from it. Disappointment with God can create a seed of resentment toward Him, and unless it is laid before the Throne of Grace, it turns into a root of bitterness. We are urged to cast our cares upon Him because He cares for us (I Peter 5:7), and to kneel before the Throne of Grace in the hour of our greatest need.

## **God is not Silent - He is Listening to your Heart**

*“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” Hebrews 4:15-16*

When Christ Himself suffered the indignities and shame of the cross, while enduring unimaginable torture and pain, He remained obedient to the will and purpose of His Father. He knows what it is like to experience physical, emotional

and mental pain and sorrow. Drawing near to Him in the midst of suffering helps us to bear up during our hardship and remain free from bitterness.

### **God is not Silent - He Understands what it is like to be Tested**

*“Because He himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted.” Hebrews 2:18*

What are we most tempted to do when we are experiencing insufferable pain and unrelenting disappointment? Our greatest temptation is to blame God, and become bitter toward Him as we wonder, “Where is God when it hurts?” We can struggle with His seeming absence, and conclude that He just doesn’t really care.

*“I will trust Him. Whatever, wherever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him; in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him; if I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. My sickness, or perplexity, or sorrow may be necessary causes of some great end, which is quite beyond us. He does nothing in vain.” John Henry Newman*

### **God is not Silent - He is wants us to give Him the Unbearable Burden**

The only shoulders strong enough to carry our burdensome pain, once carried an old rugged cross to become our substitute for sin...He suffered and died for every one of us. He alone can bear the Unbearable Burden for He already has.

*“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.” I Peter 1:18-20*

God is never Silent... He speaks through the darkness of your lonely night. God is never Silent...He speaks to you though His Word. God is never Silent... He whispers your name to call you to Himself. God is never Silent...He is there beside you as you read these words...ready to comfort you. God is never Silent...He is waiting for each of us in The Quiet Place where comfort and trust in Him, will become more meaningful than understanding the reason why.

*“Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for His compassion never fails. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. I say to myself, “The*

*Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for Him. The Lord is good to those whose hope is in Him, to the one who seeks Him...” Lamentations 3:22-23*

### **Pathway Principles:**

1. The Silence of God has been a confusing and faith challenging issue throughout history. What is it about the Silence of God that is so perplexing?
2. Why does the Silence of God seem to be so opposite to His attributes and character?
3. Has there been a time when God’s seeming silence deeply affected your walk with Him, or trust in His faithfulness? If so when was that, and how did it work itself out through the years?
4. The Silence of God in Biblical History fulfilled different divine purposes that are rooted in trusting Him and His Word regardless of what we feel and see or do not see. On a personal level the seeming Silence of God can result in deepening our faith in Him, and often draws us closer to Him than we thought possible. Why is that?
5. Write a prayer to your Heavenly Father that specifically addresses His seeming silence in relation to an issue of unanswered prayer in your life. Perhaps explore His Sovereignty over all things, the reality of His will being done on earth and in Heaven (Matt. 6:9-13), and Christ’s yielded example to His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:41-43).

## Daily Meditation Scripture

Notice how David dealt with unanswered prayer during a specific time in his life. The following excerpts example his attitude toward God in the midst of persecution, and ultimately His confidence in His Sovereignty and purpose for His people.

*“Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in the miry depths, where there is no foothold. I have come into the deep waters; the floods engulf me. <sup>3</sup> I am worn out calling for help; my throat is parched. My eyes fail, looking for my God. “(Psalm 69:1-3)*

*“But I pray to you, LORD, in the time of your favor; in your great love, O God, answer me with your sure salvation. <sup>14</sup> Rescue me from the mire, do not let me sink; deliver me from those who hate me, from the deep waters.<sup>15</sup> Do not let then floodwaters engulf me or the depths swallow me up or the pit close its mouth over me. <sup>16</sup> Answer me, LORD, out of the goodness of your love; in your great mercy turn to me. <sup>17</sup> Do not hide your face from your servant; answer me quickly, for I am in trouble. <sup>18</sup> Come near and rescue me;” (Psalm 69:13-18)*

*“But as for me, afflicted and in pain— may your salvation, God, protect me. <sup>30</sup> I will praise God’s name in song and glorify Him with thanksgiving. <sup>31</sup> This will please the LORD more than an ox, more than a bull with its horns and hooves. <sup>32</sup> The poor will see and be glad— you who seek God, may your hearts live! <sup>33</sup> The LORD hears the needy and does not despise His captive people. <sup>34</sup> Let heaven and earth praise Him, the seas and all that move in them, <sup>35</sup> for God will save Zion and rebuild the cities of Judah. Then people will settle there and possess it; <sup>36</sup> the children of his servants will inherit it, and those who love His name will dwell there.” (Psalm 69:29-36)*

# **Unanswered Prayer in The Quiet Place**

## **Chapter 3**

### **Taking Time to be Silent with God**

Social Media has an incredible far reaching impact on our lives today. The World Wide Web and innumerable social media sites enable the average user access to a vast array of information and social interaction, cross-culturally throughout almost every corner of the globe on a moment by moment basis. Recently Face Book had a glitch that shut down its site for 2 ½ hours, blocking access to millions of subscribers. Face Book has 1.49 Billion subscribers worldwide that log in at least once a month. For those who use it as a primary means to communicate, and participate in the lives of their friends and family, it created great consternation, anxiety and frustration.

Communication is to the family what the circulatory system is to the body. Without healthy interaction with those closest to our lives we grow apart, become disconnected and lose touch. On the opposite side of the issue, the pace of life today, access to instantaneous societal chaos, and what some describe as continuous cognitive dissonance, has made it nearly impossible to just find a quiet place to enjoy a few moments of pure unadulterated silence.

### **Seeking Solitude in a Fast Paced World**

Silence....we all long for it at times. Throughout our lives, parents, school teachers and older siblings have admonished us to: "Be Quiet" to "Hush" to "Be Still" to "Settle Down" or in some cases, to "Not Speak unless you are Spoken to."

If we were not compliant with those admonitions, the directive would then be to "Go to your Room!" or "You are Grounded" or "No friends over and no phone privileges." Sometimes it would be for a week, a month, throughout the year, or even threatened that it would be for the rest of our lives.

The youth of today would specifically be restricted by having: "No Cell Phone use, No Lap Top, and No Internet, iTouch, iPhone, iPod, iPad, or Smart Phone use." In other words: Stay in, be alone and be separate from the usual social activities with family and or friends.....and by all means, learn something valuable from the experience. "No Face Book, Twittering

or anything that involves contact with others." and furthermore, "That means also No Radio, No access to the TV, No watching DVDs, Blue Ray, or other media." In addition, "No use of a VCR (if there is one), and never mind using Dad's music Cassettes or even grandpa's 8 Track player. Right, they will get that one.

### **The Quiet Place is a Place of Privilege**

Be Quiet...and spend some time alone. That was the message that we received, and it continued to be the message, as we grew up. However, it was all too often tied to a form of punitive disciplinary action. Isolation, was one of life's most painful, awful, no-good-very-bad kinds of punishment. Strangely enough, years later as adults, we find ourselves longing for times of silence, and it ranks as one of life's top three daily fantasies. Time alone...

On the other side of the spectrum, poets and songwriters have produced countless ballads, poems, have written prose, lyrics for music, plays and or screenplays, on the topic of loneliness: the long term experience of isolation, relational rejection, and abandonment. Often the solution to the dilemma is to fall in love, and find someone to love you back. The myriad number of love songs ever written, could likely circle the earth so many times, that it would look like a gargantuan tangled ball of yarn.

The sad reality is that if we are unable to connect meaningfully with a close friend or a significant other, a painful loneliness sweeps slowly in upon the soul like a misty winter fog, and it can camp there for a very, very long time. The worst part is not in being lonely, it is being forgotten by someone that you could never forget. It is believing the notion that to be alone is life's punishment for being unwanted by another. When being alone is so depressingly painful, we miss the value of being close to the one companion that we will have from birth to death - ourselves.

*"What a commentary on civilization, when being alone is being suspect; when one has to apologize for it, make excuses, and hide the fact that one practices it - like a secret vice." ~Anne Morrow Lindbergh*

### **The Strength of Solitude in The Quiet Place**

There is a deeper life lesson to be learned from all of this. It is important in life to discover that there is a profound difference between loneliness, and carefully planned periods of solitude. It is not in the rushing cascade of the river that a

beautiful sunset is mirrored, but in the quiet waters of a still lake. There is keen insight in David's Psalm where he poetically penned,

*“The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures,*

*He leads me beside Quiet waters, He refreshes my soul.” Psalm 23:1-3*

Sadly, we all too often find short term more immediate ways to adapt to the stresses of life, and label that as "My Chill Time."

For many, taking time out for personal contemplation, daily journaling, private reflection, and or spiritual worship, is seen to be impractical, and unrealistic in light of today's frantic pace of life. However, silence speaks when words cannot. We can slowly become conditioned to finding "other things" to keep us calm in the midst of chaos, rather than seek out a Quiet Place to deepen our inner peace and renew our strength in a way that God alone can provide.

### **Whispers in our Memory in The Quiet Place**

It is hard for most people to remember a time when they found themselves in a tranquil Quiet Place....to remember that moment, when one is enveloped in a peaceful stillness, and the dissonance of continuous noise had all but disappeared. To discover that no sounds were scratching at the periphery of your thoughts to distract you. It likely didn't last long, but when it happened, you vowed never to forget the sweet sound of silence.

For the one whose world is silenced due to deafness, quietness became the unwelcomed guest who stopped by without invitation, and refuses to leave. The prison of imposed silence, however it comes to one's life, is not the discovery of the precious essence of quietness, unless it is discovered as a strength rather than a disability. To lose any of the 5 senses is monumental. The reality of the priceless value of cherished times of silence, are only discovered on a very personal and spiritual level, whereby a gentle hush transcends the senses.

### **The Sounds of Silence in The Quiet Place**

Paul Simon, who wrote and sang folk ballads in the 1960's, released the familiar song, "The Sound of Silence." Performing in Greenwich Village, Simon and Garfunkel, relevantly expressed what many people were feeling at that time throughout the world. To many, the lyrics of the song whisper gently from our

memory, at just the reminder of it. For some, poignant phrases were mentally etched upon the walls of memory with a tenacity that still remains. Why is that? Was it the profoundness of the song's lyrics, or the timeless melody that embraces the words like a warm blanket, carrying it into our consciousness and memory? Maybe it is both.

Many have pondered questions about the meaning of The Sound of Silence. Whether it was the personal reflection of a dream that Paul Simon had one night:

*"Hello darkness, my old friend  
I've come to talk with you again  
Because a vision softly creeping  
Left its seeds while I was sleeping  
And the vision that was planted in my brain  
Still remains  
Within the sound of silence."*

or a grassroots cry to society to refuse to be led blindly into accepting whatever any political power might dictate to be the standard for social ethics, virtues, or values:

*"And in the naked light I saw  
Ten thousand people, maybe more  
People talking without speaking  
People hearing without listening  
People writing songs that voices never share  
And no one dared  
Disturb the sound of silence."*

or perhaps it is a challenge to not follow the media as mesmerized children, stumbling after the humanistic worldly Pied Piper to a perilous end.

*"Fools", said I, "You do not know  
Silence like a cancer grows  
Hear my words that I might teach you  
Take my arms that I might reach you"  
But my words, like silent raindrops fell  
And echoed  
In the wells of silence."*

or was it a call to resist media manipulation, and rather listen to the genuine cry of

a different way to address real social issues of the day, found etched in Graffiti-esque literature in dark urban subways and tenement halls:

*"And the people bowed and prayed  
To the neon god they made  
And the sign flashed out its warning  
In the words that it was forming  
And the sign said, "The words of the prophets are written on  
the subway walls and tenement halls"  
And whispered in the Sounds of Silence."*

Writer(s): Paul Simon, Nat Simon, Gordon Jenkins  
Copyright: MCA Music Publishing A.D.O. Universal S, Paul Simon Music

We still cry out today to stop the injustice, tyranny and cruel domination of so many people across the world. We also yearn in our own lives, to stop the noise, the unrelenting stress, and the tyranny of the urgent. Regardless of one's race, color or religion, it rings true for everyone across the 196 countries throughout the known world.

### **The Irreplaceable Value of The Quiet Place**

God whispers to each of us to discover the irreplaceable value of The Quiet Place and guard it as a time to meet with God in the Holy of Holies of undisturbed, and worshipful silence. Instead of, "Hello Darkness my old friend, I come to talk with you again" our prayer becomes, "My dear Heavenly Father, I come to commune with you again." We all need to find a solitary place where we can stop the world, breathe our own oxygen and hear the sounds of silence. Yet mere aloneness or solitude is not an asset that truly satisfies unless we are able to connect to someone greater than ourselves.

There is a Quiet Place and we can each kneel reverently in the blessed hush of God's presence, however, the pathway is only accessible through the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ (John 14:1, 6 and 14).

There was absolutely no other way for any of any of us to have intimate access to a Holy God. None of us could pay the debt of sin's terrible cost, so Jesus paid the debt that He did not owe, because we owed a debt that we could not pay.

### **The Undeniable Cost of The Quiet Place**

As precious drops of His sacrificial sinless blood touched the altar of atonement, The Lamb of God died for every one of us. The veil that separated mankind from God in the Temple in Jerusalem, from true intimate worship with God, was torn asunder. In a Holy flash, the way was made open for all of us. His precious blood was sprinkled upon the Mercy Seat of meritorious atonement for our sins, and it continuously opens the pathway to each and every one of us, but we must embrace Him as our Lord, Savior and King.

There is a Quiet Place.... Find the time and place where you are undisturbed, inaccessible and unhindered by life's distractions, and treasure it as non-negotiable moments that are etched upon your daily schedule with indelible ink.

### **Unanswered Prayer and The Quiet Place**

Perhaps the big a part of the issue of unanswered prayer has to do with our hasty, drive-thru style of prayer time, where we have taken little to no thought to consider the implications of God answering every prayer we prayed. He not only has a Sovereign Will to unfold on earth and in heaven, He also longs to just spend time with each of us. That quality of intimacy with Him would change much of the way that we approach The Quiet Place, and the issue of unanswered prayer.

There is a Quiet Place....reach out and seize it, and make it your own. Cherish it as a foundational part of each day of your life. It is your time to walk in the Edenic Garden with your Creator, where you and God enjoy sweet and precious moments together. It must be priceless to Him... for He gave His very life to ensure that nothing could ever separate the two of you again. You just have to reach out to Him, and you will already discover His hand already waiting for yours.

### **Pathway Principles:**

1. Devotional discipline used to be called The Quiet Time. What has happened with the advance of technology, social media, and the pace of even the activities of the average local church today, that has made The Quiet Time an add on to our, rather than the essential beginning of it?
2. What steps could you begin to take to guard against the rush of each day, so as to make it a priority to have a more intimate experience with God in The Quiet Place?

3. If we gave thought to how much time we even spend in solitude and silence each day it would be an insight to anyone. Are we uncomfortable with of silence and solitude and if so why?
4. How does that affect how we approach a Quiet Time with God?

Explore ways to arrange your Quiet Time so that it is undisturbed and unhurried.

5. Write a prayer to your Heavenly Father that addresses the issue of silence and solitude with Him. Jesus often spent much time away from others praying to His Father.

### **Daily Meditation Scripture**

Jesus made it a high priority to spend time alone and away from others to pray to His Father in solitary, quiet, and sometimes lonely places. We can learn much from His example:

*“When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place.” Matthew 14:13*

*“After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone.” Matthew 14:23*

*“Jesus left there and went along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up on a mountainside and sat down.” Matthew 15:29*

*“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.” Mark 1:35*

*“After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.” Mark 6:46*

*“Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. <sup>16</sup> But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.” Luke 5:15-16*

*“One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.” Luke 6:12*

*“Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, “Who do the crowds say I am?” Luke 9:18*

*“One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” Luke 11:1*

*“Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. <sup>40</sup> On reaching the place, he said to them, “Pray that you will not fall into temptation.” <sup>41</sup> He withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, <sup>42</sup> “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” Luke 22:39-42*

*“They crucified [Jesus] ... Darkness came over the whole land... Jesus called out with a loud voice, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.’ Mark 15:25, 33; Luke 23:46*

# **Unanswered Prayer in The Quiet Place**

## **Chapter 4**

### **When you Face the Unknown**

From the time we first begin to explore the world into which we are born, one of the toughest lessons to learn is how to deal with the unknown. Those unpredictable, uncertain, cannot guarantee, just not sure, it could be disastrous realities that just may happen tomorrow.

The primary reason it is so hard to deal with the unknown is that we only have a small piece of what we can ever be sure of regarding tomorrow. It wears away at us because we cannot be absolutely certain that it will be anything that we imagine it may be. Lurking away on the periphery of your thoughts, it can work away at your peace of mind today, like a nagging toothache.

### **Why it is hard to deal with the Unknown**

All of life is in a continuous merge of changing circumstances. We are created to be planners, goal setters and are purpose driven by nature. Every time an event happens that can touch your life, all of the variables change with it: the how, why, who, when and where, change with it...second by second by second by second. No wonder it is so difficult dealing with the Unknown.

### **Facing the Challenge of the Unknown**

There are certain personalities that have a harder time with the unknown.

The more perfectionist, detailed and structured the person, the more stressful the unknown becomes. However, in **The Quiet Place** as we worship God, we are transformed by His presence, and soothed by His peace. When everything else seems to be falling apart, and we have no control over the details of the Unknown, we can stop striving, and begin to rest in His protective care over ourselves and our loved ones.

### **Yield Control of the Unknown to God**

Our earlier life experiences can make it harder to deal with the unknown. The more a child lives with traumatic events, where they had no control over the tough times

they experienced, the more the unknown becomes an issue. The bottom line is that we all struggle with the unknown. The older we become, the more we realize how little control we have over anything.

*“Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” Matthew 6:25- 34*

### **Yield Depression and Anxiety to God**

When a person struggles with depression and anxiety issues, it is harder to deal with the unknown. The brain’s Limbic System controls our emotional responses to everything that we experience. One’s perception of the future becomes their reality. Hormonal secretions race through the body and impact mood, and motivation. What is real is what they feel, and many times it is laced with dread.

### **Yield your Finances and Needs to God**

Today most people are living with limited financial resources. Getting downsized at work, being laid off, terminated or being unable to work due to health issues all impact how we look at the unknown. Having a greater responsibility for others to care for also makes it harder to deal with the unknown.

*“And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:19*

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God, and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7*

### **God has a Purpose in the Unknown**

Recognize that God allows hard times to teach us to humble ourselves before Him and acknowledge Him always and in all things as Lord. Like the seasons of nature, God weaves His Sovereign plan from the budding of blessings in the spring, to the storms that hit our lives in the winter of the soul.

*“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.” 1 Peter 5:6-7*

## **God has a Plan in the Unknown**

Remember that God wants us to maintain a Biblical view of life, and the foundation is to be built upon seeking wisdom from the Scriptures.

## **Maintain a Biblical Strategy to Face the Unknown**

*“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.” James 1:5*

## **Maintain a Biblical Strategy in your Thought Patterns**

*“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Romans 12:2*

## **Maintain a Biblical Strategy in your Daily Planning**

*“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3:5-6*

## **God Gives Peace to Face the Unknown**

Rest in God’s peace and trust Him to use the unknown future in your life as a means to be glorified through you however it turns out.

*“But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him.” Jeremiah 17:7*

*“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.” Hebrews 11:6*

## **A Prayer for this moment**

*“Lord of all things and Creator of Heaven and earth, I thank you that you invite me to call you my Heavenly Father. You have led me to yourself through your Son, The Lord Jesus Christ, and have redeemed me through His precious Blood. The horizon of my tomorrows is unknown to me. In your infinite all knowing wisdom*

*you have chosen to not give me access to what is ahead, for it may be too much for me to handle today. I kneel before you and release the anxiety and burden of the Unknown to your Sovereign Will."*

### **The Lord Jesus taught us to pray...**

*"Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be your name, your Kingdom come, your Will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us today our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we also have forgiven those who have sinned against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory forever." (From Matthew 6:9-13)*

*"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the Heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ." Ephesians 1:3*

### **Pathway Principles:**

6. Devotional discipline used to be called The Quiet Time. What has happened with the advance of technology, social media, and the pace of even the activities of the average local church today, that has made The Quiet Time an add on to our, rather than the essential beginning of it?
7. What steps could you begin to take to guard against the rush of each day, so as to make it a priority to have a more intimate experience with God in The Quiet Place?
8. If we gave thought to how much time we even spend in solitude and silence each day it would be an insight to anyone. Are we uncomfortable with of silence and solitude and if so why?
9. How does that affect how we approach a Quiet Time with God?

Explore ways to arrange your Quiet Time so that it is undisturbed and unhurried.

10. Write a prayer to your Heavenly Father that addresses the issue of silence and solitude with Him. Jesus often spent much time away from others praying to His Father.

### **Daily Meditation Scripture**

Jesus made it a high priority to spend time alone and away from others to pray to His Father in solitary, quiet, and sometimes lonely places. We can learn much from His example:

*“When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place.” Matthew 14:13*

*“After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone.” Matthew 14:23*

*“Jesus left there and went along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up on a mountainside and sat down.” Matthew 15:29*

*“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.” Mark 1:35*

*“After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.” Mark 6:46*

*“Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses.<sup>16</sup> But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.” Luke 5:15-16*

*“One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.” Luke 6:12*

*“Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, “Who do the crowds say I am?” Luke 9:18*

*“One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”  
Luke 11:1*

*“Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him.  
<sup>40</sup> On reaching the place, he said to them, “Pray that you will not fall into temptation.” <sup>41</sup> He withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, <sup>42</sup> “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” Luke 22:39-42*

*“They crucified [Jesus] ... Darkness came over the whole land... Jesus called out with a loud voice, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.’ Mark 15:25, 33;  
Luke 23:46*

# **Unanswered Prayer in The Quiet Place**

## **Chapter 5**

### **Hope in the Midst of Unrelenting Trials**

We are often made most aware of our need for strength when we are at the very weakest in our lives. It doesn't take long before tough times can bring the strongest person to his knees, where it seems impossible to solve the dilemma that is draining him of the needed resources to hang in there when he feels like quitting and throwing in the towel.

Some days you can literally feel like you are at the end of your rope and hanging on by your fingertips alone. During a season of unrelenting tough times, it can seem that no matter what we do, or how hard we pray, that nothing ever changes. In truth, it is natural to hope that life will get better, that our pain will heal or that our financial setbacks will turn into financial gains. That is human nature. We were created to enjoy sunrises, not cold winter storms.

There are mornings when you can awake with the premonition that the day just seems to have a negative spin to it. You just know that trouble is stalking outside of our door, awaiting your first stumble. A morning where the toothpaste gushes out and drops onto your fresh clean shirt, then you sit down to have some breakfast and discover that one of the kids has left something awful on the chair that squishes against the seat of your pants, and then on our way to the car, you step in dog poop and fail to realize it until you are stuck in rush hour traffic with the windows rolled up.

#### **When Hope is needed the Most**

It is insightful to remember that a flower follows the sun even on cloudy days. It may not see the sun, but it follows where the sun is moving across a cloud banked sky. The only gaze that strengthens and gives you courage to not give up, is to keep your eyes upon God and trust in His Word to give you the strength and the wisdom that you need. It is only through Him that the deepest resources of peace, hope and joy, in the midst of suffering and in spite of suffering, can be accessed.

## **Doubting God in Midst of Suffering**

It is very difficult to hang on to hope and not give in to weary despair and have doubts of God's love for us as we hang on to the ledge of our fleeting faith with trembling fingertips. In reality it is human nature to feel that way and is completely normal. What is supernatural is to see past the present trial that is testing our faith, and see the Sovereign hand of our Father in Heaven at work in our circumstance. The doubt of your faith is not so much God testing you beyond what you can handle, but it is the Truth seeking to enlarge your faith and free you from despair.

Paul wrote this truth to give us perspective during tough times while he was chained and confined in a Roman prison experiencing painful and disappointing suffering and deprivation.

*“Now I want you to know and continue to rest assured, brethren, that what has happened to me through this imprisonment has actually only served to advance and give a renewed impetus to the spreading of the good news of the Gospel. This a fact that throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest here my imprisonment has become generally known to be in Christ that I am a prisoner in His service and for Him”. Philippians 1:12-13 Amplified Bible*

Tough things happen **to us**, so that something will happen **in us**, so that something will happen **through us** to touch the lives of others. Things were happening to Paul, so that something would happen in Paul, so that something would happen through Paul. That something was the Gospel igniting within the corridors of that prison, and then it flowed throughout the known world in the form of the prison epistles written there, namely, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon (See Acts 28).

## **Cultivating a Thankful Heart**

What a challenge it can be give thanks to God when you are going through the winter storms of life.

*“Give thanks in all circumstances for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.” I Thess. 5:18*

Giving thanks for the tough things that are going on in our lives at all times, in every circumstance and without exception? This seems illogical and bizarre, especially when you are at the end of your rope. Why would a person be encouraged to thank God when his dreams are shattered and broken in pieces at his

feet and he doesn't know why or how that happened? Because it is not for the terrible circumstance that we are thanking Him for, but the liberating truth that in spite of tough times, we can rise above the storm with a song of praise in our hearts. (See Psalm 46-1-11).

### **Trusting God is more than a Feeling**

The following Scripture sheds light on a crucial truth that is important to get a hold of early in his life:

*“Trust in the Lord with all of you heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all of your ways acknowledge him and He will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3:5-6*

The Word of God directs us to trust in the Lord with all of our heart and to not draw our own conclusions, derive a life strategy from, or rely upon our own ideas, our wits, our education or our life experience, as we live our lives each day. We are to establish in our minds that in all ways, in everything, and at all times we are to acknowledge Him and make His will our will and His way our way. As we do so, He will provide, from His Word, a strategy as to what to do in any situation that we are facing.

God's counsel in **The Quiet Place** of our heart is to discover that there is only one way where troubles, grief and sorrow can find comfort and meaning. He alone is the God of all comfort. To lean one's hopes on anything other than God and His wondrous grace is to set oneself up for disappointment and despair.

*“Find rest, O my soul in God alone; my hope comes from him.” Psalm 62:5*

*“You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your Word.” Psalm 119:114*

Our hope must look confidently forward to something divinely purposeful, eternal and good that is yet to happen. We need to cling to the truth that regardless of the circumstances, God's Sovereign purpose will be done in our lives. In spite of what we cannot see, He is at work and He is Lord. The natural man must see in order to believe but the spiritual man must believe in order to see.

*“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” Hebrews 11:*

*“For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? “But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.” Romans 8:24-25*

## **When Prayer goes Unanswered**

The reality is that God sometimes allows suffering to remain unchanged and unrelenting in our lives. His will may be that for this time, the pain will continue, and the trial may be there again tomorrow. Do not doubt His love or compassion for you in the midst of your suffering, no matter how dark the night.

In The Quiet Place, God calls gently to us to still our anxious heart, and discover anew that it is here that true honesty and a humble openness with God are present. If the trial does not change for the better, do not doubt God or His Word. To do so will leave you confused and disappointed that your request seems to have been denied. The seeming delay may mean that God may be saying, “No,” or “Not Now?”

*“Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. For I am the LORD your God, who upholds your right hand, who says to you, “Do not fear, I will help you.” Isa 41:10, 13*

He is right there with you, right now. It is wonderful to greet the sunrise with the confident awareness of the presence of the God who created it, and the One who will be beside you whatever your day brings forth. Do not be afraid to venture out and experience the wonder and glory of being His child. There are simply no burdens, heartaches or times of suffering that can take away the hush of being with Him in [The Quiet Place](#).

## **Pathway Principles:**

1. When prayer goes unanswered, it is hard to not lose hope. One can feel like giving up. Doubts can assail our faith, and we can even become angry at God. What is it about unanswered prayer that creates such a challenge a person’s personal faith and trust in God and His Word?

2. A popular motto on faith is seen to be an encouragement to maintain the belief that unwavering faith is what motivates God to act and answer prayer.

“Faith is not believing that God can, but it is believing that He will.”

- What do you read into this statement?
  - What does such a statement assume regarding God’s will?
  - Can such a statement can set-up a believer for disappointment and disillusionment regarding faith and hope. Address God’s Sovereignty and man’s faith regarding this issue:
3. Identify a time when unanswered prayer resulted in deepening your trust in God?
  4. Paul wrote to the Church at Philippi that God had a greater purpose in his being incarcerated then initially seen by the early church, and that Paul was able to grasp it and embrace it:

*“But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; <sup>13</sup> So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; <sup>14</sup> And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.” Philippians 1:12-14*

Reflect upon a time when as the result of a prolonged difficult trial in your life that the following became your experience:

~ Things happen **to us**, so that something will happen **in us** so that something will happen **through us** ~

5. Read the whole of Hebrews chapter 11, and then write a prayer to your Heavenly Father that expresses your commitment to His will, regardless of life's circumstances. Use the following verse in your introduction:

*“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”  
Hebrews 11:1 NASB*

### **Daily Meditation Scripture**

*“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in **hope** of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup> And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; <sup>4</sup> and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, **hope**; <sup>5</sup> and **hope** does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” Romans 5:2-5*

# **Unanswered Prayer in The Quiet Place**

## **Chapter 6**

### **Shattered Dreams and the Sovereignty of God**

It seems inevitable that each and every one of us will at some time in our lives, be touched by the painful experience of a shattered dream. Some people may hold on to a fading dream with tenacious passion, even above reason, until one day that dream lies broken in jagged pieces at their feet. It may be a love that should have lasted for a lifetime, a career that was to be the pinnacle of one's life work, or a financial nest egg that was to be there at retirement to provide a measurable life of ease rather than hardship in the senior years....gone now, with only the memory of what could have been.

### **The Painful Reality of Shattered Dreams**

Tragedy touches everyone. Shattered dreams are real and they can leave a person devastated and broken. A man who was very acquainted with the reality of living on the raw edge of a shattered dream was the man Jacob, a character found in the Old Testament. He was the son of Isaac, the grandson of Abraham, and the fraternal twin brother of Esau. He was named Jacob as he came out of the womb with his hand grasping his older twin brother's heel. (Genesis 25:26).

These two brother's were opposite in every way, and their relationship was troubled by a harsh and divisive sibling rivalry. It culminated in Jacob manipulating both his elder brother, and his father Isaac to obtain a birthright that was not his own (Genesis 28:4), bestowing upon him the promise of The Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12: 1-3). This was a sacred rite and blessing reserved for the firstborn son alone. Jacob later fled for fear that his brother Esau would kill him for such treachery. Leaving his childhood home he journeyed into the wilderness, alone and uncertain as to his future. He found himself surrounded by a dry and barren wilderness.

*“... Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Harran. When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. He gathered some stones there, and arranged them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.” (Genesis 28:10-11)*

The stones that Jacob had used to rest his weary body upon may have symbolized what he might have felt that his life had become ... barren and desolate. His shattered dream became a painful reminder that what he had hoped for had not come without cost. Yet in God's grace and mercy, those very stones became an altar of worship, as God gave Him a vision of the tomorrow yet to be.

### **When a Shattered Dream is given to God**

In The Quiet Place, God can begin to teach us that even a shattered dream can be used by Him to teach us something of His mercy and grace that can only be learned when our hearts are truly open and He is given full and complete access.

### **God's Mercy is Revealed to Jacob**

*"He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. There above it stood the LORD, and he said: "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. Genesis 28:12-14a)*

### **God's Grace is Extended through Jacob**

*"All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." (Genesis 28:14b-15)*

### **When a Shattered Dream becomes an Altar of Worship**

*"When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, 'Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it.' He was afraid and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the House of God; this is the Gate of Heaven.'" (Genesis 28:17)*

In life we often discover that what we thought would make us happy and fulfilled is found to leave the heart empty, restless and unsatisfied. How precious it is to discover that what was once a shattered dream can become God's means to bless us with much more than we could have ever imagined.

*“Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. He called the place Bethel, though the city used to be called Luz.” (Genesis 28:18-19)*

The name Luz comes from the verb *luz* meaning to turn aside. In the Bible this word is used mostly as a negative, either as a turning away from wisdom (Proverbs 3:21, 4:21) or used to describe being a "twisted" person (Proverbs 3:32, 14:2). It is used also to describe a crooked uneven pathway. The derivative *azut* means deviation or crookedness. Jacob's manipulative scheming to gain Esau's birthright, when given to God for Him to have His way, changed this barren place into a place Jacob called, Bethel...The House of God; the Place where God dwells. Jacob's sorrowful place became His Quiet Place where God revealed His will to him.

The name Bethel is a compound of two Hebrew words. The first segment is the word *bayet* meaning house, household, home or temple. The second segment is the word *El*, the common abbreviation of the word Elohim. It is the first name given for God in the Bible, *"In the beginning God, (Elohim) created the Heavens and the earth."* Genesis 1:1).

The word *beth ha-'elohim*, is a designation of the Hebrew word for sanctuary. In a moment of profound personal revelation, Jacob discovered that his desert place became "The House of Yahweh," the place where God does dwell.

It is only when we allow God to dwell in midst of the broken pieces of our shattered dream, that that very place of grievous sorrow, becomes The Quiet Place of the House of God to our soul. It becomes personal and real, when upon the dark lonely pathway through the forest of disillusionment; the night shadows become aglow with the presence of God.

Jacob understood that in a lonely desert place, his shattered dream had become the pathway to a deeper understanding of the will of God for his life.

## **Give your Shattered Dream to God**

Jacob realized that his bed of stones had become an altar of worship, but only as he yielded his heart and broken dreams to the infinite purpose of God. Are you in a struggle with God, wrestling over a shattered dream that needs to be laid at His feet in humble obedience? Give Him the pieces and He will show you the pathway to discovering how only His will can lead to the creation of a new beginning in your life.

*“...and Jacob vowed a vow, saying, ‘If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God.’” (Genesis 28:20-21)*

### **Honor God with Obedience and Sacrifice**

Jacob recognized that God wanted him to sacrifice a measure of His provision for him, as a token of trust and obedience that God alone must have His way in Jacob's life.

*“... and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's House, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth.” (Genesis 28:22)*

### **When the Pathway to the Future is Unclear**

The Quiet Place is where understanding becomes enlightenment, and enlightenment becomes a ministry to others. When the way seemed unclear to Jacob, God would later remind him, to return to this place he called Bethel, where God had taken his shattered dream, and gave him the vision of a promised blessing that lay in store for him. God would remind him to return to worship Him there, in The Quiet Place of the House of God.

*“I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and go back to your native land.” (Genesis 31:13)*

*“Then God said to Jacob, “Go up to Bethel and settle there, and build an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you were fleeing from your brother Esau.” (Genesis 35:1)*

Where once it was enough to have his father's Isaac's blessing, now in the wilderness of his shattered dreams, he had to have God's blessing. When our dream is no longer as important as His blessing in our lives, then the horizon of the future will not be the central focus of our hopes and dreams, but rather our focus will be His glory and His blessing alone. It is only then that the Quiet Place becomes not merely a place to clear our heads, but a place to clear our heart and hear the whisper of His voice alone.

Letting go of the sorrow of a shattered dream is no easy thing. For Jacob, this lonely desolate time became a testimony to others as to how God alone can take a

shattered dream and use it as a pathway into a deeper understanding of God's will, God's provision, and God's blessing.

*"...and let us arise, and go up to Beth-el; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went." (Genesis 35:6)*

### **Shattered Dreams are Memorials not Headstones**

As we journey through our lives, we may discover that the stones that are embedded in the pathway before us, are the footprints of those whose hearts and dreams were shattered and broken. They were fellow pilgrims upon the path of life that experienced personal tragedy in the loss of a life dream.

What is important to remember is that the rock strewn path need not be seen as headstones meant to mark the graves of lost hopes, but rather, stepping stones to remind fellow pilgrims to never give up their quest to dream yet again, when sorrow cloaks the day into night. The dawn will bring forth the sunrise of God's promise to each one who mourns the loss of a shattered dream.

He longs to teach us that the horizon yet ahead of us at this moment in time, is His gift to us, but we must take steps, however faltering, toward what we can sense but cannot see. That is faith with the breath of God giving us wings to fly.

### **Pathway Principles:**

1. Jacob discovered that his dream of enjoying the blessing of his father's birthright, turned out to be a nightmare as he fled for his life from Esau into the wilderness (Genesis 28). What is the unique significance of his awareness expressed in the following verse:

*"When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, 'Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it.' He was afraid and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the House of God; this is the Gate of Heaven.'" (Genesis 28:17)*

2. Shattered Dreams and Unanswered Prayer are most often connected together because of one's perspective of what a Shattered Dream means to the individual experiencing it. How does the influence of the values of the world influence the dreams we often deem to be essential for happiness?
  
3. Identify a time in your life when you experienced a Shattered Dream and what you learned from it:
  
4. Write a prayer to your Heavenly Father that addresses the issue of Shattered Dreams in your life. If you are ready, lay them before the Throne of Grace, seeking to glorify Him through your purpose in doing so:

*“Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the Throne of Grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:16*

### **Daily Meditation Scripture:**

*“The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,  
because the LORD has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim freedom for the captives  
and release from darkness for the prisoners,<sup>[a]</sup>  
<sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor  
and the day of vengeance of our God,  
to comfort all who mourn,  
<sup>3</sup> and provide for those who grieve in Zion—  
to bestow on them a crown of beauty  
instead of ashes,  
the oil of joy*

*instead of mourning,  
and a garment of praise  
instead of a spirit of despair.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
a planting of the LORD  
for the display of his splendor.*

*<sup>4</sup> They will rebuild the ancient ruins  
and restore the places long devastated;  
they will renew the ruined cities  
that have been devastated for generations.*

*<sup>5</sup> Strangers will shepherd your flocks.” Isaiah 61:1-5*

## **Epilogue**

Thank you for purchasing and or obtaining a copy of “Unanswered Prayer in The Quiet Place.”

Unanswered prayer

John A. Krohn PhD

Visit The Quiet Place at: [johnkrohn.blogspot.com](http://johnkrohn.blogspot.com)