





DAY 1

So far this month we've added the habits of reading the Bible and praying to our daily line-up. But this week isn't about addition, it's about subtraction. What are the noises that are swirling around in your head? Let's spend today discovering that answer.

Write down a quick list of the things you listen to in a typical day. Include things you read like texts or books since those things can add to the noise too.

Without doing anything different than normal, write down what you listen to and for how long.

Read this verse and compare it to your list. How much room is left for God?

Psalm 10:4 NIV

*In his pride the wicked does not seek him;
in all his thoughts there is no room for God.*

At the end of your day, write your thoughts about your list. Is it what you thought it would be? Are there any surprises to you? Which one thing took up the most of your time?

For tomorrow, pick one thing off of your list that you think takes up too much time and make a commitment to cut it out completely for 24 hours. Write it down so you don't chicken out. You may need to get a friend from your small group involved to help you stick to your plan if you think it will be hard.



DAY 2

For today, you've made a commitment to cut one noise out of your day. So, now the question is, how will you spend that time? Let's start by putting our first two habits into practice.

First read this passage from the Bible.

1 Kings 19:11-13 NLT

“Go out and stand before me on the mountain,” the LORD told him. And as Elijah stood there, the LORD passed by, and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

And a voice said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

God was speaking in the silence. God is a Spirit. So we'll usually hear His whispers with our heart not our ears.

Now, take time to pray. Don't do all the talking. Get quiet and give God room to whisper to you.

At the end of your day, reflect on how your day seemed different when you escaped the noise and let God whisper. Write about how you feel and what you may feel like God is saying to you.

For tomorrow, get ready to make your escape from one of the biggest “noises” in our culture! Call a friend from your small group and check in with them.



DAY 3

Even with DVR and Tivo, TV dominates how Americans spend free time. Even if you have already disciplined yourself to get more active instead of vegging out all day, you may still be surprised to see how much time you spend watching TV. So today, let's go cold turkey and turn off that noise.

First, let's review our key verse for this week.

Psalm 46:10 NLT
Be still, and know that I am God!...

Now get still and think about the effects TV has on your schedule. Do you ever consider the shows you watch to be a part of your weekly schedule?

Do you block out time to catch up on specific shows or just channel surf? If someone calls and asks you to do something, do you wait until your show is over before you'll go? Have you ever chosen TV over other plans?

At the end of your day, spend some time writing about ways you think the things you watch on TV might affect your attitudes and actions.

Have you ever thought about the things that you watch, actually have an effect on your mind. You see the stuff that you watch, does put images in your mind. Is the things you watch on TV honoring God?

Ask God to show you what you need to do to minimize the noise TV adds to your life.



DAY 4

Music. For some people, every waking minute of your day has a soundtrack. At home, in the car, outside, you've got music playing everywhere you go. Clearly, music is noise. But if it's just in the background most of the time, is it something you really need to turn off?

- You may want to continue to keep the TV off today too, but at least make today your day to escape the noise of music.
- Look at a list of what you listen to. It could be CDs, your iTunes, what you have on your iPod, or maybe even a list of songs from the radio station that plays where you work or hang out. Do you think God cares what you listen to?
- The Bible talks about music a lot. Singing, dancing, playing instruments—music was a big part of culture in Bible times just like it is today. As matter of fact, God even assigned people to keep music going 24 hours a day. (See for yourself in 1 Chronicles 6:30-33.)
- So if God isn't against music, then how can you invite God to guide your music choices?

Instead of using your own opinion to categorize what kinds of music God wants you to listen to, why don't you just ask Him?

At the end of your day, write about what you feel like God is telling you about the role of music in your life



DAY 5

What about your computer? Online gaming, social networks—a world of entertainment right at your fingertips. It's a safe guess that the Bible doesn't have anything to say about computers. But it does have a lot to say about things in our lives that fill up our minds with things that don't please God.

Everything we see online, the visual images, the jokes, all of it gets stored away in our heads. So what does God think about those things? Read these verses from Psalms.

Psalm 139:23-24 NLT

*Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
Point out anything in me that offends you,
and lead me along the path of everlasting life.*

No matter how much your parents or anyone else may want to keep tabs on the noise that your computer can add to your life, only you and God really know what it has put inside your heart. Spend a few moments to pray these verses as a prayer to God.

Write down what God reveals to you about your computer habits. This may be one of the toughest ones to break without getting other people to help you. Talk to a friend from your small group about what changes you want to make. And until then, keep the whole thing unplugged if you have to.



DAY 6

If you have a phone, you probably use it far more than your parents or anyone from the generations before you. And if you don't, you probably feel like you're the only student on the planet who doesn't. But your phone can add a whole new layer of noise to your life. Not just with their ring tones, but with all of the countless conversations you can add to your day through calls and texts and whatever is the next cool thing.

So, can you do it? Will you turn your phone off all day? Look at your call history and write down some of the numbers it shows of call times, calls made, calls received, texts, etc. (If you don't have your own phone—or you're grounded from it—you're not off the hook. Spend today turning off video games or anything else you still have on your list from day one!) Your phone allows you to spend even more time being influenced by friends. When you escape the noise of your phone for a day, how will you feel like it affects your relationships?

Read this verse and ask yourself if your words on your phone please God.

Psalm 19:14 NLT

*May the words of my mouth
and the meditation of my heart
be pleasing to you,*

O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

Make this verse your prayer to God today. Ask God how your new habit of silence can help you minimize the influence your phone conversations have had in your heart. But don't call a friend from your small group to talk about it! Hopefully their phone is off too!



DAY 7

Meditation!

This word might make us think of monks sitting criss-cross on a mountaintop humming. But is that what it really means? The Bible actually encourages meditation. Not the lotus position kind, but a disciplined mental focus on seeking God and hearing his voice.

Read this verse and take time to let it speak to you. See how long you can keep your mind clear of other thoughts besides what God has done for you.

Psalm 77:11-13 NLT

*But then I recall all you have done, O LORD;
I remember your wonderful deeds of long ago.
They are constantly in my thoughts.
I cannot stop thinking about your mighty works.
O God, your ways are holy.
Is there any god as mighty as you?*

Write a list of some things God has done in your life or the lives of those you know. Include things from the Bible that you think are too awesome not to mention.

If you've been successful to turn off all the outside noises in your life this week, what changes have you noticed in what you think about?

Have you achieved a habit of silence that you'd like to continue beyond this week? Write about steps you'd like to take to really make silence a habit you include in every day.