



**GET YOUR
LIFE BACK:
LESSON 2
SIMPLE
UNPLUGGING.**

Have you ever felt lost in the hustle and bustle of today's world? A sense of urgency seems to swirl around us, especially when we remain connected 24/7 to the myriad of technical devices used to keep us in touch.

Have you ever been concentrating on something, and suddenly your phone vibrates, even though you had put it on silent and you react? This is a learned, reflex response.

Of course you **MUST** check who it is from, reply, put the phone back down and try to return to whatever you were doing. But this can often take moments before you recover your thoughts.

What about when you are wanting to Google something and while it is opening up, suddenly up comes the pop up ads – telling you to buy this or read this....how frustrating!

Every day we are bombarded with so much stimuli demanding our attention. This is what cognitive psychologists call “an orienting response.” (an important evolutionary adaptation in a world of predators – an animal turns its face and eyes towards the new thing) A new thing typically appears every second on television. The images on the screen jump out of the flow of experience and make a demand on us.

Nicholas Carr who won the Pulitzer Prize for his book – *The Shallows*: what the Internet is doing to our brains – concludes:

*The frenziedness of technology threatens to entrench itself everywhere.
It may be that we are now entering the final stage of that entrenchment.*

We are welcoming the frenziedness into our souls.

Have you felt like your soul is frenzied? Do you sometimes feel you cannot hear from God, because of everything that is going on around you?

We can't give God our attention when it is constantly being taken captive and we are co-operating. It is a known fact that we are finding it more difficult to linger and dig deep into something – it's just the next thing, the next thing, the next thing.

First, let's read what happened to Elijah.

Read: 1 Kings 19:9-13

Was there anything that spoke to you in this passage?

In the Hebrew language, the phrase for "gentle whisper" is Kol D'mama Daka, meaning "the sound of thin silence." That's where the Lord meets us: in the gentle whisper, in the thin silence.

Down through the ages, followers of Christ believed that to be able to give God our attention it must be on a regular basis.

Read: Hebrews 12:1-2

Read: Psalm 34:5

Read Psalm 119:97-99

Read: Psalm 1:1-6 What are the two types of people and experiences being contrasted here?

When your phone makes a chime or bell or swoosh sound to say you have an incoming text – can you easily ignore it and go on with the conversation you are having?

Can you shut your phone off when you get home in the evening and not turn it on again until morning? When you first wake, do you enjoy a leisurely breakfast before you check your phone?

Let's all be honest – we prefer distraction.

The more distracted we are, the less present we are to our souls' various hurts, needs, disappointment, boredom and fears. It is a short term relief with long term consequences. Sadly, this has become the new “normal.”

Finding more of God, growing strong in soul and spirit, requires creating space in your day for God – to intentionally put yourself in a place that allows you to draw upon and experience the healing power of the life of God filling you.

Serious followers of Jesus have used stillness and quiet, worship, fasting, prayer and beautiful places to drink deeply of the presence of God, and untangle their souls from the world.

The immediate access to every form of knowledge and ground breaking information right there, every waking moment confuses the soul into a state of artificial meaning and purpose, all the while preventing genuine soul are and life with God.

It is so counter to the social air we breathe – what has become the normal daily consumption of input is numbing the soul with artificial meaning and purpose while in face the soul grows thinner and thinner through neglect, harmed by the very madness that passes for a progressive life.

We are not faced with a series of decisions that are going to make us look like freaks – choices like fasting from social media, never bringing our smartphones to any meal, conversation or Bible study, cutting off our media intake so we can practice stillness every day.

The good news is that we actually have a choice. We can choose not to participate in it.

Now you may be wondering how to set aside a space to hear from God. You don't have to wait for the perfect conditions to talk with the Lord or believe that you have to make some grand gesture before you can enter into His presence. You can do this while washing your dishes, shopping, tidying up at home, gardening, swimming. God meets you there – where you are.

However, you need a stillness and quiet in your heart to be able to hear God's whisper. If you can silence the loud voices of the world, those meant to distract you and steer you off course, confuse you or fill you with anxiety and worry, you will find the peace that only comes from Jesus.

Prayer: Dear God, help me to draw near to You. I know whatever story You have written for my life is beautiful – because it is from You.

Help me to quiet the voices of the world and distractions, so I may enter into the thin silence, to hear Your gentle whisper and be filled with Your peace in my heart today. In Jesus Name, Amen.

are a few ideas to start with:

Turn off notifications: you don't need to know when someone has posted another picture of her cat on Facebook; you can check when you have set aside time to do so.

You don't need to know about the wild weather in NSW or the latest announcement made by the Premier.

Fast from social media: Try cutting your use by 50% for one week and see what it does for you. You may just begin to love it.

Turn your phone off at 8pm: give yourself some evening time for real things. And banish all technology from your bedroom.

Don't check your phone as soon as you wake up in the morning: give your soul mercy to wake up; enjoy a few peaceful moments.

When your phone chirps or vibrates, don't react: make it wait till you pick it up. In these small ways you are making your phone a tool again, something that serves you instead of the other way around.

Do real things: chop vegetables, play cards, write, draw, go for a walk, learn to play an instrument.

If you create a little bit of sacred space every day, God will meet you there. And you will begin to love it.