

Get In The Game

Drills For Disciples: Part 1 Silence & Seclusion

Written By
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By employing a baseball motif this fall, we, as your spiritual coaches, challenge you to **Get In The Game**. “What game?” you ask. We invite you to get in the game of becoming a more mature player on the team of Jesus Christ. Players on this eternal spiritual team do come with different abilities and skills; however, the divine call for each of them is to grow in those abilities and skills until the Team Owner calls them home.

Our playbook easily validates this premise about players being focused on being better players. Here’s one exert from a well-worn, yellowed, marked-up page:

²⁸ We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ (Colossians 1).

Let’s unpack this content briefly.

Paul’s main goal as a pastor, which a goal we as pastors, elders, and lay teachers hold as well, was to continually work to make sure every man, or every saint (as is denoted by the preceding two verses), was brought to a place of advanced spiritual development. The Greek word/adjective here is most instructive: *teleios*, viz., τέλειος. Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament And Other Early Christian Literature*, expands the lexical meaning with this helpful discussion:

- **τέλειος, α, ον** (Hom. [e.g. Il. 24, 34 of unblemished sacrificial animals] +) gener. ‘attaining an end or purpose, complete’.
- ① pert. to meeting the highest standard
- ① of things, *perfect*
- α. as acme of goodness, as adj. (ἀρετή Did., Gen. 40, 19.—Of aeons, Iren. 1, 1, 1 [Harv. I 8, 2]; Hippol., Ref. 6, 31, 4) ἔργον Js 1:4a (s. ἔργον lb); cp. ISm 11:2. δώρημα Js 1:17 (s. δώρημα). νόμος vs. 25 (opp. the Mosaic law). ἀγάπη IJ 4:18. ἀνάλυσις 1 Cl 44:5 (Just., D. 41, 1). γνῶσις 1:2; B 1:5. πρόγνωσις 1 Cl 44:2. μνεία 56:1. ἐλπίς ISm 10:2 (v.l. πίστις); χάρις 11:1. νηστεία Hs 5, 3, 6. ναός B 4:11 (ἐκκλησία Did., Gen. 69, 14). τελειότερα σκηνή (s. σκηνή 2) Hb 9:11.—Subst. τὸ τέλειον *what is perfect* Ro 12:2; perh. 1 Cor 13:10 (opp. ἐκ μέρους. S. EHoffmann, ConNeot 3, '38, 28–31). ἐνάρετον καὶ τέλειον (*someh.*) *virtuous and perfect* IPhld 1:2. W. gen. τὸ τέλειον τῆς γνώσεως ἡμῶν *the full measure of our knowledge* B 13:7. Pl. (Philo) τέλεια *what is perfect* ISm 11:3b (Tat. 13, 2 τὰ τέλεια).
- β. as acme of badness (ApcSed 14:7 ἀπόγνωστοι τὴν τελείαν ἀπόγνωσιν), adj. ἁμαρτία B 8:1; Hv 1, 2, 1. σκάνδαλον B 4:3.—Subst. τὸ τέλειον τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν *the full measure of the sins* 5:11.
- ② of persons who are fully up to standard in a certain respect and not satisfied with half-way measures *perfect, complete, expert* (TAM II/1, 147, 4f ἰατρὸς τέλειος; ZPE 3, '68, 86: Didymus Fgm. 281, 7 τέλειος γεόμετρος; Wsd 9:6; 1 Ch 25:8) τέλειος ἀθλητῆς IPol 1:3. Esther is τελεία κατὰ πίστιν 1 Cl 55:6. Jesus became τέλειος ἄνθρωπος *perfect human* ISm 4:2.
- ② pert. to being mature, *full-grown, mature, adult* (Aeschyl., Pla., X.+; oft. pap; Philo; Jos., Ant. 19, 362).
- ① adj. ἀνήρ τέλειος Eph 4:13 (opp. νήπιοι, as Polyb. 5, 29, 2; Philo, Leg. All. 1, 94, Sobr. 9 νήπιον παιδίον πρὸς ἄνδρα τέλειον—an immature child compared to a mature man, Somn. 2, 10). In dazzling wordplay: μὴ παιδία γίνεσθε ταῖς φρεσίν, ἀλλὰ τῇ κακίᾳ νηπιάζετε, ταῖς δὲ φρεσίν τέλειοι γίνεσθε *do not think like children, yet do be infants as respects evil, while at the same time grown-up in your thinking* 1 Cor 14:20 ...
- ④ pert. to being fully developed in a moral sense
- ① of humans *perfect, fully developed* (Hippol., Ref. 1, 19, 16) in a moral sense τέλειος ἀνὴρ Js 3:2 (s. RHöistad, ConNeot 9, '44, p. 22f). τὸν τέλειον ἄνθρωπον GMary 463, 26f (restored). Mostly without a noun εἰ θέλεις τέλειος εἶναι Mt 19:21 (EYarnold, TU 102, '68, 269–73). Cp. IEph 15:2; D 1:4; 6:2. Pl. Mt 5:48a; ISm 11:3a. W. ὀλόκληροι Js 1:4b. W. πεπληροφορημένοι Col 4:12.
- ② of God *perfect* (Pind., Aeschyl. et al.; Theocr., Diod S, Plut. et al.; Tat. 4, 2, 12; 4, 15, 2; Theoph. Ant. 2, 15 [p. 138, 12]) Mt 5:48b (i.e. God is a role model for unlimited display of beneficence; cp. on this verse Hierocles 18 p. 459: the goal

is τὴν πρὸς θεὸν ὁμοίωσιν κτήσασθαι ‘attainment of likeness to God’ [oft. in Hierocles]; Marinus, Vi. Procli 18 ἵνα τὴν ὁμοίωσιν ἔχη πρὸς τὸν θεόν, ὅπερ τέλος ἐστὶ τὸ ἄριστον τῆς ψυχῆς; Betz, SM ad loc.). Restoration in a corrupt context AcPl Ha 1, 11 (ed. indicates τελέσαι or τελεῖν as alternatives).—RFlew, The Idea of Perfection '34; FGrant, The Earliest Gospel, '43; EFuchs, RBultmann Festschr., '54 (Beih. ZNW 21), 130–36; PDuPlessis, Teleios. The Idea of Perfection in the NT '59; KPrümm, Das NTliche Sprach-u. Begriffsproblem der Vollkommenheit, Biblica 44, '63, 76–92; AWikgren, Patterns of Perfection in Hb, NTS 6, '60, 159–67.—Schmidt, Syn. IV 503f. DELG s.v. τέλος. M-M. EDNT. TW. Sv.¹

How this moral/spiritual maturity is gained is, to some degree, the activity of the spiritual leader(s) as is showcased in the present tense verbs. True, advancement in spirituality does rest with the will and activity of the saint (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Peter 1:14-16); yet the spiritual coach is certainly part of that amazing process as Paul demonstrates here in Colossians 1, verse 28:

- Καταγγέλλομεν, *we proclaim*, is a present tense verb which means to announce broadly, to make known openly and with wide distribution. Historically, Justinian and Tacitus relate how the word was used of public decrees, like a “Hear ye, Hear ye.”² What does the spiritual leader/ coach do? He proclaims loudly and broadly who Jesus is and what He requires of His players.
- νουθετοῦντες, *we admonish*, is a present tense participle which is grammatically tied back to the main verb, really it derives its force from the main verb. The Greek word lexically speaks of warning someone about their moral behavior so they can, and will, make better life choices.³ As players respond so such moral instruction based, of course, on God’s standards, maturity is achieved.
- Διδάσκοντες, *we teach*, is another present participle wedded to the main verb. In Paul’s proclamation there was, therefore, always an impartation of skills for wisdom (*sophia*, σοφία), or wise, godly living.

¹ William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000): 995-996.

² Ibid., 515. καταγγέλλω impf. κατήγγελλον; 1 aor. κατήγγειλα; pf. κατήγγελκα. Pass.: 2 aor. καταγγέλην Ac 17:13; pf. ptc. κατηγγεμένος (Just.). (Since X., An. 2, 5, 38; ins [e.g. SIG 797, 6]; pap; 2 Macc; Philo, Op. M. 106; Joseph., Just., Tat.; freq. used of public decrees) to make known in public, with implication of broad dissemination, proclaim, announce²

³ Ibid., νουθετέω fut. νουθετήσω; 1 aor. ἐνουθέτησα. Pass.: aor. ptc. νουθετηθέντες Wsd 12:26; pf. 2 sg. νενουθέτησαι Job 38:18 (s. prec. entry; Trag. et al.; PGrenf II 93, 3; LXX; pseudepigr.; Philo; Jos., Ant. 4, 260; 20, 162; Did.) to counsel about avoidance or cessation of an improper course of conduct, *admonish*, *warn*, *instruct* w. acc. of pers. (Dio Chrys. 56 [73], 10; Sb 6263, 26) Ac 20:31; 1 Cor 4:14 (Wsd 11:10 τούτους ὡς πατὴρ νουθετῶν; PsSol 13:9; Jos., Bell. 1, 481, Ant. 3, 311); Col 1:28; 3:16 (in the last two pass. w. διδάσκειν, as Pla., Leg. 8, 84b; Philo, Decal.); 1 Th 5:12; 2 Th 3:15; Tit 1:11 v.l.; 1 Cl 7:1; 2 Cl 19:2. ἀλλήλους Ro 15:14; 2 Cl 17:2. τοὺς ἀτάκτους *warn the idle* 1 Th 5:14 (*punish*, as Plut., Sertor. 578 [19, 11] πλῆγαῖς v., probably overstates). τὸν οἶκον Hn 1, 3, 1; also τὰ τέκνα 1, 3, 2. τὰς χήρας καὶ τοὺς ὀρφανούς 2, 4, 3. ἀμαρτάνοντας m 8:10. Pass. νουθετεῖσθαι ὑπό τινος (Philo, Deus Imm. 134; Jos., Ant. 20, 162a) 2 Cl 17:3; Hn 3, 5, 4.—DELG s.v. νόος. M-M. TW. Spicq.

The present tense nature of these wonderful, descriptive verbs denotes the ongoing, perpetual nature of this worthy spiritual endeavor on the part of coaches of the Church of Jesus Christ. We are called, by God, to do our part to assist you in always improving as a player on the Lord's team.

So, in this new fall series we are merely fulfilling our God-given assignment by calling and challenging each of you to **Get In The Game** of moving on toward greater maturity. We'll show you some crucial drills to help you achieve this goal, but, please, realize we will present only some of the many drills you should practice to become a better, more seasoned member of the Lord's winning team. Should you desire to study additional drills, I would direct you to great books written by proven players:

- Richard Foster, *Celebration Of Discipline*
- Jerry Bridges, *The Practice of Godliness*
- R. Kent Hughes, *Disciplines of A Godly Man*
- Lewis Sperry Chafer, *He That Is Spiritual*.

I'd also invite you to take the new adult Sunday morning class we offer built of Dr. Charles Ryrie's excellent book *Balancing The Christian Life*.

And if you are not on the Lord's team, He died for your sin and rose from the grave to give you the opportunity to switch teams by placing your faith in Him as your Savior. As He promises in John 5, verse 24:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”

Honestly, you aren't living life the fullest, you aren't playing as you should, you aren't living up to your full spiritual potential until you join His team. So I challenge you, make this day, this moment, the time you leave the team of spiritual death and join the team of spiritual life.

Now, let's get to those all-important spiritual drills.

To warm up for practice and games, my baseball coaches typically lined us up in the outfield and challenged us to play pepper. In pepper, three or four players face one man with a bat. The first man throws a ball at the batter and his goal is to place-hit it back at them in successive order. So, the second man catches the ball, throws it to the batter, he hits it to the third man and so on. What does this drill teach players? It works on their eye-hand coordination, it helps them track the ball, it hones their glove skills, and it builds team unity as they work together.

For our first training camp drill, I'd like to introduce to our first drill for Christ's players, or disciples. Believe me, I use it often and has revolutionized my spiritual life.

A Drill For Disciples: Silence & Solitude

Noise. Our day is full of it. From the moment our feet hit the floor, until we go to bed at night, sounds surround us, some of our own making, some which are beyond our control.

- We waste no time clicking on the TV to check FOX NEWS.

- We fire up the IPAD to listen to our Amazon Prime, or Sirius music account.
- We walk around in public with headphones so focused on our music we don't just miss countless conversations with people, why, we might even miss the trumpet sound of the Rapture.
- We never drive the car without the sunroof open on a sunny day and stereo pumping out our favorite songs.
- We go to rock concerts, like I did recently (ZZ TOP), and have to insert ear protection devices to really enjoy the loud music which is actually moving your shirt on your body.
- We can't sit in our bedrooms without our hands on a video controller and the sound up as we play our favorite, intense, and life-like games.
- We have the I Phone up to our ear constantly as we field those all-important calls. And when we're not talking on them, they're constantly dinging as Instagrams or e-mail messages arrive.
- For me, personally, I downloaded a decibel meter on my I Phone last year just to mark how loud the music is before games at Lake Braddock High School. They promise to keep it down, but sometimes it's so loud I think the speakers are in my living room.

Yeah. Whatever became of silence? Guess Simon and Garfunkel's *Sounds Of Silence* from 1966 wouldn't be a best-seller in this generation. Quiet Riot's *Come On Feel The Noise* is probably a better theme song for our day. The louder, the better.

I'm all for good music, and good sound ... be what it may (a fresh-flowing river, the throaty sound of Harley mufflers, a beautiful piano etude by the late Vladimir Horowitz); however, a player on the Lord's team doesn't really mature in their spiritual abilities and they don't grow in their intimacy with the Coach until they learn the ultimate value of silence and solitude, the two very things our culture chafes against.

Consider the words of the Psalmist:

¹⁰ Cease *striving* and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth" (Psalm 46:10).

The participle is supplied by means of ellipsis in order to give meaning to the English sentence in the NASB. In Hebrew the opening command is just to "Cease," derived from the word *raphah*, רפה, which emphasizes stopping an action already in progress.⁴ Put differently, it is the

⁴ S. R. Driver and Charles A Briggs, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon*, ed. Francis Brown (Lafayette, Indiana: Associated Publishers and Authors, INC, 1981): 951-952, רָפָה S⁷⁴⁹⁸, 750³, 751⁰ TWOT²¹⁹⁸, 2198^b GK⁸³³², 833⁴, 833⁵ vb. *sink, relax* (NH id., so Aramaic רפא (der. spec.), Zinj. רפה Aph., رفا (rpo); Arabic رَفَاهَة (rafāhat) *an easy life* is perhaps akin);—Qal Pf. 3 ms. Ju 19:9 (yet v. infr.); 3 fs. רָפְתָה Ju 8:3 Je 49:24, etc.; Impf. 3 ms. יִרְפֶּה Is 5:24, יִרְרֶה Ex 4:26 (v. infr.), etc.;— 1. *sink down*, of hay in flame Is 5:24; *sink, decline*, of day Ju 19:9 (si vera l.; ὄλ κέκλικεν, GFM נָטָה [but how expl. the difficult רפה?]). Usually 2. *sink, drop* (of wings, v. Pi.), of hands, c. מן Ne 6:9 *their hands will drop from the work* (in fear); elsewhere abs. fig. = *lose heart, energy*, 2 S 4:1; Is 13:7; Je 6:24; 50:43; Ez 7:17; 21:12; Zp 3:16; 2 Ch 15:7; יָדִים om. Je 49:24. 3. *relax, abate*, of temper Ju 8:3 (+ מַעַל pers.). 4. *relax, withdraw*, subj. ", מן pers. Ex 4:26 (J), i.e. let one alone (but read perhaps יִרְרֶה, v. Hiph.). Niph. Pt. pl. נִרְפִּים *idle* Ex 5:18, 17 (J). Pi. Pf. 3 ms. רָפָה Jb 12:21; Impf. 3

command to stop whatever is causing current noise in your life and purposefully be quiet. When you do that is when you'll come to a deeper understanding of who God is. Why? Because you'll have more time to actually listen to Him, to contemplate Him, and to speak with Him. I know it is a hard, probing question, but I must ask it: When is the last time you were absolutely quiet before Christ, when you turned everything off, shut everything down and got alone with Him? When? Trust me, there are not greater times in your life because God always meets you there in the silence and speaks in a most profound, practical, penetrating fashion as you clear away the decibels causing clutter. To this I would also add that it is difficult to move onto maturity if you do not learn the high value of this particular drill. Show me, then, a person who has a deep, abiding, wise walk with God and I'll show you someone who knows how to be purposefully quiet before Him in a place of quiet. Show me someone who is spiritually shallow, whose spiritual walk is more carnal than it is holy and I'll show you someone who spend little or no time practicing this drill. Which are you?



While you are thinking about the answer to that query, I direct your attention to three concepts which naturally flow from the drill to pursue silence and solitude in order to head toward more marked maturity.

First, there is what I'd call ...

The Place

Why was Jesus so powerful? How did He bear up under such intense persecution? What did He do to get His spiritual batteries charged after a long day of work and ministry? Mark 1:36-38 tells us His approach to spiritual life:

³⁶ Simon and his companions searched for Him; ³⁷ they found Him, and said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You." ³⁸ He said to them, "Let us go somewhere

fp̄l.; תרפִינָה Ez 1:24, 25; Pt. מְרַפָּא (Ges ⁷⁵ m) Je 38:4; pl. מְרַפִּים Ezr 4:4;—causat.: *let wings drop* Ez 1:24, 25 (read Qal, מְרַפִּים subj., Co Toy Krae al., who del. in v 25); loosen and *let drop*, girdle of mighty, fig. for *weaken* them Jb 12:21; c. acc. hands, fig. for *enfeeble, dishearten* Je 38:4; Ezr 4:4. **Hiph.** *Impf.*, 3 ms. sf. יִרְפֶּךָ Dt 4:31 +; juss. 2 ms. תִּרְפֶּךָ Jos 10:6 +, etc.; *Imv.* ms. הִרְפֵּה Ju 11:37; 2 K 4:27; תִּרְפֶּךָ Dt 9:14 +; mpl. שֶׁ הִרְפִּי ψ 46:11;—causat., 1. *let drop*, the hand 2 S 24:16 = 1 Ch 21:15; fig., + מִן pers., = *abandon*, Jos 10:6 (JE); perhaps also (יָד om.) = *relax, refrain* Ex 4:26 (reading יִרְפֶּךָ, v Qal.); acc. rei., = *abandon, forsake*, Ne 6:3, so (subj. יָ) ψ 138:8; subj. יָ, c. acc. pers., Dt 4:31; 31:6, 8; Jos 1:5 (D), 1 Ch 28:20. 2. *let go*, sf. pers., Ct 3:4 (opp. אָחַז); fig., acc. (om.) מוֹסֵר, Pr 4:13 (opp. הִחֲזִיק, הִצְדִּיקָה, Jb 27:6 (opp. id.)). 3. *refrain*, c. מִן pers., = *let one alone* Ju 11:37; Dt 9:14, מִן of anger ψ 37:8; c. לָ pers. 1 S 11:3; 2 K 4:27; acc. pers. Jb 7:19; abs. *let alone*, i.e. do nothing, be quiet, 1 S 15:16 ψ 46:11 (cf. Weir in Dr 18 15, 16).—Je 3:22; Jb 5:18 ψ 60:4 v. רָפָא. **Hithp.** *Pf.* 2 ms. הִתְרַפִּיתָ Pr 24:10 *hast shewn thyself slack*; Pt. מִתְרַפֵּה 18:9 *one shewing himself slack*, pl. מִתְרַפִּים Jos 18:3.—Vid. also רָפָא *heal*.⁴

else to the towns nearby, so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came for” (Mark 1).

Where was He? Alone with the Father in silence and solitude. What was He doing? Listening, speaking, praying, and getting energized. After He fed the 5,000 plus people from the five loaves and the two fish, Matthew tells us what He did next:

“And after he had sent the multitudes away, He went up to the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone” (Matthew 14:23).

When the people attempted to make Him their ruler, John recounts what happened next:

“¹⁵ Jesus therefore perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force, to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone” (John 6:15).

Mark it well: He withdrew *again*, denoting that getting alone with the Father was a drill He lived by to make sure He was filled up and prepared for the mission at hand. And His withdrawal typically found Him in a mountainous region, much like that of Moses, of whom Jesus came to be the greater Moses and greater prophet, as prophesied (Deuteronomy 18:15).

Speaking of Moses, God taught him the drill of silence and solitude for the purpose of spiritual intimacy with Himself and spiritual growth on more than one occasion. After Moses, at forty years of age, fled from the busy life and sounds of Egypt when he killed the Egyptian taskmaster, he spent the next forty years as a lowly, obscure shepherd in the backwater, soundless, and hot desert of Sinai near Midian. I find it interesting that the Hebrew for wilderness or desert, *midbar* (מִדְבָּר), is derived from the verb “to speak,” *dabar* (דָּבַר).⁵ And, speak, God did to Moses in this trackless, treeless desert:

⁵ S. R. Driver and Charles A Briggs, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon*, ed. Francis Brown (Lafayette, Indiana: Associated Publishers and Authors, INC, 1981): 180-182. דָּבַר S¹⁶⁹⁶ TWOT³⁹⁹ GK^{1818, 1819, 1820}]1142 **vb. speak** (original meaning dub.; *range in order* Thes is conjectural and not comprehensive enough; *treiben* MV does not explain Arabic or Heb. usage, but only Aramaic A meaning *go away*, sustained by Arabic دَبَّرَ *dabara bihi*) *go away with it*, would best explain the four branches of usage:—(1) Arabic دَبَّرَ (*dabara*) *depart, perish*, IV. *retreat*, fig. *retrograde, decline*; دَبَّرَ (*dabrun*) *passing away, death*; Assyrian *dab̄aru*, Pi. *drive away*, Bez ^{Orient. Diplom. Vocab.}, *Dibbara*, pest-god, Hpt in KAT ⁵⁰⁰, דָּבַר *pestilence*. (2) Arabic دَبَّرَ (*dabara*) *follow behind*, in time, place, or station; دَبَّرَ (*dabrun*) *part behind*, دُبُرُ (*duburun*) *back*, דְּבִיר *hindmost chamber of temple*. (3) Syriac דָּבַר (*dabar*) *lead, guide*, cattle, sheep, government, *take a wife*, = Aramaic דָּבַר; Syriac דּוּבּוּרָא (*doburo*), Aramaic דָּבַר *leader*; Syriac דּוּבּוּרָא (*duboro*), Aramaic דְּבָרָא *guidance*; Syriac דָּבּוּרָא (*dabro*) Aramaic דְּבָרָא, Heb. דָּבַר; Syriac מַדְבָּרָא (*madbar*), Aramaic מְדַבְּרָא, Heb. מִדְבָּר *pasture, wilderness*; Arabic دَبَّرَ (*dibrun*), Syriac دِבْرִיטָא (*deburito*), Aramaic דְּבִירָתָא, Heb. דְּבִירָתָא *swarm of bees*, may be in this line, as led by their queen, so Thes. (4) Arabic دَبَّرَ (*dabbara*) *consider the end or issue* (of an affair), *relate* (a story or tradition); دَبَّرَ فِی (*dabbara fi*) *consider*, دَبَّرَ عَلٰی (*dabbara ‘alā*) *plan against*; Ph. דַּבַּר *speak*; Heb. דָּבַר etc. Syn. of אָמַר *say*, as Aramaic מְלִל with אָמַר; Gk. λαλεῖν, λέγειν; Lat. *loqui, dicere*; Germ. *reden, sagen*)—†Qal₄₁ only inf. (once?) & pt.: Inf. sf. בְּדַבְּרָה (by attraction to בְּשִׁפְטָה for usual Piel) ψ 51:6; Pt. דָּבַר Ex 6:29 + 30 times; pl. דְּבָרִים Nu 36:5 ψ 109:20; estr. ψ דְּבָרִי 5:7 + 3 times; f. דְּבָרוֹת Nu 27:7 ψ 31:19; pass. דָּבַר Pr 25:11;—*speak*, abs. Nu 27:7; 32:27; 36:5 (P) ψ 51:6 (?); דָּבַר דָּבַר *word spoken* Pr 25:11; with acc. rei דָּבַר דָּבַר *speaking a word* Jb 2:13; ψ אמת 15:2; תמים Am 5:10; (מ) ישׂרים Pr 16:13; Is 33:15; צדק Is 45:19; Est 10:3 ψ 28:3; (שקר)ים) ψ 63:12; 101:7; Je 40:16; ψ כזב 5:7; 58:4; רע ψ 109:20; נבלה Is 9:16; הָנֹת נִפְשׁוּ Mi 7:3;

with אָל of *person, unto* Gn 16:13 (J) Ex 6:29 (P) Je 38:20; 40:16 Dn 10:11 Jon 3:2; בְּאָזְנֵי *in the ears of* Dt 5:1; Je 28:7; המְלַאֵךְ *concerning, about* ψ 31:19; 109:20; Je 32:42 (sometimes rendered *against*, but dub.); עם *with* ψ 28:3; המְלַאֵךְ *the angel that spake with me* (as a prophet, an instrument of communicating with Israel) Zc 1:9, 13, 14; 2:2, 7; 4:1, 4, 5; 5:5, 10; 6:4 (vid. prep. בְּ III. 2 Ew^{217 f. (3)}). †**Niph.** Pf. נִדְבְּרוּ Mal 3:16; נִדְבְּרוּ ψ 119:23; נִדְבְּרוּ Mal 3:13; Pt. הִנְדְּבְּרִים Ez 33:30; reciprocal sense, *speak with one another, talk, abs.* Mal 3:16; with בְּ, *against* ψ 119:23; Ez 33:30; with עַל, *concerning, about* Mal 3:13 (RV *against*, vid. Ew^{217 i}). **Pi.**₁₀₈₉ Pf. דִּבֶּר Gn 12:4 +, דִּבֶּר Gn 21:1 + (on דִּבֶּר Ex 12:25 Dt 26:19 v. Bö^{1021 d (1)} Kö¹⁸⁸); **Impf.** יְדַבֵּר Gn 44:7 +, יְדַבֵּר Gn 44:18 +; יְדַבְּרוּ Gn 32:20; יְדַבְּרוּן Gn 58:2; **Imv.** דִּבֶּר Gn 24:38 +, דִּבְרֵ- Ex 11:2 +; **Inf.** דִּבֶּר Gn 24:50 +, דִּבְרֵ- Is 59:13 +; **Pt.** מְדַבֵּר Gn 27:6 +; f. מְדַבְּרֵת 1 S 1:13 +;— (הַדְּבָרִי Je 5:13, inf. Ki⁴⁸, prob. Ol^{182 e} Kö^{23 (5)}, perhaps MV; but more prob. a noun, as Ges^{52 (2)}, Anm.³ Ew^{156 a}, dub. pf. as Sta²²²; דִּבֶּר כְּיוֹם דִּבֶּר Ex 6:28 Nu 3:1 Dt 4:15; תְּחַלֵּת דִּבְרֵ- Ho 1:2, inf. Ki⁴⁸ Bö^{987 (7)} Kö^{23 (5)}; but more prob. pf., as Ges^{52 (2)}, Anm.³);—**speak, 1.** abs. Dt 18:17 + (throughout the literature) usually with לְאִמֵּר, less freq. וַיִּאמְרָ 2 K 18:28 +, cf. the phrases דְּבַרְתִּי (י) דְּבַרְתִּי Ez 5:13 + 18 times Ez; דְּבַרְתִּי Is 1:2; 21:17; 22:25; 24:3; 25:8; Je 13:15; Jo 4:8; Ob 18; דְּבַרְתִּי Is 1:20; 40:5; 58:14; Mi 4:4; דְּבַרְתִּי ψ 49:4; דְּבַרְתִּי ψ 66:14; 145:21; השִׁכַּח וּדְבַרְתִּי Je 17:13; 25:3; 35:14; דְּבַרְתִּי Jb 1:16, 17, 18. **2.** with acc. rei, very frequently, את הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה, Ex 20:1 Dt 5:19 +; לְמַעַן תְּדַבֵּר why *speakest thou any more of thy affairs?* 2 S 19:30; עַד אֲמַדְבֶּרְתִּי דְּבַרְתִּי until *I have told my errand* Gn 24:33; seld. sq. דְּבַר indef.; as דְּבַרְתִּי Is 58:13 *speak a (mere, empty) word*; so prob. also דְּבַרְתִּי Ho 10:4; with other nouns, e.g. דְּבַר קָשׁוּת *spake rough words* Gn 42:7, 30 (E); גְּבוּהָהּ דְּבַרְתִּי *proud words* 1 S 2:3; טוֹבֵי דְּבַרְתִּי *friendly words* Je 12:6; טוֹב 1 S 19:4 1 K 22:13 Est 7:9; שִׁקָּר Is 59:3 +, כּוֹב Dn 11:27, אִמְתָּהּ Je 9:4 +, שׁוֹאָה ψ 12:3 +; שִׁיר דְּבַרְתִּי *utter, sing a song* Ju 5:12; מִשָּׁל 1 K 5:12; יְהוּדִית *the Jewish language* Ne 13:24; סִרְהָהּ *rebellion* Dt 13:6 Je 28:16; 29:32. **3.** with persons: **a.** rarely acc. יְדַבְּרוּ לְשָׁלֵם *they could [not] speak unto him peaceably* Gn 37:4 (J; but Ew^{282 a} *about him*); אֲתָם ... וַיְדַבֵּר Nu 26:3 (P, but text corrupt vid. Di; no satisfactory explanation yet given, possibly read אֲתָם vid. d). **b.** most frequently with אֵל throughout the literature: Gn 8:15 +; cf. phrases יְדַבְּרוּ אֵל מֹשֶׁה לְאִמֵּר Ex 6:10 + 87 times; P; but אֵל מֹשֶׁה לְרִיב Ex 32:7; 33:1 (JE); וַיְדַבֵּר אֵל אֱהֲרָן Lv 6:18 + 8 times (P); וַיְדַבֵּר אֵל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל Ex 6:9 + 38 times (P); elsewhere, Ex 19:6 (E) Dt 1:3; 4:45 (D) הַעֲדָה (כָּל) הַעֲדָה Ex 12:3 Lv 19:2 Nu 16:24, 26 (P); אֵל לִבְּךָ *speak unto one's heart* Gn 24:45, i.e. to oneself, cf. also לִבְּךָ 1 S 1:13, v. 5 infr.; אֵל is used inexactly for עַל 1 S 3:12 1 K 16:12 Is 16:13 Je 27:13; 30:4; 33:14; 36:7, 31; 40:2; 50:1; 51:12, 62 where it is rendered *concerning* or *against*. **c.** with לְ, *speak to* 1 K 2:19 Ez 32:21 Dn 2:4; לְיְהוָה *speak, sing to Yahweh* words of a song Jos 10:12 (D) 2 S 22:1 (= ψ 18:1 title); in D, לְ דְּבַר *promise to*, in phrases לְ דְּבַר (י) Dt 1:11, 21; 6:3; 9:3; 10:9; 11:25; 12:20; 15:6; 18:2; 26:18; 27:3; 29:12 Jos 13:14, 33; 22:4; 23:5, 10 (all D); לְ דְּבַר אֱשֶׁר Dt 9:28 1 K 8:24, 25, 26 (= 2 Ch 6:15, 16, 17).—**d.** דְּבַר לְ Gn 24:7; 28:15; 49:28 Ex 32:34 (J) Jos 9:21 (P) Ju 14:7 2 S 23:3 Is 30:10 Zc 9:10 usually rendered *speak to*, but often rather *promise to*. הֲיִשָּׁאֵל לְדַבֵּר לְךָ אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ *is it possible to speak for thee unto the king?* 2 K 4:13 (by attraction to לְעֵשׂוֹת לְךָ). **d.** with אֶתְּ *speak with* Gn 17:3, 22, 23; 21:2; 23:8; 34:6, 8; 35:13, 15 Ex 25:22; 31:18; 34:29, 33, 34, 35 Nu 3:1; 7:89 Jos 22:15, 21 (all P) Gn 35:14; 41:9; 42:7; 45:15 Jos 17:14 (all E) Dt 5:21; sources of S K Ch 2 S 3:27; 7:7 = 1 Ch 17:6 1 K 8:15 = 2 Ch 6:4 1 K 22:24 = 2 Ch 18:23 2 Ch 10:10 (= אֵל 1 K 12:10) Je 5:5; 7:22; 9:7; 35:2; 38:25 Ez 2:1; 3:22, 24, 27; 14:4; 20:3; 44:5 Dn 1:19 Zc 8:16; cf. phrases דְּבַר אֶת אֶחָד *speak one with another* Ez 33:30; דְּבַר מִשְׁפָּטִים אֶתְּ *speak judgments with*, usually = *give judgment against*, (not Je 12:1), Je 1:16; 4:12; 12:1; 39:5; 52:9 (= 2 K 25:6); דְּבַר טוֹבוֹת אֶתְּ *speak kindly with* 2 K 25:28 = Je 52:32. **e.** c. אֶתְּ *speak with*, (not P), Gn 29:9; 31:24, 29 Ex 19:9; 20:19⁰; 22; 33:9 Nu 11:17; 22:19 Jos 24:27 (all JE) Dt 5:4; 9:10 Ju 6:17 1 S 9:25 (⊗ Th We Dr spread a couch for) 17:23 2 S 13:22 1 K 1:14, 22 2 K 6:33; 18:26 2 Ch 9:1 (= אֵל 1 K 10:2) Ne 9:13 Est 6:14 Je 32:4 Dn 8:18; 9:22; 10:11, 15, 17, 19 Ho 12:5; I Spake, *communed with my heart* Ec 1:16. **f.** לְפָנֶיךָ *before, in the presence of* Ex 6:12 Nu 36:1 (P) Ju 11:11 1 K 3:22 Est 8:3. **4.** with בְּ: **a.** *instrumental, by, or by means of a person* (vid. supr. **Qal** ad fin.) Nu 12:2⁰, 6, 8 (E) 2 S 23:2 (cf. Dr), 1 K 22:28 = 2 Ch 18:27; Hb 2:1; דְּבַר בְּשֵׁם *speak in the name of* Ex 5:23 (J) Dt 18:19, 20⁰, 22 1 Ch 21:19 Je 20:9; 26:16; 29:23; 44:16 Dn 9:6 Zc 13:3; בְּיַד *by the hand of* Nu 17:5; 27:23 Jos 20:2 (P) 1 S 28:17 1 K 8:53 + 13 times K, 2 Ch 10:15 (= 1 K 12:15) Is 20:2 Je 37:2; 50:1 Ez 38:17. **b.** *local (fig.), in the ears of* Gn 20:8 (E) Ex 11:2 Dt 32:44 (J) Gn 23:16 Nu 14:28 Jos 20:4 (P) Dt 31:28, 30 Ju 9:2, 3 1 S 8:21; 11:4; 25:24 2 S 3:19⁰ Je 26:15 Pr 23:9; דְּבַר בְּלִבְךָ *speak in the heart* Ec 2:15. **c.** *of the object, speak of, about* (prep. בְּ IV. e Ew^{217 f. (2)}) Dt 6:7; 11:19 1 S 19:3; 4 ψ 119:46; 122:8; *propose for (a wife)* 1 S 25:39 cf. Ct 8:8). **d.** *of hostility, against* (Ew^{217 f. (1)}) Nu 12:1, 8; 21:5, 7 (E) Jb 19:18 ψ 50:20; 78:19. **e.** *of price, at the cost of his life* 1 K 2:23 (vid. בְּ III. 3). **5.** with עַלְתִּי, of the object *concerning* or *about which* one speaks Gn 18:19 Nu 10:29 (J) Jos 23:14 (D) Ju 9:3 1 S 25:30 1 K 2:4, 27; 5:13⁰; 14:2, 22:23 (= 2 Ch 18:22), 2 K 10:10, 19:21 = Is 37:22, 1 Ch 22:11 2 Ch 23:3 Je 1:16; 18:7, 8, 9; 42:19. It may have this sense in most if not all of the following, where RV renders 1 K 2:18, 19 Est 7:9 Je 18:20 *for*; 2 Ch 32:16 Ne 6:12 Je 11:17; 16:10; 25:13; 26:13, 19; 35:17 Ez 36:5 Dn 9:12; 11:36 Ho 7:13 Am 3:1 *against*; and 1 K 9:5 2 K 22:19 Je 10:1; 19:15 *unto* (עַל is used for אֵל *unto* 2 Ch 32:19 Je 6:10; 25:2; 26:2 Ho 12:11); cf. the phrase דְּבַר עַל לְבָב *speak upon the*

¹Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. ³ So Moses said, "I must turn aside now, and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up." ⁴ When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush, and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." ⁵ Then He said, "Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." ⁶ He said also, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God (Exodus 3).

Jaw-dropping, isn't it? Instructive, too.

God didn't disclose Himself to Moses in the middle of a busy city, with camels coming and going, and shop owners calling out to customers to come and consider their wares. No. He revealed Himself to an old, used up, leathery-skinned shepherd on Mount Sinai in the middle of absolutely nowhere. Tells you something about God, doesn't it? While He can, and does, meet us where we are, His ultimate choice for us connecting with Him is in an obscure, out-of-the-way, sometimes hard-to-get-to place known for its silence and solitude.

Here in this unusual place, Moses heard God speak in a profound fashion in the middle of a common desert bush which burned but miraculously wasn't consumed. Figuratively, the lowly bush, easily represented Israel, the least people among the nations (Deuteronomy 7) who had been burning in affliction for the last forty years of Moses' desert experience; however, they had not been consumed. Why? The Lord was with them and for them, and His fire illustrated His holy judgment was about to be unleashed on the Egyptians. Yet He needed a deliverer. That man was Moses, the octogenarian. How lofty and mysterious are the ways of God.

Moses could have stayed in the valley floor with the sheep. I'm sure he'd seen desert bushes burn before from lightning strikes; however, this one proved to be different. So, he made the arduous climb to get to that remote, quiet location to see what was going on. While there He not only received His call to go on a spiritual mission to end all missions, He came face to

heart, speak kindly, comfort Gn 34:3; 50:21 (E) Ju 19:3 Ru 2:13, 1 S 1:13 (seemingly from context על for אל, *to her heart, to herself*, vid. Dr), 2 S 19:8 2 Ch 30:22; 32:6 Is 40:2 Ho 2:16. **6.** with infin. דבר לעשות † *promise to do* Ex 32:14 (J) Dt 1:14 Ez 6:10 Jon 3:10; † לתת דבר לתת † *promise to give* Dt 19:8; † דבר למהות † *threaten to blot out* 2 K 14:27; cf. † דבר להזהיר † i.e. so as to warn Ez 3:18; 33:8.

Note.— ותקם ותדבר את-כל-יורע הממלכה 2 Ch 22:10 ὁ ἀπόλασε, † *interfecit*, scribal error for ותאבד 2 K 11:1. Other explanations: *plot against, waylay* (Arabic دَبَّرَ (*dabbara*)) Thes MV; *pronounce sentence*, ellipt. ותדבר משפטים Ges^{hdw} Rob; but cf. VB—†**Pu.** Impf. שִׁדְבַר-יָהּ בַיּוֹם שֶׁיִּדְבַר-יָהּ *in the day when she may be spoken for* Ct 8:8 (vid. **Pi.** 4 c); *Pt.* גְּדוֹר מִתְדַבֵּר גְּדוֹר מִתְדַבֵּר *glorious things are being spoken in thee* (RV Pe MV *of thee*) ψ 87:3. †**Hithp.** Pt. מִתְדַבֵּר = מְדַבֵּר with acc. הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה *speaking this word* 2 S 14:13; שָׁמַע (את הקול) מִדְבַר אֱלֹהִים *heard (the voice, or) one speaking unto* Nu 7:89 (P) Ez 2:2; 43:6 (Di Nu 7:89 would read מְדַבֵּר after ὅ; the meaning not appreciably different from Piel; the Hithp. difficult to reconcile with אל). †**Hiph.** Impf. וַיִּדְבַר עִמָּי תִּהְיֶינָה *ψ 18:48* (2 S 22:48 has ומרד for rare וידבר, וַיִּדְבַר, וַיִּדְבַר *either* (cf. Aramaic דְּבַר *leads subject* (so Ges *coegit*, De Now), or (cf. Arabic اَدْبَرَ (*adbara*) *turn the back, retreat*) puts to flight, fig. for *subdues* (so Hi).

face with the living God and were permitted to be the first person in human history to hear the name of God:

hy<+h.a, (rv<âa] hy<βh.a, (hv, êmo-la,
 `~yhil{a/ rm, aYOÝw:

“And God said to Moses, I AM WHO I AM” (Exodus 3:14).

Stop and think about this. One of the most outstanding, magnificent revelations ever given to a mortal, God-fearing man came in one of the most remotest, God-forsaken, quietest places on earth.

What does this tell us? Much. It tells us we have to make the effort to get alone with God to consider Him, to study Him, to hear from Him, and to be in a place where His holy presence is so over-powering we feel the need to remove our shoes because just the their thickness makes us too lofty before His utter holy loftiness. Ever feel God calling you to take a walk off the main trail at Burke Lake? Do it. Ever feel God calling you to go out in your backyard late at night and sit in an Adirondack and take in His stellar glory? Do it. Ever feel God calling you to pull the car off the road in the Shenandoah mountains and walk to a vista point. Do it? Ever feel and sense God just wants you to shut everything down, turn everything off and just get absolutely quiet before Him. Do it? Do it and you will connect with Him, you will hear from Him, and you will be empowered and challenged by Him.

Where, I ask you, then, is your Mount Sinai, which was the highest peak in the Mount Horeb mountain range, rising some 7,497 feet off the desert floor? Where is your place of silence and solitude so you can more effectively get into God’s holy, awe-inspiring presence? I have several, and cannot even begin to explain their value to you. Some are static, while others are dynamic; however, I have them, as you should, too.

How often should you go there? That is the next logical question. I think the rest of Moses’ story in Exodus gives us the much needed answer. I call this part of the drill ...

The Performance

Reading through the rest of Exodus, you’ll readily discover that after Moses delivered the Israelites from bondage by the power of the living God, he followed God’s leading all the way back to that barren, arid, backwater, rock-strewn desert at the foot of Mount Sinai. It took all two million of them three months to walk there (Exodus 19:1). Don’t you know they must have thought, “Why in the world is God leading us into the middle of nowhere? Why are we headed into the heart of the desert where there is no food or water when He could lead us in a better, more beneficial, grassier direction? Why is He having us stop and set up camp at the base of an ominous, craggy mountain peak in the blistering sands of the desert?” There are many answers to these questions, but for our purposes we shall focus on the fact God showed them, as He has showed Moses, that He is best reached in a place of utter silence and solitude.

Cecil B. Demille’s 1956 cinematography masterpiece titled *The Ten Commandments* leads you to believe Moses went up the holy mount one time and then came down with the Law. Theatrical license merely summarized what really happened, probably for the sake of time. Such, however, is not what happened. To study chapters 19 through 34 of Israel’s time before the holy mount is to learn that Moses, at eighty, climbed that mount, per God’s request, at least seven times and maybe eight, depending on how you interpret the passages in question.

Stop and think about this.

God could have just spoken to Moses while he walked around at the base of Sinai. He could have come to him while he was in his tent one evening. But He did not do any of these things. He called His leader, His prophet, and His priest to climb the lofty, dangerous, arduous peak. Let's say he did this eight times, as I think he did. Ostensibly, this means God commanded an eighty-year-old to walk up a total of 59,976 feet. Imagine the stamina to pull those ascents off? Imagine the beating his old knees and back took as he headed back down for a total of 59,976 feet. He could have argued and complained (like we are prone to do when God wants us to go the extra mile to connect with Him), "Lord, you have got to be kidding? Do you remember how old I am? You want *this* body to go back up *that* mountain? Look, I just came down. So, could you wait a minute? Let me get some Ben Gay and a heating pad along with a couple of Advil and then I'll get these old bones moving." He didn't do that because he knew the value of getting alone with God in that solitary place of utter silence.

Consider what transpired, what Moses learned as he made those ascents.

- *Ascent 1*: Moses went up and learned that Israel would be kingdom of priests to God if they obeyed His covenant (Exodus 19:3-6).
- *Descent 1*: Moses went down the mount and gave Israel God's Word (Exodus 19:7-8a). Israel said they'd be obedient (Exodus 19:8a).
- *Ascent 2*: Moses went back to the Lord with the words of the people (Exodus 19:8b). God promised to reveal Himself in a powerful, graphic fashion to the people (Exodus 19:9-13).
- *Descent 2*: Moses went back down the mount to get the people ready for God's personal and spectacular revelation (Exodus 19:14-15). God came to earth, stopping atop Mount Sinai and smoke, fire, an earthquake, and a loud angelic trumpet blast announced His arrival (Exodus 19:16-19).
- *Ascent 3*: Moses went back up the mount and God warned him to warn the people not to get too close for a look lest they die (Exodus 19:20-24).
- *Descent 3*: Moses went back to the valley floor to be with the people (Exodus 19:25). God verbally gave the people, in that remote, still location His Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-20).
- *Ascent 4*: Moses went up into the thick darkness caused by the clouds to be near God (Exodus 20:21). While here, God gave him additional laws on how to live holy lives before Him (Exodus 20:22-24:2).
- *Descent 4*: Moses went back down the mount to relay God's new commandments to the people and they agreed to be obedient (Exodus 24:3-8).
- *Ascent 5*: Moses headed back up the mount, but this time Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, the seventy elders and Joshua joined him (Exodus 24:9). They joined him in order to ratify the Mosaic Covenant as Israel leaders, but from what we read in the context they stayed at one level, while Moses and Joshua headed up higher. Eventually, Joshua stayed in a solitary location as Moses headed up even higher into the fire and smoke of God's presence (Exodus 24:13-14). FOR SIX DAYS MOSES SAT ON THAT MAGNIFICENT MOUNT AND HEARD NOTHING FROM GOD (Exodus 24:16-17). Again, we learn much about God from this, don't we? Sometimes we learn that the greatest truths God wishes to disclose to us, sometimes the most memorable moments we have with Him

come after prolonged period of complete silence and solitude. For the next forty days and forty nights, God let Moses see the pattern of the heavenly tabernacle so he could make one down on the desert floor (Exodus 24:18-31:18). Imagine the magnitude of this. God showed this one man who dared to get alone with Him in the middle of nowhere how and where sinful man could approach Him. And His revelatory insight started with the Ark of the Testimony, located in the Holy of Holies (Exodus 25:10-22), and then it moved out from here, thereby showing that God, in His grace and mercy, reached out to sinners first. Wonderful.

- *Descent 5:* Moses, at God's bidding, hurried down the mount with the Ten Commandments carved in stone by God's very finger (Exodus 20:12; 31:18). When he reached the bottom, he saw the people worshipping a golden calf, so he summarily broke the first-ever copy of God's personal handwriting man had ever seen (Exodus 32:15-30).
- *Ascent 6:* Moses scrambled up the mount in order to secure the mercy of God, lest His holiness consume the Israelites for their flagrant sin (Exodus 32:3-33:3). God sent a plague upon the people, but in His wrath He remembered mercy.
- *Descent 6:* Moses told the people they had better act repentant (Exodus 33:4-6) and they did. God, then, for the first time, personally descended on the tent of Moses located outside the camp of the Israelites. He would do this on multiple occasions, but this wouldn't keep Him from asking Moses to head back up the mountain (Exodus 33:7-11).
- *Ascent 7:* It seems Moses ascended the mount again here for God hid him in the cleft of a rock as His glory passed by (Exodus 33:12-23). Moses, who struggled with God abandoning the people because of their sin, wanted extra reassurance God was with them, so he asked to catch a glimpse of God if God was going to be with them for the rough road ahead. Once more, in this barren, rock-strewn place, God gave him a greater, more intense revelation, one no man has ever had since. Who says silence and solitude are not profitable for the spiritual man?
- *Descent 7:* Moses headed back down the mount and cut two stones per God's command (Exodus 34:4a).
- *Ascent 8:* Moses took the blank stone tablets back up to God, and God renewed the covenant with Israel once more, telling them what He expected from them as covenant partners (Exodus 34:4b-26). During the next forty days and nights he chiseled the commandments on the stone and communed with God.
- *Descent 8:* What is most interesting is when Moses descended this time, his face radiated the shekinah glory of God (Exodus 34:29-35). The sight was so bright they had to put a veil on him. Absolutely amazing. Such is what happens in a small fashion when you spend quality time in silence and solitude. You radiate the fact, to all those around you, that you have been in the presence of the living God.

Please, take note of these historical episodes from the life of Moses. He wasn't afraid to be alone with God, not one time but many times. It wasn't enough to make the difficult climb to see the

bush which burned but was not consumed. No, this godly man devoted a pivotal part of his life to making the tough ascents and descents into God's presence on a mountaintop. Those treks proved to be the most important quests he ever took, touching his life and other lives in ways we are still speaking about today. Those treks gave him insights into God he never would have attained, and saw things he would have never seen regarding the awesomeness of God's mysterious presence. What about you? Where is your Mount Sinai and how often will you ascend and descend so you can worship God and hear His voice speak into your life?

Baseball games are typically really noisy; however, there is always that quiet time in the locker room when you get alone and get geared up for the game. Based on what we've seen in the life of Moses, I'd dare say it's time for God's players to get ready for our own journey by looking for that special place called Silence and Solitude. Time spent there in God's presence is priceless and powerful.

