



ASSOCIATION
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Reference Point

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Quiet

Quiet.

Oh, we know. Libraries don't have to be quiet any more. We are permitted to speak in normal voices and have conversations with friends—even laugh out loud!—without fear of someone frowning at us.

But we still appreciate the quiet—the concentration and intensity it signifies, the courtesy it represents, the tradition it upholds. In fact, when I read Ecclesiastes 9:17 (ESV) recently, I thought I should cross-stitch it as a banner for the library: “The words of the wise heard in quiet are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools.” The words of the wise heard in quiet—why, that practically “shouts” LIBRARY!

So I've been studying the word quiet. In the Bible, quiet is associated with blessing, rest, security, peace, holiness, ease, assurance, gentleness, and work. However, quiet is held in contrast to strife, foolish arguments, wickedness, fear, rash actions, and trouble. Quietness is one of the results or fruits of righteous living (Isaiah 32:17).

Quietness is a source of strength, according to Isaiah 30:15: “In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.” Our pastor, Rob Morgan, recently told our congregation about a conversation with his wife Katrina. “Will you pass me the Extra Strength Tylenol?” she asked him. “Oh, dear,” he replied, “do you need medicine for a headache?” “No,” she said. “My head is fine. I just need some extra strength!”

Me too! If extra strength came in a bottle, I'd buy stock! But even better, we have the promise of strength in the simple discipline of quietness.

Some of us, when we feel weak and needy, respond with bluster and busyness and wordiness. We talk too much. We fret. We go on the defensive and become argumentative. We rally the troops and give pep talks.

But the scripture points to a better route: quietness. Choosing to rest instead of stirring things up, choosing to be confident instead of worrying is the true path to strength. This is a deliberate, even an unnatural, response in time of crisis or high demand, but it is the path that makes us look like Jesus. This attitude of quietness is not just for those emergencies, though; it is our strength for daily living, too. With dependence on the Lord to meet our needs, we can find stamina for the daily details, the Monday mornings, the everyday events. We can be solid and reliable Kingdom people.

Here's the best part. We don't have to supply the quietness for ourselves. We have a Heavenly Father who provides it for us. “The Lord will quiet you by his love,” Zephaniah 3:17 promises. If you find yourself in turmoil—uneasy, insecure, weak—just meet with the Lord to rejoice in His love and strength and protection and provision for you, and your heart will receive His quietness. As a fretful child is quieted by a loving parent, we can rest in the security of our Heavenly Father's arms.

Shhh.

--Carol Reid

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