

Published based on [The Fight for Quiet](#)

The Fight for Quiet



I slipped out of the house and sat in the rocking chair on my front porch. It was 5:15 a.m. Darkness surrounded me. The silence was both inviting and discomfoting.

I felt the delight of the moment. Just me, God, and the world of nature. And I entered the war zone. The fight for quiet.

I closed my eyes for a moment. I consciously tried to quiet all the thoughts that so quickly swarmed my brain. I “centered” or rather, I attempted to.

I could hear at least 4 different species of birds singing “Good Morning” to the world. Crickets chirped. In the distance, I heard a frog croaking. A dog barked somewhere nearby. Cars on a nearby highway occasionally made their way on their journey.

Much more noisy was my world within.

For most of the last thirty years, I have practiced a daily “quiet time”. I've taught others about it. I've written about it. I studied about it, yet I still have to fight through layers of stuff to access the “quiet place”.

Humorously, sometimes I find the best way to make my daily “to do” list is to enter my quiet time because everything that I even might need to do will jump into my mind!

I find that there are two primary “fights” that I must deal with in order to find the place of quiet. The fight within and the fight without.

Getting up early helps me with the fight without. The things that literally swirl around me demanding my attention increase as the day unfolds just like the hummingbirds who awakened as I sat on my front porch to fight over the sweet concoction my husband has hanging there for them. However, getting up early is not an answer in and of itself if we are just adding to the busyness of our lives. There may be additional changes that we need to make to put our world in order.

The fight without is one reason to live in a monastery! Most of us living in today's world are pulled in a million directions all throughout each day. I recently read an article (for which my kids relentlessly “rib” me, the article reading queen, always prepared with some tidbit of knowledge which will help them!) about the 5 Health Issues That Hit Young Women. I know some of you are asking why I, a mere 50 years old, was reading such an article. I suppose denial and delusion are still part of my thinking processes!

Anyway, the article named the #1 health crisis for young women as intense, crippling stress. It talked about how they were overspent with careers, social life, cell, e-mail, and instant messages. Then this quote struck me, “They don't realize it isn't normal to live in chaos.”

Sadly, this “chaos” is the way many of us try to live. I've learned that it doesn't work too well for me, yet I still have to fight it off at every corner.

Almost three years ago, I remember looking at my crowded calendar and asking God what I could take off. I was almost stretched beyond belief with the normal demands of any wife and mother plus homeschooling two teens, my husband and I pastoring a large church, leading the ladies' ministry, the etc.

I just couldn't find one thing that could be taken off that calendar even though I longed to do so.

Months later, with life's circumstances changed drastically, I took my pencil and erased months of activities that no longer "needed" me. Ah, a sobering perspective on truth for me.

A friend of mine later commented about the insane life she had been watching me live. Too busy for any sane woman. I mused about how no one had commented on that to me before this crash happened, but now the quiet voices increasingly emerged verifying that I had been truly out of balance. Ouch! How can I (or anyone) lead others spiritually if I don't have a clue that my life is in chaos?

And I have found that my busyness "worked" for most everyone else. I helped to meet their needs and wants.

If you want balance in your life, you have to get it for yourself. I've found that this is called "self-care" and is quite different from selfishness. Self-care allows us to be healthy, whole people, who can give of themselves in appropriate ways to others because we have first attended to our own hearts. To do otherwise is to be out of sync with our hearts and we can't hear the voice of God or the voice of our own heart very well.

Hebrews 4:10-11 speaks of how we have to labor to enter rest. Another one of the paradoxes of God that bears our contemplation.

Rest is beautiful, inviting, restorative, refreshing, yet we find ourselves completely devoid of it because of our own unawareness or our own choices or both.

Hebrews also repeatedly states that "Today if you will hear His voice..." God is speaking to us today. We have to labor to hear that voice, working to quiet the world without so that we can tap into the world within.

Tomorrow I will write about the fight within, but for today, can you ask yourselves the following questions?

How can I quiet the world without so that I can hear God's voice?

What changes do I need to make in order to live a balanced life?

You can also find this article published on [The Fight for Quiet](#)