

The Quiet Year 2024

WHAT IS THE QUIET YEAR?

“...aspire to lead a *quiet* life.”

- 1 Thessalonians 4:11

As a church community, we have felt the increasing danger and unhealth that comes from the pace, priorities, and products that come from social media and phone addiction. We believe that these tools are at the point which their negatives far outweigh their positives.

Our community has always been dedicated to the freedom and restoration found in Christ and his church. It is not an understatement to say that more than 95% of our community is experiencing serious negative effects from social media and the overall speed we find ourselves running. There are countless people battling lust & sexual addiction, body image, jealousy, anger, shopping addiction, and much more.

Therefore, we feel that our church’s conviction and call is to honor the spirit of Paul’s thoughts in 1 Corinthians 8... That we may abstain from all forms of social media in solidarity with those who are trying to find peace, and freedom for their emotional and mental health, and at a whole-- their soul. We believe that with the removal of social media and other compulsive addictions related to our phones, and overall pace, we will create an environment which will distill down the quality and depth of relationships, and allow us to actually pursue a life of non-anxiousness, peace, and ultimately presence and joy.

This decision has been agreed upon by our entire staff, and we are dedicated to this practice for the entirety of 2024.

This commitment is structured around four components which fully encompass daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly rhythms:

1. The complete **disengagement with our social medias** (and any addictive phone applications including our church accounts).
2. A heavy focus on the **practice of a weekly savor day** for the entire year.
3. The participation in our **communal, monthly quiet practices** which we create for the replacement of the void from screen time.
4. Plan and implement some form of a **spiritual solitude retreat** in 2024.

Lastly, We acknowledge the reality of this decision and commitment, especially in regards to our church and community experiencing the potential negative effects of “being out of the loop,” broadly disconnected, and socially irrelevant as a church. However, through our Google chat platform, we believe we can actually foster a deeper, more robust and meaningful community which will actually curate the environment for change, freedom, peace, and deeper, quality relationships. While producing the most important goal: A deeper and more rich abiding relationship with Jesus. Ultimately, we know this to be true: This year commitment will only provide a better, higher quality pace and presence with our relationships, and we believe it is worth it.

Want to join the quiet year?

www.contrast.church/thequietyear



GRACE & EFFORT PRECURSOR

Anytime we attempt a “challenge” of some sort there comes the tension of being afraid of failing, or being shamed for not doing enough, etc. It is called a challenge because it is not meant to be easy, and we understand that most of what this quiet year is asking is not just hard, but **completely** counter-cultural to the rest of our world. It can be easy to start judging people, or bragging about how good we are doing, or also on the flip-side, feel insecure, judged for not doing enough, or hiding/lying about what we are doing. I (Trey) just want you to know that just by reading this document you have at least some interest in this, and we are so proud of you for that alone. If you complete one day, or the whole year, you spent energy, time, resources, and more to fight for this in your life and we are so proud! There is no shame in not finishing. Grace is the air we are breathing in this endeavor. But it is important to know that grace isn't opposed to **effort**, just **earning**. That being said, this is HARD, for everyone. It requires money, time, stepping into fears, avoiding things we have wrapped our identity around. People will have a hard time understanding, and it will be difficult. But, we promise you that even a few days engaging in these components will lead us to walking more closely with Jesus. And the best part, we you aren't **alone**. There are almost 100 people all trying to quiet their soul for the sake of health and intimacy with Jesus.

We are here for you, and we will celebrate each and every win you see in your life because of this year!

Much love,

Trey



THE FOUR COMPONENTS EXPLAINED

ADDICTIVE PHONE REMOVAL | (DAILY)

*The complete **disengagement with our social medias** (and any addictive phone applications including our church accounts).*

This includes but is not limited to:

Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok, X (Twitter), YouTube Shorts, etc.

We are leaving it up to your personal discretion on other apps and if you should remove them. For instance, some may be heavily addicted to a news app, sleeper, or the stock market. If you feel it is aiding in still having an addiction to constantly pick up your phone then you may want to remove it. Its also important to note that some of these may still be able to be used on a browser on your computer, like amazon, or a shopping app but may still limit overall phone use.

The best way of thinking is to create a phone which focuses on minimizing “daily pick-ups.”

“Anything which I find myself getting on a few times or more a day I will remove.. Ex: Sleeper is a terrible app for my Sundays, as I am on it a lot mindlessly scrolling, watching scores, etc.. I still want to play fantasy, but I will just do the desktop mode. Is it more impractical? For sure.. But it will minimize my phone pickups on Sunday and few nights a week. Hopefully that gives you some inspiration!”



THE SAVOR DAY (SABBATH) | (WEEKLY)

*A heavy focus on the **practice of a weekly savor day** for the entire year.*

The Savor Day (or Sabbath) is a 24 hour period once a week of: worship, delight, rest, and healing. It is a mini-heaven each week.

Worship is anything which ascribes glory, reverence and honor to God. Worship can be listening and singing to music, or it can be going on a walk or hike in nature. It could be reading a liturgy or the Bible, or sitting in silence reflecting on gratitude for God's provision. Worship can be cooking a healthy meal, or listening to a sermon. It comes in many facets, and a great book to help you feel the freedom and fullness of this can be best explained in *Spiritual Pathways* by Gary Thomas. My personal favorite Savor reads are:

Celebration of Discipline | Richard Foster

Ruthless Elimination of Hurry | John Mark Comer

Sabbath | Abraham Heschel

Sacred Rhythms | Ruth Haley Barton

Delight is anything which creates as Abraham Heschel would say a “palace in time,” its a moment of heaven. It's reminding yourself that God has glimpses of true heaven on earth, and foreshadows what is to come. Maybe you order that brisket you've been eyeing, or you grab a black-raspberry chip cone from Graeters, or you take a nice long bath, or you play 9 with a close friend, a coffee shop with some quiet time.

Rest is not just physical rest, but emotional, mental and spiritual. It is a holistic, soul (*nephesh*, which means all of you) rest. This means that it can be different for each person. But it is not simply numbing or pivoting to “other work.” For instance, watching 8 hours of netflix is not rest, and filling your savor day with to-dos and house projects is not rest. Maybe a good movie is, but we do not embrace a sloth mentality for rest. Maybe if you work primarily in an



office, gardening/walking could be rest, whereas a tradesman may read for rest. Rest can be a nice nap, rest can be shutting your phone off for four hours. Rest can be waiting to confront your spouse about something until the next day. Rest is setting up boundaries to not work. This includes “errands,” and even chores. The point of rest is becoming “nothing” worthy of earthly value. We do not “accomplish rest,” we allow it for the sake of worship, obedience, and trust that God can work when we aren’t and to remind us he still loves us regardless of what we do—or more specifically DON’T do.

Healing is, in my opinion, the most important Biblical component (after the fall) of Savoring. We heal from the weeks past, the unsettledness in our souls, the tensions of life, the present things in our minds and hearts, and lastly, the reminder of our future, full-healed selves... We heal because Jesus is our healer, and he is the “sabbath embodied.”

“God creates and shapes a rich and colorful world in order to celebrate the feast of creation with all his creatures on the Sabbath. Therefore the **Sabbath is a consummation of creation**; without it creation is incomplete and remains insignificant..’ And as we celebrate it weekly, we have **hope in God’s final consummation**—the return of Jesus...” and the kingdom coming forever.

If you'd like more information/clarity on a Savor day, please listen to our teaching we did on this topic back in the Spring, or I attached the manuscript too if you'd like to skim it.

Podcast:

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/6FReIRlWf5waC2CO75Vwdo?si=ac86dea26c58456d>

Manuscript:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1oNHVWoexPKVaKbPt4E2wG8jqAXa5U5bBlTHocrsepIQ/edit?usp=sharing>



COMMUNAL QUIET PRACTICES | (MONTHLY)

*The participation in our **communal, monthly quiet practices** which we create for the replacement of the void from screen time and a slower pace.*

In order to fully engage a “quiet year” it requires not just the subtraction of distractions and unhealthy habits/addictions, but it requires a *replacement*. Spiritual disciplines can be a powerful means to provide an intentional space (and overall life) to encounter God and yield more deeply to his Spirit.

Each month we will **practice** a different spiritual discipline/or quiet-centered practice. We expect you to attempt as close as possible the expectation/frequency of the discipline, but know that some of these may be a big step for some people on top of the other things, so there is grace in your adaptations.

January | Fasting

Fast (from food if possible) one day a week for the month.

February | Hospitality

Have at least one person/family over for a meal (or out if you don't have a place), encourage them and share a meal with them.

March | Silence

Spend at least 20 minutes in complete silence one time each week.

April | Service

Intentionally offer to help serve someone for nothing in return (yard/house project, clean their house, or serve at a local ministry)

May | Prayer Labyrinth



Participate in a prayer labyrinth and reflect on it.

June | Generosity

Give \$100 bill to someone who has no way of returning the favor in any capacity, and do not share this story with anyone.

July | Missional Living

Complete one of the suggested missional challenges this month.

Aug | Honoring One Another

Write a “substantial length” encouragement card to someone and give it to them.

Sep | Simplicity

Engage in one (or more) simplicity challenges this month.

Oct | Slowing

Attempt some of the suggested “slowing practices”.

Nov | Bible Reading

Complete one of the suggested reading plans this month.

Dec | Reflection

Spend at least an hour reflecting on your past year, filling out some form of reflection.



SOLITUDE RETREAT | (YEAR)

*Plan and implement some form of a **spiritual solitude retreat** in 2024.*

We know this is a big ask, both timewise and financially. Therefore, our only recommended parameters is it must be **at least** one night away, and it must have an attempt to do nothing but **be alone**.

A great example that we would highly recommend is to rent a “getaway house,” bring a simple meal or two, and just spend the time with no agenda, and just your bible, and maybe a journal. Try to have no cell-service/use your phone, no music, nothing super taxing (fancy meal to make, lots of activities/books, etc.).

The goal is as Henri Nouwen would say: “become useless before God.”

This will require planning, so just know you have the whole year to carve out a date.

*Fun fact, in the OT law, it was the norm to save about 5-10% of what would have been about a 23% tithe for “spiritual vacation” or pilgrimage to Jerusalem to participate in several-day-long feasts each year. So just know that when you save \$150 for this you are literally “tithing” in the way the OT law prescribed which is cool. #Dontfeelguiltyforgoingonvacation

We can't wait to see how God meets you in this crazy, quiet, slow, unproductive, mundane, but beautiful, faithful, paced, non-anxious year!

