

Noise [Psalm 131]

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INTRODUCTION

1. A few years ago, the wife & I went to Wrigley Field in Chicago while in town for a conference.
 - a. If you've been to an MLB game lately, there's always things happening.
 - 1) Between innings—jumbotron running and soundtracks blaring—an ADHD nightmare
 - b. At Wrigley, it's a throwback to a time long ago. There's none of that flair.
 - c. Quite honestly, because the crowd was small (the Cubs were bad), it was like a library.
 - 1) Although enjoyable, the experience felt abnormally. There was no noise.
2. Our world is full of noise: from cars, to sirens, to jets, to mowers.
 - a. And we've become almost used to it, haven't we?
 - b. An old iPhone commercial makes a point to isolate some of these noises.
 - 1) If you note, it used light piano noise and isolated quiet while it's really all noise
 - 2) It's popular to have earbuds blaring while living out the rest of life.
 - c. Usually, I spend my nights on the laptop while watching television.
3. It's true it's a noisy world, but all of this says nothing of the internal noises we experience.
 - a. Noises of anxiety, fear, uncertainty, and even guilt.
 - b. Is it even possible to achieve inner quietness in the midst of this noisy world?
 - c. The Scriptures say it is possible, and we'll discover it today in a short psalm: 131
4. This is another psalm of ascent, another psalm of King David.
 - a. His life vacillated between pride and humility, strong and weak, noise and quiet

VERSE 1

My heart is not proud, LORD, my eyes are not haughty;
I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me.

1. This text encouraging quietness begins with a conversation on pride.
 - a. In Hebrew thought, the heart was the source of intelligence and reason.
 - 1) Additionally, the word for pride here means, "to be swollen."
 - b. Thus, a swollen heart was something to be avoided.
 - 1) Confidence is fine, but it must have its limits.
 - 2) **Proverbs 16:18** = Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.
2. In the second part of the verse we read, "I do not concern myself with great things"
 - a. In the original Hebrew, this actually says, "*I have not walked about ...*"
 - b. So the original readers equated "walking about" with over-thinking
 - 1) I sometimes react to stressful moments by pacing about.
 - 2) When we lead noisy lives, we run around without purpose
3. This Psalm gives us two pieces of advice in order for us to eliminate the noise?
*First, it takes HUMILITY.
 - a. The message of verse one: eliminating pride is critical to the eliminating noise
 - 1) Arrogance and quietness are opposites.
 - 2) One of the most rewarding thing over the past years have been my doctoral studies
 - a) I've learned a lot about the world and even more about me.
 - b) The main thing I've learned: that I'm not that bright
 - c) I better understand my limitations and am realistic about my talents.
 - 3) And I know that I have absolutely nothing to be arrogant about.
 - b. **James 4:10**: Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will lift you up.

VERSE 2

² But I have calmed and quieted myself, I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content.

1. The metaphor used here is still relevant today: like a breast-feeding child
 - a. Guys tend to get weirded out about this, and I can't blame them.
 - b. Then you get to the other side of it: when your baby wakes up in the middle of the night
 - c. The text speaks to the level of quietness: an innocent contentment we should have.
2. In addition to humility, eliminating the noise takes EFFORT. Note: I HAVE CALMED
 - a. This seems antithetical because we believe movement equals friction which equals noise.
 - b. It is possible, however, to exert effort and to do so in a quiet manner.
 - c. What do we need to do to get here?
 - 1) Acknowledge the noise
 - a) We tend to cover up noise with more noise
 - 2) Seek Scripture
 - a) We tend to think we can solve it ourselves
 - 3) Rely on the Lord through prayer
3. RESULT ONE of all of this: INNER QUIETNESS
 - a. We're able to move along in the world because of our new found silence.
 - b. At the beginning of WW2, the British wanted to prepare its citizens to Nazi bombs
 - 1) One of their ways was a campaign urging its citizens to "Keep Calm and Carry On"
 - 2) It was rarely used, but has gained huge popularity in recent years.
 - c. The point: do you have the peace to maneuver in a world of chaos around you?

VERSE 3

³ Israel, put your hope in the LORD both now and forevermore.

1. RESULT TWO: QUIETNESS FOR OTHERS
 - a. David advises his people to walk in his way and reduce the noise for themselves.
 - b. Once we discover our own peace, it should organically flow to those around us.
 - c. For the longest time, people have wanted to talk about evangelism.
 - 1) We come up with programs to try to encourage people to talk about faith.
 - 2) If you find something that truly changes your life, won't you tell others?
 - d. Then what about Jesus?

CONCLUSION

1. When you put your phone on vibrate, you're not solving anything.
 - a. There's a thing called "Airplane mode" that basically bricks your phone.
 - b. To truly eliminate the noise, we can't just do what we always do.
2. We can't control the noise outside of us, but we can control the noise within.
3. **Psalm 46:10** "Be still and know that I am God.