

patina = brown film that forms on the surface of metal over a long period of time,
a sign of grit, long-suffering, endurance through the fires of life

2 Corinthians 4:8-11

8 We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair;
9 persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. 10 We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.
11 For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body.

➤ **What do we do with the "silence of God"?**

Matthew 15:22-23

22 A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly." 23 Jesus did not answer a word.

John 11:6

So when he [Jesus] heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days...

Luke 9:20

When the men came to Jesus, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?'"

silence is not absence

"Sometimes God hides from us. He is seeking to create the kind of person whose patient persistence can actually handle truth. God won't ruin us with truth if we don't have the character to handle it. God does not always hide things from us. Sometimes he hides them for us...If we can never understand his silence, we'll certainly never understand his words."

– A.J. Swoboda

- Remember that "silence" is normal Christian life.
- Trust that God is at work with our best in mind, if it's quiet then it's quiet for a reason.
- Learn to settle into the deeper questions and hold them over a longer period of time.

➤ **How do we give our attention to what matters most?**

Romans 8:5

Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

Colossians 3:2

Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

Psalms 16:8

I have set the Lord always before me.



"We must reflect that, when we reach the end of our days, our life experience will equal what we have paid attention to, whether by choice or default." – William James (1842-1910)

In trying to pay attention to everything, we're losing our ability to pay attention to anything.

"Immersing myself in a book or lengthy article used to be easy...Now my concentration often starts to drift after two or three pages. I get fidgety, lose the thread, begin looking for something else to do. I feel as if I'm always dragging my wayward brain back to the text...Once I was a scuba diver in the sea of words. Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski."
– Nicholas Carr

ra'ah (Hebrew) = tending, looking, paying attention

The ancient life was a tending life--a life where you gave yourself to something, where you stuck with it over the long-haul, where you sustained your attention on whatever it was you were assigned to do.

"We have not yet learned the skills of attention that would allow us to hear God when he does speak. Our soul pays a price when we throw around our attention willy-nilly to every little thing of slightest interest on our screens, to the buzzes in our pockets, to notifications...We lose what Augustine called a *virginity of our mind*. When we're promiscuous with our attention, we're promiscuous with our soul. Practicing attentional discipline is challenging business. Curating a tending heart in a Tinder world requires far more than goodwill and nostalgia. It means missing out. Being ignorant. Falling behind...And maybe even being on the wrong side of history." – A.J. Swoboda

☐ **Take one step toward a more "tending life".**

- putting some boundaries around the amount of screen time? social media? TV?
- shutting down devices earlier in the evening?
- starting the day with a little more silence and reflection?
- every time your mind wanders, whisper *Colossians 3:2*, "*Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things.*"

☐ **If you're in a season of "silence", have a conversation with a friend about it.**

- How is God coming to you?
- What's most difficult about it?
- How can others pray for you?