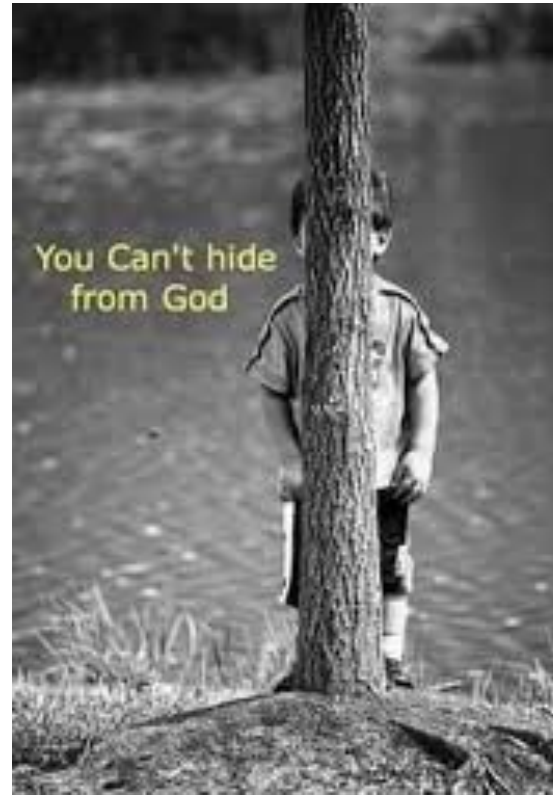




Throughout my walk with Christ one of my biggest struggles has always been making time and space to spend time with God. I suppose it's because I don't like being quiet, I like things to be loud, busy and in technicolor. When I was a youth worker back in Northern Ireland, every year the Church of Ireland Youth Department would have a quiet retreat at a beautiful monastery. You could walk in beautiful gardens, sit by the lake, spend time alone and no one would speak. Can you guess who never went, yes, your right, me. It was my worst nightmare, could they not arrange a day with pumping music, thronging crowds and multiple screens with flashing images, that would be my comfort zone and probably for most of you it would be your worst nightmare. We are all wired differently, we are all created unique, we are all special and what we need to do is to find the best fit for our "quiet time" or in my case "loud time." Quiet time doesn't mean you have to be silent but it's about making time to have a one to one with Jesus. It's important that we have time with Jesus, we all love to hang out and visit with our best buddy and with Jesus it should be the same because he needs to be our BFF.

For many of you, your time with God will have a prayer list, a devotional, a Bible reading plan, perhaps a journal, while for others it will be listening to worship songs or your favorite Christian Artists will be the order of the day. What I want to say to you is that it doesn't matter what or how you do it but you just need to make sure it happens. It has to be natural, it has to fit in to the person you are and you will know best what it is that helps you connect with Jesus. It's all about telling your frantic, fearful heart to be still, so that you can be at the feet of Jesus. We have to take the position that Mary took when Jesus visited her home, resting by his feet, listening to his every word

and drinking in everything Jesus had to offer. Unfortunately we are all too much like Mary's sister Martha, busy preparing, busy making everything right and missing out on the opportunity to spend time with Jesus. That's why I think this story from scripture is such a great example of why we need time with Jesus, we shouldn't miss an opportunity to be in his presence. You see so much of our Christian life could be compared to Adam and Eve in the Garden at the beginning of creation. They had the privilege of walking and talking with God and they blew it. Ambition, temptation, ego got in the way and they lost the precious intimate times of sitting with God in the garden. They tried to hide, ashamed of who they were, with all their failures and flaws. I want you to know that who you are is who Jesus wants to be with. He chose you with all the mistakes and mess of your life. Today he may be calling you to come out of the trees and stop hiding like Adam and Eve. Let's stop pretending to be something that you're not. I want you to stop trying to earn something that has already been given to you and stop trying to regain something you have never lost. Jesus just wants you, all of you. He longs to stroll through life with you, to learn the things he wants for your life, and to share in the unbelievable love that he has for you.



C. S. Lewis wrote this in "The Silver Chair" when Jill arrives in Narnia and meets Aslan for the first time. *"Are you not thirsty?" said the Lion. "I'm dying of thirst" said Jill. "Then drink" said the Lion. "May I - could I - would you mind going away while I do?" said Jill. The Lion answered this only by a look and a very low growl. And as Jill gazed at its motionless bulk, she realized that she may as well have asked the whole mountain to move aside for her convenience. The delicious rippling noise of the stream was driving her nearly frantic. "Will you promise not to - do anything to me, if I do come?" said Jill, "I make no promise" said the Lion. Jill was so thirsty now that, without noticing it, she had come a step nearer. "Do you eat girls?" she said. "I have swallowed up girls and boys, women and men, kings and emperors, cities and realms," said the Lion. It didn't say this boasting, nor as if it were sorry, nor as if it were angry. It just said it. "I daren't come and drink" said Jill. "Then you will die of thirst" said the Lion. "Oh dear!" said Jill, coming another step nearer. "I suppose I must go and look for another stream then". There is no other stream," said the Lion.*

My friends, just like Jill, we cannot drink from the stream on our own terms, God will not be moved. He wants to tell us to take time with him and drink from him, there is no other way, no other stream. He longs for us to respond as he whispers in our ear: "You are my child, who I love. I am pleased with you and I delight in you. I made you in my own image and you are worth dying for. You are enough. Take time from your day and let's walk together." You have nothing to hide from God, so don't miss out on spending quality time with him each and every day. It needs to be our daily exercise, it needs to be our daily walk with God.