

Solitude - 3 Tips from Psalm 139 to Help a Wandering Mind

Here are some helpful tips, taken from Scripture, for dealing with the internal noise that assails us when we first start listening to God in prayer. Let Psalm 139 be your companion as you start out.

Tip 1: Remember that God knows everything about us already

The thoughts that pop into our minds in the silence may be a surprise to us, but they are not a surprise to God. We cannot disappoint God because God knows everything about us better than we do. As you begin a time of silent prayer, why not start by reading the first two verses of Psalm 139 aloud to yourself and to God:

O Lord, you have searched me and known me!
2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.

Tip 2: Don't be hard on yourself!

Remember that the thoughts that enter your mind are there because your brain is working hard to process everything that has happened to you. God made us this way for our good. When the internal noise feels like a torment, read verses 13 and 14 and praise God for making your inmost being:

For you formed my inward parts;
you knitted me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
my soul knows it very well.

Tip 3: Don't resist your thoughts, but ask God to lead you through them

The thoughts in our minds are not going to go away. It's how God has made us! So there is no point resisting them or trying to distract ourselves from them – we have to go through them. But we cannot do this on our own. Using the words of verses 23 and 24, ask God to lead you through your thoughts and reveal the truth about them:

Search me, O God, and know my heart!
Try me and know my thoughts!
And see if there be any grievous way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting!