

RETREAT!

INSIDE THIS
MONTH'S ISSUE:

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“Come with Me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.” – Mark 6:31

As we journey deeper into this year, God is drawing our hearts away from the noise and into the quiet. In a world filled with constant activity, endless conversations, and relentless demands, the Lord is calling His people to something sacred, retreat.

Life can be loud. Responsibilities pull at us from every side, emotions compete for our attention, and even good things can crowd out the voice of God. But Jesus shows us a better way. Again and again, He withdrew from the crowds, stepped away from the demands, and retreated to solitary places to pray. Not because He was weak, but because intimacy with the Father was His strength.

This month, God is inviting us to do the same. To pause. To step aside. To be intentional about spending time alone with Him. Retreat is where clarity is restored, strength is renewed, and our hearts are realigned with heaven. It is not escape, it is preparation.

May the Holy Spirit help us value the secret place, respond to God's invitation, and find rest for our souls. As we retreat into His presence, may we return renewed, refreshed, and ready to walk fully in His purpose in Jesus' name Amen.

INTRODUCTION: THE CALL AWAY FROM THE NOISE!



As we journey further into 2026, the Spirit of God is whispering, and at the same time calling loudly, to His children: Retreat. Not retreat as in escape. Not retreat as in giving up. But retreat as in stepping aside with intention. Retreat as in pulling away to be restored. This is not God asking you to abandon responsibility; it is God inviting you to recover your strength so you can carry it well.

Think about it for a moment. Imagine a phone that never gets switched off, never plugged in, never allowed to recharge. No matter how advanced it is, it will eventually shut down. Not because it is faulty, but because it was never designed to run endlessly without power. In the same way, many believers are exhausted, not because they are doing the wrong things, but because they are doing the right things without retreat. We keep going, giving, serving, responding, showing up, yet rarely stopping to be refilled.

The noise is everywhere. The noise of constant activity. The noise of expectations, spoken and unspoken. The noise of opinions telling you who you should be, where you should be by now, and what success should look like. The noise of pressure to keep up, to explain yourself, to prove something. And then there is the inner noise, the thoughts that replay at night, the fears you never voice, the questions you keep pushing aside, the emotions you suppress because there is “no time” to deal with them.

This year will be filled with many competing voices. Some distractions will come from places you truly cannot control, work demands, family responsibilities, financial pressures, global uncertainty. Life will happen. But other distractions will come from choices we make, relationships we allow to drain us, dramas we entertain unnecessarily, conversations that leave us empty rather than edified, activities that keep us busy but not alive. And then there are the distractions from within, restlessness that makes us uncomfortable with silence, comparison that steals our joy, ambition that pushes us to run faster than grace, anxiety that whispers, “You are falling behind.”

In the middle of all this, God, in His mercy, is calling us to intentional retreat. Not accidental quiet. Not silence by exhaustion. But a deliberate withdrawal into His presence. A conscious decision to step away, refuel, and reconnect. Because here is the truth we often learn the hard way: the world can drive a person weary, confused, and spiritually empty if there is no consistent place of retreat in God. Picture a well that once overflowed with water. If people keep drawing from it and no fresh supply flows in, the well will eventually run dry. Many people are dry today not because they are sinful, but because they are depleted. Strength is not sustained in noise; it is renewed in stillness. Clarity is not found in crowds; it is birthed in communion. Direction does not come from constant motion; it comes from quiet alignment with God.

This month, God is not asking you to add more to your schedule. He is not demanding more effort, more activity, or more performance. He is simply asking you to come closer. To sit. To breathe. To listen. To be with Him again. Because retreat is not where you lose time, it is where you find yourself. And more importantly, where you find God waiting for you.

JESUS AND THE DISCIPLINE OF RETREAT

One of the most striking, and often overlooked, patterns in the life of Jesus was His unwavering commitment to retreat. Jesus lived a life filled with compassion, power, and purpose, yet He never allowed activity to replace intimacy. Though crowds followed Him, demands pulled at Him, and urgent needs surrounded Him daily, He consistently withdrew to be alone with the Father. Retreat was not an interruption to His ministry; it was the source of it.

Think of Jesus' life like a river. Power flowed out of Him constantly healing the sick, casting out demons, teaching the multitudes, restoring the broken. But every river must be fed by a source. For Jesus, that source was retreat, quiet moments away from noise, away from people, away from expectations, to commune with God.

In Mark 1:35, after an intense day of ministry, healing many, delivering the oppressed, and responding to endless needs, the Bible says, "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed." Before the next wave of demands arrived, Jesus chose retreat. He did not wake up to check who needed Him next; He woke up to align with the Father first. It's as though He was saying, "I cannot pour out today unless I am first filled."

This is a powerful lesson for us. Many of us wake up already overwhelmed, checking messages, emails, to-do lists, before we have checked in with God. Jesus shows us a different rhythm: retreat first, then engage.

In Luke 5:15-16, we see another beautiful insight. As Jesus' popularity increased, so did the pressure. The crowds grew larger, the expectations heavier, the demands louder. Yet Scripture says, "But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed." Notice that word, often. Retreat was not something Jesus did only when He was tired or desperate; it was something He practiced regularly. The more the noise increased, the more intentional His retreat became.

It's like a person in a noisy marketplace stepping into a quiet room to regain their hearing. Without retreat, constant noise numbs the soul. Jesus understood this. He knew that popularity without retreat leads to burnout, and visibility without intimacy leads to emptiness.

Jesus also retreated in moments of victory, not just pressure. After feeding the five thousand, a miracle so profound it stirred messianic expectations—Matthew 14:23 tells us that Jesus sent the crowds away and went up on a mountainside by Himself to pray. He did not stay to enjoy the applause. He did not allow success to distract Him from God. He knew that even victories must be processed in God's presence, dangerous as suffering if it is not anchored in retreat.

How often do we do the opposite? When things go well, we celebrate loudly but neglect solitude. When prayers are answered, we move on quickly instead of retreating to give thanks and seek fresh direction. Jesus teaches us that success can be as spiritually

Before making major decisions, Jesus retreated again. Luke 6:12 tells us that before choosing the twelve disciples, men who would shape the future of the Church, Jesus spent the entire night alone in prayer. He did not rush selection. He did not rely on human judgment. He withdrew. He waited. He listened. He understood that discernment is sharpened in solitude, not in haste.

And then there is Gethsemane. In His deepest moment of anguish, when His soul was overwhelmed with sorrow, Jesus retreated once more. Even when betrayal was near, even when pain was imminent, even when His humanity felt the full weight of suffering, He chose retreat over distraction. In that quiet garden, He surrendered His will, received strength, and aligned Himself fully with the Father's purpose.

Gethsemane reminds us that retreat is not only for rest, but also for surrender. It is the place where we lay down our will and rise with God's strength.

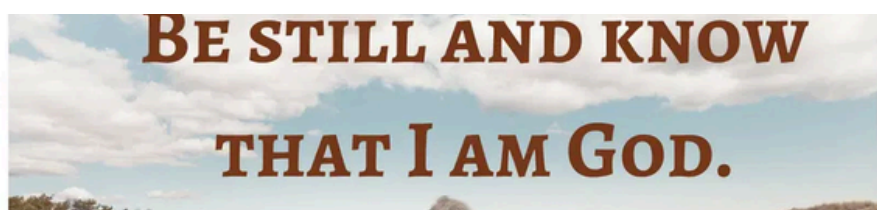
If the Son of God, perfect, powerful, and without sin, needed retreat, how much more do we? If Jesus could not sustain His earthly assignment without withdrawing to the Father, we cannot afford to live without a place of retreat. Retreat is not weakness. Retreat is wisdom. It is where we are recalibrated, refilled, and realigned to live as God intended.

FOLLOWING HIS EXAMPLE – RETREAT IN EVERY SEASON

Beloved, retreat is not a luxury reserved for the spiritually mature or the unusually disciplined; it is a necessity for every believer who desires to walk steadily with God. We are called to follow Jesus not only in His character, but also in His rhythm of life. And His rhythm was clear: engagement and withdrawal, service and solitude, pouring out and being refilled.

Jesus never lived at one extreme. He did not hide permanently in solitude, neither did He live endlessly in the crowd. He understood when to speak and when to be silent, when to give and when to retreat. If we ignore this rhythm, we risk burning out spiritually, emotionally, and even physically.

There are seasons when life feels chaotic, when responsibilities pile up, emotions are stretched thin, and answers feel distant. In those moments, our instinct is often to talk more, scroll more, attend more meetings, or drown the noise with noise. But Jesus shows us a better way. Chaos is not a signal to run faster; it is an invitation to retreat deeper. Retreat gives us perspective. It quiets the storm within before we face the storm without. In God's presence, confusion gives way to clarity, and anxiety is replaced with peace that cannot be explained.



But retreat is not only for chaos, it is equally vital in seasons of victory. When doors open, prayers are answered, and things seem to be working, success can subtly shift our focus. We begin to rely on momentum instead of God, applause instead of approval, activity instead of intimacy. That is why Jesus, after feeding the five thousand, withdrew alone to pray. He refused to let success define Him or distract Him. Retreat keeps us grounded when life is going well and humble when others are praising us.

And then there is always the call to retreat, not only when something is wrong, but as a lifestyle. Retreat is like refuelling a car. You don't wait until the tank is completely empty before stopping; you refuel consistently so the journey can continue smoothly. In the same way, retreat is where we are spiritually refuelled, emotionally recalibrated, and inwardly realigned with heaven.

Jesus' invitation in Mark 6:31 is deeply personal and still relevant: "Come with Me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." Notice He didn't say, "Go and rest." He said, "Come with Me." Retreat is not just about rest; it is about relationship. It is rest in His presence, strength drawn from His nearness.

Now, let's talk honestly. Many of us are familiar with corporate spiritual moments, New Year fasts, church-wide prayers, annual retreats, special programmes. And yes, these are good. They are powerful. They are necessary. God moves mightily when His people gather. But we must never downplay the place of personal retreat. Public encounters cannot replace private communion.

Jesus ministered to the crowds. He spent time teaching and mentoring the twelve. He shared deeper moments with the three closest disciples, Peter, James, and John. But most importantly, He had time alone with the Father. If Jesus did not guard that secret place, how would He have overcome the temptations of the devil in the wilderness? How would He have responded with wisdom to the Pharisees? How would He have endured betrayal, rejection, and the cross itself?

The strength Jesus displayed publicly was birthed privately. The authority He walked in openly was cultivated quietly. The power to say "Get thee behind me, Satan" came from time alone with God.

Beloved, no matter how active your church life is, no matter how involved you are in ministry, nothing replaces personal retreat. It is in that quiet place that God corrects you gently, heals you deeply, strengthens you daily, and speaks to you clearly.

This February, choose intentional retreat. Step away from what drains you and step into what restores you. Create space, real space, for God. Turn down the noise. Silence the distractions. In the quiet place, you will find clarity. In the secret place, you will find strength. And in retreat, you will discover that everything you truly need flows from His presence. Retreat, so you can return renewed.



REFLECTION

Take a moment and ask yourself honestly: Do I truly retreat?

Not just attend programmes. Not just join fasts. Not just listen to sermons. But do you intentionally withdraw, alone with God, to be refreshed, recalibrated, and renewed?

How do you respond when life becomes noisy? When pressure builds, when emotions run high, when demands pull you in every direction, do you retreat to God, or do you retreat to distractions? Do you run to His presence, or do you drown the weight in activity, conversations, entertainment, or busyness?

And what about seasons of victory? When things are going well, when prayers are answered and doors open, do you still retreat? Or do you slowly drift away from the secret place, assuming strength will carry itself?

The Holy Spirit is gently inviting you to examine your rhythm. Where is your quiet place?

Is it a consistent time? A sacred space? A protected moment in your day where you meet God without an agenda, just to be with Him?

Retreat does not have to be complicated. It is not about long words or perfect prayers.

Sometimes, it is sitting quietly before God. Sometimes, it is weeping. Sometimes, it is listening. Sometimes, it is simply saying, "Lord, I am here." What matters is intentionality.

Reflect on this: if Jesus, sinless, powerful, and fully surrendered, needed retreat to remain aligned with the Father, how much more do you? Strength leaks without solitude. Direction blurs without stillness. Intimacy fades without intentional withdrawal.

Let the Holy Spirit show you what needs to change. Ask Him to teach you how to retreat, when to retreat, and what to release in the quiet place. The secret place is not optional, it is essential.

As you reflect, make a decision today: I will retreat, so I can return renewed.

PRAYER

Father, in the name of Jesus,

I thank You for Your gentle call to retreat. Thank You for loving me enough to invite me away from the noise and into Your presence. I acknowledge that many times I have allowed busyness, distractions, and the pressures of life to replace intimacy with You. Forgive me, Lord.

Today, I surrender my rhythm to You. Teach me how to withdraw and wait on You. Teach me how to be still and know that You are God. Quiet every inner noise, every restless thought, every anxious desire, and draw my heart back to the secret place.

Holy Spirit, help me to value personal retreat, not just public gatherings, not just seasons of fasting, but daily, intentional moments alone with God. Create in me a hunger for solitude with You. Give me the discipline to step away from what drains me and the wisdom to remain where You restore me.

In moments of chaos, be my refuge.

In seasons of victory, keep me humble.

In every stage of life, anchor me in Your presence.

Renew my strength. Realign my heart. Refresh my spirit. Let my retreat produce clarity, obedience, and intimacy with You. And as I return to my responsibilities, let me return renewed, empowered, and aligned with Your will.

I choose Your presence over noise.

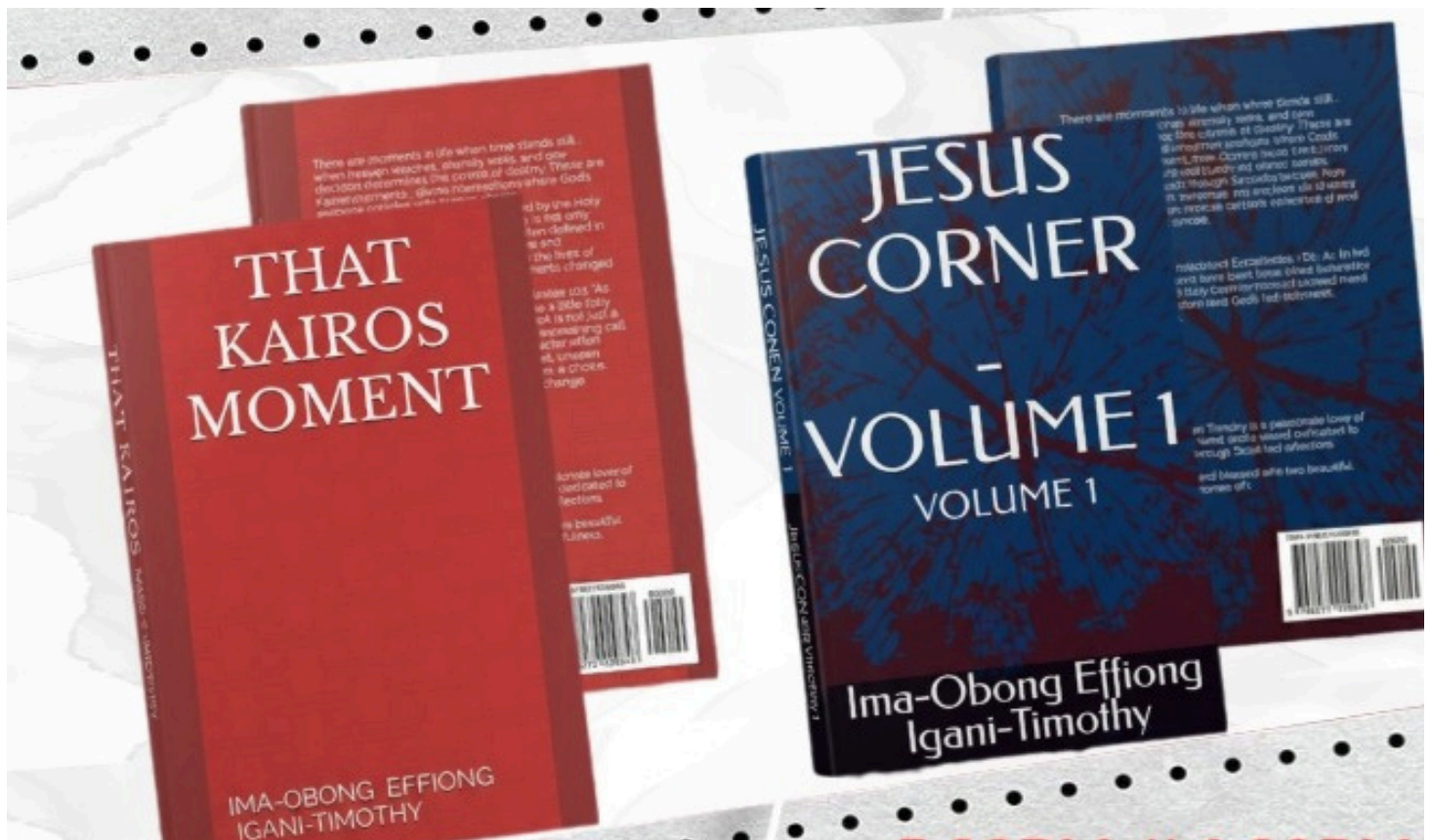
I choose intimacy over activity.

I choose retreat, so I may live fully in Your purpose. in Jesus name, Amen.

ACCEPT JESUS TODAY!!!

God's mercy is fully revealed in Jesus Christ, who gave His life so we could be forgiven and restored. If you haven't yet received Him, you can do so today. Turn to Him, confess your need, and invite Him into your heart as Lord and Saviour. His arms are open wide in mercy and love—waiting for you to come home. Accept Jesus Today!

If you need to discuss further or want someone to pray with you, please feel free to contact me on: +44 7448624608



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