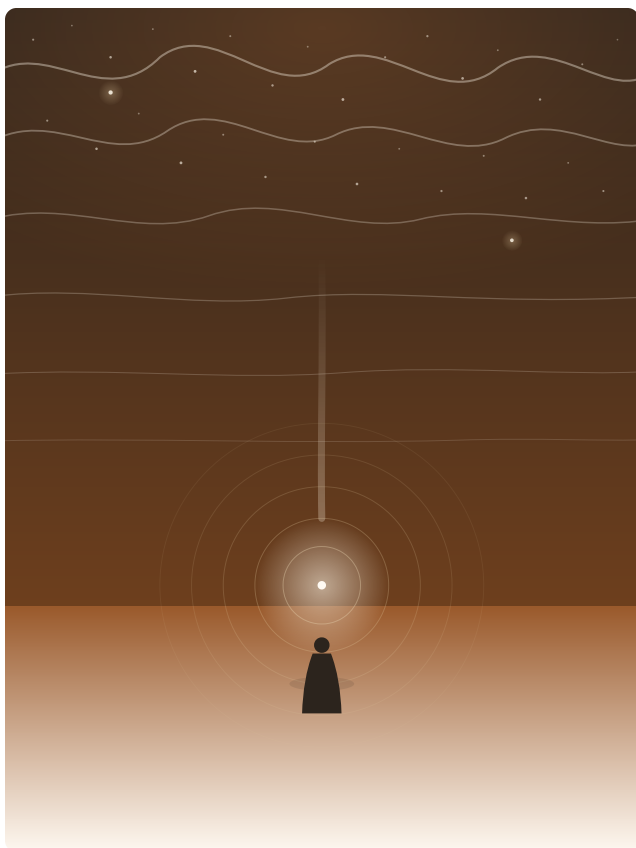




WEEKLY BOOK #2

The Still, Small Voice in the Noise

*Stories and words to find calm when
everything is shouting*

Written by José Martínez · Powered by AI



*For the one who no longer remembers what
silence feels like,
and still keeps searching for the voice that calls
them by name.*

“The Still, Small Voice in the Noise”

Weekly Book #2 of Godlives

Stories and words to find calm when everything is shouting.

Written by José Martínez · Powered by AI.

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Contents

1.	Prologue	
2.	A Letter to the Reader	
3.	Under the Broom Tree	
4.	The Wind, the Earthquake, the Fire, and the Gentle Whisper	
5.	Be Still	
6.	The Habit of Withdrawing	
7.	The Silence That Sends	
8.	Four Pauses (and One Step) to Turn Down the Noise	
9.	A Closing Word	
10.	Prayer for the Week	
11.	Before You Close the Book	
12.	Bibliography and Sources	

Prologue

Last week I promised you we'd talk about something that's sometimes harder than walking in the dark: hearing the quiet voice that speaks to us in the middle of the noise. Here I am, keeping that promise.

We live surrounded by sound. Notifications, news, everyone's opinion about everything, the rush of having to respond right now, the feeling that if you stop for a second you'll be left behind. I live it too. There are nights when I lie down and my head keeps buzzing as if it had twenty tabs open at once, and I can't manage to close a single one.

That's why this week I wanted to tell you a very old story, the story of a man named Elijah, who one day won the greatest battle of his life and, the next day, wanted to die. I'm not telling you this to frighten you. I'm telling you because I need you to know, from the very first page, that this book is not going to say "just calm down." It's going to tell you something more honest: that sometimes the noise outside and the noise inside are so loud that the first thing you need

isn't a spiritual answer, but bread, water, and sleep. And that after that, there's a voice that doesn't shout, and it's worth learning to hear it.

Jehovah. Yahweh. The Eternal. The Creator. I still believe the same thing I told you last week: there are many names and many traditions, but there is only One behind them all. And I believe that One doesn't need you to shout for Him to hear you, nor is He going to shout at you for you to hear Him.

Here comes the second book. I hope it finds you in some moment of silence, even a small one.

With all my appreciation,



José Martínez

A Letter to the Reader

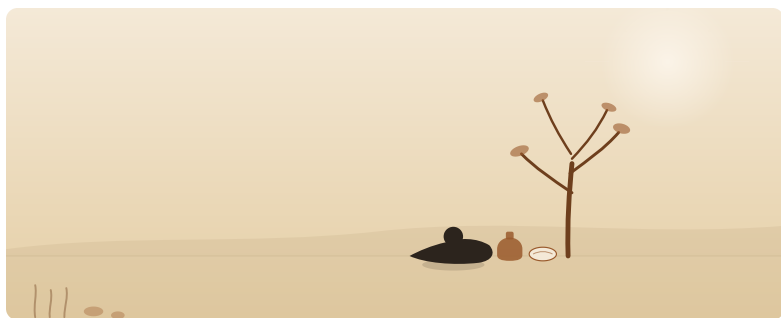
If you asked me, “How do I find peace with everything I’m carrying?” I wouldn’t tell you, “Turn off your phone and pray.” I know it isn’t that simple. I know you have responsibilities you can’t just drop, people who depend on you, a mind that won’t stop spinning even when you finally lie down.

This book isn’t going to ask you to stop feeling anxiety, or hurry, or exhaustion, as if that were a matter of choice. I’m going to tell you the story of a prophet who, after the greatest victory of his life, sat down under a bush and asked God to let him die. And I’m going to tell you that God didn’t scold him for it. He fed him. He let him sleep. And only afterward, much later, He spoke to him — not in the powerful wind, not in the earthquake, not in the fire, but in a whisper so gentle it was almost lost.

I’m also going to tell you stories from today: about people who collapsed from sheer exhaustion and had to learn to stop, about people who, in the middle of the greatest chaos of their work, gave themselves sixty seconds of silence before going on, about someone who withdraws, twice a year, to a cabin with no one else around, just to think clearly.

I don’t promise you the noise of your life is going to switch off. I promise you there’s a voice quieter than all that noise, and that you can learn to hear it — not once and for all, but a little each day.

Come on, take a deep breath. Let’s begin.



CHAPTER 1

Under the Broom Tree

There's a kind of exhaustion that arrives right after you win, not after you lose. Has it happened to you? You finish the huge project, you pass the exam, you leave the hospital with a healthy baby, you close the deal you chased for months — and instead of feeling the victory, you feel a strange emptiness, as if something inside had come unplugged. If you've ever felt that — winning something big and, the next day, not having the strength even to get up — this story is exactly for you.

The prophet Elijah had just lived the greatest day of his life as a man of God. He had faced, all alone, four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, in a kind of public duel: they asked their god for fire and nothing happened; Elijah prayed, and

fire fell from heaven in front of all the people. The crowd shouted, “The LORD—he is God!” It was, literally, the highest point of his spiritual career.

And the next day, Queen Jezebel threatened to kill him. The text doesn’t hide it: “Elijah was afraid and ran for his life” (1 Kings 19:3, NIV). There’s no ambiguity there. It doesn’t say he doubted God. It says he was afraid, a real fear, right after the greatest miracle he had ever seen in his life. And I want you to hold on to this, because it’s the heart of the whole chapter: Elijah’s fear was not a failure of faith. It was a human reaction, a normal one, from someone who had spent the very last drop of strength he had. *Your fear is heavy because your burden is real, not because you are weak.*

Elijah walked a full day into the wilderness, sat down under a bush — a broom tree — and asked God to let him die: “I have had enough, LORD. [...] I am no better than my ancestors” (1 Kings 19:4, NIV). This isn’t a whim or a passing bit of drama. It’s the language of someone who simply can’t go on.

Many centuries later, at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games (held in 2021), the gymnast Simone Biles — one of the greatest in the history of her sport, with years of victories behind her — withdrew from the team final and from several individual finals where everyone expected to see her win. It wasn’t a visible injury. It was her body and her mind telling her she could no longer go on safely, in the middle of an enormous public pressure she had been carrying for years. She explained it herself, at the press conference on July 27, 2021: “I have to focus on my mental health.” Many criticized her for “giving up.” Others understood that stopping, in that

moment, was the bravest decision she could make. And a few days later, on August 3, she competed again: she won the bronze in the balance beam final, her seventh Olympic medal. She didn't leave for good; she stopped as long as she needed and came back when she was ready. It reminds me so much of Elijah's broom tree: sometimes the body and the mind reach a point where pushing on is no longer strength — it's simply not listening to the distress signal you're sending yourself. The exhaustion that comes right after you win isn't a failure: it's the bill for everything you spent to get here.

And what did God do with Elijah, lying there under the bush, asking to die? He didn't lecture him. He didn't say, "You can do it, have faith." An angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." There was fresh bread baked over hot stones and a jar of water. Elijah ate and lay down again. The angel touched him a second time: "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." Only after eating and sleeping — twice — did Elijah have the strength to walk to the mountain of God.

Notice the order: first the body, then the word. God didn't demand a better spiritual attitude before caring for him. He cared for him first, with no conditions, and the important conversation came later. That's something I want to give you today too: if you feel you can't go on, what you need first isn't necessarily some grand spiritual answer. Sometimes you need to sleep. To eat. For someone to let you rest without asking anything in return. Sometimes the strongest — and most spiritual — step you can take today is to eat, sleep, and let yourself be cared for. *To rest is also to move forward.*

BEFORE WE GO ON

If what you're feeling is anything like Elijah's — an exhaustion so deep it makes you wish you didn't have to go on, a sadness that won't lift, or thoughts of harming yourself — that isn't solved by this book alone, or by prayer alone. Seeking professional help (a psychologist, a doctor, a crisis line) is an act of courage, not of little faith. God used an angel with bread and water before He spoke to Elijah; today that concrete help can also take the form of a therapist, a doctor, or someone who walks closely beside you. Asking for help is part of the care God Himself modeled in this story.

THE WORD

1 Kings 19:3-4 (NIV)

TO REFLECT ON

- Have you ever felt that strange emptiness right after achieving something big?
 - If today your body were asking you for rest before answers, would you give it that, or would you keep pushing?
-



CHAPTER 2

The Wind, the Earthquake, the Fire, and the Gentle Whisper

We live in a world that confuses volume with truth. The one who shouts loudest, the most alarming headline, the most extreme opinion — they seem more right just because they make more noise. And in the middle of all that, we often look for God the same way: expecting a big sign, a lightning bolt, something spectacular that will lift every doubt off our shoulders. If you've ever looked for a clear answer and found only more noise, this is your story.

After eating, sleeping, and walking for forty days, Elijah reached a cave on Mount Horeb. There God asked him a question that will be repeated twice in the account: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" And Elijah answered with his

truth, even if it was an incomplete truth: he had been zealous for God, the people had broken the covenant, and “I am the only one left,” he said, feeling completely alone. His exhaustion had made him believe he was more isolated than he really was — something that happens to anyone who’s been carrying something too long without help.

Then God told him to go out and stand on the mountain, because He was about to pass by. And there comes the scene that gives this book its name:

“Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.”

— 1 Kings 19:11-13, NIV

I want to pause here, because there’s a detail that’s easily missed if you read quickly: the wind, the earthquake, and the fire were exactly the symbols used to represent the god Baal

— the same one Elijah had defeated the day before on Mount Carmel. God didn't need to prove His power with more of the same. What Elijah needed in that moment wasn't another spectacular display — he'd already seen fire fall from heaven — but a near and silent presence. That's why I don't want you to walk away from here with the idea that "God only speaks in whispers" and never in the middle of the storm. It isn't a universal rule. It's that, for this exhausted prophet, in this exact moment, God gave him precisely what he needed: not more noise, but the capacity to stop and hear what is subtle.

There's something else I find beautiful: in Hebrew, the phrase behind "gentle whisper" is hard to translate fully. Literally it suggests something like "a sound of thin silence" — not so much a voice whispering words as a silence charged with presence, in total contrast to the roar before it. The power of the image isn't that God speaks softly. It's the contrast: after so much noise, what can finally be perceived is the stillness.

This happens in places very far from a cave in the desert, too. In many hospitals there's a real emotional-support program for health-care workers, known as "Code Lavender," popularized by the Cleveland Clinic and whose concept is also credited to the North Hawaii Community Hospital. When someone on the medical team goes through an especially hard moment — the loss of a patient, difficult news to deliver — a brief support pause is activated: someone stays with them, offers a few minutes of breathing or silence, sometimes water or something to eat, before they return to their next shift. It's not that this pause solves the trauma of what they've just lived through. It's a small space of stillness,

in the middle of a chaos that doesn't stop, that gives the mind and the body a chance to lower the intensity before stepping back into action. It's not magic. It's simply that human attention is limited, and when there's silence, the mind finally has room to process what it couldn't process in the middle of the noise.

Maybe your life today doesn't have a wind that splits mountains or literal earthquakes, but it does have its own version: the inbox that never stops, everyone's opinion about what you should do, the rush that won't let you think. Before you look for a huge sign, try something smaller: stop. Turn down the volume. And give yourself the chance to hear what sounds quieter than everything else.

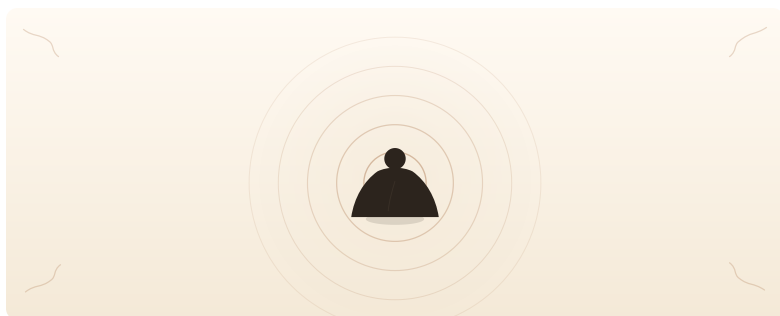
*Turn down the volume; the voice you're looking for
doesn't need to shout to be with you.*

THE WORD

1 Kings 19:11-13 (NIV)

TO REFLECT ON

- Have you ever confused “the loudest” with “the truest”?
 - When was the last time you gave yourself, even for a minute, a deliberate silence?
-



CHAPTER 3

Be Still

There's a way of living that consists of flailing all the time: solving, controlling, responding, fixing, being everywhere at once, as if letting go of the wheel for a second would make everything sink. If you've ever felt that you can't stop because the moment you do, everything will fall apart, I want to tell you about someone who reached the limit of that way of living.

In 2007, Arianna Huffington, cofounder of one of the most-read digital media outlets in the world, collapsed from sheer exhaustion in her home, at a time when she was sleeping only a few hours a night and stringing together meetings, trips, and decisions without pause. She struck her face as she fell and fractured a cheekbone. Years later she told the story, in talks and in her book *Thrive*, that this fall forced her to ask herself something she hadn't dared to ask before: what kind of success is it that leaves you sprawled on the floor of your

own home? From then on she began to speak publicly about the importance of sleeping well, of disconnecting from the phone, of giving the mind spaces with no stimulus — not as a luxury, but as a basic need she had been ignoring.

There's an ancient psalm, written in the middle of an age of upheaval — nations at war, the earth seeming to crumble — that says something that sounds almost impossible in the middle of so much noise:

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. [...] ‘Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.’ The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.”

— Psalm 46:1, 10-11, NIV

Notice that the words “be still” don’t mean “do nothing, let everything happen.” In the original language they carry more the sense of “let go” — like when someone is fighting or flailing with all their strength and finally unclenches their fists. It’s a command to stop trying to control everything by your own force, not an invitation to passivity: this same psalm describes God acting, with power, in the middle of

history. The stillness this psalm calls for isn't inaction. It's giving up the belief that everything depends solely on you never letting go, not even for a second.

I understand the temptation not to let go. If you let go, you feel everything will fall. But the truth is another, even if it's hard to believe: almost nothing falls just because you took ten minutes of silence. What can happen, if you never let go, is that you end up like Arianna that morning: on the floor, with your body forcing you to stop because you wouldn't do it on your own.

Be still doesn't mean you stop acting in your life. It means that, before the next decision, the next message, the next race against the clock, you give yourself permission to loosen your grip for a moment and remember that the whole weight of the world isn't resting on you alone.

Loosening your grip isn't abandoning the fight: it's ceasing to fight, all by yourself, against the whole weight of the world.

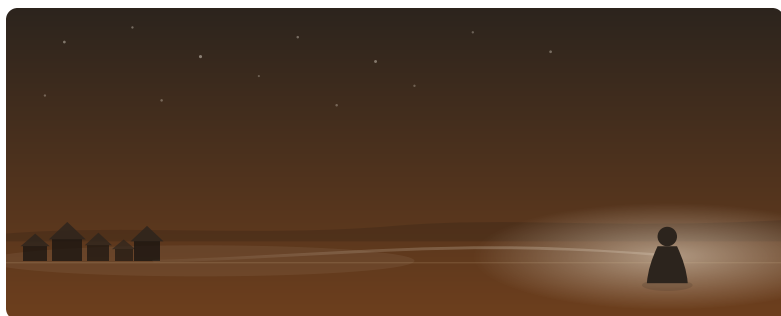
Let go: the whole weight of the world was never on you alone.

THE WORD

Psalms 46:1, 10-11 (NIV)

TO REFLECT ON

- What is it that you find hardest to let go of, for fear that “everything will fall”?
 - If you gave yourself ten minutes of stillness today, without solving anything, what would actually happen?
-



CHAPTER 4

The Habit of Withdrawing

So far I've told you about moments of crisis: a prophet who wanted to die, a theophany in a cave, a woman who collapsed on the floor of her home. But I want to tell you something different in this chapter, because the quiet voice doesn't only come when you've already hit bottom. It can also be cultivated, like a habit, before the noise reaches you.

The day before had been one of the most intense anyone could remember in Jesus' public life: he healed the sick, freed tormented people, and as night fell "the whole town gathered at the door" of the house where he was. Anyone would have slept in after a day like that, worn out by the demands of so many people. But the account says something different:

“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.”

— Mark 1:35, NIV

He didn’t withdraw after the noise reached him. He withdrew before the noise of the new day began. And when they found him and told him that everyone was looking for him, he didn’t rush off to meet the immediate demand: from that time of stillness, he decided what his next step would be.

There’s a similar habit, much more recent, in the life of Bill Gates. Since the nineties, he’s had the custom of withdrawing alone, twice a year, to a cabin with no one else around — no calls, no meetings, no family — during what he himself calls his “Think Week.” There he reads, without interruption, dozens of documents and proposals from his company — he’s said to have read as many as a hundred and twelve in a single week — and makes decisions that go on to help set the direction of everything else. The journalist Robert A. Guth documented this practice on the front page of *The Wall Street Journal*, in March 2005, under the headline “In Secret Hideaway, Bill Gates Ponders Microsoft’s Future.”

What I find valuable about this story isn’t that he’s a successful man: it’s that he decided, deliberately and repeatedly, to step away from the noise before the noise forced him to. He didn’t wait for a crisis. He built the habit.

There's a small psalm that sums up this idea better than any explanation of mine:

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

— Psalm 131, NIV

It doesn't say “God calmed my soul while I did nothing.” It says “I have calmed and quieted myself” — it's a verb in the first person, something the person decides to do, not something that simply happens to them. Like a child who no longer demands anything, who just rests in someone's arms, no longer fighting for anything more.

You don't have to wait until you're under a broom tree, asking to die, to learn to step away from the noise. You can start today, with something as small as getting up a little before the rest of the day, or turning off the phone ten minutes before you sleep. It's not a magic formula for hearing God right away. It's simply turning down the volume of everything else so you have, at least, a chance to hear something gentler.

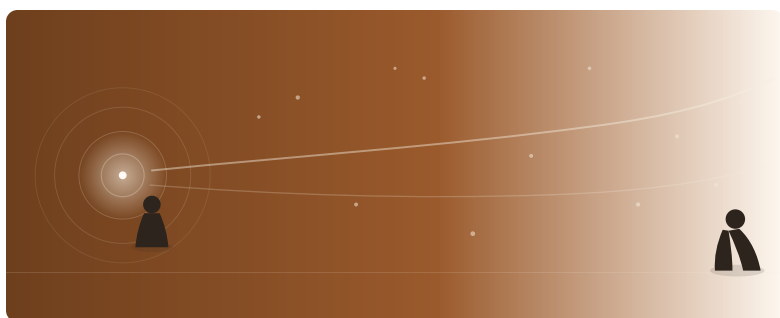
THE WORD

Mark 1:35 (NIV)

Psalm 131 (NIV)

TO REFLECT ON

- Do you have any habit — however small — of stepping away from the noise before it reaches you?
 - If you could give yourself a “solitary place” this week, what would it be like?
-



CHAPTER 5

The Silence That Sends

I want to finish Elijah's story where we left it: standing at the mouth of the cave, his face covered, after hearing that gentle whisper. God repeats exactly the same question as before — “What are you doing here, Elijah?” — and Elijah repeats, word for word, the same answer as before: that he is alone, that he is the only faithful one left. It's important to notice this: the theophany did not magically solve Elijah's emotional crisis. After such a great encounter with God, Elijah still felt just as alone as before. The silence didn't fix everything in a single stroke. What did change was what came next.

God didn't console him with more beautiful words. He gave him two very concrete things: a mission — to anoint new leaders, to leave a successor, Elisha, who would walk the rest of the road with him — and a fact that corrected his distorted perception: he was not alone. There were seven thousand people in Israel who had never bowed to Baal. Seven thousand that Elijah, in the middle of his exhaustion, had not been able to see. Exhaustion makes you see fewer people than there really are beside you: the loneliness you feel is real, but it isn't always accurate.

Elijah's way out of that pit didn't come by a single road, but by three: physical rest first, a real encounter with God next, and finally, purpose and community. The silence of Horeb wasn't a place to stay and live forever. It was a place of passage, a necessary one, that returned him to life with more clarity than he had when he arrived.

There's an ancient word, short and forceful, that I like to use to close this thread: "The LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him" (Habakkuk 2:20, NIV). It was written as a contrast to the idols, the ones who say nothing because inside they are empty. The silence this verse speaks of isn't a relaxation technique: it's reverence, the right posture before a real God who keeps acting in the middle of injustice and history. Not all silence is therapy. Sometimes silence is, simply, recognizing that not everything depends on our voice or our noise.

And I want to leave you another word, with an honest warning alongside it. The prophet Isaiah once said to his people, who were desperately seeking military alliances to

save themselves from a real threat: “In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it!” (Isaiah 30:15, NIV). It’s a beautiful line, but notice that the same verse tells us the people did not accept it. Calm and trust were not a magic formula that automatically solved their crisis: they were an invitation, and that invitation can be refused. I tell you this with the same honesty: nothing you read in this book guarantees you a result. It’s an invitation, not a closed promise.

Finally, I want to touch carefully on a very well-known verse, because it’s sometimes misused. Jesus said: “Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink [...] do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own” (Matthew 6:25, 34, NIV). This isn’t a formula for switching off anxiety the way you switch off a light. If what you feel is real, persistent anxiety, the kind that won’t let you sleep or function normally, this verse does not replace the support of a mental-health professional. It’s more of an invitation to reorder your priorities and to trust that you don’t have to carry the whole weight of the future alone — not an instruction that feeling anxiety is a spiritual problem to be solved by more faith alone.

Elijah’s silence didn’t end in the cave. It ended on a road back, with a mission and with people by his side. And I believe the quiet voice you’re looking for, too, if you ever find it, isn’t going to ask you to stay hidden forever. It’s going to return you to your life, with more clarity than you had before you stopped to listen.

*Turn down the volume: the voice you're looking for
never needed to shout to be with you.*

THE WORD

Habakkuk 2:20 (NIV)

Isaiah 30:15 (NIV)

Matthew 6:25, 34 (NIV)

TO REFLECT ON

- What mission or concrete purpose is waiting for you on the other side of your own silence?
 - If today someone corrected a fact about your life — like Elijah's seven thousand — and told you "you're not as alone as you think," would you believe them?
-

Four Pauses (and One Step) to Turn Down the Noise

Come, sit with me for a moment before you close the book. I want to leave you four small pauses, like four breaths you can carry with you this week. They aren't a formula to solve your life or to guarantee you'll hear God in five minutes. They're simply honest ways to turn down the noise.

- 1 First: breathe slowly, even for just two minutes.** Inhale for a count of four, hold for four, let the air out over six. It's not magic or a spiritual ritual. It's simply giving your body the signal that, for now, there's no threat to attend to.
- 2 Second: give yourself screen-free pauses, even short ones.** A few minutes a day with no phone, no news, no music — just being. Not to “purify” yourself. Your mind needs time without new stimulus to process everything it already took in.
- 3 Third: set concrete limits on notifications.** Silence the alerts at certain hours. Don't check the phone the moment you wake up. Set a closing hour at night. Putting a limit on the noise outside is part of caring for the noise inside.

4 **Fourth: name what you feel, out loud or in writing.** Say “I’m anxious,” “I’m exhausted,” “I’m afraid” — without correcting yourself, without adding “but I shouldn’t feel this way.” Putting a name to what you feel makes it smaller and more manageable.

5 **And before you go on: the sixty-second step.** Before the next message, the next call, or the next decision, give yourself sixty seconds of deliberate silence. It’s not to fix anything. It’s to turn down the noise outside just enough to hear one single thing: what is the smallest step you actually can take today — not the perfect retreat, not the complete solution, just the step the size of this hour. And take it. *One small step, today, counts as a step.* And if, when you make that pause, what shows up isn’t clarity but an exhaustion that won’t ease, a sadness that won’t lift, or the wish not to go on, that is the moment to take another step just as valid and brave: reach out to someone — a person you trust, a professional, a helpline. Asking for help is also moving forward.

These pauses — and this last sixty-second step — aren’t going to solve your life or guarantee you’ll hear God in five minutes. They’re simply ways to turn down the noise so that, if God speaks to you, you have at least a chance to hear Him. And if the noise inside doesn’t quiet down with this, you aren’t failing: it may be time to seek professional help, with the same dignity with which Elijah received bread and water before he received a word.

A Closing Word

I want to close this book with a blessing, something like the silence that fills a room when someone finally stops talking and simply stays near.

May the Creator, the Eternal, the One so many different voices have called by so many names, give you bread and water before a sermon, when you feel you can't go on. May He teach you to tell His voice apart from the noise — not because He never speaks loudly, but because sometimes what's needed isn't more intensity, but the capacity to stop and hear what is subtle. May He help you loosen the hands you've kept clenched for so long. May He grant you, even for ten minutes, a solitary place this week. And may you, when you come out of your own silence, find a mission and people by your side — because it was never the intention that you stay hidden forever.

And above all, may you never forget this: it doesn't matter what you call God, or what tradition you grew up seeking Him in — what matters is that His voice, though gentle, has not gone out. It's still there, even in the middle of all your noise.

I don't know how to turn off all the noise of your life either. But I can walk with you as you turn down the volume, a little each week. And I believe that, if you stop long enough, you'll find that the voice you're looking for was always closer than the noise let you hear.

Prayer for the Week

TO PRAY SLOWLY, ALOUD IF YOU CAN



*God, Eternal One, Creator of all that breathes:
I come to You tired, and I'm not going to pretend I'm
not.*

*You know the noise I carry inside,
the nights when my head won't switch off,
the fear I tell almost no one about.*

*I'm not asking You today to still the storm with a
single breath.*

*I'm asking You for what You gave that exhausted
prophet:
bread before a sermon, rest before answers,
Your quiet presence sitting down beside me, asking
nothing of me.*

*Stay. Keep me company in this silence.
Give me strength not to carry the whole world,
but to take the next step, the small one, today's step.
And when I can't go on, teach me that loosening my
grip
is also a way of trusting You.*

***And remind me all this week:
Your voice, though gentle, never went out —
it's still here, beneath all my noise.***

You can come back to this prayer any day of the week, not only today.

Before You Close the Book

This week we walked together through five scenes: a prophet under a bush who only needed bread and sleep, a wind and an earthquake and a fire that were not God, a woman who collapsed for not knowing how to let go, a habit of stepping away before the noise arrives, and a silence that, in the end, sends you back to life with purpose.

None of these stories promises that your noise is going to switch off completely. All of them promise the same thing: that there is a voice quieter than everything else, and that you can learn to hear it.

***A question for this week:** what is the smallest pause — not the perfect retreat, not a whole week of silence, just the smallest pause — that you can give yourself today?*

Carry this question with you. Write it somewhere you'll see it. Come back to it when the noise turns the volume up again.

With love,
José.

Bibliography and Sources

Nothing you read here is made up. Every ancient word and every story has its own origin, and here it is, in case something moved you and you want to go find it.

The Scriptures

All quotations come from the **New International Version (NIV)**, © Biblica, Inc., checked against the official text (1 Kings 19 read in full context, vv. 1-21).

- **1 Kings 19:3-4** — Elijah flees and asks to die under the broom tree
- **1 Kings 19:11-13** — the wind, the earthquake, the fire, and the gentle whisper
- **Psalms 46:1, 10-11** — “Be still, and know that I am God”
- **Psalms 131** — “But I have calmed and quieted myself”
- **Mark 1:35** — Jesus withdraws to a solitary place to pray
- **Habakkuk 2:20** — “Let all the earth be silent before him”
- **Isaiah 30:15** — “In quietness and trust is your strength” (quoted together with the warning in the same verse: “but you would have none of it”)
- **Matthew 6:25, 34** — “Do not worry about tomorrow”

The Stories

Elijah at Horeb (1 Kings 18-19). Biblical account, read in its full historical and literary context (chapters 18 and 19), with exegetical validation prior to its use in this book.

Simone Biles, American gymnast. At the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games (held in 2021) she withdrew from the team final (July 27) and from the individual all-around, vault, uneven bars, and floor finals, citing her mental health (“I have to focus on my mental health,” press conference of July 27, 2021). She returned on August 3 to compete in the balance beam final, where she won the bronze medal.

ESPN, “Simone Biles withdraws from individual all-around competition at Tokyo Olympics to focus on mental well-being” (July 2021).

Olympics.com, “Simone Biles withdraws from women’s all-around final.”

TIME, “Simone Biles Wins Bronze in Balance Beam at Tokyo Olympics” (August 2021).

Code Lavender, a rapid-response emotional-support program for health-care staff, popularized by the Cleveland Clinic (implemented around 2008) and whose concept is also credited to Earl Bakken at the North Hawaii Community Hospital.

Cleveland Clinic, “Code Lavender: A tool for staff support” (institutional document).

Stony Brook Medicine, “Code Lavender – Caring For Our Caregivers.”

Advisory Board, “When Cleveland Clinic staff are troubled, they file ‘Code Lavender’” (2013).

Arianna Huffington, cofounder of The Huffington Post. In 2007 she collapsed from exhaustion at home and fractured a cheekbone in the fall; she herself has recounted the episode as her “wake-up call” about rest and true success.

Arianna Huffington, “10 Years Ago I Collapsed From Burnout and Exhaustion, And It’s The Best Thing That Could Have Happened To Me” (Thrive Global).

Huffington, Arianna. Thrive: The Third Metric to Redefining Success and Creating a Life of Well-Being, Wisdom, and Wonder. Harmony Books, 2014.

TODAY, “Arianna Huffington: Collapse from exhaustion was ‘wake-up call’.”

TIME, “Arianna Huffington Says Fainting In 2007 Was A Wake-Up Call.”

Bill Gates and the “Think Weeks,” twice-yearly retreats of solitary reading and reflection that he has practiced since the nineties.

*Guth, Robert A. “In Secret Hideaway, Bill Gates Ponders Microsoft’s Future.” **The Wall Street Journal**, March 28, 2005, front page.*

The Seattle Times (2005), “Microsoft’s ‘Thoreau’ takes to woods to ponder future” (contemporary review of the WSJ report).

CNBC, “Bill Gates took solo ‘think weeks’ in a cabin in the woods—why it’s a great strategy” (2019).

An Honest Note

The contemporary stories in this book involve public figures, told on the basis of widely reported facts verified against reliable primary and journalistic sources before this edition. None is presented as proof of anything, nor as a personal endorsement of this book’s content by these figures: they are real people who, at some documented moment of their lives, had to stop in the middle of the noise.

END OF WEEKLY BOOK #2



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