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Topic # 1

*In the Old Testament we read that there is “a time to keep silence and a time to speak” (Ecclesiastes 3:7). What is the value of silence and quiet in a time when we are always “plugged in”?*

How many of you have a smart phone? Ok, so - you must know what it's like to have the battery constantly dying on you; the need to have a charger on you at all times. I get on the school bus every morning with my phone at 100%, and by the time I get to school it's at 70% and draining! Sometimes I feel as though my faith is like a smart phone battery. I leave church on Sunday with God fresh and 100% on my mind. By the time I get home, my spiritual battery has been drained by things like Instagram and Snapchat.

I am the last of 4 children, and the only one still at home. My parents have grown tired and weary, their batteries drained by my three siblings before me – especially after my brother went away to college and drained them completely. So, I keep myself busy. I train and play tennis for my school team. I go to GOYA meetings and I Greek dance. Being so busy gives me little time to hang out with my friends. The solution? Social media; Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook. My parents have a hard time accepting this; they think it's crazy, but hey, this is a new generation, with new technology and new innovative ways to communicate. Always going, always doing, always plugged in.

Almost as if he could see two thousand years into the future, King Solomon once said. “There is a time to be quiet and a time to speak.” Always plugged in as I am, I struggle to find a moment of silence. Scroll, like, comment, repeat without end. I always have something to say.

On our way to church we pass by a billboard where every week there is a new quote. A few weeks ago the quote said, “Most of us know how to say nothing, few of us know when.” Which made me wonder... Why is it expected of us to be quiet in church? I think it is in quiet moments that we can actually listen, whether to wise men and women, servants of God like Paul, or to the Lord's Spirit Itself. These people will speak truth, wisdom, and love – if we will just be still, quiet, and silent. Noise and distraction are all Satan's tools to remove us from the peace, calmness, and rest of the Lord. In Proverbs chapter 10 verse 19 we read: “When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, but he who restrains his lips is wise.” **Silence**, more than just keeping my parents' sanity allows the messages of others to spread through our hearts and our minds, giving us peace and happiness. **Silence** is how we recharge our batteries.

When I was younger I would be hauled to church every Sunday with the unpleasant thought that I will have to withstand 2 hours of uncomfortable silence. As I have grown up this uncomfortable silence has become a pleasant and enjoyable one. Church has become my haven, the place where I can step away from the ever-plugged in addiction of social media and become instead, plugged in with God. The two hours I spend in church are replenishing my spiritual batteries by connecting to the power source, **our God, our lord, our savior Jesus Christ.**