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by Alan Martin

Paul instructed the Thessalonians to "aspire to be tranquil." I must admit that I have been a slow learner in this regard but I am discovering that this aspiration is far more than a little quiet homestead out in the country where we don't disturb any of our neighbors. Tranquility of the inner man is far more crucial to life and peace than any quiet place in an external setting. Yet few of us have an intimate acquaintance with inner tranquility.

We have become activity addicts. We have a spiritual attention deficit disorder. This is part of the effect of the "evil days" we live in; we are too often slaves of our senses. Is this true in our life? How comfortable are we in complete silence? Does our mind ever completely rest - even in our sleep? Is our inner man a sanctuary of solitude where we can completely shut out the noise of all man's vain bustling about? Does the surface of our heart ever look like the glass top of a lake in the early morning light - when you can clearly see heaven on its surface?

Sadly, this is why so few of us ever hear the voice of God - for the tranquility of the soul is God's recording studio. How can the still small voice of God be recorded over the irritating interference of our loud living? You can rest assured that anything recorded amidst all the background noise will never be worth listening to. We need to construct a spiritual sound studio where the noise of our flesh, its continual crying to be pampered, can not penetrate the recording studio of solitude.

Long before I had any inkling of its true meaning, I learned a song as a youth that somehow stuck in a very cluttered mind. One of the lines of the song stand out to me now more than ever before:

There is a quiet place
Far from the rapid pace
Where God can soothe my troubled mind.

Sheltered by tree and flower
There in my quiet hour
With him my cares are left behind.

Whether a garden small,
Or on a mountain tall
New strength and courage there I find.

And then from that quiet place
I go prepared to face
A new day with love for all mankind.

I am beginning to see more of what Paul meant - we all need to aspire to retire! We should cease from our works and BE STILL and KNOW that I AM GOD! There in the inner sanctuary of the tranquilized soul - God's voice will be recorded on our hearts - and it will be a song worth playing over and over again.