

The Spiritual Discipline of Solitude and Silence

Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Hale
The Gathering
Ray of Hope Christian Church
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Mark 1:35

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 1:21-25

A close-up, artistic photograph of a glass filled with a golden-brown liquid, possibly whiskey, with a white object partially visible at the top right.

Mark 1:28

Luke 5:15-16

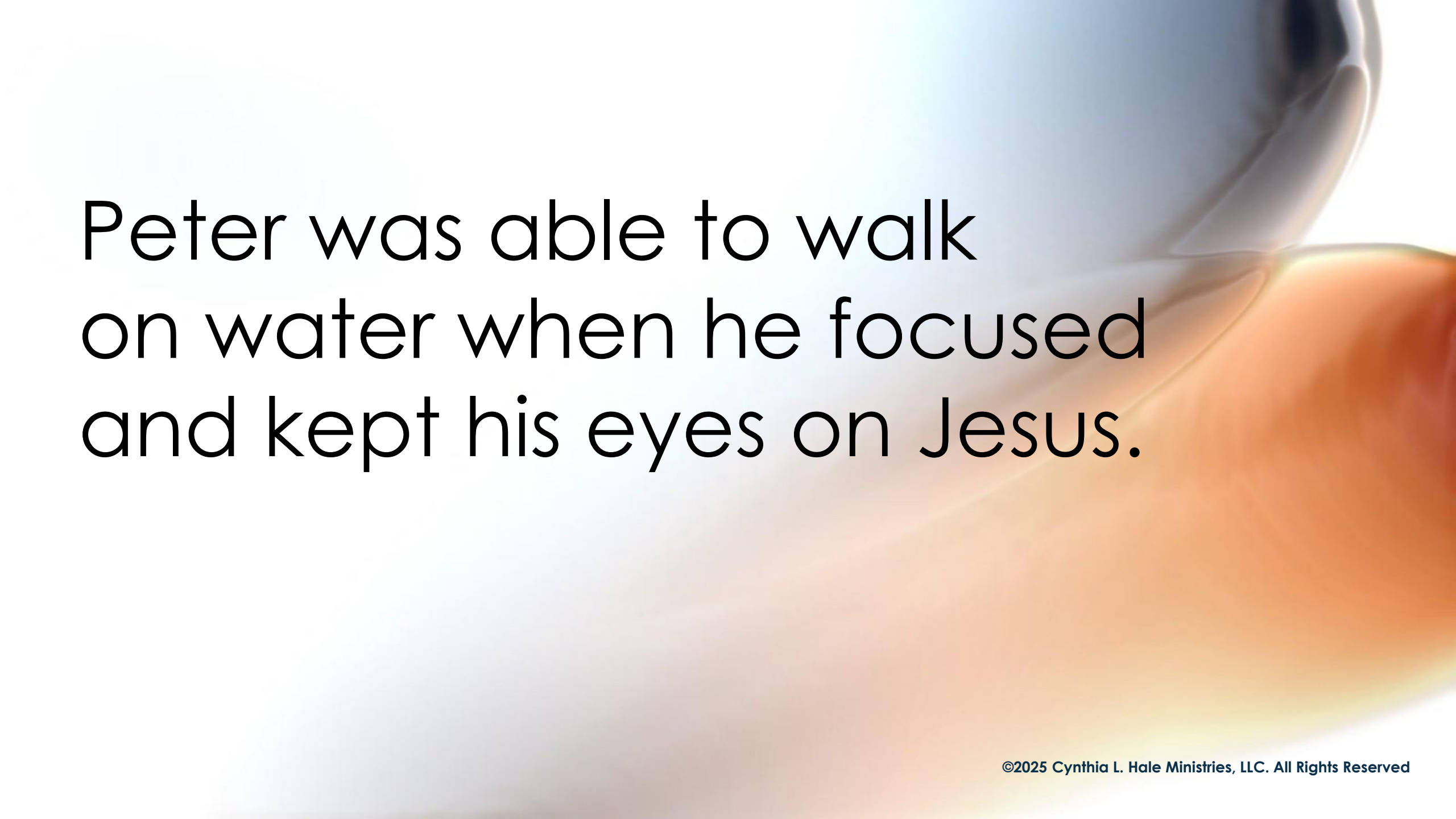
Yet the news about him spread all the more so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sickness. But Jesus “often” withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

Matthew 14:13

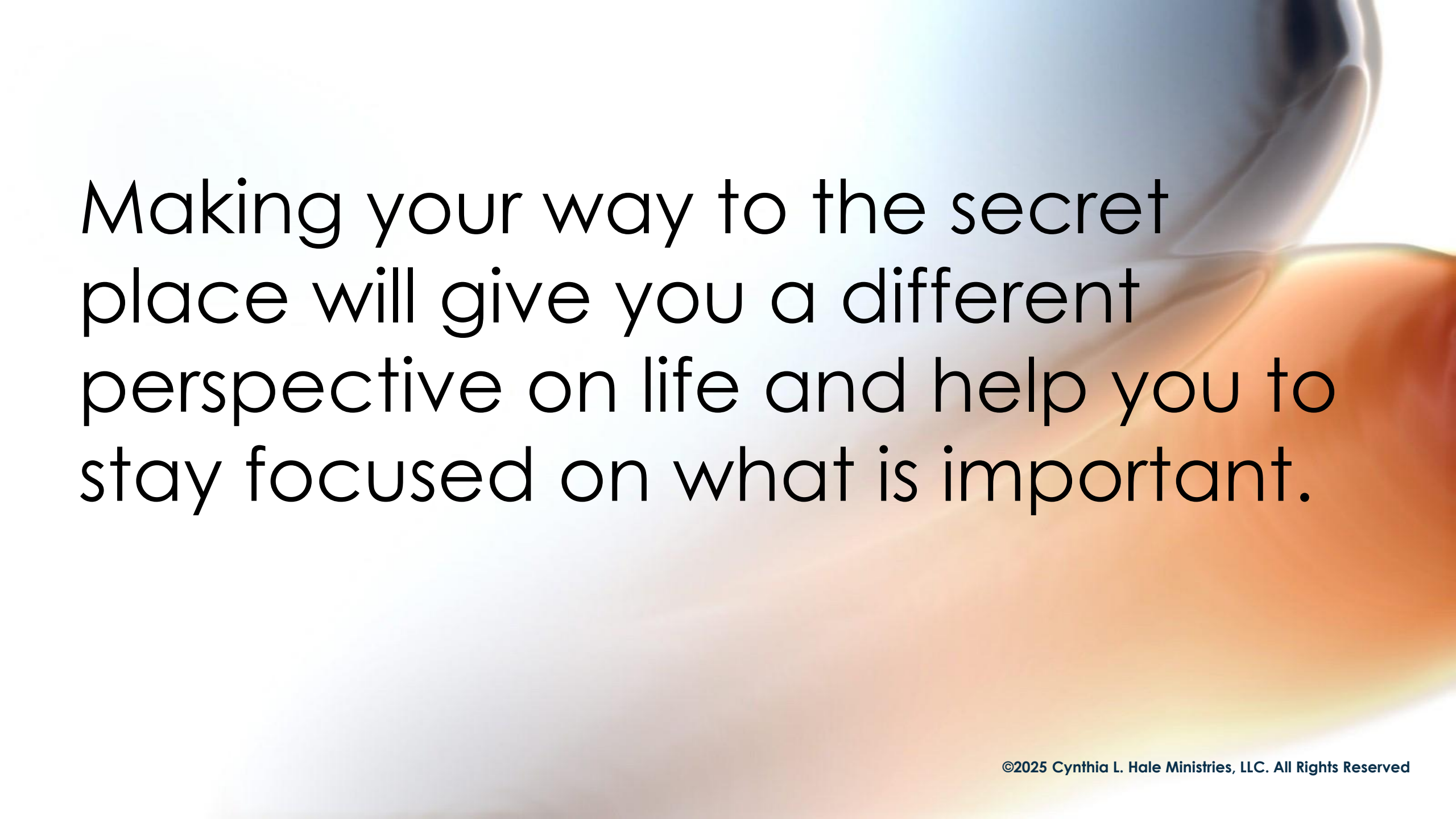
He withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place.

Matthew 14:22-23

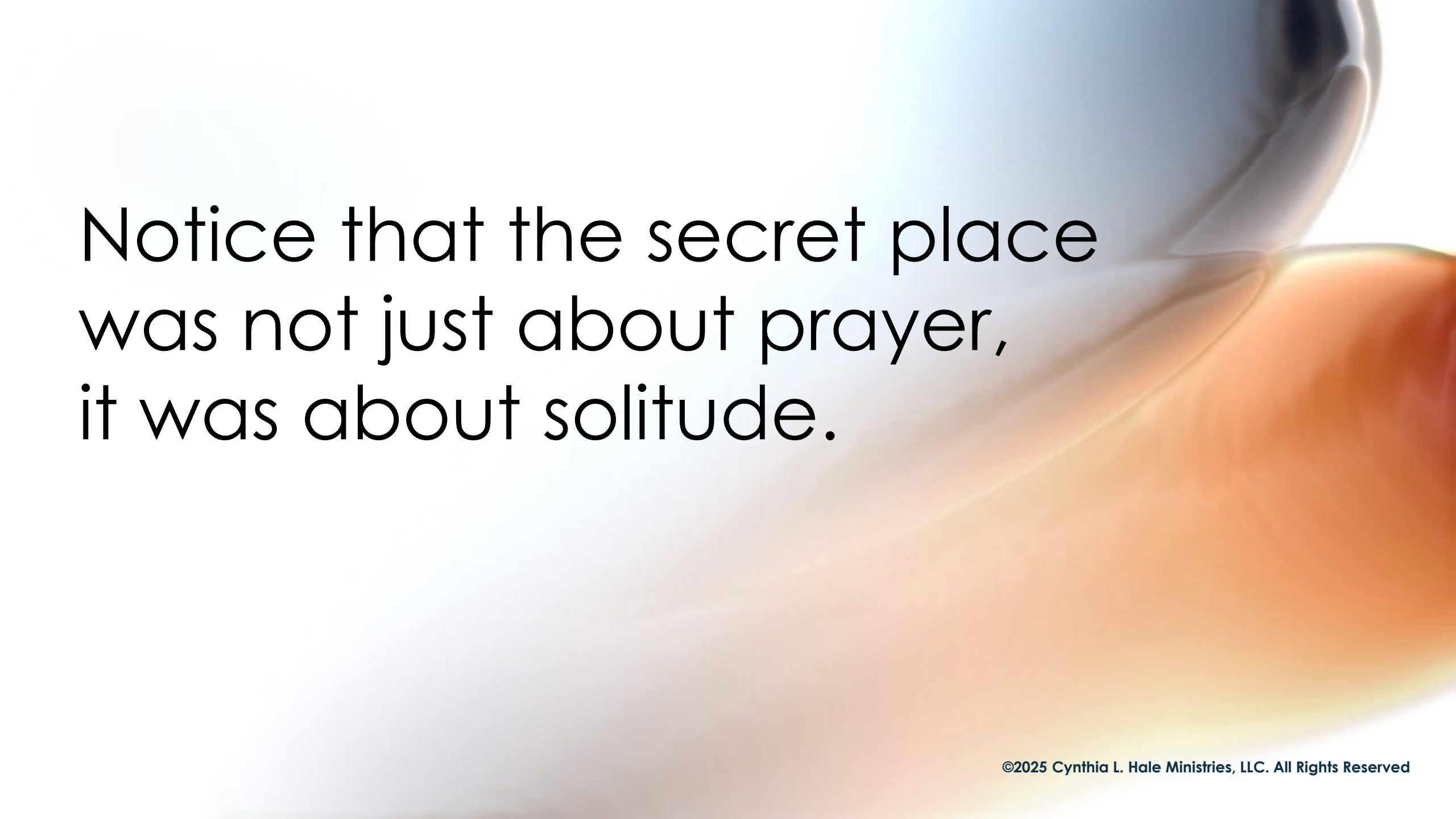
Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountain side by himself to pray.



Peter was able to walk
on water when he focused
and kept his eyes on Jesus.



Making your way to the secret place will give you a different perspective on life and help you to stay focused on what is important.



Notice that the secret place
was not just about prayer,
it was about solitude.



So-li-tude is the state of being
alone.



Discipline of Solitude

Richard Foster

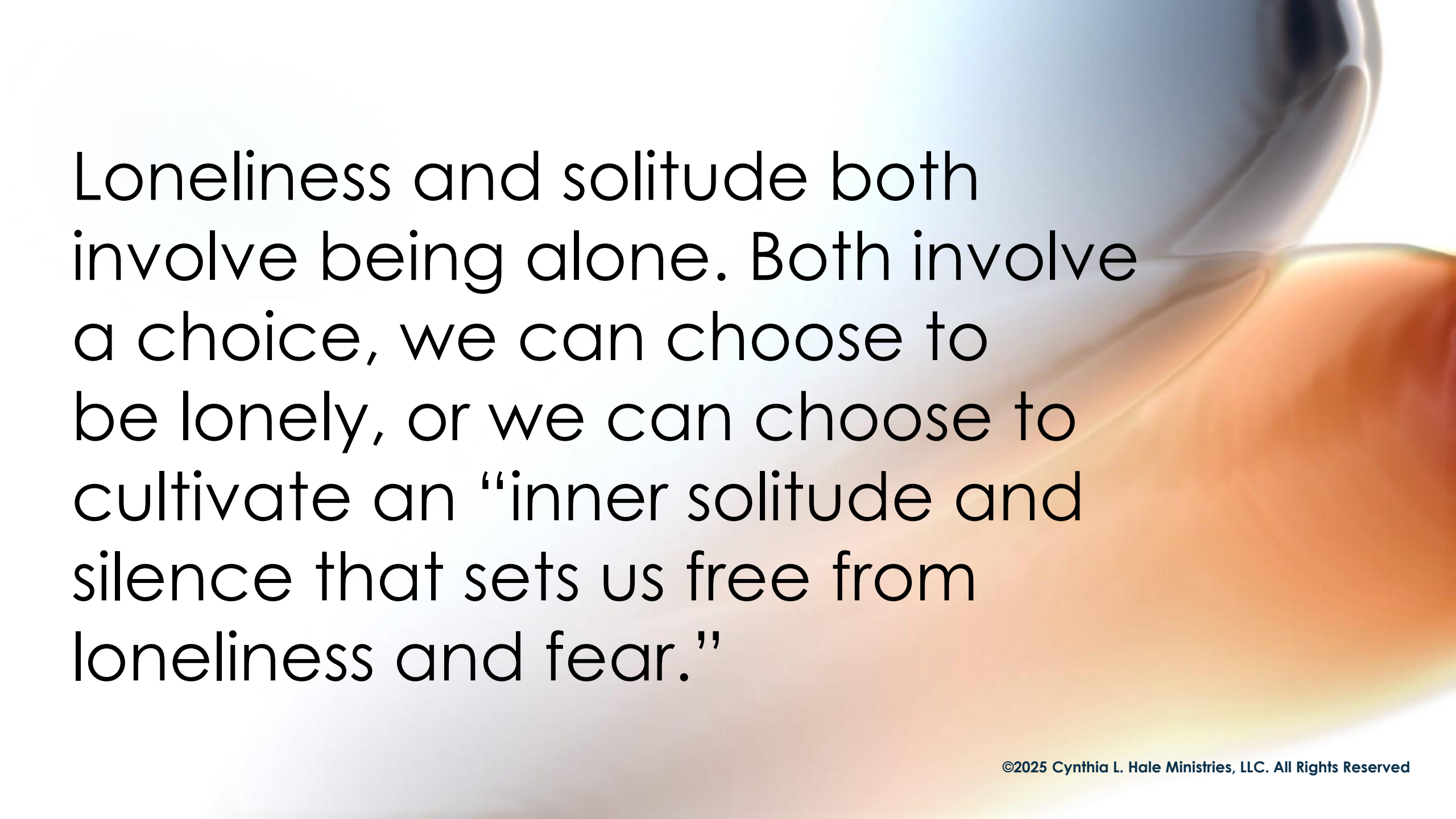
Celebration of Discipline

What we fear is not so much being alone but rather being lonely.



Richard Foster

Jesus calls us from loneliness
to solitude.



Loneliness and solitude both involve being alone. Both involve a choice, we can choose to be lonely, or we can choose to cultivate an “inner solitude and silence that sets us free from loneliness and fear.”



Solitude is more a state of mind
and heart than a place.

Hebrews 13:4

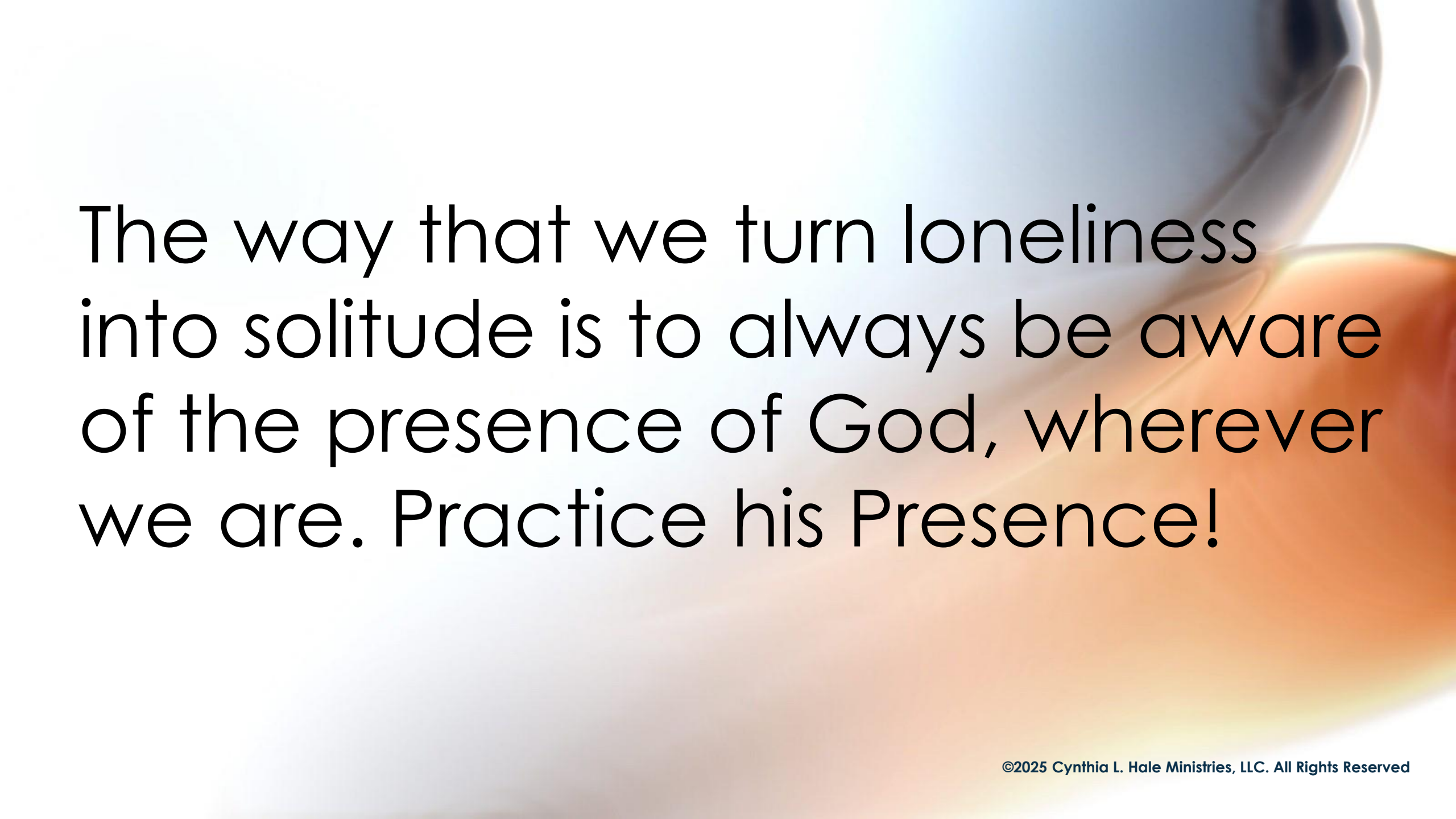
I will never leave you nor
forsake you!

Discussion or Reflection:

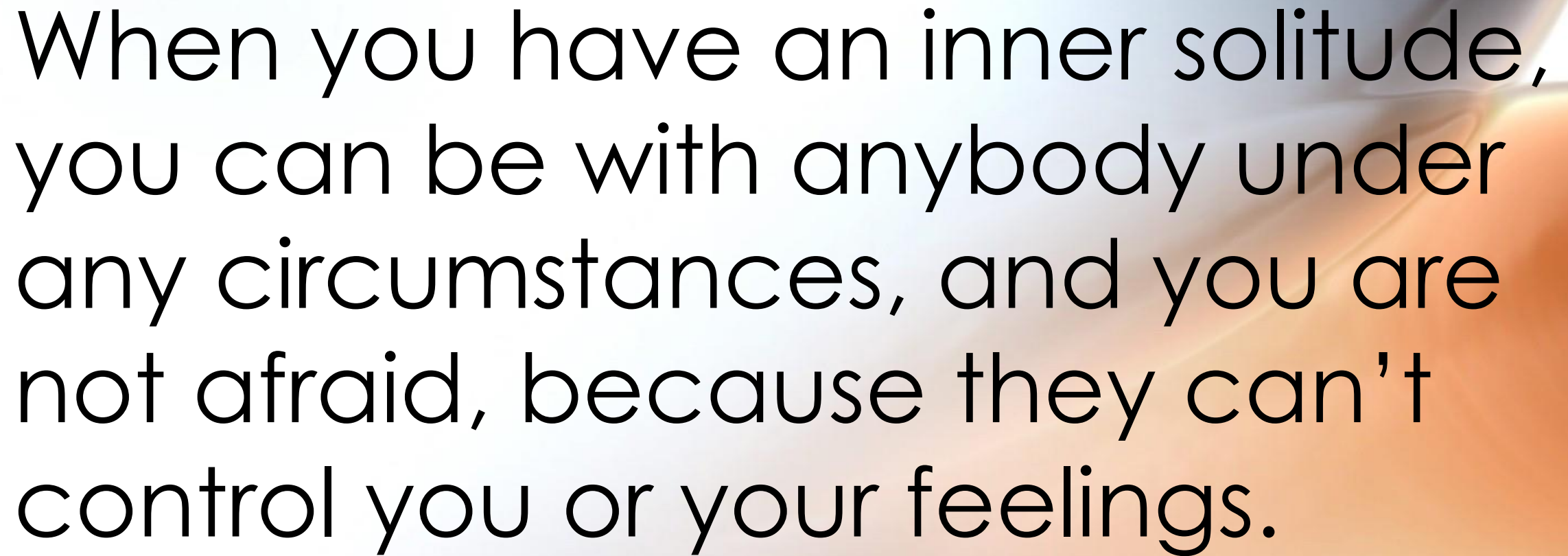
Do you believe this? When have you had to rely on this promise to help you overcome fear, anxiety, or a difficult season in your life?

Psalm 139:7 – 10

We are never alone because
we are always in the presence
of God!



The way that we turn loneliness into solitude is to always be aware of the presence of God, wherever we are. Practice his Presence!



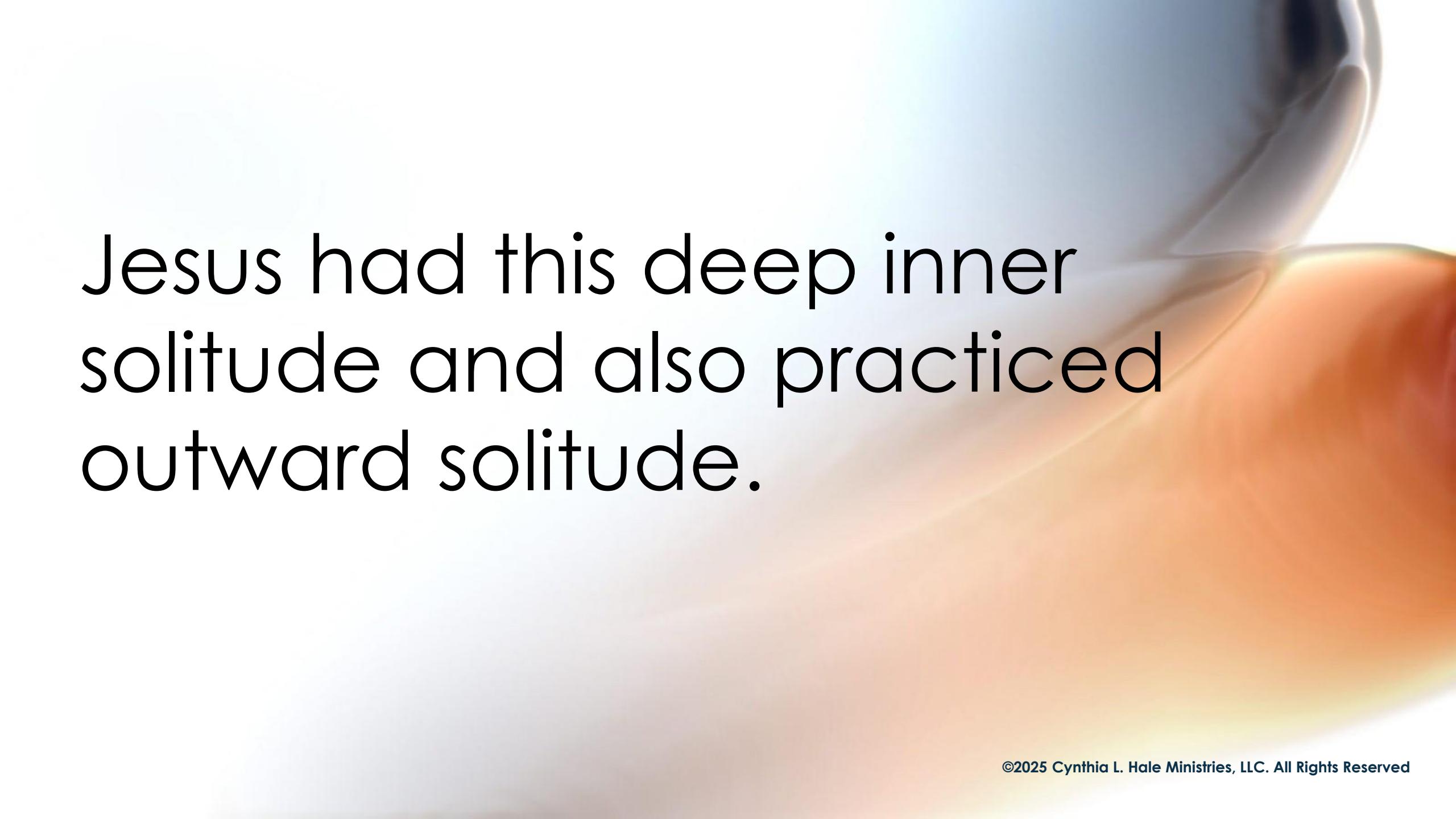
When you have an inner solitude,
you can be with anybody under
any circumstances, and you are
not afraid, because they can't
control you or your feelings.



Inward solitude has outward
manifestations.



There are times when you
need to be alone so you
can hear from God.



Jesus had this deep inner solitude and also practiced outward solitude.

Matthew 4:1-11

He began and prepared for his ministry with 40 days in the wilderness alone.

Luke 6:12

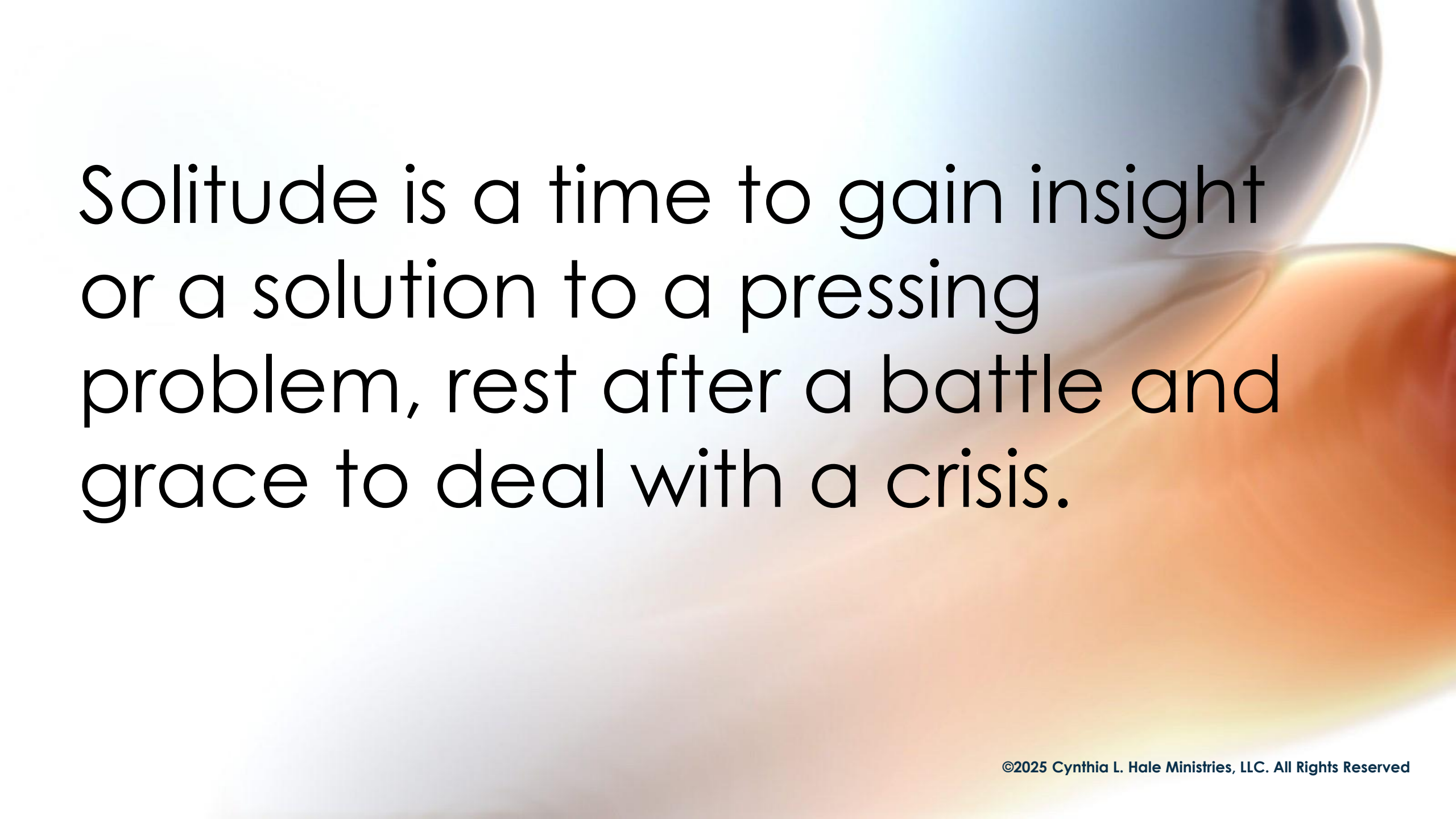
Before choosing the Twelve,
he spent the night alone praying.
Every major decision was made
in conversation with God, alone.

Matthew 26:36

As he prepared to give his life on Calvary, he sought out the solitude of the Garden of Gethsemane.



Solitude is an investment.



Solitude is a time to gain insight or a solution to a pressing problem, rest after a battle and grace to deal with a crisis.

Isaiah 30:15

In quietness and trust is your strength.

Psalm 46:10

Be still and know that I am
God.

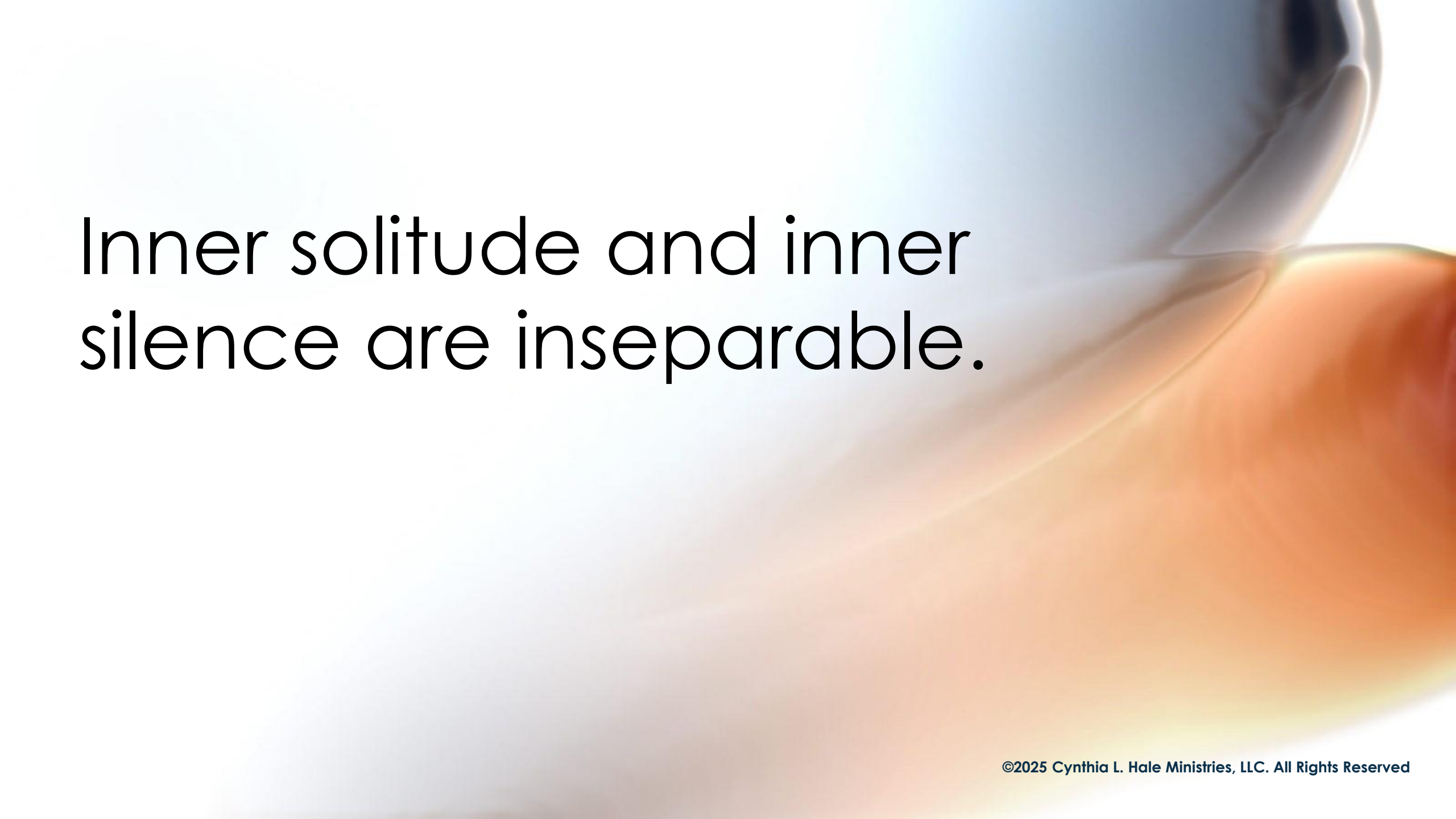


Discussion or Reflection:

What is the biggest barrier to your getting still before God?



Without silence there can be
no solitude!



Inner solitude and inner
silence are inseparable.



Control rather than no noise
is the key.

James 3:2

James 1:19

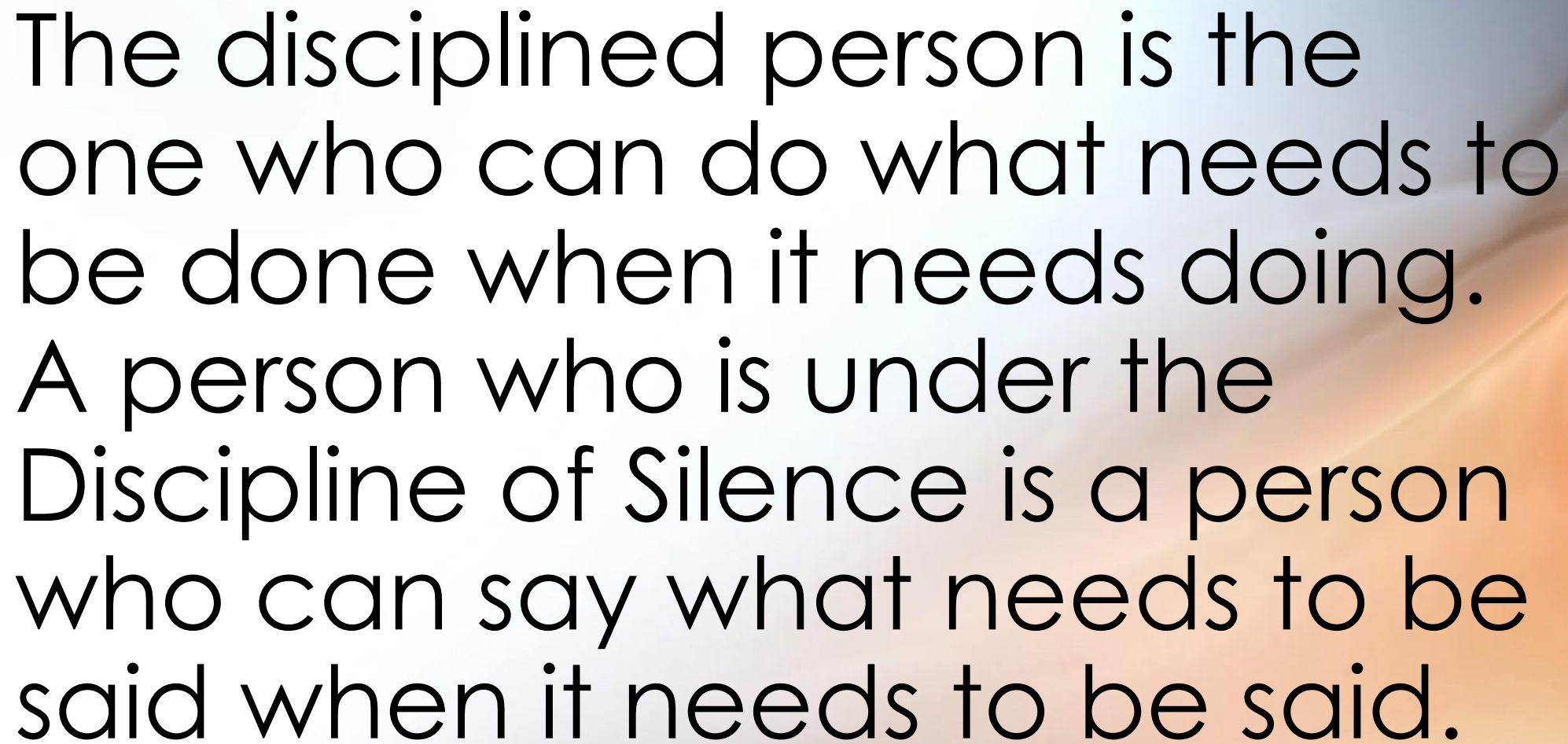
My brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.

Thomas a Kempis

It is easier to be silent altogether than to speak with moderation.

Ecclesiastes 3:7

There is a time to keep silence
and a time to speak.



The disciplined person is the one who can do what needs to be done when it needs doing. A person who is under the Discipline of Silence is a person who can say what needs to be said when it needs to be said.

Proverbs 25:11

A word aptly spoken is like
apples of gold.

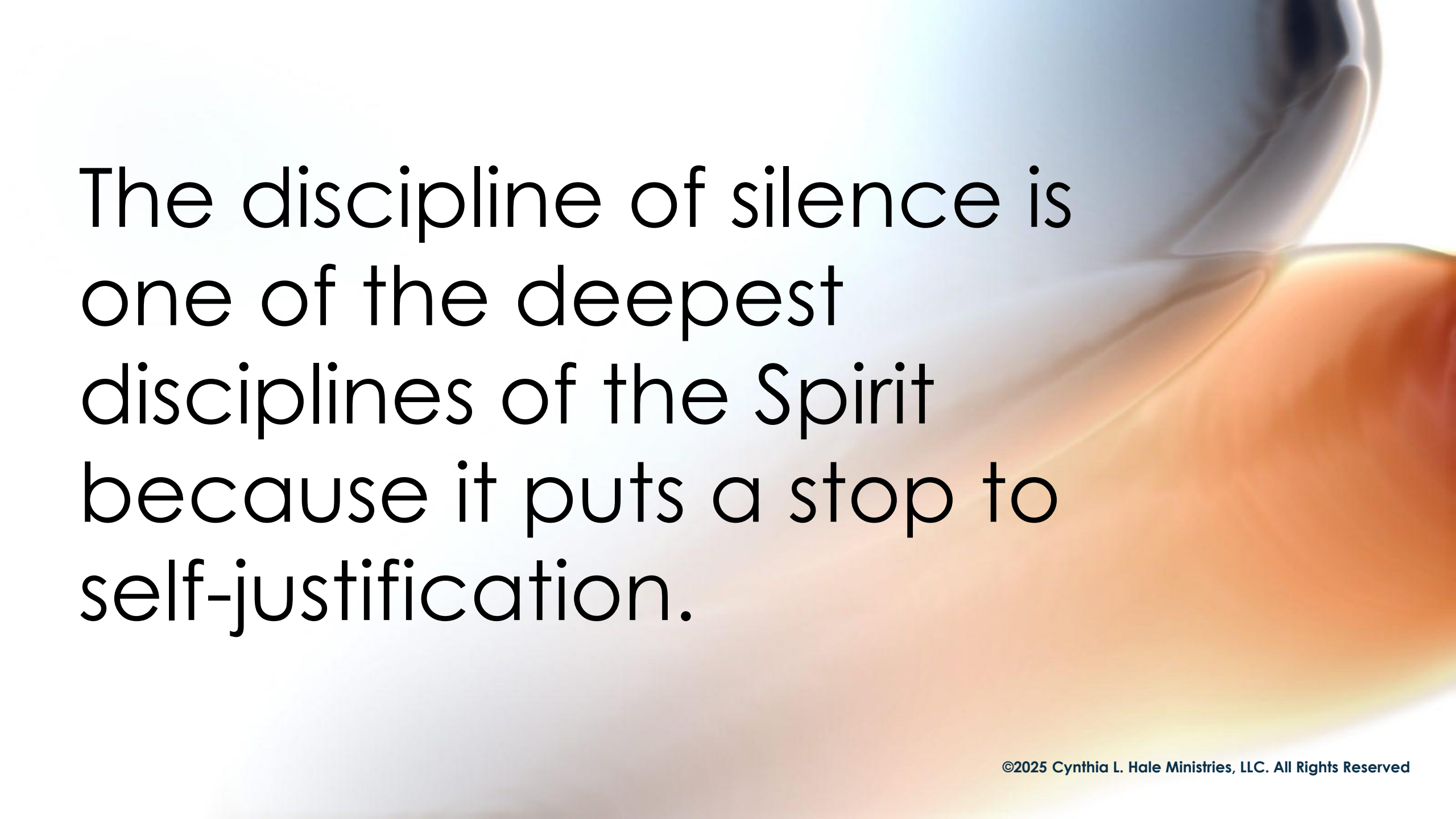
Ecclesiastes 5:1b - 2



Matthew 17:4



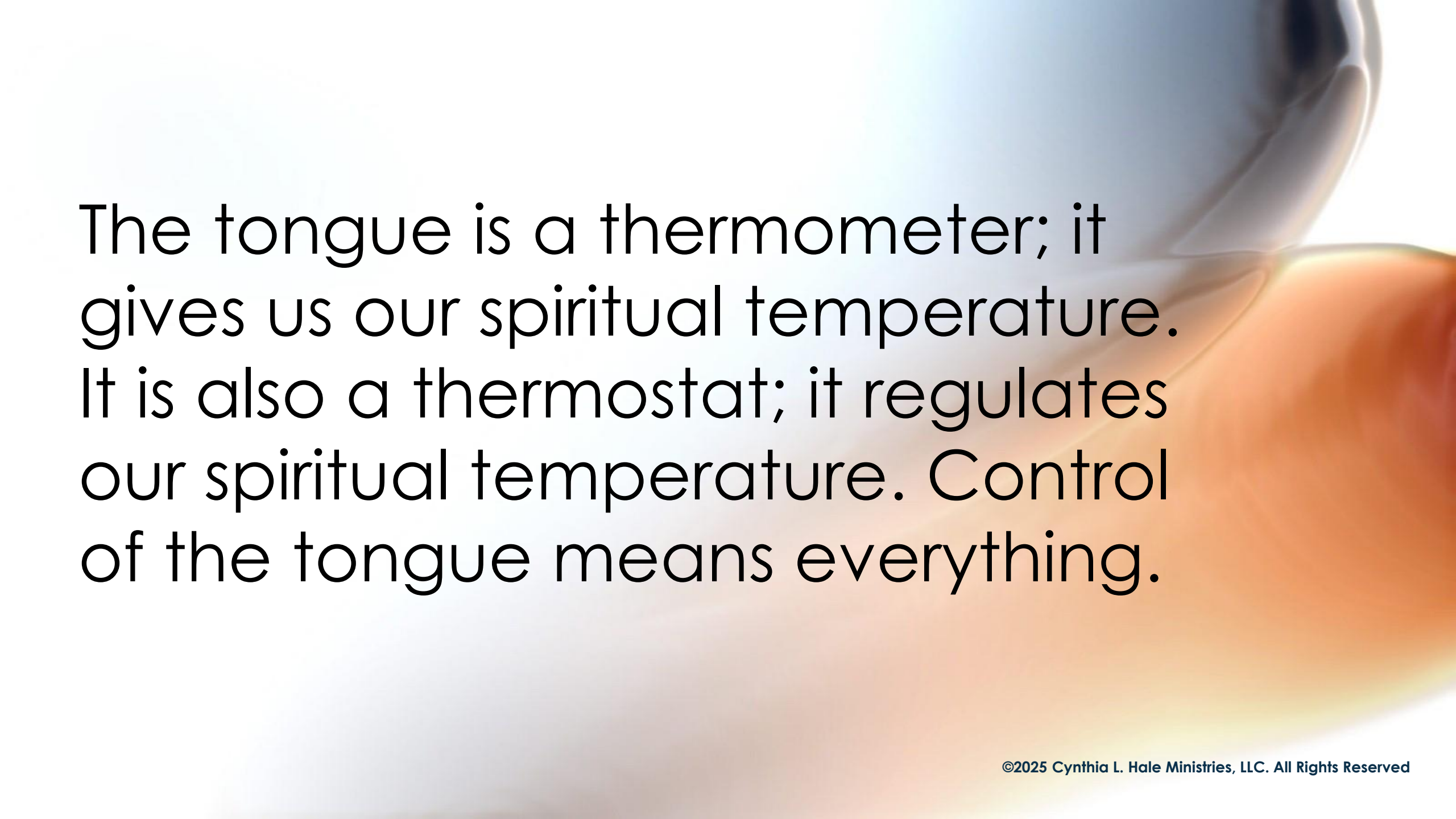
Most of us struggle with the
discipline of silence.



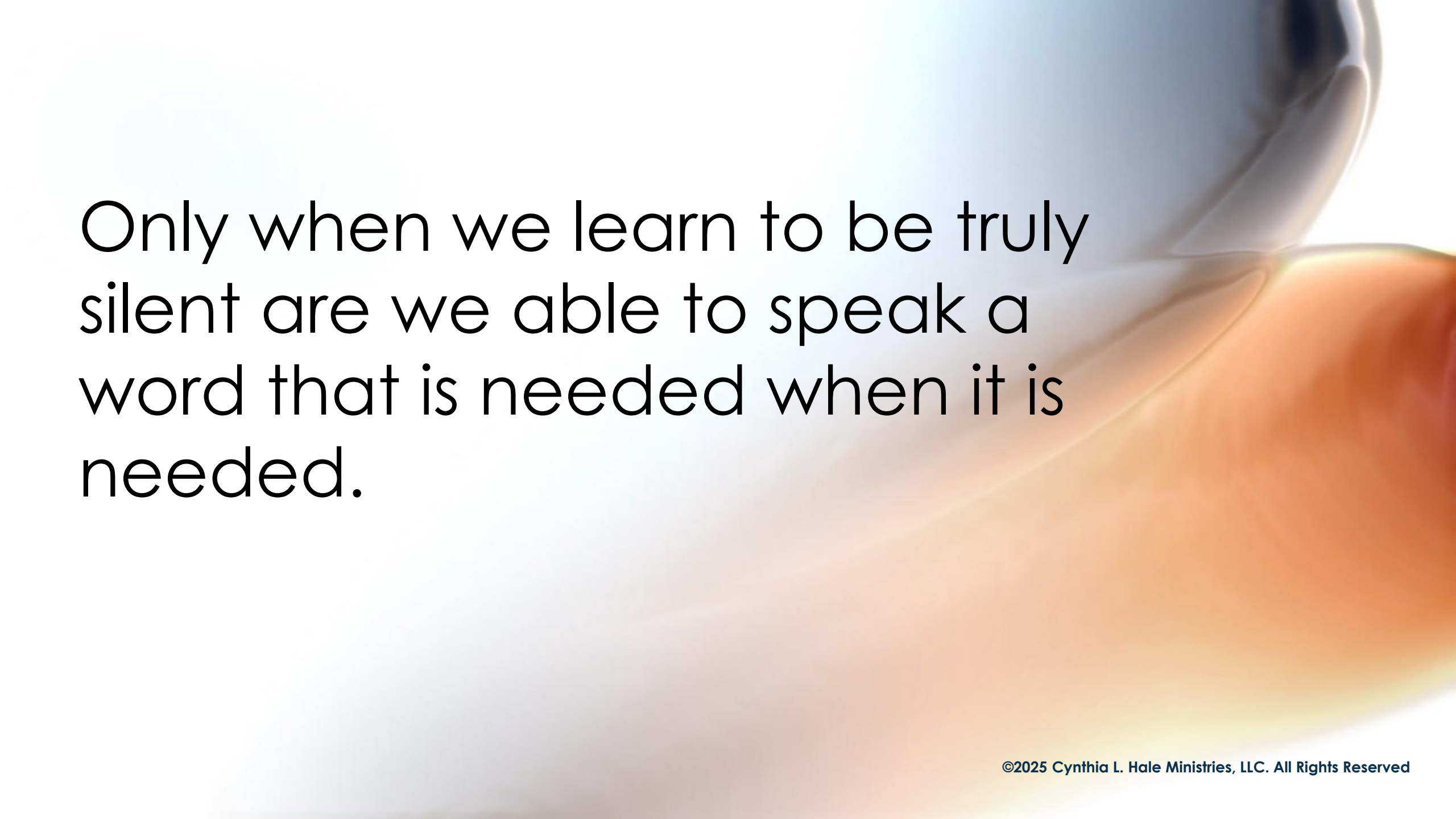
The discipline of silence is one of the deepest disciplines of the Spirit because it puts a stop to self-justification.



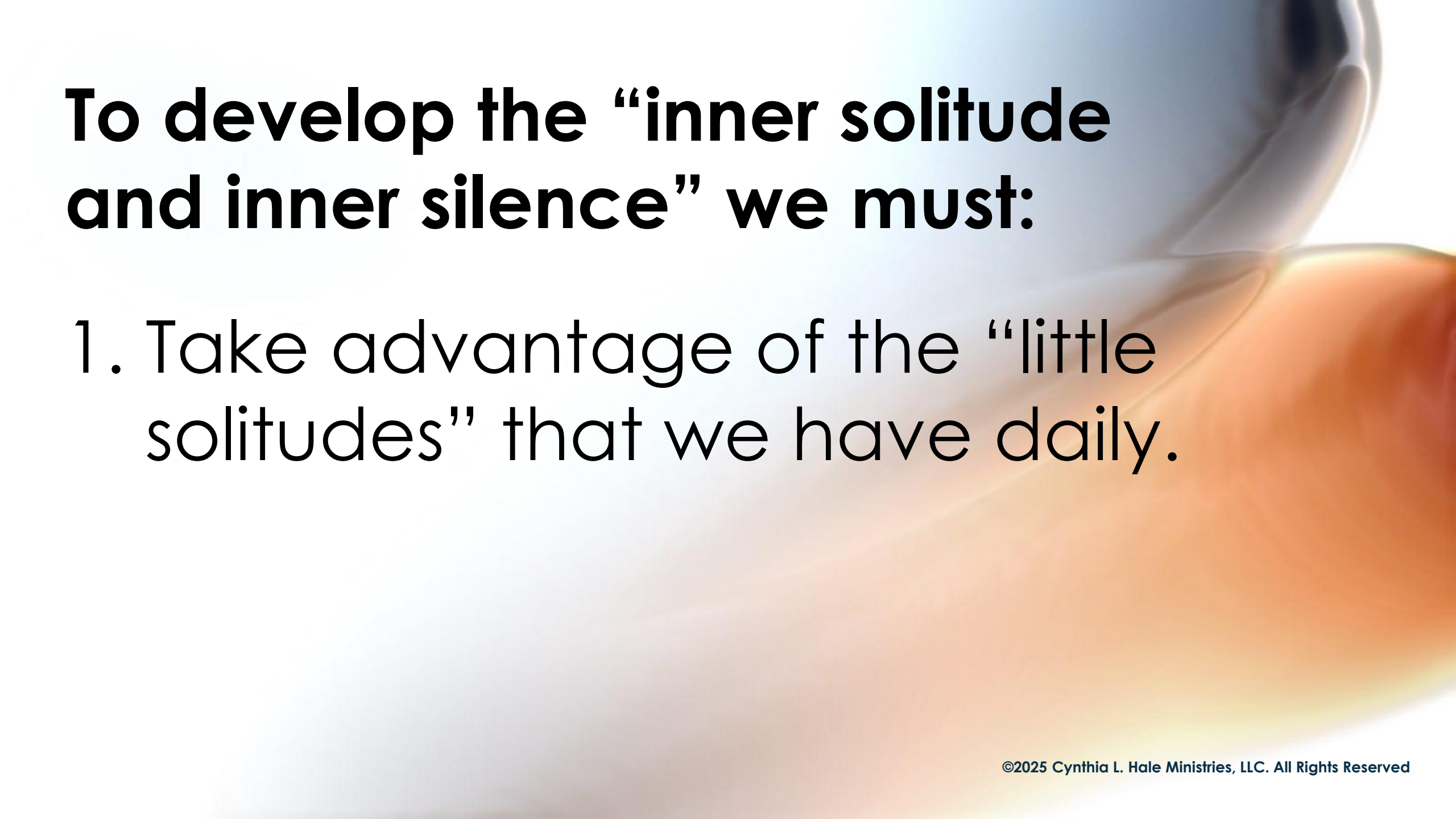
Silence teaches us that God
can take care of us.



The tongue is a thermometer; it gives us our spiritual temperature. It is also a thermostat; it regulates our spiritual temperature. Control of the tongue means everything.

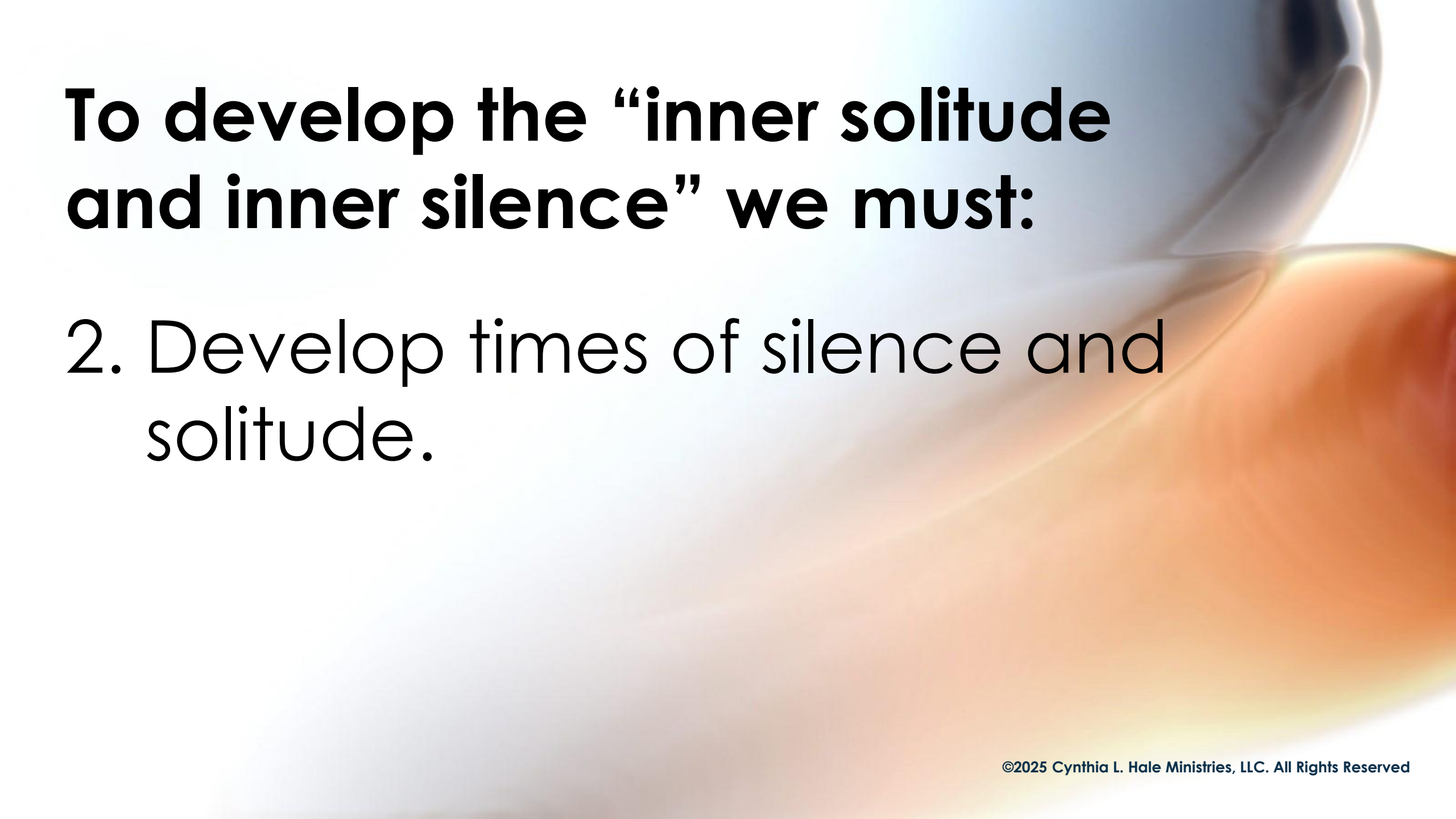


Only when we learn to be truly
silent are we able to speak a
word that is needed when it is
needed.



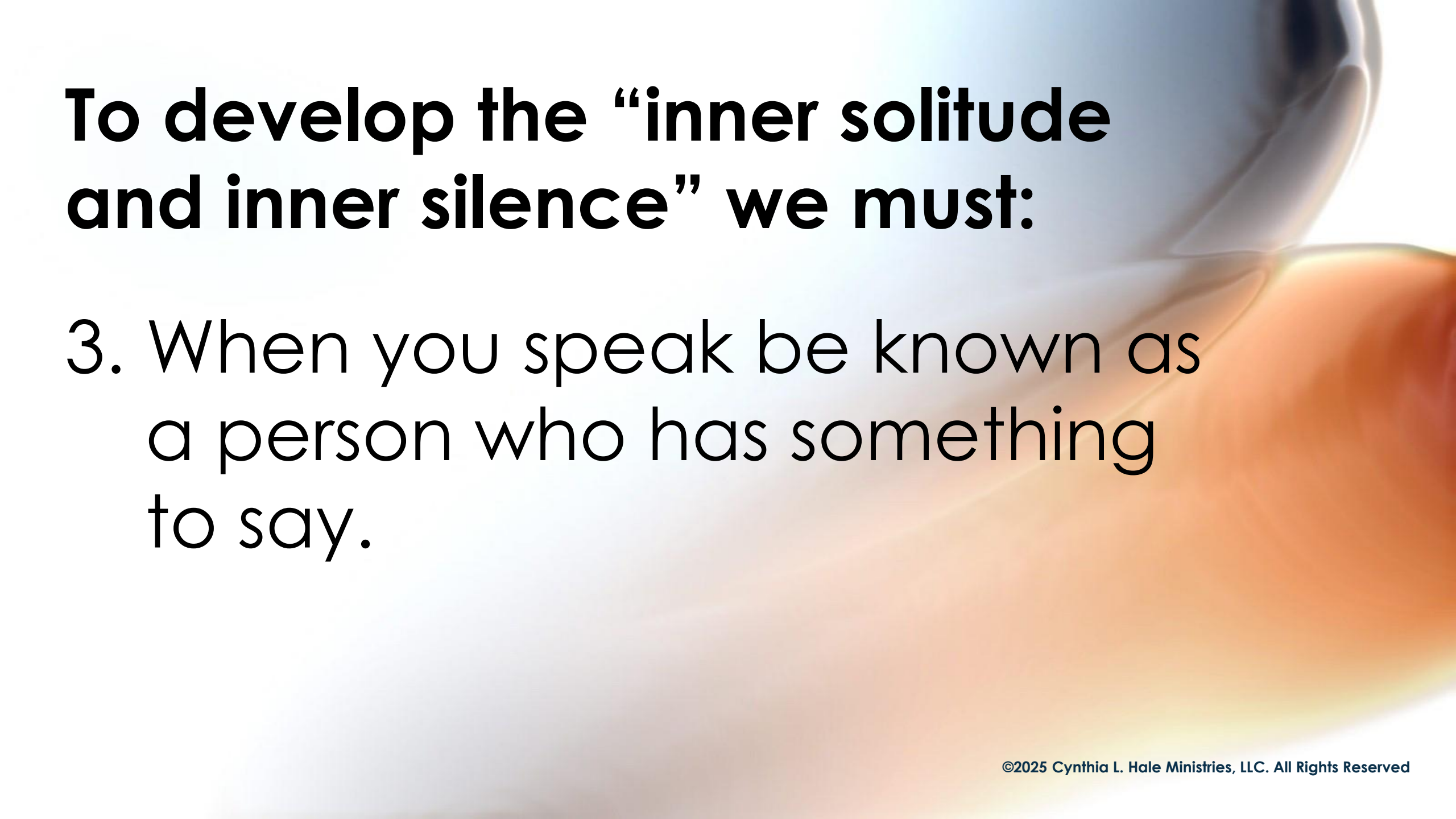
To develop the “inner solitude and inner silence” we must:

1. Take advantage of the “little solitudes” that we have daily.



**To develop the “inner solitude
and inner silence” we must:**

2. Develop times of silence and solitude.

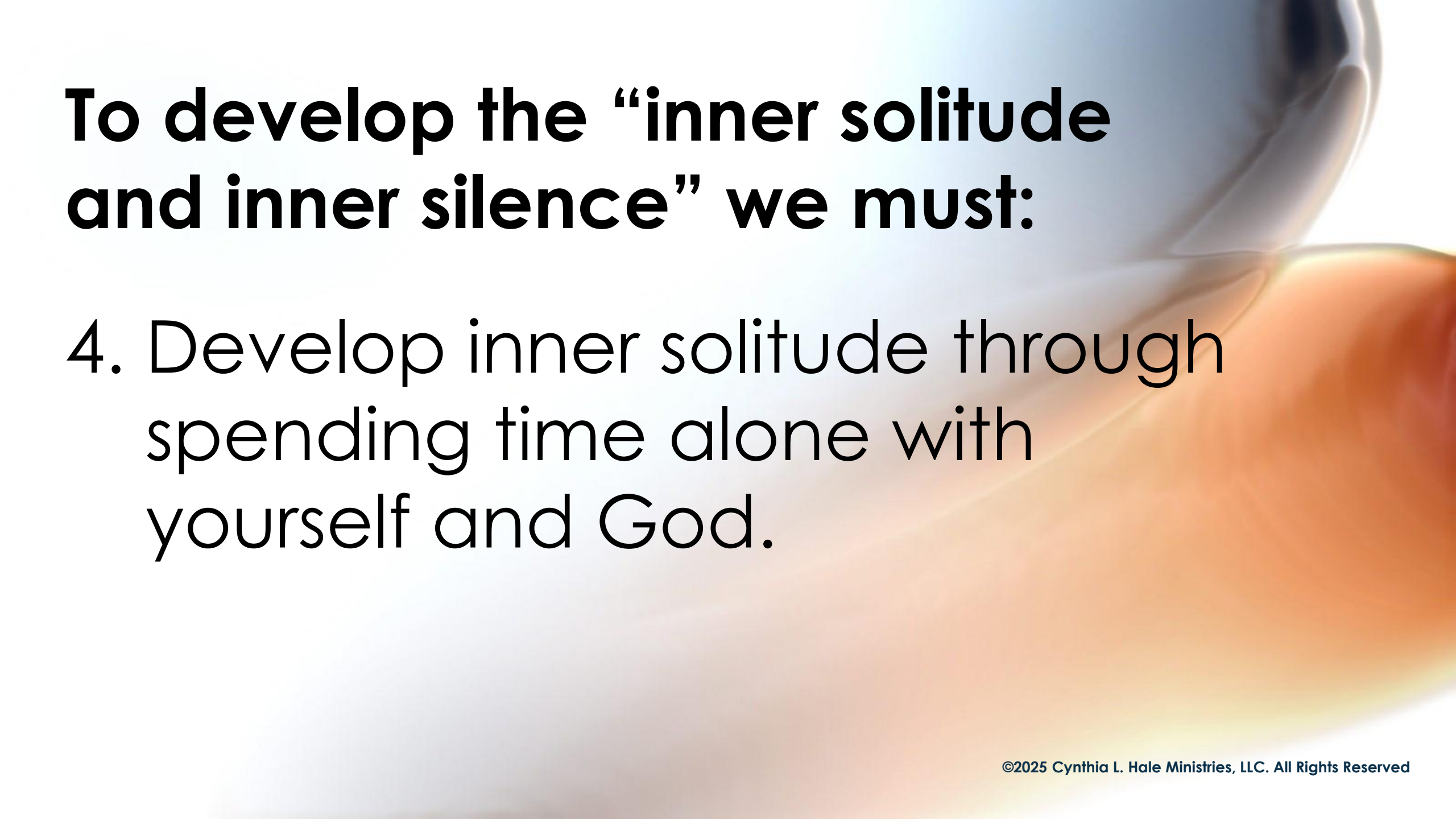


**To develop the “inner solitude
and inner silence” we must:**

3. When you speak be known as
a person who has something
to say.

Bonhoeffer

Much that is an unnecessary remains unsaid, but the essential and the helpful, they can be said in a few words.



**To develop the “inner solitude
and inner silence” we must:**

4. Develop inner solitude through
spending time alone with
yourself and God.

Discussion or Reflection:

1. How comfortable are you with aloneness, solitude, and silence?
2. What are the ways that you avoid being alone?
3. Are there times when you feel God calling you to solitude that you resist?
4. What difference would more solitude or silence make in your quality of life?

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