

The Danger of Isolation
(Dealing with the aftermath of the pandemic)
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Introduction: God made us with the need to be with others.

- A. Every relationship we have is built upon *this God-given need*.
 - 1. We may choose to marry because we find it *not good* “to be alone.” (Gen 2:18)
 - 2. Companionship *gives us strength* to face the difficulties of life. (Ecc 4:10-12)
 - 3. We are made to *seek a relationship with God*. (Ecc 3:11; Isa 57:15)
- B. All of us have had *our relationships disrupted* by current events.
 - 1. In 1918 the country endured *similar struggles* with isolation from a pandemic.
 - 2. Regardless of the reasons or the wisdom in the path forced upon us, we must *look ahead to rebuilding* the relationships God has ordained!

I. Understanding the real pain of being isolated

A. The social pain of isolation is *often greater* than any physical pain in our lives!
We are social animals and need to feel that we “belong” to others and feel connected to one another. Social pain is as real a sensation for us as physical pain; researchers have shown that loneliness and rejection activates the same parts of the brain as physical pain. - The loneliness epidemic, Rebecca Harris

- 1. One of the hard punishments in prison is solitary confinement.
- 2. Towards the end of Paul’s life he experienced *the pain of standing alone*.
(2 Tim 4:16)
- 3. There are events that can suddenly thrust us from a world surrounded by people to *a hostile world where we are isolated*. (Job 29:4-12; 30:10-11, 26-29)
- 4. There is a good probability that you will *one day walk down this path* in your life!
- B. One can be lonely *in the midst of people!*
 - 1. There is a longing for a certain kind of companionship. A companion to *share your joys and to bear your hurts*.

Another myth is that loneliness is typically associated with being alone, but it also effects people when they are surrounded by others.... This is because loneliness is about the quality rather than the quantity of relationships that we have, so a person may have a lot of friends but still find that their needs for social contact are not met.

- 2. It may be the longing for *just one person to do this*.

II. Consequences of extended isolation

- A. If burdens cannot be lifted, we become exhausted and *vulnerable to false realities*.
 - 1. We all have a load limit that *if exceeded* will break us down.
 - 2. In isolation you often *do not feel complete or secure*. (Ecc 4:9-10)
- B. In isolation we tend to *look upon the past*. (Job 29:1-5)
 - 1. Could Job return to the past?
 - 2. However Job’s past *could be an encouragement* to his here and now!
(Psa 22:1-5)
- C. In isolation we *tend to focus upon ourselves*.
 - 1. This is natural, as it is like being hungry. *You cannot help but notice!*
 - 2. You are made to *feel different and even unwanted*. (Job 30:9-10)

- D. In isolation our *natural weaknesses and negative thoughts* often are amplified!
1. You can second-guess yourself and even second-guess God!
 2. When left alone our emotions can grow and *eventually create their own reality*.
(1 Kings 19:4, 14)

III. We must move ahead with God's wisdom

- A. We cannot change our past but what should we do as a church *in the days ahead*?
1. Each of us are in different places as to *what we think is the safe and wise course* regarding this virus. I will not force my opinions on you! (Rom 14:4-5, 19)
 2. Because of the forced isolation we simply have *not had the communication and understanding* that we did when regularly being around each other!
 3. Some may have some *very strong expectations* on how other brethren should respond.
- B. We must be committed to *returning to regular assemblies and Bible studies*.
(Heb 10:23-25)
1. In time this is *where each of us want to be*. How will we get there?
 2. This will occur in steps and with communication with each other. All of us must overcome our fears *with faith and knowledge!* (Ex. My learned fear of a bike!)
- C. We must be committed to *renewing our individual relationships* with our brethren.
(1 Cor 12:23-26)
1. When a serviceman is *away for months from his family* there is a challenge when he comes home. Time is needed to rebuild relationships.
 2. We are *in need of being reacquainted!*
 3. We likely will have lost some during this prolonged isolation. Maybe we can *reach out and bring them back!* (Lk 15:4, 7)
 4. Some were isolated and needing companionship *before these events!* Those that fall away often follow predictable patterns! Who can we reach out to?

IV. Things that we can do right now

- A. We can find a stronger faith by *focusing on God* (worship).
1. Men of faith were *often alone and in pain*. Consider some great examples!
 2. What were David's thoughts when *he was isolated and unfairly attacked?*
(Psa 142:4-5)
- B. Let us *this week* take new steps in getting with others!
1. Paul carried burdens that even he allowed to pull him down. *What did he do?*
 2. He was relieved by *reaching out to brethren* with both direct and indirect contact!
(2 Cor 7:5-7)
- C. Let us reexamine the life of Christ and *learn to think like He did!*
1. Jesus was *forsaken and left alone* by men! (Psa 69:20, Jn 16:31-33)
 2. The Father was *always with Him!*
 3. May this present isolation draw us closer to our God *who will never leave us alone!*

Conclusion: Where is our present relationship with God right now?