

## A Need for Counsel

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by John Hines

These past two years have taught us a good bit about a word we would prefer to forget: **isolation**. Recently, in reading through **Proverbs**, this writer came across the word. “A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; he rages against all wise judgment” (**18:1**). While physical sicknesses and pandemics are not in view, **isolationism** certainly is.

It stands in *contrast* with the need for **counsel**, and **Proverbs** has much to say about the need for counsel. Let’s look at this topic from **Proverbs** and learn a few lessons.

### There Is A Time For Isolation

We should be careful about meddling in others’ quarrels (**26:17**), as we will likely get hurt ourselves. Rather, we need to mind our own flocks and herds – our own business (**27:23**). It looks as though our words should be few but powerful (**10:19-21**). Overall, there is a time for isolation, privacy, and tending to one’s own affairs. Isolation is conducive to **meditation, prayer, self-examination**, and other good things as well.

### One Danger Of Isolation Is Selfishness

We already read about seeking our own desire. Isolationism easily leads us to, “*There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death*” (**14:12**). “*The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise*” (**12:15**). This is the great danger. Here is the person who **only** listens to themselves.

### Another Danger Is Neglecting Others

The isolationist cuts himself off from helping others as well (**10:19-21**). “*There is one who scatters, yet increases more; and there is one who withholds more than is right, but it leads to poverty*” (**11:24**). “*A true witness delivers souls, but a deceitful witness speaks lies*” (**14:25**). Needless to say, we are trying to do the former. While isolationists may not be hurting others **actively**, they are **passively**. They are *neglecting* to do the good God wants them to do.

### But There Is Also A Danger Of Ungodly Counsel

“*The simple believes every word, but the prudent considers well his steps*” (**14:15**). There are also several proverbs about those who flatter (**20:19, 28:23, 29:5**). One only needs to look as far as Solomon’s son to find an example of someone who listened to **counsel** – *the wrong kind*.

### We Need Good And Godly Counsel

We need good and godly counsel and we need to give good and godly counsel (**1:5**). These are the best of friends (**27:9**). This is how plans are made that succeed (**15:22**). This is how wars are fought and how our latter days are what they should be (**20:18, 19:20**). Ultimately, the Lord is our counselor (**19:21**). Wisdom cries out. Let us hear and share with others the wisdom that is from God Himself.

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