

Why Believers Must Avoid the Satanic Trap of Isolation

One of Satan's biggest traps we must avoid is isolation. No person is an island unto themselves.

We were not designed to live in prolonged solitude but to interact in a network of healthy relationships. Isolation is not healthy for us physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually. We need meaningful relationships with other people and genuine fellowship with other believers.

Creation itself proves this point. When God surveyed His work after each of the first five days of creation, He saw that "It was good." On the sixth day, after He formed man in His own image, He observed, "It was *very* good" (Gen. 1:31). Then, on the seventh day, God rested. Why? Was He tired? No, God paused to appreciate His work and enjoy communion with the man He made.

Adam had God and more pets than a zookeeper prior to the fall. Yet God noticed something was missing. God made the first and only negative observation of His otherwise perfect creation—"It is *not good* that man should be *alone*; I will make him a helper comparable to him" (Gen 2:18, NKJV). God realized Adam wouldn't thrive in seclusion, so He made him a companion. God knew man needed help. He couldn't tend the garden, take care of the critters, and produce and raise a family alone. From Adam and Eve's union came the first family, then clans, communities, towns, cities and nations.

One author noted, "Alone and without love we die. Life is as dependent upon relationships as it is on food." A scientist performed an experiment with puppies. He took two dogs of the same breed and fed them the same diet. One was placed in solitary confinement; the other was given interaction with

people and other dogs.

Over time, it thrived but the isolated pup eventually became sick and died. Satan's strategy with people is similar—he wants to drive us into isolation. Why? Because when we're alone, we're much more vulnerable to temptation, fear, depression and even suicide. Think about it: When did the serpent tempt and deceive Eve? Apparently, when Adam was absent. When did the devil tempt Jesus? When He was alone in the desert and was weak from fasting for 40 days.

What happens when you isolate one coal from the other coals in a fire? The single coal will burn out. When did Elijah suffer his severe bout with depression and battle suicidal thoughts? Not when he was leading the crowd in prayer on Mount Carmel but when he was camping alone in a cave. Jezebel put a bounty on his head, and he fled from Jezreel to Beersheba, the southern border of Israel (about 113 miles), then he walked another day's journey (20-24 miles).

Then he sat under a juniper tree and prayed to die. He didn't really want to die. If he did, he should have stayed where Jezebel's henchmen could find him. He was discouraged, emotionally drained, physically fatigued, mentally burned out. God sent an angel to minister to him, and feed him, who said, "the journey is too great for you" (1 Kings 19:2-8). If a mighty prophet like Elijah needed supernatural help, we also need God's and people's help. We can't do it all alone. We have a unhealthy tendency to withdraw into a shell and push people away when we need them the most.

When predators like a pack of wolves or a pride of lions hunt, they usually isolate sick or weak prey from their herds. They gang up on one victim instead of attacking a united herd. By instinct they know it's easy pickings. The Bible speaks of the power of partnership, "If two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven" (Matt. 18:19). The principle is true—one can put

1,000 to flight, two can put 10,000 to flight (Deut. 32:30). There is strength in numbers, "Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you" (Lev. 26:8).

In Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, Solomon shared four benefits of friendship:

1. **Increased productivity:** Verse 9 says, "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor." A team can accomplish much more than any individual. In a horse pulling contest, the first-place winner pulled 4,500 pounds. The second-place winner pulled 4,000 pounds. Hitched together, they pulled 12,000 pounds. That's the power of partnership!
2. **A strong support system:** Verse 10 says, "For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up." When you are struggling, strong friends will support you and vice versa. Geese flying in a V formation can fly much farther and faster as a unified team than they can individually. When they get tired, they rotate from the front of the formation to the back where less wind resistance makes it easier to fly. The geese in the back honk encouragement to the ones in the front. As John Maxwell says, "Teamwork makes the dream work!"
3. **Comfort:** Verse 11 says, "Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; but how can one be warm alone?" This world is a cold, cruel place. We draw comfort and warmth from people who provide emotional and spiritual support.
4. **Protection:** Verse 12 says, "Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken." Even the Lone Ranger had Tanto to fight with him. We all need people

in our corner who have our back. We can't defeat the devil by ourselves, we need some tag team partners to help us fight the good fight of faith.

That's why Jesus sent His disciples out two by two (in pairs)—for accountability, to have a witness, for protection, and for moral and spiritual support. Some negative things have resulted from a year of off-and-on quarantining. Some people spent so much time alone, they fell into depression and despair. People spent way too much time staring at screens. Suicide increased among certain demographics and addictions rose as coping mechanisms. We are not designed to live in isolation. Don't let the enemy isolate you from friends, family or the fold. If it wasn't good for Adam to be alone in Eden's paradise, it's certainly not good for us to be alone in a broken world. We need human interaction and frequent fellowship with other believers and with God. {eoa}

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