

Isolation

“Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.” Philippians 2:4.

“Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment.” Proverbs 18:1.

It is very easy for us to isolate ourselves in our time. We have many opportunities to isolate ourselves physically and emotionally. We can isolate ourselves in our homes by paying monthly fees for such things as unlimited movies and television, comfortable furniture and even fully-cooked meal deliveries. With a reasonable salary, we can place ourselves in positions never to leave the home but still have everything necessary to live. We also have lots of opportunities to be isolated in nature. With cars, we are able to drive for a short period of time to places that are inhabited by no one. Our culture, in many ways, is a culture that values isolation and independence.

This is not to say that isolation is always a bad thing. Even Jesus took time to be alone to pray. There can be great value in occasional alone time. As Christians, though, we cannot do this all the time. We do not have this option. It is quite impossible for us to spend the majority of our time in isolation and for us to be doing things that please God at the same time. One reason for this is because we cannot be in regular isolation and looking to the best interests of those around us.

In order for us to seek the best interest of those around us, we must be involved in the lives of those around us. We must enter into relationships with them. We cannot be casual observers of the lives of others and also know deeply the best interest of another person. This is because most of us are selfish creatures, so when asked what is best for us, we will often respond with something we want rather than something we need. A casual observer will believe the person and give the person what they want rather than what they need, which is often in direct conflict with that person's best interest. An outside observer who is in a close relationship with the person, however, will have a much better idea of what is in a person's best interest.

Christians who live in especially immoral times may want to isolate themselves even more. It may even seem justifiable. Lot probably did not look forward to stepping out into the streets of Sodom every day. But this is not what God asks of us. God asks of us to seek the best interests of those around us. And the only way to do this is to be in close relationships with those around us. **[DJR]**