

# Dealing With Isolation

By Dale D. Robins

We are by nature social creatures. At the time of Creation God said, *"It is not good that the man should be alone,"* and He created Eve as a helper for the man (Gen. 2:18). We interact and help each other. As Solomon said, *"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow"* (Eccl. 4:9-10). When around others, they can help us in our thought processes and skill sets. As Solomon said, *"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend"* (Prov. 27:17). However, when that social interaction is curtailed, we struggle.

When a prison inmate misbehaves and shows themselves unable to associate with others, they are placed in solitary confinement for a while. This time frame is limited, because psychological problems can develop if the isolation goes too long. Reality becomes foggy, and doubts begin to arise. This impacts the story of the later days of John the Baptist.

At the baptism of Jesus, John saw the Holy Spirit descend and land upon Jesus as a demonstration to John that Jesus was the Messiah. He later said, *"I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God"* (Jn. 1:32-34). The next day John saw Jesus again and said, *"Behold the Lamb of God"* (Jn. 1:36). He began to openly preach that *"He [Jesus] must increase, but I must decrease"* (Jn. 3:30), but isolation later affected him.

John was imprisoned because he preached against the adulterous marriage of King Herod and Herodias (Matt. 14:3-4). Being isolated away gave John time to reason and doubt. While in prison, he sent two of his disciples to talk to Jesus and ask, *"Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?"* (Matt. 11:3). How could John have any misgivings about Jesus after what he had seen the day of Jesus' baptism? Time and isolation may have taken its toll. However, Jesus told them to return to John and tell him, *"The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them"* (Matt. 11:5). This was enough to help John reaffirm in his mind that Jesus was the Christ.

As we find ourselves in a degree of social isolation due to the current coronavirus restrictions, don't be alarmed if you begin to feel overwhelmed and fretful over the future. The media pumps bad news to us in abundance, and our contact with positive Christians who are full of hope and joy is limited. Don't let it get you down. God is still on His throne and is in control of all things. He is doing some mighty works in bringing people together in cooperation and reminding the world of how quickly things can change. A microscopic virus has certainly brought the world to a halt and caused much re-evaluation of priorities. Suddenly, common, "unskilled" laborers are our heroes.

This is a time to increase our Bible Study and grow closer to God. When necessary, call and talk with Christians who can lift up your spirits. You are not alone, and your feelings are not abnormal. We flourish best when we can teach, admonish, and edify each other. That is why God's Word commands us to assemble (Heb. 10:25). Now that we are assembling in small groups, it may take a little more study, prayer, meditation, and effort to *"stay on the sunny side of life,"* but you can do it. Christian brothers and sisters are only a call away, and they will point you heavenward. Hang in there through this *"present distress."* It will pass and things will be okay!