



## moving from isolation to *Community*

Being created in the image of a triune God (Father, Son, and Spirit), I am made for community. As my heart connects with God's heart, it is natural to relate to those on the same journey.

Loneliness and isolation are enemies of the life God intended because I have a spiritual need to be known by others. A ruthless authenticity grows out of my security as God's child and I don't have to hide or pretend to be someone I'm not. My life transforms as I pursue authentic, accountable relationships.

Because I am made in the image of God, I was designed to live in community.

Read Mark 2:1-12 then answer the following questions.

If you are lying on the mat, what do you say to your friends who want to take you to Jesus?

Do you have friends who would destroy private property so you could live a better life? Describe the character of these types of relationships.

Read the "Rocking Chair" excerpt from Soul Care 101 by Larry Crabb below.

"A long time ago, my wife and I were only married I suppose five or six years at the time, and we moved to south Florida, to a little city north of Miami Beach by about an hour. We were all excited—a young married couple, living in Florida now, about to have a chance to go see Miami Beach, and finally we had a chance to get a sitter for two young kids, and get in the car and drive the hour, hour and a half, south to the beach—I'll never forget how excited we were. I'll also never forget the sight that greeted us and made the most impact when we actually got there. My wife and I were walking down a sidewalk that was in from the ocean by a little bit, and the sidewalk was in the middle of a city that seemed like it was a million miles from the sandy beaches and the blue skies and all the happiness of a resort town.

We were in the middle of a noisy, dirty, busy street. And I recall, as Rachel and I walked down the street, we had walked by an apartment house—a big old apartment house that had a deck, a porch, on the front of it that was maybe ten feet deep and perhaps sixty feet long. On this deck, there were maybe one hundred chairs—wicker rocking chairs—as I recall. They were all lined up in perfect rows and perfect columns, nicely, rigidly placed. On these hundred chairs, maybe about sixty of them, were occupied with an older person. The apartment, we later found out, was a retirement center, and about sixty people were sitting in these rocking chairs.

What became immediately apparent as Rachel and I walked past was that nobody was talking, nobody was even rocking in their rocking chair, nobody was drinking iced tea or sipping a cup of coffee, nobody was reading a magazine. Everybody was sitting very rigidly facing forward, not looking to their side, having no conversations of any sort. My wife couldn't take it. She turned to me and whispered. (I am really not sure why she whispered because nobody was listening.) She said, "I feel like breaking into a song and a dance just to wake these people up."

The thought occurred to me, "I wonder what the Spirit of God feels as He walks past our churches. I wonder what He feels as He observes the small groups that we convene in our living rooms. I wonder if He sees us the way my wife and I saw those retired folks in Miami Beach." Certainly there are differences. We talk to each other. Certainly we move a lot, but I wonder if we are a lot more like those folks than we think. Do we really talk in ways that cause a meeting of souls to take place? Is there an intersection of who I am with who somebody else is? Is there a soul-to-soul contact? Or do we really keep our inner worlds to ourselves? Do most of us, in fact, live alone? Do most of us come into our small groups with our interior worlds private and leave with our interior worlds just as private, and nothing has taken place at a deep, meaningful level at all? Maybe the Spirit feels like breaking into a song and a dance to wake us up so that we turn our chairs toward each other and learn to connect at the level of our souls.

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Who do you need to “turn your chair” toward this week?

Ask God for the courage and humility to begin relating to the person you listed above at a deeper level and for them to be receptive. Write your prayer below.

Schedule a time to hang out with the person you identified and prayed for above. Go for a walk, get coffee, go to lunch, have them for dinner, etc.

Ask them to about their life. Get to know more of their story. Ask them about a person or event that has significantly shaped their life. Be curious.

Then, share more of your life with them. Let them know how God is impacting your life and how that is changing you.

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Read Hebrews 10:24-25 then complete the 3-part interactive Bible study.

1. Copy the passage “word for word” from your Bible.

2. Write the passage in “your own words” as if you’re telling a friend about it.

3a. Write down what you will do/stop doing as an act of obedience to God’s word.

“ I will...”

3b. Share with a friend or family member (preferably someone who might not have a personal relationship with Jesus) how this specific passage is impacting you. Or, share what God is doing in your life in general. Write their name below.

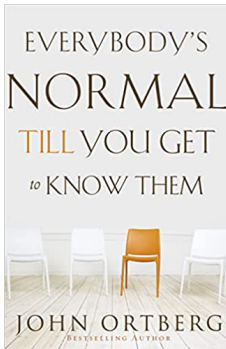
If there is anything I have I can't give away, I don't own it; it owns me.

*Continue your exploration...*

**Engage and obey Bible passages from the Isolation to Community Reading Plan.**

- ☐ Mark 2:1-12
- ☐ Hebrews 10:24-25
- ☐ Philippians 2:3-8
- ☐ Ecclesiastes 4:9-10
- ☐ Acts 2:41-47
- ☐ John 13:34-35
- ☐ 1 Peter 1:13-23
- ☐ Ephesians 4:20-29
- ☐ Romans 12:9-21

**Read “Everybody’s Normal Till You Get To Know Them” by John Ortberg.**



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