Solitude

**Go into the room and shut the door**

**and pray to your Father who is in secret;**

**and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.**

**(St. Matthew 6:6)**

**He said to them,**

**“Come away to a deserted place**

**all by yourselves and rest a while.”**

**(St. Mark 6:31)**

**Take two acorns from the same tree, as nearly alike as possible; plant one on a hill by itself, and the other in the dense forest, and watch them grow. The oak standing alone is exposed to every storm. Its roots reach out in every direction, clutching the rocks and piercing deep into the earth. Every rootlet lends itself to steady the growing giant, as if in anticipation of fierce conflict with the elements. Sometimes its upward growth seems checked for years, but all the while it has been expending its energy in pushing a root across a large rock to gain a firmer anchorage. Then it shoots proudly aloft again, prepared to defy the hurricane. The gales that sport so rudely with its wide branches find more than their match, and only serve still further to toughen every minutest fiber from pitch to bark. The acorn planted in the deep forest shoots up a weak, slender sapling. Shielded by its neighbors, it feels no need to spread its roots far and wide for support. (Joe Griffith, in Speaker's Library of Business, p. 13)*\***

**Alice Springs, Australia, is a town literally a thousand miles from nowhere. (George Luzzatto, in New York News World)**

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**Today, 35.7 million Americans live alone, or 28 percent of households. That's up from 13 percent of households in 1960 and 23 percent in 1980, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Demographers attribute the trend to delayed or forgone marriage, longer life expectancy, urbanization, and greater wealth. *(The Week magazine, June 14, 2019)***

**28 percent of Americans live alone, an increase of 23 percent since 1960, and re4tailers are reacting. Sales of 18-inch-wide dishwashers and 15-inch stovetops are up 30 percent since March. *(The Wall Street Journal, as it appeared in The Week magazine, June 14, 2019)***

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**Every person needs to take one day away. A day in which one consciously separates the past from the future . . . a day in which no problems are confronted, no solutions searched for. (Maya Angelou)**

**An authority on jungle beasts says almost all animals with spotted or striped fur are somewhat solitary. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Be able to be alone. Lose not the advantage of solitude. *(Sir Thomas Browne)***

**That is not the best sermon which makes the hearers go away talking to one another and praising the preacher, but which makes them go away thoughtful and serious, and hastening to be alone. (Gilbert Burnet)**

**If typical, your blood pressure goes up when you walk into a roomful of people, goes down after you walk out alone. So say the medical researchers. (L. M. Boyd)  
The only bone that does not connect with any other in the body is the hyoid bone, which is in your throat and supports your tongue and its muscles. (Barbara Seuling, in You Can't Sneeze with Your Eyes Open, p. 13)  
  
The American explorer Richard Byrd, the first man to fly over the North and South Poles, once spent five months alone in Antarctica. (Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts, p. 79)**

**When we cannot bear to be alone, it means we do not properly value the only companion we will have from birth to death -- ourselves. (Eda LeShan, in Long Island, New York, Newsday)**

**I never feel lonely in the kitchen. Food is very friendly. (Julia Child, in Time)**

**Solitary trees, if they grow at all, grow strong. (Winston Churchill)**

**The painter must be solitary. For if you are alone you are completely yourself, but if you are accompanied by a single companion, you are only half yourself. (Leonardo da Vinci)**

**Emily Dickinson, whose poetry thrills millions today, fantasized about the earth and sky and heaven itself, but left her home state, Massachusetts, exactly once, and that was to visit her father in Washington where he was a Representative. She became such a recluse that she would not stay in the same room with her guests but would speak with them from an adjoining room. (Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts, p. 201)  
Three-quarters of U.S. commuters drive to work alone. (Rocky Mountain News, 10-25-1993)**

**Map reading was our topic in one earth-science class at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. The teacher explained latitude, longitude, degrees and minutes, then asked, “Suppose I asked you to meet me for lunch at 23 degrees, 4 minutes north latitude and 45 degrees, 15 minutes east longitude … ?” After a confused silence, a voice volunteered, “I guess you’d be eating alone.” (Sandra Wadsworth, in Reader’s Digest)**

**I live in that solitude which is painful in youth, but delicious in the years of maturity. (Albert Einstein)**

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**The great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)**

**Every man alone is sincere. At the entrance of a second person, hypocrisy begins. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)**

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Every now and again take a good look at something not made with hands – a mountain, a star, the turn of a stream. There will come to you wisdom and patience and solace and, above all, the assurance that you are not alone in the world. (Sidney Lovett)**

**Once I thought I was all alone -- now I know everybody’s all alone. (Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)**

**Alone, at our favorite spot, I made a little picnic – and ate my heart out. (Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)**

**Everywhere we look, the world urges us to turn on the radio or TV, to make a phone call, to see a movie. Many of us, I fear, worry that, if left alone with our thoughts and feelings, we may discover that we do not make very good company for ourselves. (James O. Freedman, president of Dartmouth College)**

**The finest hours of life are not those spent among groups of people, but in good conversation with a few, in reading great books, in listening to great music, wondering in a forest of giant Sequoias, peering into a microscope, unraveling Nature's secrets in the laboratory. The men who have the most to give their fellowmen are those who have enriched their minds and hearts in solitude. It is a poor education that does not fit a man to be alone with himself. (Joel Henry Hildebrand)**

**A fox hunts alone. (L. M. Boyd)  
  
Don't try to flee your loneliness, you'll only find it in the end. Just get acquainted with yourself, you'll gain one understanding friend.  
(Calgary Divine Science Church newsletter)**

**As a general rule, it’s better not to be where news is happening. Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)**

**One great thing about living alone … is that you always get to hold the remote! (Tom Wilson, in Ziggy comic strip)**

**Grandpa: “Opal, you’re back!” Opal: “That’s right. So, have you had enough ‘solitude’?” Grandpa: “Oh, yes. The first few days it was kind of nice being all alone, but by the end of the week it was getting pretty old.” Opal: “I’ve only been gone six hours.” (Brian Crane, in Pickles comic strip)**

**Being alone is not to be equated with loneliness, any more than being with people is a guarantee against it. Recognize it for what it is -- inevitable! Nothing is forever -- not marriage, not family, not friends. (Helen Hayes, with Marion Glasserow Gladney, in Our Best Years)**

**Men, it has been well said, think in herds; it will be seen that they go mad in herds, while they only recover their senses slowly, one by one. (Charles Mackay, historian)**

**The least densely populated country in Europe is Iceland -- it's designated as part of Europe. Land there runs 123.5 acres per person. In the most densely populated country in Europe – Malta -- it is one acre for each 68 people. (L. M. Boyd)  
The Indian goes solitary into the forest, on rare and stated occasions, to gain a certain sense of his own superior strength and poise. Then he comes back to familiar scenes and regular activities, and runs, and leaps, and rides, and sings, and plants, and harvests, and tells the stories that inspire his race, and ministers to those in need in the spirit of love. (Myrtle Fillmore's Healing Letters, p. 56)**

**If I want to be alone, some place I can write, I can read, I can pray, I can cry, I can do whatever I want -- I go to the bathroom. (Alicia Keys)**

**I never feel more alone than when I'm trying to put sunscreen on my back. (Jimmy Kimmel)**

**Never is he less alone than when he is by himself. (Cato)**

**We read to know we are not alone. (C. S. Lewis)**

**Man: “I would like to be alone?” Garfield: “You got it!” Man: “Well?” Garfield: “I’ll stand guard.” (Jim Davis, in Garfield comic strip)  
  
The world today does not understand, in either man or woman, the need to be alone. . . . Anything else will be accepted as a better excuse. If one sets aside time for a business appointment, a trip to the hairdresser, a social engagement, that time is accepted as inviolable. But if one says: “I cannot come because that is my hour to be alone,” one is considered rude, egotistical, or strange. What a commentary on our civilization, when being alone is considered suspect; when one has to make excuses, hide the fact that one practices it -- like some secret vice. (Anne Morrow Lindbergh, in Gift from The Sea)**

**Charles Lindbergh was not the first man to fly the Atlantic. He was the sixty-seventh. The first sixty-six made the crossing in dirigibles and twin-engine mail planes. Lindbergh was the first to make the dangerous flight alone. (David Louis, in Fascinating Facts, p. 20)**

**The joys of living alone: “More people live alone than at any other time in history,” said Eric Klinenberg. In major U.S. cities, such as Atlanta, Denver, and Minneapolis, 40 percent of households contain a single occupant. In Manhattan and Washington, D.C., nearly 50 percent of households consist of one person. Throughout the country, 32 million people live alone – 15 million of them between the ages of 34 and 65. Once, most people thought about living alone with a sense of “anxiety, dread, and feelings of loneliness.” But today, many appreciate the freedom and independence from intrusive family members, annoying roommates, or spouses that turn out to be “the wrong person.” Far from being lonely, research shows, single people are generally more socially active than those who “hunker down at home,” and are more likely to spend time with friends and neighbors. And the advent of online social networking makes the solitary existence less isolated still, allowing us to “engage with others when and how we want to, and on our own terms.” It may not be for everyone, but going solo has clearly become a viable option. (The Week magazine, February 17, 2012)**

**Grandpa: “I feel like taking a nice long walk. You want to come?” Grandma: “No thanks. You go ahead.” Nelson: “Don’t you like long walks, Gramma?” Grandma: “Oh, I love long walks. Especially when they’re taken by your Grampa.” (Brian Crane, in Pickles comic strip)**

**People talk about the melancholy mood in my pictures. I think the right word is not “melancholy” but “thoughtful.” I do an awful lot of thinking and dreaming about things in the past and the future – the timelessness of the rocks and the hills – all the people who have existed there. I prefer winter and fall, when you feel the bone structure in the landscape – the loneliness of it – the dead feeling of winter. Something waits beneath it – the whole story doesn’t show. People always feel that anything like that – which is contemplative, silent and shows a person alone – is sad. Is it because we’ve lost the art of being alone? (Andrew Wyeth, artist, in an interview with Richard Meryman, published in Life magazine)**

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*Love consists in this: that two solitudes protect and touch and greet each other. (Rainer Maria Rilke, in Unity magazine)**

**What a lovely surprise to finally discover how unlonely being alone can be. (Ellen Burstyn)**

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**It’s like magic. When you live by yourself, all your annoying habits are gone! (Merrill Markoe)**

**The great thing about marriage is that it enables one to be alone without feeling loneliness. (Gerald Brenan, in Thought in a Dry Season)**

**Let me tell you this: If you meet a loner, no matter what they tell you, it's not because they enjoy solitude. It's because they have tried to blend into the world before, and people continue to disappoint them. (Jodi Picoult, novelist)**

**A man wanted to move to a remote cabin in the mountains with his wife. “If I decided to live there permanently, what would you miss the most?” he asked his wife. “You,” she replied. (Rocky Mountain News)**

**A young boy about five or six years was talking on the telephone. As his dad listened on, the youngster told his grandparents dejectedly, “Mom is in the hospital, so the twins and Roxie, Billy, Sally, the dog, and me and Dad are all home alone.” (S.C.U.C.A. Regional Reporter)**

**“Monakhnos" is Greek for “solitary” and is where we got the word “monk.” (L. M. Boyd)**

**For me, the solitude of early mornings is the most precious time of day. There is a quiet serenity that disappears a few hours later with the hustle and bustle of the multitude. Early morning hours symbolize for me a rebirth; the anxieties, frustrations and woes of the preceding day seem to have been washed away during the night. God has granted another day of life, another chance to do something worthwhile for humanity. (Michael E. Debakey, in Look)**

**To be left alone is the most precious thing one can ask of the modern world. (Anthony Burgess)**

**Only one person walked with Mozart 's coffin from the church to the cemetery for its burial in an unmarked pauper's grave. (Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts, p. 385)  
 In solitude, be a multitude to thyself. (Tibullus)  
One of the deepest mysteries of life is that every individual in the world stands alone; he lives his life alone and can never really be united with anyone in a purely physical sense. Each person lives in a separate world, the world of his or her own thinking. Just as no two atoms ever really touch each other even in the most compact of substances, so no two individuals ever completely touch each other, even in the most beautiful relationship of husband and wife. (Eric Butterworth, in Unity magazine)While few of us might choose solitude as a lifelong condition, most of us need at least some time to ourselves. We may differ from friends, colleagues, and partners in the amount, frequency, and urgency of our need, as well as in the way we spend our time alone with ourselves. We may have trouble carving our periods of privacy, and even feel guilty claiming them. But when we're deprived of being-alone time for too long, we experience distress. (Susan Smith Jones, in New Realities magazine)  
There is no solitude in the world like that of the big city. (Kathleen Norris)**

**There's one thing worse than being alone: wishing you were. (Bob Steele, WTIC, Hartford, Connecticut)**

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**All of man's misery comes from his incapacity to sit alone in an empty quiet room. (Blaise Pascal)**

**When he was a child, Blaise Pascal once locked himself in his room for several days and would not allow anyone to enter. When he emerged, he had figured out all of Euclid’s geometrical propositions totally on his own. (David Louis, in Fascinating Facts, p. 129)**

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*Half the pleasure of solitude comes from having with us some friend to whom we can say how sweet solitude is. (William Jay)**

**Only four people, and not a one of them a close personal friend, showed up at**

**the Baltimore funeral of poet Edgar Allan Poe. (Boyd’s Curiosity Shop, p. 123)**

**The Madonna Chapel of Bayou Goula, La., is just large enough to accommodate the priest while saying mass. The worshipers must remain outside. (Ripley's Believe It or Not!: Odd Places, p. 19)**

**Solitude will provide you with an opportunity to become comfortable with your feelings and thoughts, and to assess the strategies for reaching your objectives. (Dr. Ari Kiev, in Reader's Digest)**

**The trouble with being punctual is that nobody’s there to appreciate it. (Franklin P. Jones)**

**As for the bona-fide rattlers, their noisemaking is not, contrary to what many people think, the prelude to an inevitable strike. It is, instead, a warning: “Don't step on me.” If something suggests to the snake that its message is not getting through, it will then poise, ready to attack. Given the option, though, the rattler would rather twitch than fight; it just wants to be left alone. (Eugene J. Walter, Jr., in Reader's Digest)**

**Joshua Slocum was the first person to sail around the world alone. When he was fifty-one years old, he left Newport, Rhode Island, in 1895, in his thirty-six foot oyster boat Spray, returning three years and two months later after sailing 40,000 miles. (Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts, p. 380)**

**The mystic or supposed saint sought the presence of God almost as an experience without connection with existence in the external world. Hence there seemed to be no intelligible report of his visions to be carried to mankind in general. (Horatio W. Dresser, in Unity magazine)**

**One of the greatest necessities in America is to discover creative solitude. (Carl Sandburg)**

**Man is a gregarious animal, and much more so in his mind than in his body. He may like to go alone for a walk, but he hates to stand alone in his opinions. (George Santayana, in Reader's Digest)**

**If you are lonely when you are alone, you are in bad company. (Jean-Paul Sartre)**

**I was a weary woman by the end of a long business trip and decided to relax in the sauna at my hotel. Stretching out on one of the benches in the heat, I closed my eyes. Though I heard the door open and close a few times, no one came in. My solitude was explained as I left. The sign on the door said: “Men's Sauna.” (Necia Kelly Herriman, in Reader's Digest)**

**What are those three rules for saving money at the supermarket? 1. Make a list. 2. Eat first. 3. Go alone. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Loneliness is the poverty of self; solitude is the richness of self. (May Sarton, poet)**

**Smart people spend time alone. They don't fill their days with appointments from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., as many politicians and executives do. Great science does not emerge from hard logic and grinding hours. It comes from the mysterious resources of the human brain and soul. Inspiration is nurtured by activities like chopping wood and raking leaves, preparing dinner and reading to the kids. These activities soften the rigid pace of the day's pursuits and allow all our God-given intuition to work its unlogical magic. Only then can we reach our fullest potential. Only then can we leap from thinking to understanding. (Philip K. Howard, in Reader's Digest)**

**Society is the penalty people must pay, if they can’t cope with solitude. (Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)**

**A Spanish woman spent 500 days alone in an underground cave as part of an experiment, and was reluctant to return to the world. Beatriz Flamini, 50, a climber and mountaineer, said she was surprised when her team told her she’d met her 500-day target, because it felt like only “between 160 and 170” days had passed. She spent her time reading, writing, and knitting in the cave, with no contact with the world; a team of unseen helpers brought food and took away garbage. The experience was “excellent, unbeatable,” she said. “In fact, I didn’t want to come out.” (The Week magazine, April 28, 2023)**

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**When they are alone they want to be with others, and when they are with others they want to be alone. After all, human beings are like that. (Gertrude Stein, in Paris France)**

**In the United States there is more space where nobody is than where anybody is. This is what makes America what it is. (Gertrude Stein)**

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**Daughter: “Dan and I are going out to look for an apartment this afternoon. We’ll need a place to live after the wedding, and his apartment is too small. And I’m sure you and Dad don’t want us living here with you, do you?” Mom: “Well, to tell the truth, we would like a little time alone before we die.” (Brian Crane, in Pickles comic strip)**

**Be alone -- that is the secret of invention; be alone, that is when ideas are born. (Nikola Tesla)**

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**The man who goes alone can start today; but he who travels with another must wait until the other is ready. (Henry David Thoreau)**

**I love to be alone. I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude. You think that I am impoverishing myself by withdrawing from men, but in my solitude I have woven for myself a silken web or chrysalis, and, nymphlike, shall ere long burst forth a more perfect creature, fitted for a higher society. (Henry David Thoreau)**

**Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), the American author and naturalist who spent more than two years in close harmony with nature, leading a near-solitary life free of materialistic pursuits, built his hermitage cabin on the shore of Walden Pond near Concord, Massachusetts. The cabin was only 500 yards from the railroad tracks connecting Fitchburg and Boston. *(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts, p. 147)***

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**Man: “Would you prefer to be alone with your thoughts, Axel?” Axel: “That’s okay … Talking to you pretty much amounts to the same thing.” *(J. C., Duffy, in The Fusco Brothers comic strip)***

**Grandpa: “Aah … Peace and quiet! Sometimes a man just needs a little time to be alone with his thoughts.” Then his mind says: “You’re not pulling your weight, you know!” (Brian Crane, in Pickles comic strip) \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*Our language has wisely sensed the two sides of being alone. It has created the word "loneliness" to express the pain of being alone. And it has created the word "solitude" to express the glory of being alone. (Paul Tillich, in Courage To Be))**

**Today is January 2, World Introvert Day, so if you're an introvert, feel free to celebrate by staying at home by yourself. Studies show that introverts make smart, savvy, and confident leaders, despite their reputations as timid homebodies who shun others. (The Daily Chronicle)**

**We’re all in this alone. *(Lily Tomlin)***

**If you travel alone, you can probably go faster. But the journey will never be as rewarding, and you probably won’t be able to go as far. (John C. Maxwell, in Winning with People)**

**It takes solitude, under the stars, for us to be reminded of our eternal origin and our far destiny. (Archibald Rudledge)**

**About one-quarter of all U.S. households now consist of one person living alone, the U.S. census has found. For the first time, the percentage of one-person households now exceeds the percentage of “traditional” households comprised of a married couple and their children. *(The Boston Globe, as it appeared in The Week magazine, September 16, 2005)***

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**‘Tis better to be alone than in bad company. (George Washington)**

**Feeling that the hour of his departure out of this world was at hand, George Washington desired that everyone leave the room so that he might have some time alone to commune with his God, as he had all of his life. (Dr. D. James Kennedy)**

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**Woodchucks build a special hibernating chamber in their winter dens. When the woodchuck is ready to hibernate, it seals the door to the chamber with dirt or leaves and settles down for the winter. (Jeff Harris, in Shortcuts)**

**In praise of the introvert: We’d all be better off spending more time working alone, said Susan Cain. Our workplaces have been taken over by New Groupthink, in which teamwork, collaboration, and open-plan offices have displaced solitude, independence, and privacy. “Anyone who has ever needed noise-canceling headphones in her own office,” knows what I’m talking about. This trend is bad for business, because “people are more creative when they enjoy privacy and freedom from interruption.” Some 70 percent of U.S. employees now work in open-plan offices, and nearly all spend time working in teams. That may help us exchange ideas, but it also stifles creativity, lowers productivity, and even makes us sicker. Studies show workers in open-plan offices are “hostile, insecure, and distracted,” and more likely to suffer from high blood pressure and the flu. Brainstorming sessions have been shown to be “one of the worst possible ways to stimulate creativity,” and the bigger the group, the worse the performance. Teamwork has its place. But it’s often in quiet, private moments that our best work is done. (The Week magazine, January 27, 2012)**

**When members of the organization called Zero Population Growth celebrated Valentine’s Day last year, they staged a “Love Carefully Day” party and held a raffle. First prize was a round-trip flight to London – for one. (James Brady, in New York Post)**

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