

Wings

*"Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles."
Isaiah 40:31*



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A Warning to Introverts

The desire to be alone is a perfectly normal personality trait for many people. But introverts must be careful that this desire does not dominate their existence. We need others in our lives.

"A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; he rages against all wise judgment" (Prov. 18:1).

"And the Lord God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone'" (Gen. 2:18).



Let me start with a disclaimer: I am an introvert myself. So this article is not a criticism from someone who just doesn't understand the world of the shy person. Believe me, I know all about it (and I'm a preacher, someone who makes his living dealing with people. How does that work? It's a long story . . .). Let's just say that this proverb has played an important role in my life, helping me to understand and deal with the challenge of the loner life.

Why are some people introverted? Genetics is the major factor, no doubt. Some people are just naturally quiet and prefer to be by themselves. Extroverts don't understand that, but hey, this goes both directions; the introvert doesn't understand the extrovert's constant craving for socialization. These personality quirks are just part of the package that

God made each one of us with. Neither one is right or wrong. Each type has its own strengths and dangers.

This proverb is addressing specifically the danger to the introvert. To better understand what Solomon is saying, let's look at how other translations have rendered this verse: "Unfriendly people are selfish" (NCV). "Loners who care only for themselves spit on the common good." (The Message). "Unfriendly people look out for themselves; they bicker with sensible people" (CEB). "The unsociable man is out to get what he wants for himself" (Beck).

This is brutal language expressing a message that is a hard one for introverts to swallow: Staying aloof from others is more than just a personality trait—it is a character flaw. And like most character flaws it is reinforced by poor decisions we make in trying to deal with it.

The introvert's reclusive lifestyle is a deliberate choice he makes, not a curse that fate somehow thrusts upon him. By allowing his disposition to dominate his behavior, he is robbing himself of the benefits of associating with others.

Those benefits are healthy and many. Being around others allows us to partake of the wisdom they have learned in their own journeys. The new outlooks and ideas we are exposed to as we forge friendships helps us grow. Making difficult decisions is easier when we have close friends with whom we can discuss the options before us. We are designed to be communal creatures, and we harm ourselves when we allow the frustrations of relationship-building to prevent us from getting close to others.

Introverts must understand that, like it or not, God made us to interact with others. We really do need each other. Whatever the complexities involved in forming and maintaining relationships, those connections are essential to our mental and physical well-being. When an introvert allows his propensity for solitude to define his life, he is yielding to his own version of mankind's oldest sin: *selfishness*.

So fellow introverts, listen up: It will not be easy, but force yourself to come out of your shell. You'll be a better and happier person for it in the end.

— David King