

POSTMODIMACY

POST-MODERN YOUNG ADULT INTIMACY AND SPIRITUALITY

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ARTICLE 2.1

INTIMACY | ISOLATION | CONTROL | WITHDRAWAL | FUSION

ISOLATION

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How do we begin to understand God? Our understanding of God is directly related to our understanding of the world: what we have been taught and what we teach ourselves.

God can become a very personal Father, or a very impersonal god. How we live our lives, how we relate to other people helps us understand: 1) how we relate to God, and 2) how God relates to us. God wants to be an intimate part of our lives.

In any form of intimacy, our personal fears range from: rejection, abandonment, unrequited love, mistrust, and lack of self worth (to name a few). We have all experienced many of these fears in our own personal relationships. Do we experience this with God? Does our relationship with God stem from our understandings of relationships and our experience of relating to other people? Do we treat God the way we treat others?

Throughout our life we begin to shape and mold our actions and emotions to better guard ourselves against experiencing the negative effects of intimacy. One way we may begin to cope with and guard against these feelings is through *isolation*. We may knowingly, or unknowingly, set our self apart. Within life, there is *Good* and *Evil*. Isolation is never *Good*.

There are three ways we can isolate our self: 1) Mentally, 2) Emotionally, and 3) Spiritually. We may isolate our selves with the intent of positive growth, or with the mere intent of expressing our anger and frustration.

Unfortunately we can not devote enough time to really delve completely into these topics. In following articles, I will have more personal events to relate to, but for now, here is an overview to begin the discussion:

We understand things in two ways: with our mind (ideals), and with our heart (emotions). Problems occur when these two understandings are not on the same page.

MENTAL:

We mentally isolate ourselves by guarding our ideals and understandings. The negative effect of this is that we begin to doubt our self, our abilities, and our understandings. Isolation may occur when we are trying to do good by

eliminating temptation. However, the effect of this may be an unhealthy hermitage. We are told to find God in the silence. This is through *Solitude*, not *Isolation*. The two are very different. (We will discuss solitude later on in this course study.)

EMOTIONAL

We emotionally isolate ourselves by guarding our hearts, emotions, and feelings. This may occur when our mental ideals do not align with our personal experience. *Example:* Your boy/girlfriend for three years ends the relationship, and you are stricken with uncontrollable pain and grief. Your life has just changed, your world turned upside down. You begin to think this is because of the relationship. Thus you rationalize: "I won't have any more relationships."

Emotional Isolation is one I see most often with young adults. They have been hurt by so many different relationships they have, "given up on dating." Which is translated as, "given up on intimacy." When we block our ability to be intimate, we block our natural need for interconnection and community.

What we should do is rearrange how we date and what we expect. Our flaw is not our inability to be intimate, but our expectations of others' intimacy in our own lives. We must find our balance and boundaries for other people.

We will come back to this topic later on. This will get our thinking aligned with what it needs to be as we progress.

SPIRITUAL

We spiritually isolate ourselves by guarding our response to God's presence in our lives. This usually occurs when our mental ideals of GOD, do not match with our emotional response of His Presence in our life.

Sometimes we understand what is supposed to happen. We understand what the Bible *says*, but it doesn't mean anything until it moves from our *head*, to our *heart*. This is where we will pick up the next discussion- moving from *head* to *heart*. We must clear our any form of isolation in our existence, if we hope to experience God's existence in our personal lives.

BIBLE VERSE REFERENCES

Most places in the Bible that mention "isolation" are talking about isolating the unclean from the clean. Therefore, we see that isolation is not a good thing!
Here are some verses if you are feeling the effects of isolation:

Psalm 34:17-20; 118:1-29

1 John 4:7-9. Romans 8:38-39

And my favorite: *Psalm 42*

"Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why do you groan within me?
Hope in God; for I shall praise him again,
my savior and my God."

CATECHISM REFERENCES

CCC # 789-791

BOOKS AND OTHER RESOURCES

There's A Hole In My Chest: Healing & Hope for Adult Children Everywhere,
By William Jarema

Out of Solitude: Three Meditations on the Christian Life
By Henry J.M. Nouwen

No Man is an Island
By Thomas Merton

SAINTS QUOTES

St. Augustine:

"Love is the beauty of the soul."

"Men go abroad to wonder at the heights of mountains, at the huge waves of the sea, at the long courses of the rivers, at the vast compass of the ocean, at the circular motions of the stars, and they pass by themselves without wondering."
"O Holy Spirit, descend plentifully into my heart. Enlighten the dark corners of this neglected dwelling and scatter there Thy cheerful beams."

THOUGHT TO REMEMBER

Our flaw is not our inability to be intimate, but our expectations of others' intimacy in our own lives. We must find our balance and boundaries for other people.

