

Small Group Discussion Guide for “The Way Out of Solitude”

Open in prayer.

Intro

The definition of solitude is “the state of being alone; cut off from others by choice or circumstance.”

1. Describe a time in your life when solitude was an enjoyable experience.

The word “solitude” evokes feelings of power and independence, but it can also bring about a feeling of loneliness.

2. What are the differences between solitude and loneliness? Are there any similarities?

Loneliness can produce feelings of isolation which is what Moses was feeling on the way to the Promised Land. The masses had criticized his decisions and grumbled about his inability to meet their demands.

3. Describe a time when you felt lonely. Perhaps it was when you were a leader like Moses. Describe the situation and the feelings you had.

There is only one antidote for solitude, and that is being with someone. Moses found that companionship in God. They communicated with one another “face to face, as one speaks to a friend” (Exodus 33:11a NLT). But when the security of that relationship was threatened, it left Moses feeling like he was in complete solitude.

4. What does it mean to be in companionship with God?

So the way out of solitude is realizing God is always present with us and recognizing His companionship is what we need more than anything or anyone else. The message identified 4 benefits of God’s presence which were drawn from the experience of Moses and other biblical characters.

1. Comfort

Having someone present with us, especially in difficult circumstances, can be very comforting. The Holy Spirit, God’s presence in the world, is called the Holy Comforter. In Exodus 33:14 the Lord tells Moses, “I will personally go with you, Moses, and I will give you rest. [cf. peace]- everything will be fine for you.” We have a God with us whose presence brings comfort and peace.

5. Describe a time that you’ve been comforted by someone’s presence.
6. How have you experienced the peace and comfort of Christ?

2. Confidence

There is strength in numbers, so when we have someone with us we feel more confident. Despite his great success in securing the Israelites from Egyptian slavery, Moses still wasn’t too sure about his ability to lead. Read aloud Exodus 33:12a, 14a. Even Joshua, Moses’s successor, voiced his concerns. Read aloud Joshua 1:5b-6a, 9b.

7. What is something you’d be uncomfortable doing by yourself? Whose presence would make you more confident?

Unfortunately, many people lack self-confidence. Perhaps they were abandoned and left all alone by people they trusted, or people should have been there for them and weren’t. But our God can always be counted on, and He is infinite in power and might.

8. What are some areas in which Christians lack confidence? What difference would it make knowing God is with us in those situations?

3. Conviction

Whenever God shows up, humans become aware of their sinful condition (Isaiah 6:5 NLT). When Moses came down from the mountain, it must have been abundantly clear to him that he had come from the holy presence of God into the midst of a dreadfully sinful people. They had completely disobeyed God's Law (Exodus 20:3).

9. Have you ever had an encounter with God that convinced you of your sinful condition? If so, describe what happened.
10. Have you ever been embarrassed that someone witnessed what you said or did?

It is no wonder that Moses did not want to continue without the Lord. He stared directly into the face of what life lived without an awareness of God's presence looked like, and he wanted no part of it. Jesus said this about the Holy Spirit: "And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin..." (John 16:8 NLT). When we realize our sin, we see the need for God's grace and forgiveness. An awareness of God's presence serves as a restraint for future sin.

11. How has an awareness of God's presence been a restraining influence on your speech or behavior?

4. Conquest

Moses and the Israelites were headed for the Promised Land, and a fight awaited them there. Moses knew that without divine intervention they would not have victory. Read aloud Exodus 33:16 NLT. Moses was fully aware that the presence of the Lord made all the difference in the world.

12. Describe a victory you've enjoyed by virtue of being a part of a team. What role did you play?
13. What "enemy" has God enabled you to conquer?

As we have discovered throughout this series, "the way out" is not so much a path that we travel as it is a Person whom we trust. Like the Israelites discovered long ago, God can and will provide us a way out so that we might enjoy His promised blessings.

Closing

14. How are you going to cultivate an awareness of God's presence?
15. What can you do to remind yourself that the Lord is with you wherever you go?

Don't remain in solitude and think you have to go it alone. Receive the comfort of the Holy Spirit, have confidence that God is on your side, and be convinced that, with the Lord's help, you can conquer anything and everything that stands against you.

Close in prayer, thanking God for who He is, for the times He has comforted you, and for the victories you have had because of Him.