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## Resisting Isolation

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Free media and discipleship resources for pastors, leaders, and growing disciples.

# Resisting Isolation

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Westerners are conditioned to love the rugged hero. Whether superhero, Jedi knight, cowboy, soldier, or politician our heroes are individuals who have had courage to single-handedly defeat their foes.

There's nothing wrong with that kind of courage, but we import that mentality into our Christian life. We easily assume that if we are "real Christians," then we shouldn't need help to follow Jesus and resist temptation.

God set his people in community so we can worship Him together and be encouraged, but also to help us resist temptation and prevent us from depending on anything besides God.

Good Christian friends and mentors who know us well can lovingly point out places where we are at fault, ways we've deceived ourselves or bought into Satan's lies, point us toward dependence on God, remind us of our identity in Christ, and be safe people to help us understand ourselves and our tendencies toward sin.

In this kind of close and trusting relationship we can also practice a confessional way of living. The act of confession is agreeing with God that a specific thought, pattern, or action is sin and then choosing to turn away from that and turn toward God to meet that need. Confessional living, then, is committing to initiate conversation with a trusted, mature believer about sinful thoughts, patterns, and actions, in your life so you can understand them and confess them to God.

"In confession the break-through to community takes place. Sin demands to have a man by himself. It withdraws him from the community. The more isolated a person is, the more destructive will be the power of sin over him." [1]

This kind of dependence on our Christian brothers and sisters requires courageous vulnerability and should only be done with someone who is trustworthy and who also knows how to be vulnerable and receive God's forgiveness for their own sin.

Here are some ideas for resisting isolation and living confessionally:

1. Commit to opening your life—all of it—every thought, motivation, and action up to another.

2. Initiate a time to confess your sins to God in prayer, but with the other person present (or listening if it's over the phone). The responsibility for confession has to be on you. It won't really work if you depend on the other person to ask you.
3. Meet with the other person regularly but have the freedom to talk sooner if you have something big to confess.
4. Be willing to talk about what you were thinking, feeling, what the context of the day was like, and what lies you might have believed that made it easier for you to sin.
5. Confess in prayer the specific lies and sins. Avoid vague confessions and the temptation to minimize what happened to try and save face.
6. Tell God you choose to receive his forgiveness.
7. Instead of condemning or catching you, the person with you during confession can then remind you of the truth of Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

It takes incredible courage to seek out the community God has given and incredible courage to be vulnerable with another person. But in so doing, we rely on God and his provision and not on our own superhero abilities.

[1] Dietrich Bonhoeffer. *Life Together* (New York: HarperCollins, 1954) 112.