



BARNES *on the Bay*

JULY 18, 2022

Life is Better
with Others

Life Lessons from a
Hermit Crab, #2



SCRIPTURAL MEDITATION: 1 Thessalonians 5:11

"Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing" (ESV).

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT: "Life is Better with Others"

Hermit crabs are anything but isolated loners, as the name might suggest. Instead, these crabs enjoy colonies that have quite a social life. They will usually be among hundreds with whom they interact: eating, sleeping, and exchanging shells. In such colonies, a hermit crab has a life expectancy of about 30 years and some up to 40. If alone, however, they seldom live past a year. Social interaction is key to their long-term well-being. Amazing!

Undoubtedly, life is better with others! And hermit crabs aren't the only ones to benefit from socialization. Being among friends and others allows us to observe life outside our shells because this interaction provides a life experience vastly different from our own. Yet, many who withdraw to a solitary existence find themselves sad, discouraged, or even depressed. But it doesn't have to be this way!

We are social beings, and this is just one of the ways we are created to reflect God's image. The Lord is One while also socially and perfectly interacting within the Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And when God created Adam, He recognized the need for companionship equally. "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18). After the creation of Eve, there would be children born of that companionship that provides even further socialization. And later, God would speak to Noah, encouraging the expansion of the human community. "And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein" (Genesis 9:7). Consequently, our abandonment of human socialization would deny part of our created nature and God's purpose in community.

Cont'd., p.2

But also crucial within this fellowship of others comes God's emphasis for believers to interact together in worship of the Lord. "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24-25). This Scripture is not merely a command to be observed but, even more importantly, encouragement for what will keep the Christian life vibrant and shared. We not only have a mutual responsibility to help guard but also encourage one another while living in an evil and discouraging world.

The Lord logically encourages collective companionship for the help it will bring to all. "Two are better than one because they have a more satisfying return for their labor; for if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and does not have another to lift him up. And though one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken" (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, 12 AMP Bible).

Bottom line? Living without the encouragement and help of others is a lonely life. It is also likely to be shorter for many reasons. Please don't live a solitary life hiding in a shell. Become stronger because of your connections with the body of Christ. "Life is Better with Others!"

CHALLENGE FOR THE WEEK:

Become part of the lives of others through both local community and church. Seek out opportunities to bring encouragement through a kind word, friendly smile, or helpful support. Such will benefit others but also become the means of enlivening your own life.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

"No man is an island entire of itself." -*John Donne*

More Scriptures for Meditation

Philippians 2:1-4, "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

1 Corinthians 12:25-26, "That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."

Galatians 6:2, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."