

“Castaway on the Moon” starring Korean actors, 2009, NR, 116 minutes

Major themes:

- Isolation
- Pretending
- Social networking
- Real & virtual relationships
- Survival
- Independence vs. dependence vs. co-dependence vs. interdependence
- Hope

Background info:

- The movie is set in Seoul, the capital of South Korea. Seoul is home to more than 10 million people, 1/5 of the entire country’s population.
- Bamseom (or “Bam Island”) is a pair of very small islands in the River Han in Seoul, South Korea. These uninhabited islands, approximately 60 acres in area and 7/10 mile long, are connected to one another by a narrow strip of sedimentary silt. Seogang Bridge passes directly overhead, with a pier on the western island. However, they are inaccessible except by boat, because the islands have been designated as a natural preservation district. The islands are frequented by many birds such as mallards, great egrets, common kestrels, spotbills, and mandarin ducks (which are a Korean natural treasure). There are 108 species of plants on the islands, including willow trees and itch reeds.

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- The “63 Building” is a skyscraper on Yeouido Island (a large island on the Han River containing Seoul’s main business and investment banking district). At 817 feet high, it was the tallest building outside North America when completed in 1985 and is the tallest gold-cladded structure in the world.
- Hikikomori, which literally means "*pulling inward, being confined*", is a Japanese term to refer to the phenomenon of reclusive adolescents or young adults who have chosen to withdraw from social life, often seeking extreme degrees of isolation and confinement because of various personal and social factors in their lives. Hikikomori refuse to leave their home, and isolate themselves from society for a period exceeding six months. While the degree of the phenomenon varies on an individual basis, in the most extreme cases, some people remain in isolation for years or even decades. About 1 in every 35 people in Japan (with a similar ratio suspected in South Korea) is defined as “hikikomori.” In the American population, about 7.4 million people are suspected of having “*avoidant personality disorder*,” and as many as 22 million people may have some kind of “*social anxiety disorder*.” Causes include: genetic and family factors, social experiences (e.g. humiliation, bullying), cultural influences (e.g. saving face, perfectionism), substance abuse (e.g. alcohol, dependence on anti-anxiety medications), and psychological factors (e.g. anxiety, feeling threatened).
- Jajangmyeon is a popular Korean dish that consists of wheat noodles topped with a thick sauce made of a salty black soybean paste, diced meat and vegetables, and sometimes also seafood.

Major characters:

- Male Kim
- Female Kim

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Scriptures:

Genesis 2:18 (NLT) – *“Then the LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.’”*

Proverbs 13:7 (The Message) – *“A pretentious, showy life is an empty life; a plain and simple life is a full life.”*

1 Peter 3:3 – 4 (NLT) – *“Don’t be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God.”*

Matthew 10:16 (NIV) – *“I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.”*

John 15:12 – 14 (The Message) – *“This is my command: Love one another the way I loved you. This is the very best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends. You are my friends when you do the things I command you.”*

1 Corinthians 12:12 – 13, 25 - 26 (The Message) – *“Your body has many parts—limbs, organs, cells—but no matter how many parts you can name, you're still one body. It's exactly the same with Christ. By means of his one Spirit, we all said good-bye to our partial and piecemeal lives. We each used to independently call our own shots, but then we entered into a large and integrated life in which he has the final say in everything . . . The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don't, the parts we see and the parts we don't. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance.”*

2 Peter 1:5 – 6 (NIV) – *“. . . make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love”*

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Discussion points:

1. What are some of the ways that people live isolated lives? What are some practical ways in which we can encourage or help people to engage in life?
2. It can be tempting to live in a fantasy world, e.g. by pretending to be someone else, or by inventing a make-believe friend. How can we apply wisdom and discernment both in how we represent ourselves and in how we relate to others? Compare and contrast real relationships and virtual relationships. What are the pros & cons, advantages & dangers?
3. Discuss the ways hope changed the main characters' lives and priorities.
4. When male Kim first found himself in his unexpected predicament, he seemed to cry out to God for help. When the answer to his prayer eventually came ("in the fullness of time!"), he didn't seem too happy about it. Can we trust God to answer our prayers in the time and way of His choosing?
5. Discuss the differences between living independently, dependently, co-dependently, and interdependently. What is God's highest and best?
6. What are some ways we choose to live in "survival" mode instead of drawing on God's limitless resources?
7. What are some of the results in our own lives and in the lives of others when we decide to live more authentically?
8. We see both main characters experience sweetness intermingled with sorrow. How does embracing pain and grief allow us to experience deeper joy and freedom?