



APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN

Counseling and Family Services

515 Highland Street, Morton, IL 61550 ❖ Tel: (309) 263-5536 Fax: (309) 263-6841 ❖ www.accounseling.org

LONELINESS I

Prevalent and painful

At various times in their lives, most people experience a feeling of loneliness – a painful awareness that they are lacking close and meaningful contact with others. This feeling of isolation is usually accompanied by sadness and a deep desire to connect with others. Few people enjoy the helpless feeling that they have been forgotten, forsaken, or left out. These periods of loneliness are often worsened by thoughts of “No one cares” or “I’m all alone.” Even when they are surrounded by people, the empty feeling of loneliness can come when they perceive themselves to be isolated from others or from God.

Understanding and applying what the Bible says about loneliness can be an effective remedy and a very powerful source of help. Some passages are designed to be comforting reminders that God is ever-present and has promised never to leave nor forsake us. Other passages will show that even heroes of faith have experienced times of loneliness. Still others will help us gain emotional and spiritual strength to prepare for those times when we cannot avoid being alone.

Heroes of faith experienced loneliness

In His final agonizing moments on the cross, Jesus expressed the feeling of being forsaken.

“And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, . . . My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46)

Moses was given a heavy and burdensome task when God sent him to Pharaoh in order to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt. He experienced not only the stress of that task but also the loneliness that often accompanies those who are “at the top.”

“And Moses said unto the LORD, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? . . . I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me.” (Numbers 11:11,14)

Right after God gave him a great victory over the prophets of Baal, Elijah ran for his life. Tormented by loneliness, fear, and disappointment, he cried out to God and asked Him to take his life. He complained that God was very unfair in forsaking him and leaving him alone to continue the battle against evil.

“I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.” (1 Kings 19:10)

Although he was “*perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil,*” Job experienced a great trial of physical and emotional suffering. In spite of the efforts of his friends who came to comfort him, Job felt lonely and forsaken.

“Yea, young children despised me; I arose, and they spake against me. All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me.” (Job 19:19)

Like Moses in the Old Testament, the Apostle Paul was given a similar task of setting a New Testament people free in taking the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. Along the way, Paul made both faithful friends and treacherous enemies. On one particular occasion, he expressed his feeling of loneliness to his “son” Timothy:

“At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.” (2 Timothy 4:16)

God’s faithfulness in caring for the lonely

Although many other scriptural examples can be found, they all bear evidence that God knows how to care for his people and to “*deliver the godly out of temptations*” (2 Peter 2:9).

- An angel appeared to Jesus to strengthen Him, while He was praying in the garden.
- God directed Moses to select seventy elders to help him bear the burden of overseeing the people.
- The Spirit spoke to Elijah in a “still small voice,” and God reminded him that there were 7,000 people who had not bowed their knees to Baal.
- Job finally received some comforting words from God, and in the end He gave Job twice as much as he had had in the beginning.
- Many times God spared Paul’s life and opened prison doors in order to further the gospel message.

God has promised to care for us, especially during those times when we feel forgotten or “all alone.” Paul wrote to the Hebrews, *“for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee”* (Hebrews 13:5).

We were made for communion with God and others

After God created Adam and put him in the Garden as a caretaker, God said that *“it is not good for the man to be alone”* (Genesis 2:18) and He proceeded to create Eve to be a *“help meet for him.”* While not all are called to be married, we understand from this that man was made to commune with his Maker and to enjoy friendship and companionship with others. Indeed, when we sever our communion with God, we cut off our spiritual lifeline. The entire focus of Scripture is on our relationship with God and His Son Jesus Christ. This relationship truly suffers if we do not maintain an active communication with Them through prayer, meditation, reading, and listening to the Holy Spirit.

In a similar manner, if we are experiencing times of loneliness, those times may help us learn how to communicate with people. Building relationships with others is easier if we are ready and prepared to love, help, encourage, and care for one another. Nothing will endear us to another person more than listening, empathizing, and burden-bearing.

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.” (Galatians 6:2)

The most important principle that represents the foundation for all relationships is love:

“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:30-31)

In future articles in this series, we will look at different types of loneliness and some practical ways of dealing with loneliness.

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