

Overcoming The Problem Of Loneliness

Loneliness – a common fact

1. Loneliness is the #1 emotional problem facing Americans today. One person said, “It is the most devastating malady of our age.” It attacks teens, married people, singles, middle-aged, seniors, and – yes – Christians.
2. Loneliness is not a sin, but it is part of our frail humanity. Some of the greatest saints in the Bible suffered from a feeling of loneliness.
 - Moses desired for God to kill him (Numbers 11:15), but why? Verse 14 has the answer. Moses felt as if he were facing life all alone.
 - Elijah wanted to die (1 Kings 19:4), but why? Verse 10 reveals that Elijah felt all alone.
 - Paul – 2 Timothy 4:16
3. What is loneliness?
 - It is not solitude. At times this is good for us. Jesus is our example. John 6:15
 - It is not being lonesome. This is when we miss a loved one who is gone temporarily, but we know he or she will be back.
 - It is not isolation. We can be lonely in a crowd. One person said, “A city is a place where hundreds of people are lonely together.” You will find lonely people in church, in restaurants, in movie theatres, in big crowds, etc.
 - Loneliness is an inward feeling that we are unneeded, uncared for, unwanted, and unnoticed. Psalm 102:7
 - What is more insignificant than a sparrow? It is unnoticed, isolated, unwanted, and alone on a housetop. That is the way the psalmist felt about himself.

Loneliness – a crippling force

1. All human beings have three basic needs:
 - A need to love and share that love with others – Job 19:19
 - A need for someone to understand you – Job 19:15, 21
 - A need to be needed and wanted – Job 19:14
2. Many people are not having these needs met, and it is producing an overwhelming feeling of loneliness, rejection, and isolation.
3. Loneliness can cripple a person – Job 17:7
 - Emotionally – Few hurts are deeper than loneliness. It can be so devastating. It is a leading cause of suicide. People feel alone with nobody to turn to.
 - Physically – They say that 50% of heart patients were lonely and depressed before their heart attack.
4. Here are a few of the common effects of loneliness:
 - It can lead to immoral relationships.

- People look for acceptance, intimacy, and a relationship to fill that empty void. All the physical contact in the world cannot fill an empty, lonely heart.
- It can impact our finances.
 - Lonely people will sometimes go on shopping sprees, thinking that purchasing certain items will give an emotional lift. Many times, people who abuse credit cards and end up deep in debt are lonely people.
- It can cause us to question our worth (to God and others).
 - We no longer see ourselves through the lens of God's Word and who we are in Christ. Satan loves to blind us to our exalted position in Christ.
- It can produce physical problems and even lead to suicide.
 - You may have heard people say, "Grandma grieved herself to death after Grandpa passed." When teenagers and adults commit suicide, there is a common thread. It is the thought, "Nobody cares."

Loneliness – a conquered foe (John 15:15-17)

- Jesus shares three great truths that will help us to conquer and overcome loneliness:
 1. First, recognize your best friend. vs. 15
 - We were enemies with God (Colossians 1:21). But, through Christ, we have been reconciled to God, and now Jesus calls us His friends.
 - Salvation is a friendship with Jesus that is never ending.
 - Jesus' Spirit dwells within us, and He desires to have a personal, intimate relationship with us. Romans 8:9-11; Colossians 1:27; Galatians 2:20
 - Jesus loves us with a deep, eternal love (John 15:13). We think of this love in a very general way, but He loves us individually, as friends.
 - Have you recognized that Jesus is your best friend? Have you sought to deepen your relationship with Him?
 2. Talk to your best friend. vs. 16a
 - Did you notice that Jesus told the twelve that He had chosen them to be His friends, and to be used to bear fruit? This is not referring to soul salvation in the context. This is referring to Jesus choosing them to a special position of friendship and service.
 - Did you know that the same principle is true of believers in the body of Christ today? We have been brought into a position of complete oneness with Christ. Ephesians 5:30-32
 - The moment you chose to trust Christ, God chose you to a special position of privilege and service within His family. God has provided you complete access to Himself in prayer. He has given you His very Spirit and life.

- If God did all of this for you, don't you believe He desires your company and fellowship? You can talk to Jesus about anything and everything. He's interested. He is your best friend. He knows what it feels like to be alone. John 1:11; Matthew 27:46
 - Do you remember the three basic human needs we discussed earlier? Jesus meets all three of those needs. God can use our times of loneliness to forge a new intimacy with Him that will sustain us even in the most desperate moments.
3. Share your best friend with others. vs. 17
- It is obvious that God made us to have friendships and relationships with others.
 - Although only Christ can satisfy the deepest pain of loneliness, we do need contact and fellowship with other believers in the body of Christ. God knows and recognizes this.
 - Do you remember the three different men we used earlier to illustrate loneliness? Let's look at what God did for them.
 - Moses – God gave Moses 70 men to help him. Numbers 11:16-17
 - Elijah – God gave Elijah a man named Elisha to help him. 1 Kings 19:19-21
 - Paul – God gave Paul three men: Luke, Mark, and Timothy. 2 Timothy 4:11
 - This is where lonely people run into trouble. They are lonely to a large extent because they haven't found friends they can share those burdens with.
 - Remember this: If you are lonely, there are a lot of other people who are lonely that you could be a blessing to. Here are a few practical suggestions:
 - Begin praying specifically for God to provide the right person who will encourage you, and who you can also help.
 - Become involved serving the Lord through your local church.
 - Begin pouring your life into someone else who is lonely.
 - As you begin to develop your friendship with Jesus and share His love with others, I guarantee it will allow you to overcome the problem of loneliness.
 - On the other hand, if you sit around waiting for someone to come to you to lift you out of your loneliness, you may have a long wait. You must take action.