



## **Pastoral Answers to Life's Questions: How Do I Deal With Loneliness In My Life?**

### **Introduction:**

Loneliness is the disease that

- plagued King David when he realized his separation from God (in Ps. 25:16)
- almost destroyed Jeremiah when he perceived his ministry as a failure (in Jer. 15:17)
- brought low the Prophet Elijah after his great victory over the prophets of Baal (in 1 Kings 19:10)
- was evident in the Apostle Paul's life when he was in prison... (2 Timothy 1:4; 4:9-10)
- that Jesus Christ Himself experienced—"My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Mk. 15:33-35)

"One of the prominent symptoms of our culture...is loneliness. Isn't it ironic that in an age of the greatest population explosion the world has every known, more people are desperately lonely than ever before." (Paul Little)

"Loneliness is and has always been the central and inevitable experience of every man." (Thomas Wolfe)

"It is strange to be known so universally and yet be so lonely." (Albert Einstein)

### **I. THE DIAGNOSIS OF LONELINESS**

#### **A. What exactly is loneliness?**

Webster defines loneliness as "...sadness that comes from a lack of companionship."

#### **Solitude vs. Loneliness**

• SOLITUDE is the fulfillment that comes from being alone. • LONELINESS is the emptiness that comes from being alone.

"Loneliness expresses the pain of being alone. Solitude expresses the glory of being alone." (Paul Tillich)

"Loneliness is the poverty of self; solitude is the richness of self." (May Sarton)

#### **Loneliness is the Disease of Emptiness**

cf. Genesis 2:15-24 -- the first recorded case of loneliness

#### **B. What is loneliness?**

"Loneliness is existence without completion"

"Loneliness is a lack of fulfillment...an emptiness that comes when something we need is missing."

"It is not good for the man to be alone." Genesis 2:18

Relational Need #1. Almighty God created us with the need for a right relationship to Him

Relational Need #2. Almighty God created us with the need for attachment to a partner

Relational Need #3. Almighty God created us with the need for attachment to a community of friends

#### **C. What is the God-given purpose of loneliness?**

The emotion of loneliness is God's Early Warning System. When one of our basic needs is not met, the loneliness alarm goes off, driving us to seek fulfillment.

#### **D. Who does loneliness strike?** "What age group, in general, do you think experiences more loneliness?"

"The popular conception that old people, as a group, are especially prone to loneliness is apparently a myth. In fact, survey find that people in their late 60's, 70's, and 80's are less lonely than younger adults....Loneliness is particularly prevalent and intense during adolescence."

#### **E. When does loneliness strike most often?** What season? What days of the week are the loneliest?

## II. THE TREATMENT FOR LONELINESS

“Fill the emptiness with something that makes you complete!”

### A. The Wrong Medicine:

#### 1. The Poison of Self-fulfillment

Proverbs 18:24 “A man of many friends comes to ruin. But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”

Even marriage can be a very lonely state!

#### 2. The Poison of Self-Pity

“I lie awake, I have become like a lonely bird on a housetop.” (Psalm 102:7)

“Loneliness is not a matter of isolation but insulation. Lonely people build walls around themselves and then complain of their loneliness. If we are in love with no one but ourselves, we soon find ourselves hating ourselves.” (Gaston Foote)

### B. The Right Medicine

#### 1. Find our fulfillment in Christ

Psalm 25:16-18 “Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses. Look upon my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins.”

Philippians 4:19 “And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

Matthew 28:20 “Lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age.”

#### 2. Demonstrate that fulfillment to others

Hebrews 10:23-25 “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.”

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

e.g. all the “one another verses”

- Fellowship is demonstrating our fulfillment in Christ by reaching out to others and seeking to meet each other’s needs
- Fellowship is not sitting around feeling sorry for ourselves. It is Christianity with its working clothes on.
- Fellowship is not hanging around waiting for someone else to come to meet our need. If we want to cure the loneliness, we need to get our eyes off of our needs and start meeting other people’s needs.

“The lonely person cannot wait for another to enter his life and dispel the loneliness. He must, first, begin the journey into another’s life, through service, caring and helping. Then chances are, he will find his loneliness vanishing. And he will probably have filled another’s lonely hours, too.” (C. Neill Strait)

Proverbs 12:14 “A man will be satisfied with good by the fruit of his words. And the deeds of a man’s hands will return to him.”