

Exit Church Discipleship Class

9/15/2025

Loneliness in Scripture

- 2 Timothy 4:9-22
- Psalm 142
- Matthew 26:36-46

Defining Loneliness

- Psychology Today: “Loneliness is the state of distress or discomfort that results when one perceives a gap between one’s desires for social connection and actual experiences of it.”
- 3 Types of Loneliness
 - The Loneliness of Shame
 - The Loneliness of Lack of Connection
 - The Loneliness of the Saints

The Loneliness of Shame

Defining the Problem

- Brene Brown: Shame is “the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging—something we’ve experienced, done, or failed to do makes us unworthy of connection.” [<https://brenebrown.com/articles/2013/01/15/shame-v-guilt/>]
- Trauma, sin, delicate parts of our stories
- Dr. Curt Thompson: The neurophysiology of shame turns me away from you and separates different parts, different functions of my mind (my sensations, images, feelings, thoughts, behaviors) separating them from within so that I can’t operate as a unified whole. [<https://theallendercenter.org/2023/08/neurotheology-part-1/>]
- Under the weight of shame, we believe that we cannot be truly and fully known.

Spiritual Practices

- Some parts of our stories need expert help. Biblical/Pastoral counseling, Christian counseling professionals, and healing prayer can all be a part of that journey.
- Applying the Gospel to ourselves (1 John 1:8-9; Col 2:13-14; 1 John 4:9-10)
- Confession (James 5:16)
- Confessional Communities (Romans 12:1-2)

Resources that might be helpful

- Curt Thompson’s books *The Soul of Shame* and *The Soul of Desire*.
- Brene Brown TED Talk “The Power of Vulnerability.”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCvmsMzIF7o>

The Loneliness of Lack of Connection

Defining the Problem

- The most common type of loneliness—and declared an epidemic (WHO 2023).
- We desire to be seen, soothed, safe, and secure. And sometimes our relationships don't supply that for us.
- American/Western Culture greatly contributing to this.
- The tradeoff between privacy/discretion and the common life

Spiritual Practices

- Hospitality (Hebrews 13:2; 1 Peter 4:9)—community begets community
- Covenanted community (vulnerability, curiosity, time)
 - “The person who loves their dream of community will destroy community, but the person who loves those around them will create community.” Bonhoeffer

Resources that might be helpful

- Detrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*
- <https://comment.org/on-privacy-and-exclusion/>

The Loneliness of the Saints

Defining the Problem

- Even when we are doing everything right, we can experience loneliness. This side of Christ's return, we should expect loneliness because the only perfect cure is perfect communion with the Lord.
- “If I find in myself desires which nothing in this world can satisfy, the only logical explanation is that I was made for another world.” C.S. Lewis
- “Discipleship will frequently take us to places we do not wish to go, even if we make that journey in the midst of Christian community. Embracing loneliness becomes a prerequisite to embracing the God who calls us to a frequently misunderstood and frustrating vocation.” Myles Werntz

Spiritual Practices

- Solitude (Jesus' example in Mark)
 - “Let him who cannot be alone beware of community... Let him who is not in community beware of being alone... Each by itself has profound perils and pitfalls. One who wants fellowship without solitude plunges into the void of words and feelings, and the one who seeks solitude without fellowship perishes in the abyss of vanity, self-infatuation and despair.”

Resources that might be helpful

- Henri Nouwen, *Wounded Healer*
- <https://comment.org/the-solitude-of-the-saints/>
- Dorothy Day, *The Long Loneliness*