

**WSS, Part 12**  
**Week 5**  
**Thursday**

**Alone or Lonely**  
**Sherry Kendrick, Guest Writer**

Today's Treasure

*So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*  
*Isaiah 40:10*

In this space between, some struggles come with grieving. I suspect that everyone has different struggles, but I am going to be vulnerable in a few of mine so that it may help those of you who have them in common with me.

One of the big issues for me in the five years since Mike's death has been discerning my capacity for being alone and being intentional in seeking community when being alone transitioned into loneliness. There is no magical formula for this, but through trial and error, I have discovered principles that have guided me.

First, I am never truly alone because God has promised to be with me, and He has kept that promise. But on the hard days when I have longed for companionship, I must remind myself of this deep truth. Isaiah 40:10 is a good scripture to say aloud to yourself these days.

Second, being alone is different than being lonely. Because I am a widow with grown children, I am alone in my home for a considerable time. I am still working so my weekdays are full of people. For now, my evenings and weekends are when I have meals alone and many hours of no companionship. The question has become, what am I going to do with this alone time? How can I steward this time well? First, I make sure I manage my home. The routine cleaning, yard work, laundry, groceries, and a deep clean of a drawer or closet help me love being there even when I am by myself. Second, I always have a personal project or activity that I am doing. It may be reading a book, doing a new craft, working on a puzzle, working on my Ancestry site, or creating a Shutterfly book. Having this personal project gives a sense of value, personal pleasure, and accomplishment to these alone hours. Finally, I look through the month and set up intentional times for spending time with others. Sometimes I will invite a group over for dinner. I also get invited over to other people's homes. I will invite friends to meet for a

meal, to go to the beach, to watch a movie or even to go shopping. The point is that I must be intentional in planning these times. It does not work to expect others to know when you may need companionship.

Third, loneliness is a feeling you can have whether you are alone or in a crowd. Some of my loneliest times come at church activities and holiday activities when friends and family who love me are around. Loneliness is the state of being alone and feeling sad about it. So, I most often feel lonely when I am missing Mike and sad that he is not with me to experience whatever is happening. My reaction to that feeling is to separate or withdraw from those around me, which creates an even lonelier feeling. Again, there is no magical formula for this. It has helped me to understand that being alone and feeling lonely is just a normal part of grieving the loss of someone who was an important part of your life. I have accepted the fact that there are going to be times when I feel lonely. When I do, I need to lean into the truth that Jesus has promised He is with me, and I need to be proactive to reach out to others in my community.

*To think about:* One final thought here. Find some places to serve in your community. Who might also need company? Think about someone you know that you can serve by enjoying companionship. Do you love children? Find a young mom and offer to watch her children while she gets a haircut. Are there places in your church that need help? Ask your pastor for ideas of who/where you can serve. Serving is a wonderful way to fill up alone time in healthy, productive ways that will help you heal.

### **PRAYER**

Father, on the days I miss my loved one remind me that you are indeed with me and that I am not alone. Help me steward the alone time well. Meet me in the loneliness with the breath of your Holy Spirit to comfort and calm my hurting heart.