

Series: Rising Above

Title: “Loneliness”

Text: Genesis 2:18



It may seem surprising that in today's hyper-connected culture, loneliness is one of the common needs people face. The person struggling with loneliness may be anyone from a child who is ostracized at school to a widow living in an empty house for the first time in many decades. Many people even find themselves feeling lonely while in a crowd. This is especially true for those dealing with grief or who feel misunderstood.

Loneliness itself is certainly not a sin and may be something God uses in the lives of both unbelievers and believers to cause them to turn to Him to fill the deepest needs of their soul. It can also, however, be something that makes one susceptible to sin—such as self-pity, isolation from the body of Christ, or seeking inappropriate relationships. Jesus experienced loneliness during His time on Earth. As we struggle with this human need, we can be sure that our Savior understands and is able to help.

Examples of Loneliness in Scripture:

Psalm 102:7: *"I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the housetop."* This verse from the Psalms expresses a deep sense of loneliness, likening the speaker to a solitary sparrow.

1 Kings 19:10: *"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."* Elijah feels utterly alone and endangered because of his faithfulness to God.

Job: In the Book of Job, Job, overwhelmed by his misfortunes, curses the day of his birth. The entire book depicts his feelings of isolation and despair amidst his sufferings.

Psalm 25:16: *"Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted."* The psalmist is feeling lonely and pleads for God's attention and mercy.

Ecclesiastes 4:10: *"For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up."* This verse reflects on the hardships of loneliness and the value of companionship.

2 Timothy 4:16: *"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."* Here, Paul expresses a sense of loneliness in his ministry, particularly during times of trial.

Practical Ways to Rise Above Loneliness

1. The greatest need in our loneliness is to experience the _____ of the Lord.

- Loneliness can be a prompt in our lives to help us more passionately seek the Lord.

Psalm 23:1–6 *"1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. 3 He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. 5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."*

- Engaging in regular habits of seeking the Lord — especially spending time in His Word and prayer—are essential. These won't cure your loneliness immediately, but they will help you draw near to the Lord and experience fellowship with Him.

2. Remember that _____ understands loneliness.

Isaiah 53:3 "He is despised and rejected of men; A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: And we hid as it were our faces from him; He was despised, and we esteemed him not."

John 1:11 "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

Matthew 27:46 "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

- Whether loneliness comes through a loss or through rejection, Christ experienced it and understands our need.

Hebrews 4:16 "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

- He will be with you through any season of grief and will never leave or forsake you when you are rejected.

3. Know that _____ never leaves you alone.

Hebrews 13:5 "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

4. Be an active part of your _____.

- One of God's great gifts to the lonely is the local church body.
- Be an active part of your local church-giving and receiving encouragement. (You might find help in this engagement by doing a Bible study on the "one another" commands of the New Testament, paying careful attention to how you can minister to others.)

5. _____ others.

- An essential cure to loneliness is service. Without serving others, we are more susceptible to self-pity and self-absorption in our loneliness. Conversely, when we serve others, we often discover new relationships are forged with the others we find ourselves serving alongside. So look for practical acts of service in which you can engage.

Galatians 5:13 "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."

Galatians 6:2 "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

6. Be _____ and kind to others.

- Sometimes people are alone because they push others away.
- The Bible way of having friends is to be friendly!

Proverbs 18:24 "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

Colossians 3:12 "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;"