

Overcoming Loneliness

By Pastor Don Nicely



Loneliness is one of the major problems facing mankind today. It's amazing with a world of almost 7 billion people in it, and with America having 300 million people in it- that some people can still feel "all alone."

Once Adam's relationship with God was disrupted, humanity suffered the pain of feeling lonely. I personally can understand how an unbeliever that lives a selfish lifestyle all for themselves can feel the pains of loneliness, but I can't understand how a Christian whose life is supposed to center around fellowship with one another can be lonely. In this study we are going to give you some practical steps to alleviate loneliness from your life.

Loneliness is best defined as; "an emotional feeling of being sad and dejected because of a lack of companionship from others."

Loneliness can result in a sick feeling of being left out of the crowd, or being unwanted. Some lonely people feel cut off from the rest and have an extreme lack of meaningful contact with other people. Lonely people have an intense longing to be needed and wanted by someone else. Some people suffer from loneliness from time to time, and for some it's a daily way of life. Most lonely people wear the affects of it on their face with a sad contenance or a dejected look.

In the final stages of loneliness people have a tendency to retreat or withdraw from others. This will lead to what I call a P.L.O.M. vacation. Commonly known as a P.L.O.M. Trip. Poor- Little- Old- Me attitude.

In advanced stages of loneliness some people attempt to escape it through alcohol, drugs, or other diversions. Loneliness can periodically afflict anyone from time to time. It plays no favorites. It is estimated that 75 to 95% of all Americans suffer from chronic loneliness from time to time.

Many great men of the bible spoke of being alone and feeling the pain of loneliness on several occasions.

David; *Psalms 102:7 (NKJV)* ⁷ *I lie awake, And am like a sparrow alone on the housetop.*

Paul; *2 Timothy 4:16 (NKJV)* ¹⁶ *At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me...*

Moses stood alone, Nehemiah was alone and finally Jesus faced the cross all alone. Let's now look at some of the common causes of loneliness

Causes of loneliness

Fast-paced living... Living the 21st century hustle bustle lifestyle has created a de-humanizing spirit among us that tends to breed loneliness. In today's society because people don't have time for close relationships they tend to isolate themselves and have no meaningful contact with others.

Low self-esteem... Poor self-esteem and feelings of worthlessness can both be causes for loneliness. When someone suffers from poor self-esteem... and 70% of American women do... destructive attitudes of uselessness and feelings of inadequacy can be the result. When they look in the mirror, they do so cautiously and usually can't do so for a very long period of time. This attitude makes it difficult to build any lasting relationships with and thus they isolate themselves and withdraw from the presence of others that only stands to reinforce their feelings of loneliness.

Other people harbor several different negative attitudes that create loneliness in their lives... Things like self-pity which only serves to nurse a constant self-doubt and self-critical image that nobody cares for them. If negative attitudes like self-pity, self-centeredness, anger, fear, ect., are allowed to persist in someone's life a cycle of loneliness will deepen into the person's soul and this will make it next to impossible to fellowship with them.

Also there are circumstances that happen in people's lives from time to time that can create feelings of loneliness... When we face situations like the death of a spouse, divorce, being single, or grieving over a loss

we can be susceptible to loneliness. Other situations like being wealthy, or exceptionally talented, or handicapped, or maybe being a newcomer to an area. All these things can create loneliness in our life.

Finally, and probably the leading cause of loneliness is the lack of a meaningful relationship with God... We were created to find our ultimate fulfillment through an intimate relationship with our creator. But because of man's sin and rebellion this relationship has been severed. Spiritual emptiness and internal void are the results of a non-existent relationship with God. By now you may be wondering is there any hope for me? ***The answer is emphatically yes!*** Loneliness does not have to be a dead end street for you. God understands your feelings for he himself has suffered the same feelings through his son Jesus Christ.

Matthew 27:46 (NKJV) ⁴⁶*And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"*

Hebrews 4:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵*For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*

Let's look at six corrective responses we can use to combat loneliness in our life.

Keep in mind these aren't "quick fix" remedies but **vital steps** you can take to deal with your problem of loneliness.

Correct these negative attitudes... You can't alleviate loneliness until you deal with the root. These attitudes have erected barriers in your life, instead of bridges, and you need to make some necessary adjustments in your thinking patterns. You must openly deny these character traits that are alienating you from others and sincerely ask the Lord to help and cleanse you of your destructive thoughts.

Deliberately challenge inferior thoughts... One of Satan's greatest lies he tries to use against us are thoughts that we have no value. 1 Corinthians 12:14-27 informs us that we have great value to God. Resist any thoughts of inferiority by standing on the reality of who you are in Christ.

Stand against fear... Fear can reinforce loneliness if you allow it. Fear can raise its head up in many forms, rejection; intimidation, lack of intimacy, and the fear of being hurt, are just a few. When we challenge these fears by seeking a release through Christ and his word we are on our way to forming the right relationship needed to conquer them. 11 Timothy 1:7

Practice Friendliness...

The bible tells us that if we want to have friends we must be friendly. Proverbs 18:24... We must take the initiative to reach out to others. Relationships don't just happen. We must invest the time and effort necessary to develop them. When we cooperated with others friendships will be the results.

Cultivate your relationship with God... Just like human relationships; an intimate relationship with Christ is necessary to put an end to loneliness all together. Don't look to people for fulfillment. Only God can heal you of the pain of inner loneliness. God wants us so close to his heart that we can share a meal with him. He wants us to have communion with him. Revelation 3:20

Revelation 3:20 (NKJV) ²⁰*Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.*

Get involved with the church's activities...

Acts 2:46 (NKJV) ⁴⁶*So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,*

If we become committed to church life and avail ourselves to fellowshiping with the saints we will build a sense of belonging. All of us who are born again are of the spiritual family known as the church. And that is one of our greatest defenses against loneliness.