

21 Loneliness

The knowledge that we are never alone calms the troubled sea of our lives and speaks peace to our souls.

--A.W. Tozer, The Knowledge of the Holy

1. The assurance of God's constant presence comforts us in times of loneliness.

** You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down. You are familiar with all my ways . . . Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? (Psa. 139:2-3 NIV)*

2. God has designed that the church as a unified body ministers to the needs of each of its members, including the need for encouraging companionship.

** And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. (Heb. 10:24-25 NKIV)*

** But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body . . . If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. (1 Cor. 12:18-20, 26 NIV)*

3. At the beginning of history God recognized our innate need for companionship by creating marriage as one way to combat loneliness.

** And the LORD God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone. I will make him a helper compatible to him.' (Gen 2:18 NKJV)*

** The wife of your youth . . . she is your companion. (Mal 2:14 NKJV)*

** The man who find a wife finds a treasure and receives favor from the Lord. (Prov. 18:22 NLT)*

4. God recognizes the value of family relationships as one of the answers to loneliness.

**God places the lonely in families (Psa. 68:6 NLT)*

5. God provides friendships as a means of meeting our needs.

**A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (Prov. 18:24 NKJV)*

** If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But people who are alone when they fall are in real trouble. And on a cold night two under the same blanket can gain warmth from each other. But how can one be warm alone? A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated but two can stand back to back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken. (Eccl 4:10-12 NLT)*

6. Christ modeled for us the importance of taking time to be alone with God.

** After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening. He was there alone. (Matt. 14:23 NASB)*

** In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there. (Mk. 1:35 NASB)*

** And it happened that while He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him, and He questioned them, saying, ' Who do the people say that I am?' (Lk 9:18 NASB)*

** Jesus saw that they were ready to take him by force and make him king, so he went higher into the hills alone. (Jn. 6:15 NLT)*

** A time is coming, and has come, when you will be scattered each to his own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. (Jn 16:32 NIV)*

7. In times of loneliness it is helpful to recall and give thanks for Christ's promise that he will never ever abandon us.

** Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid of them! The LORD your God will go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor forsake you. (Deut 31:6 NLT)*

** I am with you always, even to the end of the age. (Matt. 28:20 NKJV)*

** Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.' (Heb. 13:5 NIV)*

** The Lord is near. (Phil. 4:4 NIV)*

PRAYER

I am lonely, Lord. There seems to be no one with whom I can share my deepest feelings. It comforts me to know that my trials and my tears do not go unnoticed by you.

Thank you for sending your Son into this broken world full of lonely people like me. I am reminded of the unspeakable anguish of Gethsemane that your Son endured alone while his disciples slept. My loneliness pales in comparison.

Thank you for your promise never to leave me or forsake me. Help me to live each moment in the assurance of your love and with the knowledge that I am never truly alone.

PROMISE

Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid of them! The LORD your God will go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor forsake you. (Deut. 31:6 NLT)