

LONELINESS

- I. Representative Biblical usages
 - A. Old Testament
 - 1. Hebrew word *badad* - "isolated, separated, apart, alone"
Gen. 2:18 - "it is not good for man to be alone"
 - 2. Hebrew word *yahid* - "solitary, isolated, lonely"
Ps. 25:16 - "I am lonely and afflicted"
 - B. New Testament
 - 1. Greek word *eremos* - "abandoned, solitary, lonely"
Lk. 4:42 - "He departed and went to a lonely place"
- II. Defining loneliness
 - A. Our created condition as human beings
 - 1. Created as social creatures, relational beings; we need each other;
"no man is an island" - Gen. 2:18 - "not good for man to be alone"
 - 2. God-given needs and desires for love, acceptance, belonging,
relating, companionship, friendship with other men and God.
 - B. Differentiating some terms
 - 1. Aloneness - being separated from other people.
 - a. It is healthy to be alone sometimes.
 - b. Can be alone and not lonely. Some personalities prefer.
 - 2. Solitude - choosing to withdraw and be alone
 - a. to retreat - Lk. 4:42; Jn. 6:15
 - b. to rest and relax - Matt. 6:31,32
 - c. to pray - Matt. 14:13,23; Mk. 1:35
 - d. to hear from God - Dan. 10:8
 - e. to be silent - Lam. 3:28
 - 3. Loneliness - a psychological state of mind or feeling of being
excluded or estranged from other people and/or God.
 - a. Not necessarily related to physical situations of aloneness
or solitude. Possible to be lonely in a crowd.
 - b. Our need for relational interactive socialization is not
satisfactorily fulfilled.
 - (1) may be unfulfilled God-given desires
 - (2) may be unfulfilled selfish indulgence of God-given
desires
 - c. Often a feeling of isolation, separation, detachment from
companionship, fellowship, intimacy, or community.
 - d. May be sense of separation or fear of being forsaken by God.
 - C. Contemporary social situation
 - 1. Ours has been called the "lonely society"
 - 2. Some have indicated that 75-90% of adult Americans suffer from
chronic loneliness.
- III. Circumstances in which loneliness may be experienced. **May feel lonely when...**
 - A. guilt causes you to feel separated
 - 1. from God - Ps. 25:16
 - 2. from other men - Gen. 27:1-29; 32:24; 33:1-17
 - B. you feel rejected, abandoned, deserted by others - Jn. 16:32; II Tim. 4:16,17
 - C. you are voluntarily or forcefully removed from safe, secure environment
 - D. you experience the "let down" after a spiritual victory - I Kings 19:10,14
 - E. previous successes or popularity have subsided
 - F. you have suffered a defeat
 - G. you are too busy chasing "success" to relate to others.
 - H. you are "burned out" after having tried to achieve by self-effort - Jn. 8:29
 - I. you are separated from the group by leadership responsibilities - "lonely at
the top" - Numb. 11:14,17; Deut. 1:9,12; Matt 26:38-40
 - J. you have suffered the loss of a loved one by death or divorce
 - K. you are fearful and timid - I Jn. 4:18

- L. you feel inferior, unworthy, self-condemnation, insecure
- M. you are physically removed or separated from those you know and love.
- N. others reject or ostracize you for being different, or for nonconformity
- O. you fail to resolve conflict and misunderstanding; estrangement
- P. you fail to communicate; avoidance; repression; stuff emotions
- Q. you have chosen to "stand alone" against world, sin, religion (Jere. 15:17)
- R. others are not enthused about your interests or project.
- S. you don't take the time to enjoy others and have fun together
- T. you have been prejudged, stereotyped, pegged, put in a box
- U. your particular talents and abilities and personality are not appreciated
- V. you don't fit in - economically, intellectually, politically, religiously, etc.
- W. you don't feel connected, bonded, able to relate -emotionally, spiritually
- X. friends only relate on superficial level; won't get serious and real
- Y. you have been excluded from a particular social grouping
- Z. you feel like an outsider, the "odd man out"
- AA. your present responsibilities (parenting, vocation, etc.) preclude or diminish the development of relationships
- BB. you retire from your vocation and no longer relate to colleagues daily
- CC. another person is regarded as your "life," & they can't meet all your needs
- DD. you do not feel a sense of oneness, unity and intimacy with your mate
- EE. you have refused to receive the love and intimacy of your mate - SoS 5:3-6
- FF. you have been betrayed by a mate or a friend - Gen. 3:12
- GG. you alienate others by your verbosity, accusations, insensitive comments
- HH. you alienate others by using them in competitive or economic success
- II. you alienate others by criticism, negativism, sarcasm, pessimism, hostility, cruelty,
- JJ. you alienate others by your selfishness, egotism, or spiritual pride.
- KK. you make work, projects, things, possessions more important than people.
- LL. you feel you cannot perform up to expectations
- MM. others are too preoccupied with their concerns to relate with you
- NN. crisis arises and no one offers to listen or assist.
- OO. you feel left behind by a fast-paced technological society
- PP. children grow up, go to school, leave home
- QQ. isolated due to injury; secluded or ignored due to age (Ps. 71:9,18)

IV. Dealing with loneliness

- A. Secular solutions
 1. Mental adjustment. Positive thinking. "Look on the bright side." "Be aggressive." Develop communication skills.
 2. Activity. Involvement. Get busy. Change jobs. Join a club. Move. Travel. Have fun. Try something new. Be adventurous. Go to church. Volunteer. Get married, or remarried.
 3. Results of such advice have sometimes led to workaholism, alcoholism, sexual promiscuity, various addictions, burn-out, increased loneliness, depression, suicide.
- B. Biblical solutions
 1. Regeneration, reconciliation with God. Col. 1:21,22
 2. Confess known sins - I Jn. 1:9
 3. Accept God's forgiveness - Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14
 4. Forgive others - Eph. 4:32
 5. Recognize and affirm the presence of God in Christ - Josh. 1:9; Ps. 23; Isa. 41:10; 43:2; Matt. 28:20; Jn. 16:32; Heb. 13:5
 6. Accept the work of the Comforter, the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit of Christ - Jn. 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7
 7. Participate in the fellowship and community of the Body of Christ, the Church - Heb. 10:25
 8. Participate in the functional ministry of the Body of Christ in using your spiritual gifts - Rom. 12:4-6; I Cor. 12