

## “How Can I Grow Through Loneliness”

*Psalm 25:14-22*

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### **Psalm 25:14-22**

<sup>14</sup>*The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him,  
and he makes known to them his covenant.*

<sup>15</sup>*My eyes are ever toward the LORD,  
for he will pluck my feet out of the net.*

<sup>16</sup>*Turn to me and be gracious to me,  
for I am lonely and afflicted.*

<sup>17</sup>*The troubles of my heart are enlarged;  
bring me out of my distresses.*

<sup>18</sup>*Consider my affliction and my trouble,  
and forgive all my sins.*

<sup>19</sup>*Consider how many are my foes,  
and with what violent hatred they hate me.*

<sup>20</sup>*Oh, guard my soul, and deliver me!  
Let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.*

<sup>21</sup>*May integrity and uprightness preserve me,  
for I wait for you.*

<sup>22</sup>*Redeem Israel, O God,  
out of all his troubles.*

### **Introduction**

We all feel lonely at times and many of our sins are triggered by loneliness. Some people said, ‘Men are dangerous when they’re alone and women are dangerous when they’re together.’ Sometimes, you get bored when you’re alone and it leads to sin. When you’re bored, you’re looking for higher pleasure and you will find something to do. Human beings are always seeking higher pleasure. I remember counseling a teenager at a retreat when I was in a gospel band about thirty-some years ago. She was telling me her story and then she showed me her arm and it was all cut up. She said her parents abandoned her and that she gets so scared at night as she’s taking care of younger siblings. She cuts herself because when it hurts, she can forget that she’s alone. I could not understand until I counseled many people throughout the years.

Often times writing in the secular world says loneliness is generic or a result of depression – related to the biological reason to getting lonely. I think your biological body and your loneliness could be related, but according to the bible, the biological and chemical reaction is not the reason for your loneliness, but the foundation is made up of different things related to desires and the heart. Mary Roach said, “*I don’t fear death so much as I fear its prologues, loneliness, pain, debilitation, depression. After a few years of those, I imagine death presents itself like a holiday on the beach.*” Perhaps some people commit suicide because there’s less pain in taking your own life than going through the pain in this life. For some of us, much of our pain is related to loneliness. Being alone can be more painful than getting hurt, but being with people

does not guarantee that you won't be lonely. Sometimes you can be in a roomful of people and feel like you're alone. Somebody said, 'I used to think that the worst thing in life is to end up all alone.' It's not. The worst thing in life is to end up with people make you feel all alone. Sometimes you smile but you want to cry. Sometimes you talk but you want to be quiet. You pretend you're happy, but you aren't. Sometimes we feel like we're all by ourselves, but sometimes being in the wrong crowd could be bad as well. Sometimes you need to be alone. It's easy to stand with a crowd but it takes courage to stand alone. Sometimes we need to be alone. Sometimes when you're in the wrong crowd, you shouldn't be there. Sometimes being with other people helps us to define ourselves. Sometimes being alone helps us to define ourselves. Someone said, 'I think it's very healthy to spend time alone.' You need to know how to be alone and not be defined by another person. As we look into scripture, the opposite is true as well. You need to be with others so it can help you to define yourself.

I think there's a difference in philosophy between western and eastern cultures. We're living in America – western culture. Western culture is a more individualistic culture and eastern culture is a more collectivistic culture. Individualistic culture means 'I culture.' We use 'I' so much in the English language. We point to somebody's house and say, "Oh that's my house". In Korea, you say, "That's our house". I simply define western culture as more "I" culture and eastern culture -- and a lot of other cultures in the world -- as more collectivistic culture or "we" culture. There's advantages to both. In "I" culture, integrity is highly valued and important. Even if nobody is looking, you stand there at the red light. I don't know if anyone in any other country would stand at a red light when nobody is looking. Being integrity-oriented is an advantage of western culture. An advantage of collectivistic culture is more intimacy-orientated, caring about other people. The negative thing is that you care about what they think of you. You're more aware of other people and care about others more. Biblical culture is a combination of both. We need to have both integrity as well as intimacy. Both integrity and accountability is needed to deal with biblical loneliness. So what is loneliness? Biblically speaking, it is God's invitation to intimacy.

## **I. Lies about loneliness – Psalm 25**

Look at Psalm 25 verse 16: *<sup>16</sup>Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted.*

This is about going through affliction, hardships, troubles, difficulties, and fights. Enemies are the result of the fall and sin. But the Psalm writer deals with his loneliness through verse 21:

*<sup>21</sup>May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you.*

Often, our sins are involved with loneliness. We're so susceptible to sin when we are lonely. We need to guard ourselves in the midst of our loneliness so we will not fall into lies that give us permission to sin. These are some of the lies people have on their minds that people need counselling through.

### **A. There must be something wrong with me because I get lonely**

Some people think 'I am not normal because I get lonely so often.' There's some validity to that. Yes, because according to the bible, there is something wrong with all of us, but no because you're not abnormally wrong. You're normally wrong. Human beings have nature that expresses itself through desires. When we don't get what we want, we need help from somebody so we get lonely. When we get lonely, our hearts are basically saying, "Where are those people who will help me to get what I want?"

### **B. I must be a bad Christian because I get lonely**

You may be thinking, 'I'm a Christian and I'm not supposed to feel like this because God is always with me.' But when there is loneliness, think of it as a natural warning sign from God. Natural, because God made us as relational beings. Loneliness to our hearts is like pain to our bodies. Pain is a warning sign that God has given us so we can feel it so be careful; we'll be cautious about our body. Loneliness is the same thing. Loneliness means you have to take care of your heart; you need to develop intimacy. Of course, there is a healthy and a right kind of intimacy, but often we go into a wrong, false kind of intimacy. The goal is not to not be lonely, but it's about what you do when you get lonely. Notice I didn't say, 'What do you do if you get lonely?' because all of us will since we are created to be relational beings. It's about what you do in response, not about not getting lonely.

### **C. If I change my external surroundings, I will not get lonely**

That means, 'If I change my external circumstances, it will fix my loneliness.' No, loneliness is not an external issue, it's a heart issue. "If I get married, I will not be lonely." I know a lot of married people who are lonely. "If I have somebody, I will not get lonely." No! It may help a little, but the changing of external circumstances will not cure your internal problem. No, your spouse will not be your savior. Your boyfriend or your girlfriend will not be your savior; they're not your God.

One author wrote this, *'If you do not know how to redeem your loneliness to some degree, you may not be ready to get married.'* Of course, there's a verse in 1 Corinthians 7:9 that says, *<sup>9</sup>But if they cannot exercise self-control, this is talking about your longing, your relational desire, your sexual desire, then they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.* To some degree, it's going to help you, but that should not be the main reason why you get married. It's one of the reasons, but more than that, you should be able to have a desire in your heart to give, to love. Your reason to marry is not to be loved, but to love. But if you do not know how to redeem your loneliness to some degree, you may not be ready to get married because you will use your spouse to meet your longing rather than loving and serving your spouse to picture the giving love of Christ -- to picture the gospel -- which is the intention of marriage. The best way to prepare for marriage is to serve. Learn how to serve. Learn how to die. That's why I say, before your wedding, you got to have a funeral. You have to die, then you can love. Then, you can picture the gospel marriage.

### **D. I can overcome my loneliness by satisfying my physical desires**

Now, some of you might be saying, 'Satisfying my physical desires will fix my loneliness.' This is a symptom, not the cause of your problem of loneliness. Again, loneliness is a heart problem. Some people think that being sexually active before marriage will get rid of their loneliness but sometimes it will enhance it. Premarital sex will give you guilt, and because of that guilt, you become more dissociated with the other person. And because of the guilt, you dissociate with God. You become more selfish and self-protective rather than loving other people and it distances you. Eventually, if you marry that person, those things can enhance your loneliness rather than intimacy.

Think about biblical examples of positive and negative examples: David and Jonathan. King David had a great friend named Jonathan and they had a wonderful friendship; they were so intimate with one another to picture the gospel, to live for the kingdom of God. Nothing to do with sexual or physical intimacy but a wonderful relationship of picturing Christ and the church. A Samaritan woman in John chapter 4 had five husbands. She always had this physical intimacy where she was longing for love which was pictured through the story. She had physical water but she still had the thirst of her soul until she met Jesus -- and when she met Jesus, there was obviously no physical relationship. Though there was physical relationship with five husbands, and the one she's living with while not married, she was still thirsty in her soul until she met Jesus. Then her heart was satisfied.

#### **E. If I can deal with my lonely feelings, then I am okay**

You can deal with your loneliness in a wrong way and kind of have temporary escape or temporary pleasure but that doesn't mean your heart problem has vanished.

I remember being in a house during my junior high school days where there was nothing. No internet, no smart phone, just a landline phone and the T.V with a few channels. It was cold outside, but I was dying of boredom so I walked to my friend's house. Now, if I'm by myself, it's really hard to be bored because there's so many things to do in life. You can really deceive yourself into thinking, 'My heart is okay' while you're just escaping. You're not really dealing with things in your heart to develop intimacy that you need spiritually and relationally. Yet, you can think you're okay because there's so many other things to replace and fill your heart with. You might have a temporary fix through your hobbies or simple, neutral things but sometimes, even neutral things in your life are harmful. You might have a temporary fix but you're not dealing with the foundational problem of your heart that you need in order to develop an intimate relationship with God and with other people. You might think you're okay but what if you turn off everything, like in Lenten season, and give up some of the things you're addicted to? Then, how do you feel? That's who you are. That's what your heart is made of so you have to learn to receive and give according to the bible. Sometimes, life is too hard to be alone; we need other people. Or sometimes life is too good to be alone; we need to share it with people. There's life that's filled with pain and joys. To be complete, we need others.

## **II. The nature of loneliness – Psalm 25**

There's two natures of loneliness. There's two kinds of hearts if you're Christian. If you're not a Christian, you're born with sin nature -- that's all it is. When you become Christian, you now have spiritual nature. Even as Christians, there's two kinds of loneliness and aloneness. We are made in the image of God and God has never been alone. God always existed. We believe in three persons and one God. Christianity is not a polytheistic religion with many gods but a monotheistic religion, one God but with three persons -- God the Father, God the Son, and God the holy spirit, and they exist in oneness; one God. But the relationship between the Father and the Son is amazing. Their relationship includes the pouring forth of love of one another. God didn't even need to create us, yet he created us out of grace. God has never been alone. John 1 says, *in the beginning was the word*, talking about Jesus, *and the word*

with God, Jesus was with the Father, *and the word was God*. That means there is an eternal relationship between God the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. In Christianity, God is uniquely relational. So, as the image bearer of God, when we feel lonely, it's a result of sin.

#### **A. The loneliness of the sin nature**

Often our loneliness is associated with sin, whether it's my sin nature or other people's sin nature. Look at Psalm 25 verse 16, <sup>16</sup>*Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted*. Loneliness was caused by sin, especially in this context with other people. Yet, he repents of his own sins; he knows his sin is involved. Verse 25 verse 18 says, <sup>18</sup>*Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins*. He even repents of the sins of his youth -- Psalm 25 verse 7, <sup>7</sup>*Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions*; all the people should memorize this verse. *according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!* When sin entered, we became lonely, in need of other for ourselves. Adam and Eve had intimacy with God and with one another until sin came in, until they sinned. Genesis 3:6 says, *she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate*. Sin entered into their hearts.

In verse 7, they sowed fig leaves as soon as they sinned -- a symbol of how they're separated, dissociated, and how they became lonely. *And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths*. They're hiding from God and hiding from one another.

Separation and loneliness is revealed when God comes to Adam and Eve in verse 12, <sup>12</sup>*The man said, "The woman..."* This blame shows the separation of God and Adam and Adam and woman. As intimacy divided, loneliness entered in. Human beings became isolated from God and others. There's a need for others to get what I want rather than to serve.

Psalm 25 verse 16, <sup>16</sup>*Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted*.

We often say, I am lonely and \_\_\_\_: I am lonely and afflicted, I am lonely and bored. I need somebody to give me what I want; I am lonely! I need a girlfriend. I'm lonely! I need a boyfriend. I'm lonely! I need somebody to talk to. I am lonely and I need somebody to help me.

Often, this side of sinful loneliness leads us to sin as we seek the highest pleasure or even neutral, less painful things that give us pleasure or escape from our pain. This becomes replacement of great things that we need. We escape which makes us escape from the main course of our life, the narrow path that He wants us to walk, and redeem ourselves in and carry the cross and follow Christ and serve and love others to glorify God.

Even neutral things that should be a small portion of our life will lead us away from God and will hinder us from maximally living for the glory of God. That's why many verses in the bible not only tell us to avoid sin but also to avoid neutral things that we escape to when we become lonely.

Look at these verses, Hebrews chapter 12 verse 1, <sup>1</sup>*Therefore, since we are surrounded by great cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight*, Laying aside every weight is not about physical weight. It that means Christians are compared to runners and Christian life is running. In order for us to run as fast as we can, we need to get rid of things that will hinder us: weight *and sin which clings so closely*. There are bad things we need to get rid of and also not so bad things,

neutral things, and anything that will hinder us from running as fast as we can in the race of Christian life, running the race for the glory of God.

There's a similar principle in 2 Timothy chapter 2:4. Not only is Christian life compared to as runners but also soldiers of Christ. We're fighting this spiritual battle and in 2 Timothy 4:2, it says, *'No soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs.* We need to say no to some of the hobbies, the things we escape to, and the okay things. That's why a question of Christian life should not be, is it okay to do things? That's the wrong question we should ask. We should ask: What can help us to get closer to Jesus? When you're asking "is it okay?" you're going for the minimum of Christian life. We should be asking questions like 'What can help me? How can I run fast? How can we become better soldiers for Jesus Christ?'

You have to understand, becoming a Christian is coming from the "me" kingdom and entering into the "we" kingdom. You're isolated, you're lonely. Apart from Christ, you're always alone. You're never connected though you feel connected. You can never be with anything, anyone apart from Christ in your selfish nature because apart from Christ there is no real love. Every arrow is towards yourself and there is never a real connection apart from Christ. "We" kingdom means you're giving to one another. God is a God who always gives. The Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit are giving to one another, pouring forth love to each other and becoming in Jesus Christ means experiencing that now.

We have escaped the "me" kingdom to the "we" kingdom, but there's just residue that remains in us. There will be a battle with the "me" kingdom in our heart. There is a battle between Adam's DNA and the "we" kingdom in our hearts and the DNA of Jesus Christ. In one sense, as a Christian, you are never alone. You are eternally connected and together for eternity no matter if you like it or not. You're never alone, so we invite you if you have never received Jesus Christ as your Savior. Jesus come into my heart, come into my life. When he enters into you, you are coming to this cosmic connection with God and His people and the church of Jesus Christ. Ever since eternity began, all the believers in Jesus Christ will be connected. You are never alone.

## **B. The aloneness of the spiritual nature**

Psalm 25:21 says, *<sup>21</sup>May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you.*

This is the attitude of how we need to fight our loneliness. Aloneness is your operation of a spiritual nature apart from sin. We want others and we are in need of others so that we can glorify God. We can image Him.

Look at this in Genesis 2:18, it says, *<sup>18</sup>Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone;* Up to now, everything God said was good. Benediction: Bene- means good, -diction means good words. Until this verse, that was malediction: words that are not good. For the first time in the history of mankind, the Lord said it is not good for man should be alone. I know some guy will use it as, 'That's why I have to get married.' That's not what it's saying here. This is subject to many misinterpretations in marriage books and Christian books. Some people say Adam was so lonely that God made a woman so that it would meet his loneliness. Where does it say that he was lonely? It just says he was alone; this is not talking about subjective

loneliness. Adam's not lying down on the grass thinking, 'Oh I'm so lonely!' He's sitting there, perfectly content, not knowing what's going on, but with longing in his heart.

What was this longing? It's not loneliness, it was aloneness. He was created to image God and God always gives and Adam needed somebody else to give to. Loneliness is an arrow toward yourself, aloneness is an arrow toward others. It's your desire to love and serve others. That's why God said it is not good for him to be alone. He was created as a relational being to picture God's giving love to others. *So I'll make him a helper, fit for him.* This is not talking about subjective loneliness, but objective aloneness. He needed somebody to have the arrow directed towards, giving love, so that it can picture what God is like: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit who's giving to one another.

Remember when they sinned they sewed fake leaves among themselves? Before that, before sin entered into the world, Genesis 2:25 says, *man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed* because they were so concerned about others and giving to one another. There was no shame, nothing to hide, giving to one another, giving love to one another.

Think back to God's way to deal with loneliness in Psalm 25:21. There are two things in Psalm 25:21 that will help us to say 'no' to sinful loneliness, *integrity and uprightness preserve me.* Sinful nature says, 'I need somebody to use to get me what I want' but spiritual nature says 'no, *integrity and uprightness preserve me.* I'm living before the eyes of God. I'm living for the glory of God. I'm not going to use people, I'm going to love people.' No to our sin and neutral things that hinder us in order to focus in following Christ and sin nature and then yes to the spiritual nature.

In verse 21, when it says, *I wait for you*, there's protection from sinful loneliness, integrity, and the proactive action of spiritual aloneness. This is so that you can receive His grace to release that power to others in love. That's how we deal with loneliness. In our spiritual nature, we are in need; not to get what we want but to give what He gives to us. We need God for His name, for His glory because God is always giving. When you have God, you'll release love. You release His grace, you release His power and people can see Him through you. Psalm 25:14 it says, <sup>14</sup>*The friendship of the LORD.* You have to befriend God.

So, when you're lonely, get to a place where it will be hard to sin: integrity. Make adjustment to your surroundings. Go to places, get rid of things, cut off things, whatever you need to do. Whether it's physically, emotionally, relationally, whether you need accountability, whatever you need so you can say no to your sinful reaction to your loneliness. Then, learn to see what you can do to get closer to God. I will wait for you.

A question for you is, 'Can you be alone with God?' That's who you are in Jesus Christ. Do you want to grow and mature? That's ultimately what it means. How can you be alone with God? How long? How satisfyingly? That's who you are spiritually. That's how deep you are. That's how weighty you are spiritually, your character, your power. Really turn off everything and see what you're made of. What do you think about? What do you feel?

James 4:8 gives us promise. Draw near to God in your heart, in your mind, in your time, in your logistics, draw near to God. And the promise is, He will draw near to you. Of course, it has to do with our repentance. *Cleanse your hand you sinners, purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

Loneliness will lead us to different pleasures. Loneliness will lead us to both sin and spiritual nature. Loneliness can be a great opportunity to build great pleasure and intimacy with God. As I said in the beginning, loneliness is an invitation from God to seek Him; receive his invitation. There are so many things inviting us. Say no to those things. Loneliness can either lead you to sin or lead you to get closer to God. How can I get close to God through my loneliness?

### **III. How to grow through loneliness – Romans 12:9-13**

We'll use mainly Romans 12:9-13 but look at Psalm 25:14, <sup>14</sup>*The friendship with the LORD is for those.* Again, in an individualistic culture like America, we always think about, 'I' and we kind of think about our relationship with God with just 'I'. That is true; we need to have individual relationship with God but you also have to see how many plurals are used in the bible. *Friendship with the LORD is for those*, that's plural. There's an insinuation of how we need God individually, but we need God together. We need a group of people who love God so that together we can see God -- always an insinuation of the church of Jesus Christ.

John 15:15 talks about friendship with the Lord. Jesus says to the disciples, <sup>15</sup>*No longer do I call you servant, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends*, Jesus calls his disciples, the ones who will become disciples of Christ, and those here on after -- that means us – His friends. *I have called you friends*, plural, *for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you*. This is like y'all. So, when you read the bible like this, *Father I have known to y'all -- Father I have made known to* all of us in the church of Jesus Christ – there is an insinuation of our actual need for community in Jesus Christ. Some people have an idea of an ideal community. Be careful of what you're seeking for in an ideal community. Somebody wrote this, 'The person who loves their dream of community will destroy their community.' Some people have a picture of an idea of a community and when you're not a part of it, they hate or dislike you. But the person who loves those around them will create community. Community is a result of genuine love, Jesus Christ. This passage will talk about community, relationships with other people in the church of Jesus Christ, and our relationship with God. We'll talk about five verses that have so much power to combat our loneliness.

#### **A. Remedy to loneliness is love – giving love**

Romans 12:9, <sup>9</sup>*Let love be genuine*. There is no genuine love apart from Christ. The love that God gives us is a supernatural, foreign, alien love of God that comes from above -- through Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, into our hearts, and then we have this genuine love. Even that love in our hearts is mixed with selfish love. That selfishness will be gone one day, but we need to practice to become like Christ who truly loves. I remember somebody saying to me as I counseled that person, 'Sometimes I just want to disappear, to see if anyone would miss me.' Someone that you meet today might think that. Make sure they know before they do something, 'I know that person will miss me.' Learn to reach out, love.

#### **B. Loving others – small group**

You can do it in the context of small group, a church small group or just a smaller group that you belong to. Romans 12:10, <sup>10</sup>*Love one another with brotherly affection. Family affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.* We want to outdo others to show ourselves off -- outdo one another in love. Wouldn't that be a holy competition? Do you really want to be with other people or not? Horacio Jones said, "I like being alone. I have control over my own \*beep\*. Therefore, in order to win me over, your presence has to feel better than my solitude. You're not competing with another person -- you're competing with my comfort zone." When you approach somebody, you're competing with their pleasure of being by themselves. We are always like that, aren't we? When you want to be with someone, is there higher pleasure or less pain with that person than to be by yourself? We are so selfish. We have to learn to love, learn to give. Our desire to love has to be greater than our love for ourselves.

Look at this: Proverbs 18:1, *Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire.* That's so true. We need to be balanced in isolation and association, of course. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote a great book called, *Life Together* -- classic exploration in faith and community. This is what he said, "Let him who cannot be alone, beware of community. Let him who is not in community, beware of being alone." Sometimes, you can't be alone so you're always with people. You have to learn to be alone, especially with God. Then, there are people who really don't want to be with other people because they'd rather be alone because it's so painful and there's no pleasure in being with other people. We need that balance of integrity and intimacy -- integrity and accountability. Some steps need to be taken alone because it's the only way to really figure out where you need to go and who you need to be. Sometimes you need to be with others to really figure out where you need to go and who you need to be. We need that balance. We are absolutely in need of both in our lives. Love others diligently.

### **C. Diligently serve – ministries**

We need love that comes from God. We need to love others through our hearts and we need to then diligently serve through ministering to other people. Romans 12:11, <sup>11</sup>*Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.* In context, we need to serve the Lord by serving other people. Sometimes we are tired of people, sometimes we don't want to see people, sometimes we look down on people -- we don't want to serve them. We act like servants until they treat us like servants. When they treat you like a servant, the throne that was hidden in our hearts starts to rise -- I want to be a king. We need to be humble to serve other people. Someone said, 'If my sinful nature appears to me to be in any way smaller or less detestable in comparison with the sins of others, I am still not recognizing my sinfulness at all. How can I possibly serve another person in unfeigned humility if I seriously regard his sinfulness as worse than my own?' If you want to serve, you have to be able to see your own sins, repent of your sins, and know that Christ has served you with his blood and life. Then, you can serve others who are better than you. Any sinner is better than you. If you are critical, if someone is worse than you, you are not serving them. Always remain in humility, as forgiven sinners, as someone who has been served by Christ, so we can serve other people. Someone helped us in saying, 'I can no longer condemn or hate a brother of whom I pray, no matter how much trouble he causes me.' Whenever you don't like somebody, serve somebody -- pray for them. Whenever I hate somebody I pray for them, 'Lord, bless them; help them to repent.' Someone in front of you may be saying, 'I'm falling apart right

in front of your eyes, but you don't even see me.' Someone that you've seen today might be falling apart right in front of your eyes and you might not have really seen that person. Learn how to see people. Often loneliness is not being alone but it's the feeling that nobody cares. I pray that when you meet somebody, they will always say, "Wow, that person is afraid of losing me." Can you be that person that cares so much that people know you care? There might be those around you that are drowning but no one may be seeing their struggles. You have to be Jesus to them. You have to have the feet of Jesus to go to them, the hands of Jesus to serve them, and the eyes of Jesus to cry for them. Let's help Jesus to speak to them.

#### **D. Persevere in your relationship with the Lord**

All this power and ability and desire to serve and love comes from your perseverance in your relationship with the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. When you keep going through hardships and difficulties, you're going to grow. A child becomes a mother, a child becomes a father -- spiritual father, spiritual mother. Through pain, though they are going through pain, they're able to help others. Embrace the lonely ones.

Psalm 25:14, <sup>14</sup>*The friendship of the LORD*, the word friendship means intimacy. One translation translates as, 'the secret of the Lord.' Intimacy means you're able to tell secrets to one another. You need to be able to do that in the Lord, to receive his power and grace. You have to be that close with the Lord. The bible says you need to be a friend of God. He's got to be your close, personal friend. You tell Him secrets and you know His secrets. You know the word of God and you pray to God about your sins and your heart. You cry out to the Lord. He knows you, and you know him more than others. Make sure you're a friend of God, not a friend of a friend. Only the ones who have a relationship with God can contribute to a community. The more and more you have a better relationship with God, the more you're contributing to others. Learn to be alone with God, to receive and learn to be together with people who contribute and receive. In order for you to grow, you need other people to receive. Then slowly, you can contribute as you, a child, become an adult.

What do you do when you're alone? One of the signs of maturity as a Christian, as I think about myself, is that I know how to be alone with God more, but I still need to grow and learn. As you study the bible, as you pray, think about different ways that will help you. Some of you might want to listen to, read, or write God's words. Some people might need sermons. Some might want to read books. Some of you might want to sing praise -- sing alone with God. Develop your intimacy with God so that you can be a friend of God. Only those who can walk in the light when they're alone can walk with others in the dark.

#### **E. Give to the needs of others**

Romans 12:13, *contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show*. Completely give to others. So many of you know how to say that but don't know how to generously give to others. You have to learn how to do that. Learn how to wisely, generously give to others. We need to, from self-love, love in our spiritual nature. As we have a relationship with God, give relationally, give in ministry, give materially. Focus on other people. Whenever you're lonely, learn that this is an

invitation from God to get closer to Him so that you can represent Him to others, to love others. This is a great opportunity to intimacy with God and with His people and the world.

## Conclusion

Going back to conclude Psalm 25:14, <sup>14</sup>*Friendship of the LORD*, and he talks about the word covenant. We have broken the covenant of relationship with God so we have to be reconnected. We need to pursue to reconnect with God and others to battle our loneliness. When sin entered into the world, loneliness entered into the world. How did we overcome this? Genesis 3:9, <sup>9</sup>*the LORD God called to the man and said to him*, when he was isolating himself from his wife as well as from God, God came and said, “Where are you?” He’s not talking about physically, ‘Where are you?’ He’s talking about spiritually, ‘Where are you?’ Relationally, ‘Where are you?’ Spiritually, ‘Where are you away from me?’ Then he talks about Jesus Christ. Genesis 3:15, talking to Satan, *He shall bruise your head*, Jesus Christ will crush the head of Satan, crush sin, as he’s hurt. He’s bruised on the cross. *You shall bruise his heel*. First, God’s gospel is written. Genesis 3:15, through Jesus Christ, and then a sign of that reconnection. Genesis 3:21, <sup>21</sup>*the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them*. He covers them. God covers our sins, covers us with His blood but He doesn’t just cover us so that our sins are hidden, He covers us in such a way that covering becomes us. He covers us with Jesus and we become more like Jesus. Because of God’s pursuit of us, our loneliness is gone. Now we only have aloneness to love others, to serve others, to picture Christ. Jesus Christ was the loneliest person on the cross. The cross was the loneliest place in human history -- not because people left him, but because on the cross. Jesus Christ, for the first time to some degree, was separated from the Father. Jesus did not cry when He was whipped physically but he cried out when God separated himself; the Father separated from him. Why God, Why God, why have you forsaken me because you were carrying all of our sins. There was a separation of the Father and the Son and there, he felt hell’s loneliness on the cross. That means it didn’t only break his heart to save us, he broke who he is in essence so we would never be alone. God sent Jesus so that you will never have to be alone. That’s what the name of Jesus Christ is: Emmanuel- God with us. God is forever with us through Jesus Christ so we will never be lonely. Look at the promise in Hebrews 13:5, <sup>5</sup>*Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have*, fight your sinful loneliness to seek for Emmanuel, to fill your loneliness. No! Experience this, *for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”* This is the reality in our objective truth. For when we seek in our sinful nature, in our loneliness, other things to fill our loneliness. Death, then we do not experience. Though it is true that he will never forsake us, we feel like we’re forsaken so fight that. God is fighting for you to repent of your loneliness and sin. So that in aloneness, you build intimacy with God.

Some of you may have been an accident or a surprise to your parents but you are never a surprise or accident to God, in whose heart you’ll always love. Look at this, in 2 Corinthians 13:14, you hear this all the time. This is the prayer that CFC gives as a benediction, good words, as we leave. *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all*. The blessing is this incredible togetherness, fellowship, presence of God, which is with you all, now and forever. We’ll be there in fullness as you depart because you are never alone in Jesus Christ. That’s the blessings that we have. So never feel alone. Always know you’re His present in your life. Be satisfied. Be loved so that you can go out and love others for his glory.