Loneliness

What Is Loneliness?

• **Loneliness** is a state of sadness resulting from feeling isolated or “cut off from others.”

• **Loneliness** means feeling separated from others.

  “Scorn has broken my heart and has left me helpless; I looked for sympathy, but there was none, for comforters, but I found none.”
  (Psalm 69:20)

What Is Chronic Loneliness?

• **Chronic loneliness** means continually feeling isolated and disconnected from others.

• **Chronic loneliness** often leads to personal isolation, bitterness, and destructive behavior.

  “Each heart knows its own bitterness, and no one else can share its joy.”
  (Proverbs 14:10)

How Do Being Alone and Being Lonely Differ?

• Being alone refers to the physical—the state of being separated from others.

• Being lonely refers to the emotional—the state of feeling isolated, rejected, or desolate.

• Being alone can be a positive experience—a time of creativity and communion with the Lord.

• Being lonely is always a negative feeling—often accompanied by feelings of hopelessness.

  “Look and see, there is no one is at my right hand; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life.”
  (Psalm 142:4)

What Is the Language of Loneliness?

By continuously using language like the statements below, you can actually create your own world of isolation, receiving the exact opposite response than you want. These self-defeating “I” statements focus selfishly on self-protection. They are wall building instead of bridge building, keeping you stuck in a state of loneliness.

Check each of the following statements that apply to you.

- “I feel all alone.”
- “I don’t believe anyone understands the way I feel.”
- “I don’t really matter to anyone.”
- “I don’t have any good qualities that draw people to me.”
- “I don’t have anything to offer to a relationship.”
- “I can’t seem to connect with other people.”
- “I will never find anyone to love me.”
- “I don’t feel like I fit in with anyone.”
- “I’m tired of trying to make people like me. I always fail.”
- “I’m empty on the inside.”
- “I’m always on the outside.”
- “I’m too messed up for anyone to like me or want to be around me.”
- “I’m just a born loser.”
- “I feel like I’ve been deserted.”
- “I don’t deserve to be loved or to have friends.”
- “I think I’m the only one who feels like this.”

  “My relatives have gone away; my closest friends have forgotten me.”
  (Job 19:14)
Psychological Symptoms of Loneliness

Persistent loneliness can lead to other problems ...
• Depression
• Anger
• Fear
• Fault-finding in others
• Self-criticism

People who are perpetually lonely ...
• Have difficulty taking risks socially, such as introducing themselves to others, starting a conversation, or joining a group
• Feel uncomfortable sharing personal feelings
• Have difficulty trusting others in a social situation
• Develop a pessimistic or cynical outlook on life
• Expect to be rejected by others

When loneliness becomes severe ...
• Thinking is altered.
• Outlook on life changes.
• Motivation is lost.
• Hopelessness abounds.
• Isolation deepens.

Physical Symptoms of Loneliness
• Anxiety and apprehension
• Change in eating habits
• Change in sleeping habits
• Decreased immunity to illness
• Gastrointestinal problems
• Headaches
• High blood pressure
• Nervousness

Loneliness is overcome by ...
— Filling a once-empty table with dinner guests
— Not waiting for company but sending out invitations
— Making holidays festive by starting new traditions
— Calling others on the phone
— Letting go of grudges and extending forgiveness
— Sharing a meal with a shut-in
— Giving gifts to needy children
— Finding someone to listen to
— Taking the time to visit those in need of company

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’” (Matthew 25:37–40)

Key Verse to Memorize

“The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.” (Deuteronomy 31:8)

Key Passage to Read

(Psalm 63:1–8)

Praying for Comfort in Loneliness

Thank you, God, that you ...

Care for me with compassion
“Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail” (Lamentations 3:22).

Offer strength when I am weak
“I can do all this through him who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:13).

Meet all of my needs
“And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19).

Forgive and forget my sins
“For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more” (Hebrews 8:12).
Offer hope for the future
"I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11).

Reassure me of Your love
“I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness” (Jeremiah 31:3).

Turn my pain into joy.
“Crying may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning” (Psalm 30:5).

Questions and Answers
"When is loneliness most likely to occur?"

Loneliness is felt most often when a major change in life occurs. Most of us struggle with the realities of change even when the change is ultimately for the best. Most of us resist losing both the comforting support of loved ones and the security of the old and familiar. Grief surrounding a significant loss is fertile ground for loneliness to take root and grow.

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me,
so far from my cries of anguish?”
(Psalm 22:1)

“Does loneliness last forever?”

No. Typically, loneliness is temporary and diminishes as you become more accepting and comfortable with your loss or change in life. And remember, one day, when you are with God, there will be no more loneliness ... no more death, no more mourning, no more tears.

“He will wipe every tear from their eyes.
There will be no more death or mourning or crying
or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”
(Revelation 21:4)

“What are the loneliest times I’ll face now that my mate is gone?”

The most emotional times will be holidays, birthdays, and anniversaries. But loneliness and grief can come in waves when you least expect it ... when you hear a song that was meaningful to you both ... or when you see something reminding you of your beloved mate. Expect a period of sadness and grief. Mourning a significant loss is a healthy and natural part of life. It helps bring acceptance of your new reality, which in turn clears the path for you to eventually feel joy.

“[There is] a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance.”
(Ecclesiastes 3:4)

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