

# CHAPTER 4

## Dealing With Loneliness



### THE PROBLEM

As we learned in the last chapter, if we really take a stand for the Lord, then there is a price that must be paid. We may

1. Lose friends
2. Walk alone (The great majority of people follow the crowd, but the Christian has decided to please and obey God and be different.)
3. Be mocked and ridiculed
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Taking a stand for the Lord could result in times of loneliness. Thus, we must consider the very important subject of DEALING WITH LONELINESS.

A person could be around thousands of people (at an athletic stadium, in a shopping mall, at school, etc.) and yet be a very lonely person. On the other hand, a person could be in the middle of a desert with the nearest person miles away and not be lonely. It is possible for a person to be alone but not lonely.

Consider Matthew 14:23.

Was the Lord Jesus alone? \_\_\_\_\_

Was He lonely? \_\_\_\_\_

Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

What is LONELINESS? Below you will find several statements which describe loneliness. As you consider these statements, see if there are any that may apply to you.

- *Loneliness* is having your closest friend miles away with no one else to share your pain or your joy.
- *Loneliness* is missing a few days at school or work, and having no one notice.
- *Loneliness* is the dread of going to the cafeteria and thinking there will be no one to sit with while you eat.
- *Loneliness* is that deep, hollow feeling that says, "My opinions are not important to anyone."
- *Loneliness* is that disturbing feeling that no one wants to talk to you.
- *Loneliness* is wondering which of your "friends" are really true friends and which are just trying to use you.
- *Loneliness* is that gnawing feeling that few, if any people, really care about you.
- *Loneliness* is having no one notice or pay attention to you, with everyone acting as if you were not there.
- *Loneliness* is thinking that everyone seems to be ignoring you and avoiding you.
- *Loneliness* is seeing yourself as Mr./Miss Unpopular!
- *Loneliness* is wondering why so few seem to care about your real needs and those things which are of greatest concern to you.
- *Loneliness* is having others fail to give you what you feel you deserve, such as praise, recognition and gratitude.

## THE SOLUTION

Here are two essential steps that must be followed if you are to successfully **conquer loneliness**:

### 1) Forget Self and Draw Near to God

The living God wants to be your **closest Friend!** He is the nearest and dearest and best Friend that a person could ever have.

Is He a Person who should be closer to us than even our parents? See Psalm 27:10.

Is He a Person that we should love far more than any other person? See Matthew 10:37.

Is He a Friend who is true to the very end, even when all others should fail us? See 2 Timothy 4:6,7,10,11,14,16,17.

Is He a faithful Friend who will never forsake us? See Hebrews 13:5–6.

In every man there is an emptiness and loneliness that only God can fill. Can you think of other reasons why the living Lord is perfectly qualified to be the best Friend of all?

### 2) Forget Self and Reach Out to Others

Loneliness is only a surface problem. The real deep-seated problem is nothing but **self-centeredness**. This is the ugly sin which actually causes and produces that terrible feeling of loneliness. The lonely person is the person who sees only himself and his own needs and desires. The lonely person has a "Me, Myself and I" complex. Instead of developing a concern for others, he is all wrapped up in himself.

***The lonely person says: "No one loves me."***

***Instead of saying: "There are many in need of my love. Who can I love today?"***

***The lonely person says: "I have no friends."***

***Instead of saying, "Who can I be friendly to?"***

***The lonely person says: "No one cares about me."***

***Instead of saying, "I really care about that person and I'm going to show him/her that I care."***

***The lonely person says, "I never receive my necessary requirements of praise, attention and recognition."***

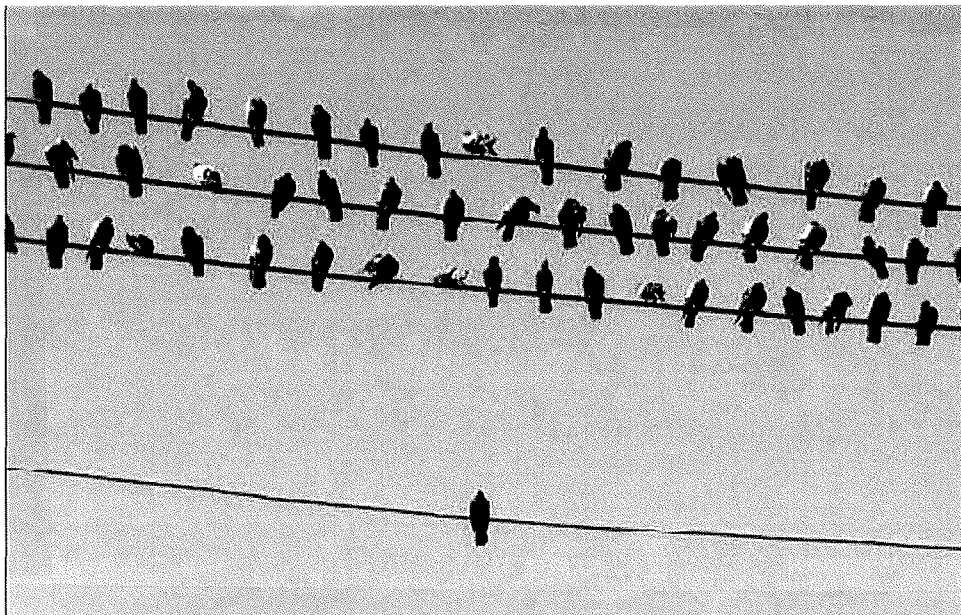
***Instead of saying, "Let me see what encouragement and help I can give to others."***

Please *CORRECT* the following verses:

1. Hebrews 10:24: "let us consider ourselves"
2. Philippians 2:4: "Look every man on his own things"
3. Romans 15:2: "Let every one of us please himself"
4. 1 Corinthians 13:5: "Love seeks her own"
5. Acts 20:35: "It is more blessed to receive than to give"
6. Matthew 22:39: "Love yourself and forget about your neighbor"
7. Galatians 6:2: "Bear your own burdens and don't worry about the heavy loads that others are carrying"

***FINAL EXERCISE:*** Go back to the statements on loneliness given earlier in this chapter and show how you can conquer each one by forgetting yourself and reaching out to others. The first three are done for you:

- Perhaps I can look for others who may need to have someone like me to share their pain or their joy.
- Have I noticed certain ones who have missed some days from school or work. Have I told that person that I missed him/her?
- Have I spotted a lonely person sitting all alone at a table who needs someone like me to sit down next to him/her?



**Acknowledgements:** Some of the material in this chapter was adapted from *Discussion Manual for Student Relationships* (Volume 1) by Dawson McAllister and Dan Webster (Moody Press).