

ACCEPTING LONELINESS—GOD’S CHOICE FOR OUR BLESSING

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Alone does not equal lonely Lonely does not equal alone

What tends to prompt loneliness?

Loss of (or lack of having) someone significant in our lives: spouse, parent, friend, pet, companion.

Being in an unknown situation or place. Leaving familiar scenes.

A lack of relationship to those people we are around.

Scripture that mentions loneliness.

Genesis 2: 18.....it is not good for man to be alone.

Genesis 3: 8.....the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God.

Exodus 18: 14.....why do you sit alone as judge.

Psalms 25: 16.....I am lonely and afflicted.

Job 7: 16.....Leave me alone!

Job 7: 19.....why won't you (leave me alone) turn your gaze from me.

There is value in being alone.

Christ went away to a secluded place to pray.

Christ urged the disciples to get away to a lonely place where they could rest.

Experiencing or Preparing for loneliness. God provides examples for us.

Paul is an example of one who was alone. **2 Timothy 4.**

When we feel alone, we can take some clues from Paul

1. Re-establish our relationship with God.

Paul said, "The Lord stood with me and strengthened me."

2. Be aware of the danger of isolation.

Paul told Timothy, "Make every effort to come to me soon."

3. Re-establish our relationship with people.

Paul said, "Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service."

4. Remember that being alone does not eliminate our usefulness. It is another opportunity to serve the Lord with our talents and gifts.

Paul wanted to have his parchments, which indicates that he still had work to do.

5. Identify any bitterness that makes you withdrawn and aloof. Determine to give it to God and leave it there.

Paul said, "oh yes, Alexander the Coppersmith.....God will deal with him!"

6. Be conscious that self-pity is sin.

Paul said, "At my first defense no one supported me. May it not be counted against them."

7. Focus on scripture that reminds you of God's care for you.

The Lord will rescue me.....2 Tim. 4: 18

She who is a widow has fixed her hope on God. 1 Peter 5: 5

Do not fear, for I am with you. Is. 41: 10

8. Seek out those that you can be thankful to and those you can help and befriend. Our experience in difficulty often makes us most useful in other's lives. 2 Cor. 1: 4, 5

Loneliness is our tutor to trusting God.

"In His mercy He stands silently by and permits us to agonize. We simply cannot turn to Him until we have nowhere else to turn. "

"It is possible both to accept and to endure loneliness without bitterness when there is a vision of glory beyond. This is a very different thing from the sigh of resignation or defeat...which merely 'sits there and takes it.' In circumstances for which there is no final answer in the world, we have two choices; accept them as God's wise and loving choice for our blessing (this is called faith) or resent them as proof of His indifference, His carelessness, even His non-existence (this is unbelief)." Both quotes by Elizabeth Elliott