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Refuge for the Loneliness of Life—Family Conflict



Part 8 (050731AM)

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Loneliness "is the most desolate word in all human language. It is capable of hurling the heaviest weights the heart can endure.

It plays no favorites, ignores all rules of courtesy, knows neither border nor barrier, yields no mercy, refuses all bargains, and holds the clock in utter contempt. It cannot be bribed; it will not be left behind.

Crowds only make it worse, activity simply drives it deeper. Silent and destructive as a flooding river in the night, it leaves its slimy banks, seeps into our dwelling, and rises to a crest of despair. Tears fall from our eyes as groans fall from our lips—but loneliness, that uninvited guest of the soul, arrives at dusk and stays for dinner.

There is simply no other anguish like the consuming anguish of loneliness. Ask the inmate in prison this evening...or the uniformed man thousands of miles at sea or in some bar tonight...or the divorcee in that apartment...or the one who just buried his or her life's companion...or the couple whose arms ache for the child recently taken... or even the single, career-minded person who prepares a meal for one and goes to bed early, *alone, [and]* surrounded by the mute memory of yesterday's song and today's disappointment".[1]

But even this grief and sorrow we feel of loneliness—Christ is acquainted with; and even loneliness can be conquered by fleeing to Christ the refuge for the lonely.

Loneliness—if you ever feel it, know that He felt it. If you ever suffer feeling friendless—know that He is the friend who will stick closer than a brother. If you ever feel forsaken—remember He said that He would never leave you or forsake you. If you feel alone—trust the One who said I am with you always, to the end!

Though loneliness has many forms—it has but one purpose. Loneliness is when God takes something or someone out of my life—so He can be closest to me. This means that loneliness is a tool in God's hand, an opportunity for a right response by us His children.

Turn with me again to Hebrews 6. Jesus Christ is presented to us as the refuge or place to go when we face six areas of our weakness: uncleanness, weariness, loneliness, helplessness, hopelessness, and temptation. We will stop at the third—loneliness.

Hebrews 6: 18b ... we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.

Christ is Portrayed as Our Lifelong Refuge from Loneliness

So how do we prepare for the next time we feel the pangs of loneliness swirling around us?

Some of God's greatest servants were forged in the furnace of loneliness. **Moses** is the back side of the desert, **Daniel** in far off Babylon, **Joseph** in a pit, a palace and a prison in the very foreign world of Egypt, **Paul** in jail after jail in distant Roman cities, but the most complete record is of **David** in the caves and deserts of Judea.

There is one person more than any other who shows us the hope we can find in Christ for our loneliness. More than any other person mentioned in God's Word this person's life is laid down for us to see from every angle. His name was David, his

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discoveries about the Lord in the midst of piercing loneliness are recorded as testimonies in the book of Psalms.

As a mere mortal man, David was truly, so much like us. He faced life and all its problems with a fervor and gusto that thrills our souls 3,000 years later.

Did you know that God has carved the life of David in the bedrock of His Word? David's testimony of how God is a refuge for all who are lonely is captured by the Psalms. In fact, David wrote Psalms or testimonies to God's faithfulness from each of the three stages of his life—from his youth or growing years, from his peak or his strong years, and from his old age or his waning years.

For just a moment let me describe the life of David to you. God's Word records over a dozen big events in David's life. We think David and Goliath, Old Testament, long ago and far away and no way it can help us—we face unemployment and cancer not sling shots and Philistines.

Here are the dozen big events David faced, that we often casually read as just facts about someone long ago and far away:

- In I [Sam 19: 11](#) as Saul tries to murder him;
- In First [Samuel 20:35-42](#) as Jonathan warns him of the danger of Saul's wrath;
- In First [Samuel 21: 1-9](#) as he flees to Ahimelech the priest;
- In First [Samuel 21: 11](#) as he fled from Saul to the Philistine city of Gath;
- In First [Samuel 22: 1](#) as he fled from Gath and the Philistines;
- In First [Samuel 22: 1-2](#) as he moved into a cave at Adullam with an incredibly difficult group of men;
- In First [Samuel 22: 5](#) and [23:14-16](#) as he was hiding from Saul in the Wilderness of Hareth;
- In First [Samuel 23: 10-13](#) as he escapes from Saul at Keilah and goes into hiding in the mountains of Ziph;
- In First [Samuel 24: 1-16](#) after he spares the life of his mortal enemy King Saul;
- In First [Samuel 23: 29](#) as he hides in the cave at En-gedi;
- In First [Samuel 25](#) in the Wilderness of Paran as he faces the danger of his anger toward Nabal "the fool" and as God delivers him;
- Finally in First Samuel 27 as he is grieved and endangered over the raid on his family and city of Ziklag.

What most of us do not realize, is that David was inspired by God to write 31 Psalms about these events. That means God gives us Divine Truth that was learned in these times of intense loneliness.

Can I repeat those same events in 21st Century language? That changes everything. If you listen closely you will find that David faced the very same struggles with loneliness that each of us will face some time in our earthly life.

And in these events are the troubles he actually faced, suffered, conquered—and wrote about in his Psalms. See if you can relate to David. And if any of these life situations come up—you have a word from God on what to do, how to respond in a way that strengthens you, and glorifies God!

1. David suffers the intense loneliness of youth. David was overlooked, ignored and even disliked by his family in First Samuel 16-18. He is left out of family gatherings, unrecognized for great achievements and basically left alone much of the time to do his "job" with the family's flock of sheep. David writes—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are disappointed. David found God was with him while alone as a young shepherd boy writing *Psalms 19 and 23, as well as Psalms 8-9*. He had many a lonely night in the fields, the woods and the hill sides of Judea. Instead of hating and fleeing those lonely times, he turned them into meditations upon the faithfulness of God.

2. David suffers intense loneliness of life as he faces family conflict and danger. David writes *Psalms 11, 59, and 64*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we face conflict and danger.

3. David suffers intense loneliness as he loses his job, and is separated from his family. David writes *Psalms 52*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are away from our work, home, and family.

4. David suffers intense loneliness as moves to a new location that is very foreign to him. David wrote *Psalms 56 and 70*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are in a new situation that is very foreign situation.

5. David suffers intense loneliness as he lives and works with a tough crowd. David wrote more Psalms in this period than at any other time in his life. These *cave Psalms are 4, 13, 34, 40, 57, 141-142*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are far from home and feel exiled.

6. David suffers the intense loneliness of unemployment and unsettled home life. David takes time to write *Psalms 17 and 63*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are insecure. This was a time of no sure place to live, no reliable source of income and provision.

7. David suffers the intense loneliness when betrayed by friends. David writes *Psalms 7, 31, 35-36, and 54* as he records his heart on how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are betrayed by those we trusted as friends.

8. David suffers the intense loneliness when wronged in a business deal. David writes *Psalms 53*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are in danger of bitterness over being hurt in a business deal.

9. David suffers the intense loneliness of the complete loss of his family, friends, and finances. David writes *Psalms 16, 38 and 39*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we suffer the loss of family, or friends, or finances—or even all three

at once.

10. David suffers the intense loneliness of temptation and failure. David writes *Psalm 32*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are tempted and fail.

11. David suffers the intense loneliness of chastisement and restoration. David writes *Psalm 51*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are chastened by the Lord and restored.

12. Finally We Find David's Testimony Of God's Closeness During His Old Age or His Waning Years. David suffers the intense loneliness of old age. David writes *Psalm 71 and 116*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are old, weak, and leave behind our health, comfort, friends, family, and security.

- Are you feeling the loneliness of youth? *Jesus says I am always with you!*
- Are you feeling the loneliness of life facing family conflict and danger? *Jesus says I am always with you!*
- Are you feeling the loneliness of job loss, and family separation? *Jesus says I am always with you!*
- Are you feeling the loneliness of moving to a new location that is very foreign to you? *Jesus says I am always with you!*
- Are you feeling the loneliness of living and working with a tough crowd? *Jesus says I am always with you!*
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- Are you feeling the loneliness of chastisement and restoration? *Jesus says I am always with you!*
- Are you feeling the loneliness of old age? *Jesus says I am always with you!*

Now, let's go through these twelve areas that God's Word addresses—one at a time, and see the situation, feel David's loneliness and then see the solution God showed him and then recorded for our use in this wonderful book—the Bible!

1. David suffers the intense loneliness of family disappointments. David was overlooked, ignored and even disliked by his family in First Samuel 16-18. He is left out of family gatherings, unrecognized for great achievements and basically left alone much of the time to do his "job" with the family's flock of sheep. David is the giant killer and writes Psalms 8-9—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are disappointed. David found God was with him while alone as a young shepherd boy writing *Psalms 19 and 23*. He had many a lonely night in the fields, the woods and the hill sides of Judea. Instead of hating and fleeing those lonely times, he turned them into meditations upon the faithfulness of God. ***Psalm 19 has three basic lessons:*** v. 1-6 explains that David meditated upon the character of God when he was alone; v. 7-11 explains that David listened to the Word of God when he was alone; v. 12-14 explains that David feared the disapproval God (heeded His Word) when he was alone. ***Psalm 23 is the testimony of what you can learn about God in times of loneliness.*** Listen to David's testimony of what he experienced, what he clung to from his long dark nights, and long lonely days. As you listen, ask the Lord to give you the same desire, then echo each of David's affirmations and make them your own testimony. Confess these loneliness lessons and find them true!

Next We Find David's Testimony of God's Closeness During Life as David Was in His Peak Or His Strong Years

2. David suffers intense loneliness as he faces family conflict and danger. These times of danger are from his boss and father-in-law King Saul. Instead of being eaten up by the intense loneliness he must have felt with job and family pressures all dumped on him at once—he expresses his needs to God.

His prayerful responses to these tough times are captured in the Psalms and show a pathway through loneliness to the One who is closest of all. The setting for Psalm 59 is **1 Sam 19:11 as Saul tries to murder him**, in that time of feeling so alone David writes *Psalm 59*—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are in danger.

Here is the key—David always remember that God was with him; that is the ultimate cure for lonely times.

Psalm 59:1-17 To the Chief Musician. Set to "Do Not Destroy." A Michtam of David when Saul sent men, and they watched the the house in order to kill him.

- v. 1 **[THE TURNS TO GOD] Deliver me from my enemies, O my God:** Defend me from those who rise up against me. 2 Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, And save me from bloodthirsty men. 3 For look, they lie in wait for my life; The mighty gather against me, Not [for] my transgression nor [for] my sin, O LORD. 4 They run and prepare themselves through no fault [of mine.] Awake to help me, and behold! 5 You therefore, O LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel, Awake to punish all the nations; Do not be merciful to any wicked transgressors. Selah 6 At evening they return, They growl like a dog, And go all around the city. 7 Indeed, they belch with their mouth; Swords [are] in their lips; For [they say,] "Who hears?" 8 But You, O LORD, shall laugh at them; You shall have all the nations in derision.
- v. 9 **[THE TRUSTS IN GOD] I will wait for You, [O You] his Strength;** For God [is] my defense; 10 My God of mercy shall come to meet me; God shall let me see [my desire] on my enemies. 11 Do not slay them, lest my people forget; Scatter them by Your power, And bring them down, O Lord our shield. 12 [For] the sin of their mouth [and] the words of their lips, Let them even be taken in their pride, And for the cursing

and lying [which] they speak. 13 Consume [them] in wrath, consume [them,] That they [may] not [be:] And let them know that God rules in Jacob To the ends of the earth. Selah 14 And at evening they return, They growl like a dog, And go all around the city. 15 They wander up and down for food, And howl if they are not satisfied.

- v. 16 **[THE TRIUMPHS THROUGH GOD] But I will sing of Your power;** Yes, I will sing aloud of Your mercy in the morning; For You have been my defense And refuge in the day of my trouble. 17 To You, O my Strength, I will sing praises; For God [is] my defense, My God of mercy. (NKJV)

Psalms 59 has several key defenses to the paralysis of loneliness during times of conflict and danger. Note these truths David found (circle them or underline them in your Bibles) and then ask your self are these personalized yet in your life.

David says the Lord is:

A defense (v. 9); a supply of mercy delivered (v. 10); a shield (v. 11); the ruler of all (v. 13); a defense and refuge in the day of trouble (v. 16); strength, defense, and mercy (v. 17). Now look back over those verses and change this from mere facts to personal reality. This method can transform your Bible study. This is how to apply God's Word to your life each day!

Here is how we do that. Note what David actually said starting in v. 9 "God is **my** defense". He made it personal. He reached out and touched God by faith—and so can we when we face family conflict and danger. Remember this was David's habit since his youth.

Can't you just hear him singing that 23rd Psalm out on the hills of Judea during those long and lonely nights? The Lord is **MY** Shepherd, **I** shall not want, He makes **ME**...

Go through David's list and make it yours. Say to the Lord from your heart right now with me:

v. 9 Be my defense; v. 10 deliver mercy to **me**; v. 11 be **my** shield; v. 13 rule over **my** life; v. 16 be **my** refuge in times of trouble; v. 17 be **my** strength today, show **me** Your mercy now I need it so, and defend me from this painful loneliness!

See also Psalm 11 where the Lord always watches us. Like a dad on duty at the park with a small child so defenseless—keeps his eyes always upon them ready to spring into action as needed.

Psalm 64 where the Lord makes us glad (v. 10) even in our sad and lonely times.

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- Are you feeling the loneliness of old age? *Jesus says I am always with you!*

[1] Charles R. Swindoll, *Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life*, (Portland, Oregon: Multnomah Press, 1983), p. 140.

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