



GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING WITH DR. HAROLD J. SALA

Subject: Loneliness

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THE CURE FOR LONELINESS

Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.
Ecclesiastes 4:12

The composer Peter Tchaikovsky knew what loneliness is. He raised the shades on the window of his heart as he wrote in a minor key, "None but the lonely heart can feel my anguish..." There are more people today than ever before who know the anguish of the lonely heart. In spite of the fact that more people are alive right now than have ever died from the days of Adam and Eve to the present, there are also more lonely people than ever before. It takes more than masses of people to eliminate loneliness.

Why so much loneliness today? There are some reasons. The backdrop for much of our loneliness today actually began with the move to the big cities, because that's where the work is; and behind the barren walls and the locked doors, the beauty of the countryside has long been forgotten. The asphalt streets and the polluted air have caused us to lose touch with the freshness of the dew on the grass in the early morning, the crispness of a new dawn and the feel of frost underfoot. We have forgotten what a sunset looks like, as the blazing sun paints the western sky a myriad shades of red and orange--colors never captured by an artist's pallet.

We tell ourselves that this is all the price of progress, that a job, or a better job, justifies all of this. But far more than where we live, it is the how we live that produces loneliness. It is true that more of us are living longer than ever before, which also means that there are more elderly men and women living alone than ever before. But so much of our loneliness is not the result of the Lord's taking a husband or wife but the result of our deciding it is better to be alone than in an unhappy home. Dr. James Lynch, a psychologist, says, "There is an almost unconscious cultural conspiracy to fool people into thinking that to be alone is a virtue. The myth of independence, which one sees every day in advertising and other media, makes it appear that to admit we need each other is a sign of weakness."

Is there a cure for loneliness? There is. It is love as we reach out to someone who is hurting. And in reaching out to help them, we find a cure for our loneliness. You'll find hurting people all around you--the ones barricaded in a one-room apartment, the lonely men and women who eat alone in restaurants, and the ones who walk alone because there is none to share their thoughts. However, there are plenty of hurting people who offer a cure for your loneliness.

Some of the work in our own office at Guidelines is done by volunteers who thank us for the privilege of being part of a group. The alternative to loneliness for some, both singles and marrieds, is to get out and to use their talents and time for the Lord. I don't think I have ever seen a church that had so many people volunteer to work with kids or help in various program that they couldn't use a few more.

Fighting loneliness? Then unlock your door, take a lingering look at the beauty which God has placed around you, and go out and look for someone who is hurting who needs your help. A theater critic closed his column, saying, "If you're feeling blue and lonely, stop by and see a movie. It probably won't cheer you up, but at least you can feel sorry for someone else." There's a better way--the way of love, as you help someone who hurts.

Resource reading: Romans 8:31-39