



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

Subject: Loneliness, Friendship

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### UNENDING FRIENDSHIP

*A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Proverbs 18:24, KJV*

In case you are ready to lose faith in humanity, let me tell you about Jean Rosenstein and what happened to her. Mrs. Rosenstein sat down at a small table in her cramped, one-bedroom apartment and painfully put her thoughts on paper. The arthritis in her fingers made the writing difficult and painful but she continued.

The scrawled words read, "I'm so lonely I could die. So alone. I cannot write. My hands and fingers pain me...I see no human beings. My phone never rings...I'm so very old, so very lonely. I hear from no one...Way past 80 years. Should I die? Never had any kind of holidays, no kind. My birthday is this month...Sometimes I even feel sure the world ended, and I'm the only one on earth. How else can I feel? Oh, dear God, help me. Am of sound mind, so lonely, very, very much. I don't know what to do."

She put the letter in an oversized yellow envelope along with some money and six stamps and mailed it to the *Los Angeles Times* newspaper. The money was to pay for the call if someone would just call to talk to her. The stamps were for anyone who would take the time to write. In a city surrounded by millions of people, Jean Rosenstein felt very much alone. And what happened? First, a reporter called and said he would like to visit. Mrs. Rosenstein was delighted. She had not had a visitor for a long, long time.

What she described was painfully accurate. She told the reporter, "If you are alone, you die every day... Sometimes I just dread to see myself wake up in the morning." The newspaper printed her letter along with a story. Within days thousands of letters and cards poured into the little one-room apartment. Visitors began to stream in and out to talk to the lonely little lady who had no friends. So many people called that she finally had to take the phone off the hook. Letters came from elderly people, young couples sent pictures of their children. People responded from all over the world. She said, "This will last for a lifetime."

Three cheers for everybody who brightened Mrs. Rosenstein's life. I am wondering, though, how many Mrs. Rosensteins there are in the city in which you live --some lost in vast cities, some in convalescent hospitals, some in shabby apartments, some on farms, but all forgotten people, forgotten by children and former acquaintances, forgotten by people who are just too busy to care. All that is necessary to destroy that loneliness is just one real friend.

Sometimes loneliness forces us to discover friendships that will last forever. That was the way it was with Joseph Scrivens, whose lovely fiancée was drowned in a Canadian lake. Feeling lost and lonely, he found the friendship of Jesus Christ—a Person who drives away the loneliness of separation. It was this unending friendship that Joseph Scrivens wrote about when he penned these words, "What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear; What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer. Oh what peace we often forfeit; Oh what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer."

Yes, we need each other, and we need the friendship of One who will never leave or forsake us. Yes, I'm wondering if there is a Jean Rosenstein living near you, a person who needs your friendship as badly as you need to extend it? Take a look, friend, and reach out to that person. It will enrich your life.

Resource reading: Ruth 2