

SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



Overcoming Loneliness

KEY PASSAGE: Matthew 11:28-30 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Matthew 27:46 | John 14:27

► SUMMARY

Loneliness can become debilitating since those who suffer from it often feel insecure, inadequate, restless, and confused.

They may have trouble concentrating and are easily distracted because their minds are divided. Therefore, they often end up wasting time and wonder why they seem stuck and can't overcome their feelings of loneliness. But for Christians, there is a way to triumph over this devastating emotion.

► SERMON POINTS

Jesus offered this invitation to those who feel weighed down by life's burdens: "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30).

This is a truth lonely people need to take to heart because they are carrying a heavy emotional weight. Those who come to Jesus will find that He is sufficient to lift their burden and guide them through times of loneliness. But people who reject Christ's invitation often turn to solutions that are no help at all. Despite their efforts, the heavy feeling of loneliness remains.

As Christians, we have a Savior who understands our weakness since He knows what it's like to feel lonely. When He was on the cross bearing the penalty for our sins, He felt

separated from His Father and cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46). Like Jesus, we cannot escape all feelings of loneliness, but if we've trusted Him as our Savior, we can count on the fact that He is always with us no matter how we feel.

Definition of Loneliness

Loneliness is an anxiety brought on by feelings of being disconnected, out of touch, abandoned, ostracized, or isolated. It's the loss of intimacy and a sense of belonging and is often caused by divorce, death, or some other form of separation. Loneliness affects the mind, emotions, and even the physical body.

Our society is plagued by loneliness. Despite efforts to find a relief in relationships, material possessions, or activities, there is no true solution apart from the God who created us. Only He can satisfy empty hearts with a relationship with Him through His Son, Jesus Christ. To overcome loneliness, we must turn to Him.

Specific Ways to Overcome Loneliness

- **Admit to yourself that you are lonely.** There are many people who deny that this is their problem. They act like everything is fine, but deep inside they are still lonely. They want to be connected to their friends and coworkers, but instead, they feel like outsiders.
- **Ask yourself what you are doing that is furthering your loneliness.** The reason is obvious if it's the result of losing a loved one through death, divorce, or separation, but many people can't point to a specific event as the

cause. That's why it's important to consider what thought patterns and actions might contribute to loneliness.

- **Admit that your present course of action has not eliminated feelings of loneliness.** Many people try to relieve emptiness with alcohol, illicit sex, drugs, shopping, or television; but it's short-lived and never gets to the root of the problem. In fact, these diversions may actually intensify loneliness, result in financial ruin, and destroy relationships. Since God created us to find our joy and fulfillment in Him through a relationship with His Son, nothing else will satisfy the longings of the human heart.
- **Ask yourself if this is the way you want to spend the rest of your life and after death give an account to the Lord for a life of disobedience and waste.** God gave us life in Christ so He could indwell us, and we could experience fellowship with Him and others. Our response should be to praise, honor, glorify, and reflect Him to others.
- **Surrender your life to Christ.** When we yield ourselves to Him, Jesus gives us His peace (John 14:27). However, sin and disobedience result in the loss of His peace and a feeling of being disconnected from the Lord spiritually. That's when we need to come back to Him, submit to His Word, and find rest for our souls (Matt. 11:28).
- **Cultivate a new friendship with someone who is an asset in your life.** We need a friend who encourages and lifts us up. This should be a godly person whose relationship with Christ is reflected in his or her language, lifestyle, and demeanor.
- **Choose to believe the truth that you are not alone.** In times of loneliness, hold to the fact that Christ is always with you and will never leave you.
- **Remember that the Holy Spirit is living within you.** Instead of thinking that you need people to relieve your loneliness, count on the Spirit's presence to comfort you.
- **Make reading God's Word a priority each day.** A good place to start is the book of Psalms because it expresses how David depended on the Lord in times of loneliness and trouble. God's Word is our spiritual fuel for life and

teaches us how to live, relate to God, be a friend, and become discerning regarding right and wrong. Therefore, we should feed on it and spend time in prayer every day.

- **Memorize a simple passage of Scripture.** We need God's Word in our minds to help us whenever we feel lonely.
- **If a situation can't be changed, accept it and call on the Lord to help you through it.** There will be periods of loneliness in life, such as the death of a loved one, but we can always rely on the Lord to walk with us through the loss. The important issue is that we don't let ourselves remain in a state of perpetual loneliness but instead trust the Lord even in our pain. When God's Word is our foundation, we can live by faith and find comfort in Him. Sometimes loneliness is what God uses to draw us to Himself.
- **Reach out to serve someone.** This helps us get our focus off ourselves.
- **Seek fellowship with a godly person who will challenge you.** We all need friends who motivate and encourage us to grow in spiritual maturity.
- **When you sin, confess and repent of it immediately.** Knowing that unconfessed sin draws us away from God, we can't give in to the temptation to delay.

Loneliness is a heavy weight that we don't have to bear because Jesus invites us to come to Him for relief and rest for our souls.

► RESPONSE

- Are you currently struggling with loneliness? How is it affecting you? What have you tried in your attempts to find relief?
- Which of the above suggestions would be a good option for you and why?

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