



The Importance Of & Lessons from Pushing and Pressing

**Lesson 11: Pushing & Pressing Through
Loneliness and Being Alone**



*It is not good for the man to be alone.
Genesis 2:18 NIV*

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Tuesday, December 13, 2022

Online Bible Study

6:30 p.m.

Prayer

Introduction

1. Loneliness

- A. Not alone, but Walking Together
- B. Impacts of Covid on Loneliness
- C. Impacts of Holidays on Loneliness
- D. Impacts of Not Assembling
- E. More Tools for combatting Loneliness

2. Alone and Closer

3. Final Thoughts/Closing Prayer

lone·li·ness

AS A NOUN

1. sadness because one has no friends or company: "*feelings of depression and loneliness*"

SIMILAR: [isolation](#), friendlessness, lack of friends/companions, rejection, unpopularity, sadness, unhappiness, lonesomeness, solitariness, lack of company, separation, remoteness, inaccessibility, seclusion

the fact of being without companions; solitariness: "*the loneliness of a sailor's life*"

2. (of a place) the quality of being unfrequented and remote; isolation: "*the loneliness of the farm*"

Pushing and Pulling through LONELINESS & BEING ALONE

The Bible often compares life to a walk because life is a journey. We're not sitting still. Throughout the New Testament, we are told to walk in wisdom, love, light, and obedience. We're told to walk as Jesus walked. We're also told to walk alongside other people. Suggested three reasons we need to walk with other people:

1. **It's safer.** Have you ever walked alone at night through a dark alley or down a lonely country road? It's a little scary. But if you have another person with you, you feel safer.

- 2. It's supportive.** Life is not a 50-yard dash. It's a marathon! Walking with other people gives you the energy to keep on going until the end.
- 3. It's smarter.** You learn more by walking with others than by walking alone. If you're walking alone in the wrong direction, you may never realize it. But if you have a friend beside you, one of you is likely to recognize that you've veered off the path and need to find the right direction.

We learn some important lessons when we walk alongside other people. We learn how to get along and cooperate with others.

We also learn how to love. **Genesis 2:18** tells us, *"It is not good for the man to be alone"* (NIV). God hates loneliness, and community is God's answer to loneliness. When we walk alongside other people, we find a community where we learn how to love.

Even James Weldon Johnson, interpreted God's loneliness in his "Creation", the first stanza:

*"And God stepped out on space, And he looked around and said:
I'm lonely--I'll make me a world"*

God tried to eliminate loneliness, since the beginning of time!

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10 NIV).

God put us on Earth to do a certain work that only we can do. Ephesians says that God created us to do good works and that he planned in advance what we would spend our lives doing. However, **He didn't plan for us to do that work alone.** We need people to walk with and work with us.

Talk it over: You know the feeling you get when you do too much work on your own. You feel exhausted and burned out. Why? Because you're trying to do your work alone, while God never meant for it to be that way.

Read: Hebrews 10:24-25 NIV: 24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching

Read: I Peter 5:8-9 I Peter 5:8-9 NIV: 8 **Be alert and of sober mind.** Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

In **Ecclesiastes 4:9**, God tells us, *“Two people are better than one, because they get more done by working together”* (NCV). *Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: (NIV)* When you work as a team, you get so much more done. Plus, having good teammates alongside you is a lot more fun and less tiring!

Picture it this way: Each of us is like a snowflake. On our own, we can't make a big difference. However, when one fragile snowflake sticks with a lot of other snowflakes, they can stop traffic. Like snowflakes, we can make a big difference if we work together, each one of us simply doing our small part.

Did you know that when we work together here on Earth, we're actually practicing for eternity?

As you walk through life, remember that you're not supposed to do everything on your own. You need other people to walk alongside you, and other people also need you. As you share the burden of your work with fellow Christians, you'll find that you accomplish more for the glory of God.

Talk It Over

1. Have you been trying to accomplish too much work on your own? What has been the effect?
2. How can you get people to help you in the work God wants you to do? Who can you help in the work God has for them?

Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble” (1 Peter 3:8 NIV).

Ministers have seen situations frequently that nobody should ever have to go through alone. Nobody should ever have to wait alone in the hospital while a loved one is in life-or-death surgery. No woman should ever have to wait alone for the lab report on a problem pregnancy. Nobody should ever have to wait for news from a battlefield alone. Nobody should ever have to stand at the edge of an open grave alone. Nobody should ever have to spend the first night alone when his or her spouse has just walked out.

Life's tough times and tragedies are inevitable. Each of us will face our share of them. But we don't need to go through them alone. We need God's safety net to help hold us up through these difficult times.

SOLUTION: What is God’s safety net? It is a group of fellow believers — a handful of people who are really committed to you. We call this kind of group a community or church. Here’s God’s plan for community: or church *“If one part suffers, every part suffers with it”* (1 Corinthians 12:26 NIV). Community is God’s answer to despair.

Romans 12:15 expresses a similar idea: *“Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn”* (NIV).

The first part of that verse is easy. When something good happens to someone, it’s natural to join in on the party.

But when someone is experiencing a tough time, it can seem more difficult. But, really, it’s simple. When you’re going through a crisis, you don’t want advice; you just want somebody to sit with you, hold your hand, put an arm around your shoulder, or cry with you.

As Paul tells us, *“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up”* (**1 Thessalonians 5:11 NIV**). Encouraging someone else doesn’t always mean giving a pep talk or offering words of wisdom. Sometimes the best kind of encouragement is just sitting in silence, and then waiting and weeping with a friend.

Think about it: Do you have a safety net — a group of fellow Christians you know you can count on in life’s toughest times? If not, go out today and begin building those friendships. The hard times in life are inevitable, and it’s unwise to go into them unprepared.

Remember: You can try, but you can’t live life well on your own. We all need other people to walk with us, work with us, and watch out for us.

Talk It Over

1. Who is part of your safety net? How do you build community with people and reach that level of commitment?
 2. What are some practical ways you can provide someone with a safety net?
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We place emphasis on Loneliness and Being Lonely, because of what we’ve been through in the last days, months, and years. We want to get to that Joy studied and preached recently by Rev. Crystal Newby Reynolds. The impact of the last pandemic has impacted our lives beyond our wildest imagination. The National Library of

Medicine: **COVID-19 and loneliness: A rapid systematic review**, Nagesh Pai¹, Shae-Leigh Vella, DOI: [10.1177/00048674211031489](https://doi.org/10.1177/00048674211031489)

The Abstract showed: **Background:** Loneliness is known to be associated with both poorer physical and mental health, being associated with increased mortality. Responses throughout the world to the current COVID-19 pandemic all incorporate varying degrees of **social distancing and isolation**.

Results: Overall, the findings indicate that loneliness has been a significant issue during the current COVID-19 pandemic and **loneliness is positively associated with mental health symptoms**.

Conclusion: Despite the inconsistencies evident in some of the results across the studies, it is clearly apparent that **loneliness** is having an impact on the mental health and wellbeing of the general adult population. Furthermore, it is apparent that the current COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on **loneliness** in the general adult population and that **loneliness** is significantly positively associated with mental illness symptomatology (a set of symptoms characteristic of a medical condition or exhibited by a patient). **Thus, there is an imperative to address loneliness through public policy and interventions.**

Yes, the public is trying to deal with loneliness, but we must address it also.

At the beginning of 2020, everyone was talking about 2020 vision—or the picture of the ideal future they had for that year.

It lasted longer than we thought. None of us wanted to be in this season. Nobody prepared for it either. And believe it or not, the pandemic has touched the life of every person in some way.

But now that we're here, we would do best if we extract what we need from this season and carry it with us into the future.



After all, one thing is clear: we're not returning to our normal lives after this. And we shouldn't want that either. **Do you know many people who wish they would go back to spending overtime in an office, returning to jam-packed schedules, or their overcommitted lives?**

We have an opportunity to assess how we want to move forward.



That's what this Bible Study is about. It's about moving forward. Hopefully, it contains helpful insights to help you move forward with confidence, knowing that the Lord has good things for you ahead.

Let's strive to have eye-opening takeaways from this pandemic.

After all, it's not about going back to the way life was; it's about moving forward. There's No Going Back!

You may have hit your low point during the pandemic. You might have prayed and asked God for life to go back to what it was before this pandemic. But were quickly reminded: there is no going back; only forward.

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Can you imagine how the disciples responded after witnessing the greatest trauma, then subsequent miracle of their lives.

They had to move forward as they gathered to pray in Acts 1.

In **Acts 1:15-26**, they take one tangible step forward in choosing Matthias to replace Judas as a disciple. It's clear in this chapter that the disciples are praying asking how they can move forward.

And that's when God met them with the blessing and power of the Holy Spirit, which gave them the ability to move forward. As you get ready to move out of your season (or even if you're in it for the long haul), ask God what you need. That's how we move forward.

We're talking about healing and Moving on!!

How to Heal the Pain of This Season



This season is not without pain. For some of us, this season of isolation has exposed our greatest hurts, desires, and vulnerabilities. But if we want to move forward from this time, we need to process this pain, not ignore it.

So the question becomes, how can we process the pain from this season?

We get a glimpse of this in **John 5:2-9**. In this story, Jesus encounters a man who had been an invalid for 38 years. Jesus asks him a strange question . . . "Do you want to be healed?"

Of course the man wants to be healed! He's been this way for 38 whole years.

But that's not what Jesus is communicating. Jesus is really asking, does the man want to partner with Him in his healing?

The man answers with a complaint. It was a simple question, but the man creates an excuse.

Jesus says, "Get up, take your bed, and walk." He shows him there is a process to healing, something that has to be done on his part to receive the healing.

So the man is healed. What can we draw from this?

One, Jesus wants to partner with us in healing the pain of this season (whatever it is). This cannot be a solitary effort.

Two, we cannot answer back with a complaint about this season. I have to stay inside, I lost my job, etc. To partner with Jesus means we have to be willing to follow what He speaks to us.

Three, there's a process to healing—something we have to do. We can be passive with it. We cannot sit back and wait for God to wash everything away. Again, He wants to work with us, not do the work for us. This is how we mature spiritually.

Whatever hurts this season, know that it can be healed. It doesn't come from sitting idly and trying our best to ignore or numb it away. It comes from going to Him, and stripping away all the excuses that prevent us from doing this.

Let's get ready to move out of this season with new lessons.

THE HOLIDAYS

It Won't Always Be Like This



We know what it's like when the holidays are hard – when life throws you for a loop and the last thing you feel like doing is celebrating.

We also know there are all sorts of things that can take away the joy of this season – loneliness, financial troubles, the pain of loss, the sharp contrast between your life and the Norman Rockwell portrayal all around you.

If you keep believing God and doing your best to move forward, it won't always be like this. The devil loves to tell us that things are always going to be this way so that we'll feel hopeless. But he's a liar! There will be times of joy, laughter, peace, and fun again in your life if you'll keep believing. With Jesus, your future is bright! We promise!

We will outline some practical tips that help when holidays are hard – things you can do to make it through. I hope they help you too. Here's the first one:

1) Do something you love each day. John 10:10 *The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance [to the full, till it overflows] (AMP). The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full. (NIV)* What is some simple thing that makes you happy? It could be reading at a coffee house with a mocha latte. Maybe for you, it's taking a nap, or soaking in a tub, or calling a friend, or window shopping.

Action: Identify it, then do it! Be extra nice to yourself this holiday season.

You Still Have Some Control of your Loneliness

If everyone around you seems happy and having fun, but you're struggling to get up each day and keep moving forward, **please remember that you are not a victim. Despite what has happened or how you're feeling, you still have choices.**

Even though things may seem out of your control, you still have some control over many things. You can choose where you go and what you do during the day. You can choose to look outward and be a blessing to others. You can choose to praise God through the pain. Here are four more practical tips:

2) Meet with a friend or group. *A person that has friends must shew himself/herself friendly (Proverbs 18:24).* When you get that "stay in and pull the covers up" feeling, make yourself get in the flow of life. Go out or invite someone over. We need our friends, especially at times like this. Meet an old one or make a new one. Make it a priority to spend time with them.

3) Get fresh air, see the sun, breathe deep. These are practical but medically proven things that help! Take a walk, or sit in the sunshine by a window. And breathe! When we're stressed, we take shallow breaths – deep ones help our bodies in many ways.



4) Help someone else. *God has given each of you some special abilities; be sure to use them to help each other...(1 Peter 4:10).* It's so easy to get tunnel vision and think of nothing but our own troubles. But someone out there needs you, and the Bible says it's more blessed to give than receive. When you help someone else, it blesses you too.

5) Create a new tradition. Very often, holiday sadness comes from the interruption of former traditions. But this holiday season, determine to create one new tradition and

move forward. Buy an ornament. Bake something. Go to a holiday concert. Volunteer in some way. You might cry the whole time, but it's progress! (You can cry and still be in faith. Crying is good for you).

Despite the world's view of Christmas, it's important to remember the real reason for this season: Jesus! As you read your Bible this season, focus on the fact that God loved mankind so much that He sent His only son, Jesus, to rescue you (John 3:16) and to meet every need in your life. The story of His birth is the greatest story ever told – the more you think about it, the more you'll find yourself rejoicing!

So spend a little extra time this season just reading the Bible. Every time you open it, pray, "Father, show me what you want me to know today – I'm expecting." And every time you close it, pray, "Father, thank you for your Word, I believe it! I receive it! I declare that your promises are coming to pass in my life today. Help me meditate on this all day." Before long, you'll find yourself rejoicing during the hard times and seeing the desires of your heart come to pass (Psalm 37:4).

May the truth of Jesus' birth become more real to you than ever before this year, and may you be filled with His joy and peace this holiday season.

Your fears can drive you to a deeper faith if you're willing to give up control. When you make that choice, God will meet you in your need. You can rejoice in knowing you are not facing anything alone, but instead with a good Father who will carry you if you only ask.

Remember Where Your Answers Are - Whenever life gets hard – not just the holiday season, but anytime! -- please remember that God's Word has the answers for anything and everything you're going through. It's alive! (Hebrews 4:12). It's God talking to you. All His plan, His wisdom, His love, His peace, and joy are in the Bible. Let it soak into your heart and wash away the pain

CONTINUING IN OVERCOMING LONELINESS

There are other ways we need to continue as we Push and Press through loneliness. We need to discuss the dangers of not assembling.

THREE Dangers of Not Assembling Together

Discouragement, Doubt, and Depression Set In: Forsaking fellowship gives place to discouragement, doubt, and depression. They multiply in isolation. When there is no fellowship, there is no stirring up love or exhorting one another. We need to assemble for your protection.

- *"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up. Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; but how can one be warm alone? Though one may be*

overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”—Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Purposes Are Missed: The story of Esther in the Bible is a perfect example of purposes *not* missed. Mordecai, her adopted father, stirred her up in love for her fellow Jews and exhorted her to see she was placed in her position for a purpose, for “such a time as this.” Had there been no fellowship or communication, even through letters and messages passed back and forth by those around them, Esther would have missed her purpose. Mordecai reminded her that God’s plans would prevail, even if she didn’t step up. God’s plans will move forward, but the opportunity for personal involvement may be missed. His purposes are often cultivated in the community, we call church.

- *“For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”—Esther 4:14*

The Power of Prayer Is Hindered: This is not contrary to the point above, as we know God’s plans written in His Word will prevail. And personal prayer is absolutely critical in our relationship with Jesus, but the Bible is clear there is also power in corporate prayer, gathering in one accord. When we come alongside each other in prayer, it is like incense going up to God out of the angel’s hand. [Revelation 8:4](#) says prayers “ascend up to God.” In other words, prayer meetings—prayers over and for each other as a group—are precious and pleasant to God, just as the smoke of incense is at the altar.



In Summary

Hebrews 10:25, *“do not forsake assembling,”* which means we are to assemble, but furthermore, it is a wise word written to protect us from...

- Enemy attacks
- Hardened hearts
- [Discouragement, doubt, and depression](#)

When we assemble as the Body of Christ, we are to stir each other up in love and encourage one other in our faith.

Paul makes it clear we are to do this even more so as Jesus' return draws closer.

So then, how will you start to assemble?

- Reach out to a friend.
- Gather with others in fellowship and prayer (6 a.m. & 9:30 p.m.)
- Study the Word in a group.
- **Make your way back to the church building with safety.**

However, the Lord leads you **to assemble**, know it is for your protection

MORE TOOLS FOR COMBATING LONELINESS

Connections and Courage

Loneliness is a sense of sadness or unease due to a lack of meaningful connection with others. It can lead to that sad feeling you get when you haven't connected with your friends in a while. It can lead to that emptiness you feel when you go a long time without talking about things that truly matter. It can lead to the pain that comes from feeling no one knows the real you.

A lack of relationships doesn't cause loneliness; a **lack of meaningful connection** causes it. A verse that is a perfect example to illustrate this is Proverbs 18:24. It says, "A man of too many friends comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." As good as it feels to have many friends who know our name, that doesn't prevent loneliness. **We need meaningful connections.**

Have you ever gone through a whole week but felt like nobody knew how you were doing? You talked to a ton of people, but you still felt lonely? Maybe you talked about work or the latest series on Netflix. Those topics are not necessarily likely to lead to meaningful connections.

So, how do you overcome loneliness and have a meaningful connection? Start by reaching out to a friend; ask how they are doing. This takes courage and perseverance but give it a try. Loneliness begins to go away when we move towards connection with Jesus and others. Tell friends and family how you are doing. Share your passions, life questions, and hardships, and ask about theirs. We need each other. Jesus did not intend for you to experience loneliness. He created you to experience a deep and lasting connection with Him and others and be satisfied.

PRAYER: *Jesus, You know how lonely I feel. Help me be honest with myself and others and be intentional in seeking meaningful relationships.*



Longing, Loneliness, and Radical Love

We have **identified longings** that God put deep in the heart of every human being. They include a longing for acceptance, safety, to be understood, and more.

The **longing to be accepted** probably carries the most weight. All longings are important, but this one is unique. If this longing is unmet because it is so foundational, it can profoundly and negatively affect someone's life.

PRAYER; *God, please help me to find faithful friends. Thank you for the way You value me. Help me to know Your love more deeply and to share it with others.*

Promise and Purpose

If you are experiencing loneliness, you're not alone in that. Many people today report feeling loneliness far more frequently than people in previous generations, but here's what you should know: you no longer have to struggle with loneliness. In Matthew 28:20, Jesus promised, "Surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Jesus wants you to know Him, experience His never-ending presence, and connect with Him deeply. Talk to Him about your feelings, fears, and dreams.

God brings healing and change to our hearts and lives. That happens in our relationship with Jesus and as the Holy Spirit works in us, but God also designed us to need people deeply. Other people can model Jesus' acceptance and love for us. They help us know and believe in our true values and identity.

Some may think, "It's just Jesus and me," and "All I need is Jesus." But we can't forget that we need people. God even looked at the perfect world He had created, and before sin had entered the world, He said that it was not good for man to be alone (see Genesis 2:18). The New Testament uses the words "one another" one hundred times! Most usages of the phrase are in the context of loving one another, supporting one another, and having healthy unity and relationships with one another. This overwhelmingly reveals that we need one another.

We are made for relationships. We cannot heal or thrive unless we have meaningful relationships.

Exercise: So, take a risk today. Invite someone out for a meal or to coffee and ask questions about their lives. Call a friend and see how they are doing. Share about how you're truly doing and what you're struggling with. Talk to God and be honest with HIM OR HER about what is going on in your soul. Experience meaningful connection.

PRAYER: *Jesus, You promised to be with me, always. Help me to know You better and to love others as You have loved me.*

DON'T BE SCARED!!! CALM MY FEARS!!

Take some time to be Alone with God!

Meet with God through His Word. *If not for your Word, I would have perished in my affliction* (Psalm 119:92). The Bible is how we get a vision for our life. Any time we want to hear from Him, there He is. Read it every day. It's your hope for the future. Pick out one or two verses a week, write it down on a card, and meditate on it.

In **John 2:22**, it says that the disciples remembered Jesus saying that He was going to raise the temple up in three days. At the time, this didn't make sense to them. But they still held it in their heart until it finally did make sense *in hindsight*.

The danger is we hold nothing in our hearts, so when the time comes, we understand nothing of this season. To understand the work of God, we have to sit still and listen to what He's trying to show us. Then, we'll have clear takeaways from this season

It's time to be **alone**, so we can encounter God to hear His "still small voice". I Kings 19:12 NKJV.

It's OK to be alone, just don't give into loneliness!

Daily Prayer: God, replace my fear with faith today. I release it to you because I know that you are greater. Lord, let your peace wash over me and calm my every nerve. Help me to have the faith to say, "not my will, but yours be done." I trust you. In Jesus' name, Amen.



WORK CITED

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