

# Transforming Loneliness

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In 2017, former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek H. Murthy referred to loneliness as an epidemic. Interviewed for the Harvard Business Review, Dr. Murthy described loneliness as “a profound issue...affecting people of all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds. This is true in urban areas, in rural areas, in the heartland of the country and on the coast.” Loneliness, he continued, is “associated with a reduction of life span...similar to that caused by smoking 15 cigarettes a day...greater than the impact on life span of obesity...associated with a greater risk of heart disease, depression, anxiety and dementia.”



Long before the coronavirus forced the world into isolation, job uncertainty, and separation from friends and family, social connections were already unraveling at a painfully rapid pace. Now, instead of categorizing emotional concerns—from loneliness to depression and anxiety—as some sort of weakness, we need to be informed. Just as we wouldn’t call people “weak” when they’re facing physical problems like cancer or diabetes, we need to know how to recognize the reality of our own and others’ emotional challenges and face these concerns in a climate of respect.

After her first husband and four other missionaries were martyred in 1956 in Ecuador, Elisabeth Elliot experienced profound loneliness, yet she and their three-year-old daughter spent two years living with and sharing God’s forgiveness with the tribe, and many of those once known as Aucas (“naked savages”) were transformed by God’s love. Elisabeth wrote, “Loneliness comes over us sometimes as a sudden tide. It is one of the terms of our humanness, and, in a sense, therefore, incurable. Yet I have found peace in my loneliest times not only through acceptance of the situation, but through making it an offering to God, who can transfigure it into something for the good of others.”

The next page offers a few ideas to help overcome loneliness. As you memorize and meditate on each of the verses listed, write down how it could help you. If you’re unable to focus or feel so lonely you can’t function, there are numerous Christian counselors available. To find a counselor, you could ask your pastor or visit the South Florida Association of Christian Counselors at <https://sfacc.net>.

To learn to deal with the trauma that comes from loneliness, you can work through Core Healing from Trauma, a biblical counseling workbook I wrote for individuals or groups, available on Amazon (<https://cutt.ly/if185nO>) . To manage the impact of life’s challenges, you can also watch “Strengthening Your Core,” my 12-video series on YouTube at <https://cutt.ly/Or6EiiW> or you can subscribe to my blog at <https://corehealingfromtrauma.com/>.

## Steps to Transform Loneliness

Turn to God instead of hurts or habits	<i>I will put my trust in Him</i> —Hebrews 2:13
Plan a regular time to go to bed, making your last thoughts of the day entrusting your night to God.	<i>He gives to His beloved even in his sleep</i> —Psalm 127:2b
Rely on God for rest, peace, and safety	<i>...you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety</i> — Psalm 4:8
Get up at regular times, making your first thoughts of the day entrusting the day to God.	<i>this is the day the LORD has made</i> —Psalm 118:24
Get involved in a small group	<i>...not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near</i> —Hebrews 10:25
Replace automatic negative thoughts	Download my article “Overcoming Depression” by clicking on the following link: <a href="https://cutt.ly/kgHApES">https://cutt.ly/kgHApES</a>
Be grateful	<i>Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful</i> —Hebrews 12:28
Avoid watching the nightly news	<i>How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!</i> —Isaiah 52:7, Romans 10:1
Make meaningful connections	Connect with people via phone, Skype, or Zoom
Take care of yourself – exercise and enjoy healthy food	<i>...your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit</i> —1 Cor. 6:19
Learn something new	Read books, join a study group or take a free online course
Get a FREE new “wardrobe”	<i>clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature</i> —Romans 13:14
Tell yourself the Truth	<i>I will never leave you nor forsake you</i> —Hebrews 13:5b