

BUC FAMILY

A Publication of the BUC Family, Children and Possibility Ministries

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Loneliness - The Silent Killer

Pr Les Ackie

Loneliness is the feeling of sadness that results from isolation or a lack of companionship. The sense of detachment from significant others can give rise to emotions of anger, sadness, depression, worthlessness, resentment, emptiness, vulnerability and pessimism. Loneliness is no respecter of persons. It affects single people, the elderly, those in marriages, families, those with successful careers, introverts, extroverts, and every age group.

The fact that loneliness is the result of a lack of emotional connection means that mere proximity to others is not the solution. We may be in the presence of thousands and still feel isolated. Loneliness is not being alone, it is feeling alone. While solitude is most often an intentional choice to create the space for self-improvement, loneliness is an involuntary sense of isolation.

There is a marked difference between being alone and being lonely. While John the Baptist spent long periods by himself in the wilderness, Ellen White comments that his life, "was not spent in idleness, in ascetic gloom, or in selfish isolation . . . In solitude, by

meditation and prayer, he sought to gird up his soul for the lifework before him" (The Desire of Ages, 64). Even though introvert personalities may cherish time alone to recharge their energy levels, they still have a basic need for social interaction in order to preserve good emotional, spiritual and physical health.

Loneliness has no common cause, but research indicates that there are some common traits that include more of a history of loss or trauma and a childhood spent with negative, critical and harsh parenting. The reality is that causal factors are too numerous to list. Loneliness is not merely a psychological/emotional problem. Research is now demonstrating that loneliness is also detrimental to physical health. Neuroscientist John Cacioppo, has studied social seclusion for decades. He has found, for example, that while obesity increases the likelihood of early death by 20%, excessive loneliness pushes up the odds to 45%. Feeling isolated from others can disrupt sleep, raise blood pressure, lower immunity, increase depression, lower overall subjective wellbeing and increase the stress hormone cortisol. At sustained high levels, cortisol gradually wears the body down. Lonely people are nearly twice as likely to die prematurely as those who do not suffer feelings of isolation. The idea of dying from a broken heart is a lot closer to the truth than many realise.



Studies in neurobiology reveal that our brains are hardwired for intimate human relationships. Where healthy human connection is absent, deterioration in emotional and physical wellbeing is the inevitable result.

The solution to loneliness often requires individuals to take personal responsibility for their emotional wellbeing. The Bible states, “A man who has friends must himself be friendly” (Proverbs 18:24). While some may claim that they do not need anybody apart from God, such protests ring hollow because God Himself said, “It is not good that man should be alone” (Genesis 2:18). It is significant that God made this declaration while Adam stood in perfection, untainted by sin. The sense of being ‘alone’ is not a sign of weakness, it is a sign of our humanity. Loneliness is a normal response to the nonfulfillment of our emotional and social needs.

Loneliness is a fact of life. It has been likened to a social pain - a psychological signal designed to alert us to our isolation and motivate us to seek social connections. The only solution to loneliness is relationship. Chronic loneliness may necessitate professional intervention, but long-term thriving requires the cultivation of healthy, authentic, encouraging and sustaining friendships that allow us to know and to be known.

Loneliness can often be the product of the fear of relationships, an unhealthy introspection due to low self-acceptance and the result of emotional pain or trauma. However, the individual who struggles with loneliness must exercise the courage to step beyond their fears and pain in order to cultivate healthy connections with others. Healthy friendships are a key factor in helping individuals to develop resilience in the face of adversity. There is much truth in the old axiom that “A trouble shared is a trouble halved”. Solomon states in Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour. 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.” Often the best way to address our own problems is to reach out to others. Solomon states that, the generous soul shall be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself (Proverbs 11:25).

Nazi concentration camp survivor Corrie Ten Boom testified that one of the ways she was able to endure her ordeal was to take her mind off her own problems by focussing on helping others. The primary characteristic, which should be exhibited by a follower of Jesus is love (see John 13:35). Love by its very nature is about giving. Agape love is one of the most effective remedies for warding off the self-absorption to which the lonely may be tempted.

The ultimate solution to our loneliness is our forever friendship with God. In our loneliness we can express the Psalmist’s cry, “My eyes are ever on the LORD, for only he will release my feet from the snare. Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted” (Psalm 25:15). In turn the Lord promises, “I will never leave you nor forsake you, I will come to you, I will be with you even to the end of the world.” Not only does He promise His eternal presence, but He also creates opportunities for human companionship. The Bible states, “God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing” (Psalm 68:6).





Single, Saved and Satisfied

Pr Buford Griffith Jr - former Secretary & Family Ministry Director for Southwestern Union Conference

While browsing the Internet one evening, I saw something regarding singleness that caught my eye. The statement was, “I’m Single Because God is Busy Writing the Best Love Story for Me. “Isn’t that a great phrase? Too many people, married or single, have the impression that being single is God’s way of depriving or punishing a person.

The Bible is such a practical book given to us by a wise, relational God. The apostle Paul states that we should “Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thessalonians 5:18, ESV). In another text of scripture the apostle counsels us by saying, “Not that I speak of want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:11, 13, emphasis supplied). There it is! Learning to be content with life. One of the biggest challenges in life is to be content in our various stages of life. It has been said that happiness is not having what you want. It is wanting what you have! God’s desire for each person is to be content in Christ, whatever circumstances we find ourselves in.

When it comes to issues pertaining to singleness, marriage, divorce, and remarriage, the question is not, “What will make me happiest?” but “What will make God happiest?” Singleness, like marriage, is a gift. The apostle Paul states, “each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner [singleness], and another in that [marriage]” (1 Corinthians 7:7, NASB). In society today, we discover a problem. Singles want to be married and some married people want to be single. The core of the problem is a lack of contentment—failing to value God’s gifts and timing. Married people must understand and be committed to their marriages, while singles must understand that they cannot operate and behave like married people.

Singleness is a gift and with the gift of singleness is the gift of abstinence. A single person is faced with the subtle and not-so-subtle pressures of those around them and the church arena tends to exert the most pressure as many Christians ascribe singleness as “unfinished business.” You may have heard the comments: “Aren’t you married yet?” “What’s a nice girl or guy like you doing unmarried?” “What you need is a good wife or husband.” “I’m praying that God will lead you to a good man or woman.” The big one: “If you would commit your life to Christ, God will give you a marriage partner.” Christ never said that! Christ’s message is that He will lead you to a life of meaning and purpose and fulfillment. God is a relational God, and He has created us to be relational beings. The question often asked in response to the statement just made is: “Doesn’t that suggest that God intends for every person to be coupled in a marriage relationship?” Not necessarily so. We relate to others in many ways and not necessarily in an intimate, marital relationship.

God is interested in our happiness and securing the best in our interaction with others. Satan is not interested in our happiness but in our destruction. He broadcasts certain lies about being single in an effort to thwart a person’s faith and confidence in God:

Lie No. 1: God is not powerful enough to find you a husband or wife. Remember that God is more powerful than our social situations, our looks, our personalities, and our insecurities.

Lie No. 2: You're single because God does not love you. If you can't see God's love on the cross, why do you think you will see it in a man/woman—especially sinful mankind?

Lie No. 3: Because no one has married you, you have no value. You were created in the image of God. Your value is not determined by mankind, but by God!

Lie No. 4: Getting married will fix all your problems. Marriage is not the best solution for every person.

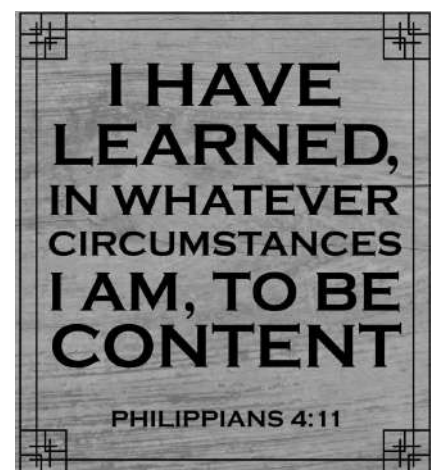
Lie No. 5: It's better to marry a non-Christian than stay single for life. Follow the counsel of scripture, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? (2 Corinthians 6:14, NKJV)." Sounds old fashioned and out of touch? It is safe to trust God and follow His counsel for your life.

Cultivate contentment in singleness. Contentment is all about a shift in perspective—a daily decision to trust God in all circumstances and to see Him at work in every chapter of your life. Instead of focusing on what you lack, remember and acknowledge all that you have.

- Cultivate a heart of gratitude (1 Thessalonians 5:18).
- Invest in your family and friend relationships.
- Pursue your God-given dreams. Don't put your ambitions and passions on hold until you find someone. Rather, dedicate your time and energy to fulfilling God's call on your life. He will bless you with someone along the way, if that is what is going to be best for your life. Place your dependence on God for fulfilment.
- Maintain high standards. There's no perfect person who will meet every one of your expectations, but you shouldn't compromise your core standards.
- Keep up spiritual practices. Regardless of your relationship status, things like prayer, time in the Word, will keep your spiritual life healthy.
- Encourage and serve others.

God has given you tasks and responsibilities to serve and provide lasting hope to those in need. You have a unique purpose and contribution to make to the world.

A final word is to surrender control of your life to God. Practice patience—God is shaping you and maturing you into the man or woman He has called you to be. He understands you better than anyone else. Enjoy being single, satisfied, and determined to be saved by the grace of God. Give God the pen, and let Him write your life story. It is going to be amazing!





Should Parents Physically Discipline Their Children?

Pr Les Ackie

The Bible clearly counsels us “Withhold not correction from the child . . .” Proverbs 23:13. God Himself sets the pattern for the disciplining of children by setting limits on us and imposing consequences for disobedience. The key factor in God’s discipline is His motivation. Jesus says, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten (Revelation 3:19).” Ellen White counselled, “Parents, let your children see that you love them and will do all in your power to make them happy. If you do so, your necessary restrictions will have far greater weight in their young minds” (*The Adventist Home*, 193).

Contrary to popular misunderstanding, the traditional interpretation of “spare the rod, spoil the child” (Proverbs 13:24) does not give parents the right to physically abuse their children. Rightly understood, the use of the rod should be like that of the Heavenly Shepherd who guides and comforts His flock (Psalm. 23:4). The methods we use in disciplining our children should be guided by our primary purpose. Discipline can be defined as training, which is expected to produce a specific character, or pattern of behaviour, especially training that produces moral or mental improvement. Parental education has traditionally emphasized behaviour modification as opposed to influencing character. It is possible to spend too much time forcing our children to be externally ‘good’ without helping them to develop internal values.

We need to be honest with ourselves as to whether our disciplining is truly an outgrowth of a desire to mould the characters of our children into the likeness of Jesus or simply an outlet for our emotional frustrations. Our children should not have to pay the price for our adult feelings of embarrassment, irritation or stress. Harsh discipline may achieve external compliance but, breed internal hostility. Somebody once said that, “If all you have in your toolbox is a hammer, you will treat everything like a nail.” Effective discipline requires that we creatively use every option available to us to guide our children in the right direction.

Before my children were born, I made a decision that I would not physically discipline them, not because I believed that it is wrong per se, but because I did not trust myself to do so with the self-control necessary to avoid overstepping the line between legitimate correction and physical abuse. The reality is that whatever the form of discipline, be it loss of privileges; verbal correction; time outs; natural & logical consequences; chores etc, any form of discipline can become abusive if carried to extremes and administered outside of the context of a loving, grace-filled relationship.

In addition to our moral responsibility, it is also important to bear in mind that in the UK it is unlawful for a parent or carer to smack their child, except where this amounts to ‘reasonable punishment’. However, physical punishment will be considered ‘unreasonable’ if it leaves a mark on the child or if the child is hit with an implement such as a cane or a belt. Ellen White said it well when she commented, “In order to maintain . . . authority, it is not necessary to resort to harsh measures; a firm, steady hand and a kindness which convinces the child of your love will accomplish the purpose” (*Child Guidance*, 283).

The BUC Needs You! Departmental Advisory Committee

Are you looking to make a difference in the Seventh-day Adventist community? Do you believe that your professional experience and skills could improve or strengthen the way in which the British Union Conference (BUC) operates? If so, this is the opportunity for you!

As part of our new strategic plan, we at the BUC are seeking talented, interested and committed individuals to serve on our advisory committees for Family, Children's, Possibility Ministries and Safeguarding. These committees will provide expert advice and guidance to help our departments achieve our goals and serve our Union and the nation more effectively.

We are looking for individuals with significant experience in their respective fields. Whether you're a seasoned professional or a rising star in your industry, we welcome your unique perspective and insights. If you're passionate about strengthening marriage, family life education, emotional wellbeing, single adults, safeguarding children, domestic abuse, supporting people with disabilities or ministry to children, your expertise and insights will be invaluable to our committees.

As a member of our advisory committees, you'll have the opportunity to give meaningful advice on the work of our departments, as we strive to execute our strategic plan (2023-26) in the BUC here in the UK and Ireland. You'll work closely with other industry experts, practitioners and interested individuals, as well as with the departmental director, to develop innovative tactics and solutions that address the most pressing issues facing our communities. Our Departmental Advisory Committees are unremunerated, and are open to all backgrounds, ages and levels of experience. The meetings will take place on Zoom at least twice per year.

If you're ready to join a dynamic and dedicated team, we want to hear from you. Contact Abigail Wright-Stephenson awright-stephenson@adventist.uk to learn more or complete the form to express your interest by clicking this link. <https://forms.office.com/e/rsgZKPpJb4>





ASNA FAMILY RESPITE WEEKEND 2023

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- Special guest judge is Richard Platt, who is deaf
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2023 KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



KENNETH PARGAMENT
Ph.D

Is a professor emeritus of psychology at Bowling Green State University and Adjunct Professor in the Menninger Department of Psychiatry at the Baylor College of Medicine. He has published extensively on religion, spirituality, and health.



MORGAN MEDLOCK
MD, MDiv, MPH

Is a convener, educator, administrator, and clinician who is passionate about designing equitable, community-centered behavioral health interventions. Since completing adult psychiatry and health policy training at Harvard Medical School she has been an advocate for marginalized populations.



Andrews University



Adventist Family Ministries



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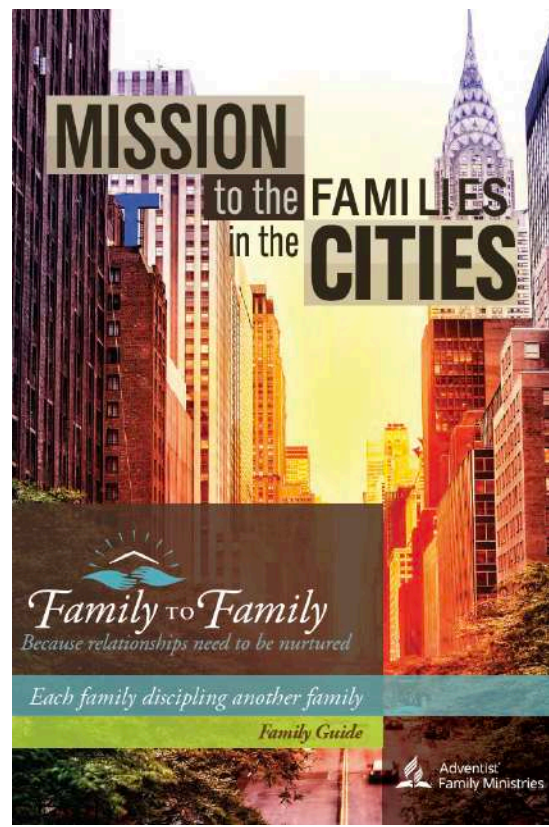
FACEBOOK.COM/SECMENSMINISTRY

2023 Dates for Your Diary

- World Day of Prayer for Children at Risk: 27 May
- NEC Camp Meeting: 29 May-4 June
- Special Needs Camp: 9-16 July
- NEC Family Camp: 21-30 July
- SEC Camp Meeting: 24-30 July
- Children's Sabbath: 22 July
- SEC Prayer Retreat: 18-20 August
- End It Now - Abuse Awareness Sabbath: 26 August
- Family Togetherness Week: 2-9 September
- World Orphans & Vulnerable Children's Day: 18 November



Click the link to download the Resource Book
[Family and Mental Health](#)



Click here to download the Missions Resource
[Mission to Families](#)



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WITH
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Through engaging, informative, and spiritual discussions about issues facing today's families, Real Family Talk seeks to strengthen families and inspire hope.

[Real Family Talk](#)





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www.ccscounselling.org.uk

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FORWARD We Go!

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Seventh-day Adventist Church

Useful Links

[AdventSource](#)

[Adventist Possibility Ministries](#)

[Adventist Single Adult Ministries \(ASAM\)](#)

[Adventist Special Needs Association \(ASNA\)](#)

[BUC Family Ministries](#)

[BUC Safeguarding](#)

[Care for the Family](#)

[GC Children's Ministries](#)

[GC Family Ministries](#)

[In Discipleship](#)

[Prepare Enrich](#)

[TED Children's Ministries](#)

[TED Family Ministries](#)

[TED Possiblity Ministries](#)

[Through the Roof \(Disability outreach\)](#)

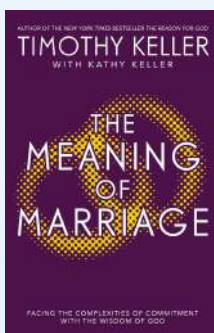
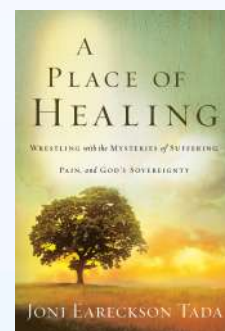
[Women's Aid](#)

Recommended Reading



In *Strange New World*, Carl R. Trueman examines the ideas of major thinkers throughout history. He outlines the belief systems that has shaped the distinctly sexual direction of present-day identity politics and explains the modern implications of these ideas on religion, free speech, and personal identity. Trueman shows how the elevation of the modern 'self' poses a threat to truth and reality.

In *A Place of Healing*, Joni Eareckson Tada offers her perspective on divine healing, God's purposes, and what it means to live with joy. This is an intimate look into the life of a mature woman of God. Whether readers are enduring physical pain, financial loss, or relational grief, Joni invites them to process their suffering with her. Together, they strive for new hope and thriving in the midst of everyday challenges to faith.



The Meaning of Marriage. Beginning with the biblical narrative, and its pictures of marriage that span the original ideal to the broken to the redemptive, Tim Keller looks at themes of friendship and commitment; the completion of men and women in each other; singleness, sex and divorce; and ministry and discipleship within the context of marriage.

BUC Family, Children, Possibility Ministries & Safeguarding



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