

# Do You Feel Lonely?



## SABBATH—APRIL 20

**READ FOR THIS WEEK’S LESSON:** Ecclesiastes 4:9–12; 1 Corinthians 7:25–34; Malachi 2:16; Hosea 2:19, 20.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Then the Lord God said, ‘I see that it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make the companion [female helper] he needs, one just right for him’ ” (Genesis 2:18, ERV).

**MANY PEOPLE FEEL LONELY.** They live alone. They do not have a lot of friends. They are not married. They have no children. Their family does not live close by. Or maybe they have no family at all. So, they spend a lot of time alone. That makes them feel sad.

In 2016, *The New York Times* newspaper wrote a story about lonely people. The scientists in the news story gave a report about lonely people. The report said that many people felt very lonely in life. Sadly, this problem is worldwide. And it is very real.

Was it ever God’s plan for humans to feel alone? No! From the start, God wanted us to feel close to other people. He wanted us to be close to our families, the person we married, our children, and our friends. God planned it that way in Eden. But then sin came. Nothing has been right since then.

Most of us have felt lonely at some time in our lives. During that time, we may wish we had someone to talk to. This week, we will look at the questions: What does it mean to feel lonely? Why are we alone at different times in our lives? And why is having good friends so important?



From the start, God wanted us to feel close to other people.

## FRIENDSHIP (Ecclesiastes 4:9–12)

**What basic idea is Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 talking about? What important rule about life do these verses teach us?**

Very few of us can live with no friends. But what about people who like being alone most of the time? Even they need people too. Sooner or later, we want to spend time with someone else. We may even need to. We need friends to do things with us that we both enjoy. People who have close families should be very thankful. Family members can give them support and love when they need it most. Not everyone has a family or feels close to their family.

There are people who need help. Sadly, they do not know anyone who can help them. They have no one to talk to. You may not know that these people are everywhere around you. They are in church. They are at work. They live next door. You may meet one of these people sometimes. We can feel lonely at any time. One man who was not married said that he felt lonely on Sunday more than any other day. During the week people were all around him at work. On Sabbath, he saw people at church. “But on Sunday I am alone,” he said.



**God is our Friend.**

**What important rules can we learn from John 16:32, 33 and Philippians 4:11–13? How can these rules help us when we are feeling lonely?**

As Christians, we know that God is real. He is our Friend too. So, we can feel happy knowing that God wants us to feel close to Him. But we must remember something. Yes, Adam was close to God in Eden. But that did not stop God from making Adam a wife. God said, “ ‘I see that it is not good for the man to be alone’ ” (Genesis 2:18, ERV). God saw that Adam needed a human to be close to. That was true in Eden. It is true for us now, even more so. Why? Because we live on an earth hurt by sin.

But we must be careful. Do not make the mistake of thinking that people are not lonely just because there are many people around them. Some very lonely people live in big cities. They meet many people all the time. But they feel alone anyway because they do not feel close to anyone.

**It is not easy to know who feels lonely. What can you do as a friend to help the lonely people around you?**

**THE SINGLE PERSON (1 Corinthians 7:25–34)**

Not everyone wants to get married. A young woman gave reasons why she chose to be alone. “Twice in my life I served God in different countries. Both times I was asked, I went right away.” A married person may not be able to do that. He or she must think first: How will my decision change the lives of my family?

**What good reasons does Paul give for staying single? Read 1 Corinthians 7:25–34 for the answer.**

God said, “ ‘It is not good for the man to be alone’ ” (Genesis 2:18, ERV). So, most people think marriage is God’s plan for their lives. But the Bible gives us many examples of people who did not marry. Jesus never married.

God tells Jeremiah not to marry (Jeremiah 16:1–3). Jeremiah is God’s special messenger. God tells Jeremiah not to marry for a special reason. God wants Jeremiah to be a word picture. Jeremiah’s life shows Israel what God will do to punish their sins. Israel broke God’s law. So, God tells Jeremiah not to marry or have any kids. Soon, God’s people will not have children either. Their sons and daughters will all get sick and die (Jeremiah 16:4).

Ezekiel was another special messenger from God. Ezekiel’s wife died with no warning. God did not let Ezekiel cry or be sad. God told Ezekiel to go on and do the work God gave him (Ezekiel 24:15–18). Hosea was another special messenger. God told Hosea to marry a prostitute (Hosea 1–3). A female prostitute is a woman who sells sex for money. Hosea’s story may seem strange to us. His wife ran away many times. He kept going after her. No doubt it was hard for Hosea to be a word picture for God’s love. But God used Hosea’s broken marriage to show His love to Israel. Israel ran away from God many times to worship false gods. But God ran after Israel and brought them back.

None of these men needed to be married or have a perfect marriage. God worked in their lives anyway. Many people will tell us that we must be married. Or we cannot be a whole person. But what does Paul say? “Don’t [do not] change yourselves to be like [the same as] the people of this world [the earth]” (Romans 12:2, ERV). And “Let your bodies be a living and holy gift given to God” (Romans 12:1, NLV).



**God used Hosea’s broken marriage to show His love for Israel.**

**WHEN A MARRIAGE ENDS (Malachi 2:16)**

Most of all, people who get a divorce can feel very sad.

Think of all the awful ways that sin hurts humans. There is no doubt that sin hurts the family most of all.

When a person dies, it can hurt a family very deeply. Divorce can hurt us and our families in the same way. People who get a divorce can feel many different things. Most of all, they can feel very sad. For some people, this sad feeling can last for many months. Other people can feel sad for several years after a divorce. Some people will feel afraid. They fear what will happen in the future. They may worry about money too. They may not know how to stay strong when they feel so much pain. Some people may feel very sad, angry, and lonely for a very long time.

**What does the Bible teach us about divorce? Read Malachi 2:16; Matthew 5:31, 32; Mathew 19:8; and 1 Corinthians 7:11–13 for the answers.**

“God uses the church to save humans and make them new. As church members, we must let God work in us. Then we can help other church members. We can give them what they need. We can show that we care for each other. In this way, church members help each other grow in God’s love. Our Christian experience grows stronger too. Church members need help and support from other members when they get a divorce. What should the church do when a couple’s marriage is about to end? The church should do everything the Bible says to do to help that couple save their marriage (Hosea 3:1–3; 1 Corinthians 7:10, 11; 1 Corinthians 13:4–7; Galatians 6:1).

“There are special classes and a lot of good information today that teach us how to build a strong marriage. You should be able to get this information from your church. What do these special classes and information include? They include: (1) Special classes for couples who are about to get married. (2) Classes that teach couples how to be better parents. (3) Support groups that help people heal from divorce.”—*The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual [guide]*, 19th edition (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press® Publishing Association, 2016), page 161, adapted.

**What are ways you can help someone heal from a divorce? How can you show him or her God’s love? Why is it important for you to not make this person feel judged?**

**DEATH AND LONELINESS (Isaiah 57:1)**

All our friendships and close connections will end sooner or later. Death will take our loved ones from us. Death is our biggest enemy. Even if our marriage is very strong, it will end when our husband or wife dies. Our closest friendships will end too. All the time we spend together will end. As humans, we know that all these things will happen. Nothing will change this sad fact until Jesus comes back.

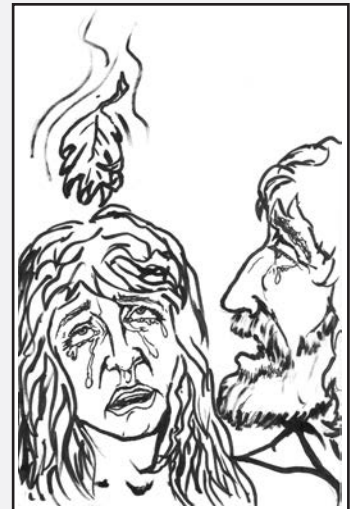
The Bible does not tell us who died first: Adam or Eve. But it must have been awful for the one who was left alive. Death was never meant to be part of life. Adam and Eve were deeply sad when they saw the first leaf die. They cried about it the same way we cry when someone we love dies. So, we cannot guess how much it hurt Adam or Eve when one of them died.

The problem is we are so used to death. So, we just accept it. But death is pain that God never wanted us to feel. We try hard to understand death. But we cannot.

**What does the Bible teach us about death? Why do people have a hard time with death? For answers, read Isaiah 57:1; Revelation 21:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:17, 18; Matthew 5:4; 2 Samuel 18:33; Genesis 37:34.**

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**Adam and Eve were deeply sad when they saw the first leaf die.**

Yes, we all will die some time. We all will feel pain when our loved ones die too. Sooner or later, we will face a time, or season, when we are lonely because of death. Death hurts. It is hard to understand. During these times, the best thing we can do is trust in God's promises. In this life of sin and death, what else do we have?

**How can your church help people who suffer because someone they loved died? What can you do to help them feel less lonely and sad?**

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## WHEN YOU ARE MARRIED BUT FEEL ALONE (Hosea 2:19, 20)

Why do some married people feel alone and lonely? That is just how a young woman named Natalie felt. Natalie was married for seven years. Then a friend invited her to church. The church was Seventh-day Adventist. Natalie loved the truth she learned there. She gave her heart to Jesus and joined the church. But everyone in her family told her not to join. Her husband and parents were against Natalie's decision. Even her next-door neighbor told her not to join the Seventh-day Adventist church! But Natalie joined anyway. She was born again. Her faith changed her life. And she changed her life to obey her faith.

As you can guess, Natalie's choice did not make her life easy. Her husband was very mad. He said, "You are not the person I married. I want you to stop changing!"

For years now, Natalie has been trying to live a life of faith. She is married, but she feels so alone.

**What words of hope does the Bible give people who are married but feel alone? For the answers, read Hosea 2:19, 20; Isaiah 54:5; and Psalm 72:12.**



**There are men and women who are married. But they come to church alone.**

There are people the same as Natalie in our church. They are the only person in their family who goes to church. These people are husbands or wives. But they go to church alone. Or they go only with their children. They may be married to a person of a different religion. Or maybe when they joined the church, their husband or wife did not. Maybe both were members of the same church. But then one of them stopped coming to church and even hates the church now. These people in our church are men and women who go to prayer meeting and potluck dinner alone. They worship alone. They are sad because they cannot give more money to the church. They want to give more. But their husband or wife will not let them. Yes, they are married. But they may feel the same as a widow or widower. A widower is a man whose wife died.

At some time, we all have met people in the church who feel this way. They need our deepest love and support.

**What can we do as a church family to help the married people in our church who feel alone?**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** “Enoch lived a busy life. He worked very hard. But he always made time to talk to God. Even when he had a lot to do, he always took time to pray. There were times when Enoch stayed away from everyone. He chose to be alone for a while after he helped people and taught them God’s truth. At these special times, Enoch wanted to be alone with God. Enoch was ‘hungry’ for knowledge about God. Only God can give humans this knowledge. Enoch started to change the more time he spent with God. Enoch’s own life started to show the holy life of God more and more. His face was bright. It glowed with a holy light. This light came from Jesus’ face. Then Enoch went back to the people again. Even people who did not follow God saw heaven’s light in Enoch’s face. It filled them with wonder.”—Ellen G. White, *Gospel [about the Good News] Workers*, page 52, adapted. The story of Enoch gives us hope. It has a powerful message for us about why we need time alone with God. But many people who are alone never wanted to be alone. Yes, we can have a beautiful connection with God when we are alone. But sometimes we want human friends. That is why it is very important for our church to help those who are lonely. We must be ready to reach out to them. There may be lonely people sitting in the seat next to you. If you are feeling lonely, please let someone at church know how you feel. Many times we cannot tell what another person feels just by looking at them. It is easy for some people to hide behind a mask, or false face. They may smile on the outside. But inside they may be feeling lonely and sad. So, we need to ask people how they are feeling. We must really mean it. We can show that we care by being ready to listen to them. We can give them support too.



**It is easy for some people to hide behind a mask or false face. They may smile on the outside. But inside they may be feeling lonely and sad.**

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① How can your church do more to help church members who feel lonely?
- ② Paul wrote: “I have learned to be happy with whatever I have” (Philippians 4:11, NLV). What lesson do Paul’s words have for our lives? How can this verse help someone who feels alone? At the same time, this verse may not be the best thing to say to someone who feels alone and is hurting. Why must we be careful not to use this verse in the wrong way?
- ③ In class, talk about a time when you felt so lonely. What helped you? What hurt you? What did you learn that can help other people?