**RISE UP** in 2020

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**The Power 0f Connection**

***1 Corinthians 12:12-26***



**Researchers estimate that 60 million Americans** — one fifth of the population — suffer from the pain of loneliness. People experiencing loneliness is not new in our culture. But in this past year with the requirements that we isolate ourselves whenever possible, venturing outside our homes only for essentials, and maintaining a six-foot minimum distance from others ... people are feeling more lonely than ever.

Loneliness is not just experienced by those who are single, or those who live by themselves as recluse from society, or the widowed … **we can all experience it**. You can feel lonely in your work responsibilities, lonely in a marriage, lonely battling an illness, a crisis, lonely as you face some decisions you need to make, or battling a sin that has entangled you. You can attend church ... and still experience loneliness.

Loneliness does not just take an emotional toll; it takes a steep toll on the human body physically. Studies have shown that feelings of loneliness have the same effect on the human body as physical hunger: to say that you are “starving for contact” is not far from the reality of what happens in your body in neurobiological terms.

**When have you felt lonely?**

Felt like you are the only one struggling with something? Felt like you wish you were not so alone? Felt you needed some help?

Loneliness is a **signal** that we are lacking something.

Lacking something that we need. It is astonishing that …

In a world of technological **connection**, people are incredibly **disconnected**.

Disconnected from the deep, meaningful, life-giving relationships that they so desperately need.

**The LEGO Principle:**

Did you ever play with LEGOs growing up?

**FUN FACTS ABOUT LEGOS:**

* The name 'LEGO' is an abbreviation of the two Danish words "leg godt", meaning "**play well.**"
* The LEGO Group was founded in 1932 by Ole Kirk Kristiansen who was a Christ-follower, and he had some incredibly hard hits to his life. Two fires that burned two factories. The loss of his wife in childbirth.
* If stacked on top of one another, the pieces would form 10 towers reaching all the way from the Earth to the Moon.
* The bricks produced today have the same bumps and holes, and can still interlock with those

produced in 1958.

* More than 400 million people around the world have played with LEGO bricks.
* LEGOs come in all sorts of colors, all sorts of sizes, and shapes.

Those are fun facts, but here is a fact worth pointing out:

**A LEGO was never intended to be a stand-alone piece**.   
**LEGOs were made to be connected.**

We are much like LEGOs.

**BIG IDEA:**

The antidote for our loneliness is found in **connection**!

God made us for **connection**.

Deep, meaningful, life-giving, purposeful, relational connection that serves to meet a hard-wired need in us. Deep, meaningful, life-giving, purposeful, relational connection that serves as the antidote for the loneliness we experience.

He made us to be connected…

**Vertically** with Him.

Part of the loneliness we experience is when our connection with Him is not in place. Sin disconnected us from God.

*And you, who* ***once were alienated*** *and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds,* ***he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death****, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.*  **Colossians 1:21-22**

Jesus is the only one who can connect us to God… and we need that connection more than any other in our lives.

A connection with God **empowers** our lives.

Our homes are filled with all kinds of electronic devices designed for connectivity. From smart tvs, to smart phones, to online gaming, to smart houses. But if those devices are not connected to a power source, they do not serve their function. There is nothing worse than the power going out in your home when so much depends on that power.

**Every area of our life is** **powerless** **without a connection with God** that comes from a personal relationship through Jesus Christ.

He made us to be connected vertically with Him, and He made us to be connected…

**Horizontally** with other believers.

God designed us to be interdependent with one another. We were made to do life together. To know and be known, love and be loved, serve and be served, celebrate and be celebrated. To experience deep, meaningful, life-giving, faith building, purposeful connection with one another as believers all to the glory and honor of Christ.

We are better **together**.

***You*** *yourselves* ***like living stones*** *are being built up as a* ***spiritual house****, to be a* ***holy priesthood****, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* **1 Peter 2:5**

So, if we are hard-wired by God for connection, **what makes getting connected to God and one another so difficult?**

**Enemies of Connection:**

1. **Satan** – His desire is to isolate you. (1 Peter 5:8)
2. **Individualism** – Ego, Pride. (Romans 12:3)

Left to ourselves, we are a potential **choking hazard!**

1. **Poor Routines/Habits** – Battling sin, not in the practice, change. (Hebrews 10:24-25)
2. **Shame** – Shame says you aren’t loved and accepted. (Romans 8:1)
3. **Wounds** – Disappointed/Hurt by someone. (Isaiah 53:5)

The question today is not whether or not you need connection. The question is …

Do you **have** it?

Are you experiencing deep, meaningful, life-giving, purposeful, relational connection vertically with God and horizontally with other believers?

We need both. Our connection to God should strengthen our connection with others ... and our connection with others should strengthen our connection with God.

Connection is not just **vicinity**. It is **family**!

You can **experience** it!

*For just as the body is one and has many members…* ***so it is with Christ.*** *For the body* ***does not consist of one member*** *but of* ***many****.* **1 Corinthians 12:12-14**

*But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member,* ***where would the body be?*** *As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.*

**1 Corinthians 12:18-20**

You **need** it.

*The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.”*

**1 Corinthians 12:21**

It is the **antidote** to the loneliness you experience.

*But God has so composed the body…that* ***there may be no division in the body****, but that the members may* ***have the same care for one another****. 26 If one member suffers,* ***all suffer*** *together; if one member is honored,* ***all rejoice together****.*

**What is stopping you from having it?**

**Where are you connecting more to God and others?**

If you call The Fellowship home, we are one! When one of us hurts, we all hurt. When one of us needs help, we all desire to help. When one of us is weak, the other members lift us up. When one of us celebrates, we all celebrate. When one of us grieves, we all grieve. When one of us is freed, the whole body experiences some freedom. When one of us is saved, we all rejoice. We are one body! We do life with God ... and we do life together in deep, meaningful, purposeful, live-giving connection. And there is no part of the body we desire to leave behind. No part out there that just needs to do its own thing. We are brother to brother, sister to sister, saint to saint, all to the glory and honor of Jesus Christ who shed His blood to give us connection with God and one another, binding us together as spiritual siblings in the family of God. Now THAT is belonging!

**THAT is the antidote to the loneliness we experience and feel!**