

The Value of Loneliness

In May 1984 Billy Graham spoke at Westminster Chapel. His subject was "loneliness." He took his text from a strange verse; Psalm 102:6, in the King James Version, in which the psalmist likens himself to an owl in the desert. Graham definitely hit a nerve! There are so many people today who are lonely.

Loneliness is a painful condition, a dreaded state that, given the choice, most people would do anything to avoid. It is enforced solitude.

There is obviously a significant difference between enforced solitude and chosen solitude. Some of us appreciate the bliss of solitude.

Jesus needed to get away from the crowds, and there are some who, by nature, are loners; they love it that way. My friend Robert Amess calls himself "the complete loner," but he is not lonely.

Enforced solitude is another matter. It may be that you are confined to one place or one room. Or, in the case of social isolation, you have few or no friends. "Webster's Dictionary" says that "loneliness" means "sad from being alone." It occurs when you have no one to share your hurts or joys with.

You may spend time with people, and that is good as far as it goes. But you are sad the whole time because you know that, in a few

moments, in a very little while, they will go back to their homes – some to their wives, some to their husbands. You, on the other hand, will go back to your lonely place and turn on the television.

If this is your situation, it's possible that loneliness is your thorn in the flesh, something uncomfortable that God has ordained for your benefit. The apostle Paul had such a thorn, though we don't know for certain what it was. He wrote, "To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me" (2 Cor. 12:7, NIV). The devil will use your thorn to torment you as well, but remember: There is a purpose in everything that happens, and God Himself takes the responsibility for it.

Also, you can take comfort in the fact that there ARE advantages to loneliness. One is that you have time to pray! In fact, God could be allowing the loneliness because He loves your company and wants you all to Himself. This is your moment to do two things: (1) to become an intercessor and (2) to grow in intimacy with God beyond anything you dreamed possible.

Another value of loneliness is that you become more sympathetic toward others. That is one of the main purposes of any trial. It produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings. You will be able to identify and sympathize with another person in the same situation. Pray you will

never forget what it was like, should this thorn be withdrawn from your flesh.

Yet another blessing of loneliness is that you become more aware of the presence of Jesus. I don't say that it totally takes the place of friends, but His presence compensates. You get to talk to Him as a friend.

A real value of loneliness, especially if you are single, is that you have the freedom to serve the Lord more fully. You are able to take on more ministry-related responsibilities (see 1 Cor. 7:32-33).

Finally, when you are lonely, you learn to worship and praise. It is easy to worship when all is going well. But do you want to know something that pleases God? Do you know what He likes? It is when you worship Him, and you don't feel like it. You praise Him, and you don't feel like it – you just do it! Oh, He likes that; it honors Him.

There was a purpose in the thorn Paul had to bear, and if your thorn is loneliness, know that it was lovingly and deliberately designed just for you. If Paul's thorn in the flesh was the best thing that happened to him – and it was – so too with you and me. Instead of complaining or getting angry with God, begin to see the value in your loneliness – and praise Him for it!

Adapted from "The Thorn in the Flesh" by R.T. Kendall, copyright 2004. Published by Charisma House. In this book, the author discusses many different types of "thorns in the flesh" and encourages

the reader to believe that they are designed by God for our benefit. To order a copy, click here:



PRAYER POWER FOR THE WEEK OF: 2/20/2012

This week praise God no matter what circumstances you are facing. Thank Him for the situation and tell Him in faith that you know all things will work together for your good because you love Him and are called for His purpose. Declare it in spite of any doubts or feelings to the contrary.

Embrace Him as the One who will never leave or forsake you. Praise Him until your heart connects with His and you feel His comfort, joy and strength energizing you once again. Continue to pray protection over Israel, perseverance for the persecuted church, and boldness for believers around the world. Pray that our churches would seek God's face, join in united prayer and fasting for the nation, and reach out in love to those who desperately need to know our God. Rom. 8:28; Heb. 13:5-6

To enrich your prayer life and learn how to strategically pray with power by using appropriate scriptures, we recommend the following sources by Apostle John Eckhardt: Prayers that Rout Demons, Prayers that Bring Healing, Prayers that Release Heaven on Earth and Prayers that

Break

Curses. *To order any or all of these [click here](#).*