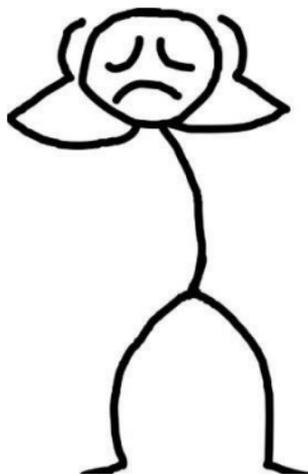


Loneliness



A Devotional
from the  of Lara Love
& Walk by Faith Ministry

Lonely? Just how lonely are you? I am a loneliness expert. I was the queen of loneliness. I was the president, founder, creator, inventor, and charter member of the loneliness club – for decades. I was lonely when I was alone, and I was lonely in crowds. I was lonely when nobody was near, and lonely when I was with my loved ones. I was lonely on holidays, and lonely on any day and sometimes every day. Sometimes I was lonely every time I breathed. When I wasn't lonely, loneliness was always waiting just around the corner. It loomed. It waited. It prowled. It lunged at me. It baited me. It took hold of me. It came after me until it got me. Hook, line, and sinker.

Loneliness was a way of life for me, and **NOTHING** and **NOBODY** was able to take my loneliness away – not for more than seconds, minutes, hours, or a day or so anyway. Loneliness attached itself to my hip and wouldn't let it go. And it cleaved to my heart until I came up breathless for air. How astonishing, and miraculous, it is then that I can't remember the last time I felt lonely. For even a minute. For even a breath. I left loneliness behind in the dust, and I would love nothing more in this little devotional than to

share with you how I learned to live without loneliness as my sidekick.

I tried just about everything to get rid of loneliness, from alcohol and bars to food to friends to crowds of people to strange men in bars to boyfriends to husbands to family to television and books and magazines and entertainment and vacations and meditation and religion and anything else that I could even imagine would take away my loneliness. Then I woke up one morning and it was gone. Just like that. No more loneliness.

Before I share what happened, let me say this. I have every reason to be lonely. More reason than ever, in fact. I was kicked out of my family when I talked about being sexually abused as a child. I was abandoned by two husbands. I have no social life because I dedicate my life 24-7 to the Lord and ministry. I have lost numerous loved ones to tragedy. I have endured rejection beyond measure. I have no husband, boyfriend, or even a date. I work from home. I spend much of my time on my own loving and serving the Lord despite the fact I am a total people person. Loneliness? Not an ounce of it. Why?

Not because I believe in God. Not because I believe

in Jesus Christ as Lord. Not because I go to church on Sundays. Not because I study the Bible. But because I am a sold-out, utterly devoted, completely committed rock-solid follower of the Lord Jesus Christ with an amazingly, phenomenal, intimate beyond description, breathtakingly beautiful, ever growing, awesome personal relationship with God through my faith in Christ. The hardest thing I've ever done in my entire life is to become a follower of Christ. Why? This is why.

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” Matthew 16:24

Little did I know when I began not to merely believe in Jesus, but to follow Him by learning to die to myself by denying my own plans, agendas, dreams, and desires, taking up my cross, and living according to the ways of the Lord instead, what it means to follow Jesus. While it has been exceedingly challenging and excruciatingly painful to learn to live according to God's ways as the Bible teaches instead of according to the lusts of my flesh and the ways of

this world so mired in sin, the reward has been to come to understand what following Jesus is all about. Strong's concordance reveals that the Greek word translated into "follow" also is defined as "to accompany." Jesus is not only simply inviting His followers to walk behind Him; He is inviting them to walk WITH Him. In His company. In fellowship with Him.

Do you know what Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, lost when they sinned against God and were kicked out of the Garden of Eden? On the outside, it looks like they simply came under the curse of death and hell and the lake of fire forever because of their sin. But their greatest loss was that they lost intimacy with God. They lost their ability to be in His presence. And though they never appeared to have physically seen the face of God, they had been able to hear His voice. They lost it all. They lost their relationship with God, and ever since then humans have been born into sin that leads to death and forever in hell and the lake of fire.

What does Jesus offer when we repent and believe that He died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins so we can be forgiven by God? Maybe you've

heard that's the way to heaven. That's not all! When we REALLY REPENT and TRULY BELIEVE in Christ dying for our sins and being raised from the dead, we turn from the ways of this world and commit to live for God. What do we gain? We gain what Adam and Eve lost. We gain fellowship with God, now and forever. We gain the ability to be in His presence. We gain the ability to hear His voice, which is the Bible and God speaking to our hearts personally in line with His Word for He never speaks against His Word.

Do you know why I was so lonely for so many years? First, because I did not know God. Then, because I came to believe in God but didn't know who Jesus is. Then, because I came to believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior but my belief was only intellectual. At last, when I became a committed follower, and started studying the Bible diligently and applying it to my life, and truly learned what it means to have a personal, intimate relationship with God, EVERYTHING changed. There was no more room for loneliness because my life became too filled with God and my relationship with Him to give loneliness a place in my heart and life.

What does my relationship with God look like? Why does loneliness not have a place? Let me be totally transparent. I seek the Lord continually. I pray to Him throughout the day and night. I study the Bible every day of my life. I put the Bible into practice. I pour out my entire heart to God, from anger to hurt to pain to questions to concerns to fear to absolutely anything and everything. I praise Him, I thank Him. I cry out to Him. I repent every time He shows me I am doing something wrong. I seek His forgiveness.

I seek His face. I seek His direction. I learn to yield all of my life to Him. I talk to Him. I listen to Him. I hear Him. I strive to obey Him and repent when I don't. I open my heart and life to Him for Him to convict me, chasten me, teach me, guide me, direct me, grow me, transform me. I tell Him how much I love Him. I am learning to let Him really love me — hard for me to do given my background of abuse, rejection, and abandonment. I ask Him questions and listen for His response. I laugh in His presence. I feel His presence. I hunger for Him. I thirst for Him. I tell Him this.

I go places with Him. He goes everywhere I do. He lives inside me, and He is teaching me to let Him

REALLY live inside me for I have struggled with letting Him all the way in so He can truly dwell inside me. I share my thoughts with Him. I think about His Word. I smile, and cry, and hurt, and lose my temper, and then repent like I need to, and do everything with Him right there. With me.

We go everywhere together. He shows me things. He tells me things. I check everything against the Bible because He will never speak or act against His own Word. If something doesn't line up with His Word, I know it's not from God. I ask Him silly questions, and tell Him silly stuff. I have asked Him stuff like will there be bathrooms in heaven? Will people grow old? Will we eat? Won't I get bored because I don't like to sit still? Will He have a job for me to do in heaven?

I get serious with God. Really serious. I cry over my sin sometimes. I tell Him how desperate I am to please Him. I pray to Him about others, and talk to Him about others, and ask Him about others, and see how He might use me to help others. I long to serve Him. I long to be a daughter He is proud of. I have come to call Him Father – which was enormously challenging given my personal story. I love to call

Him Lord, for He is my Lord. He is my God. He is my everything. I beg Him to change me. I beg Him when I fall back into sin to help me to be free. I am not only His daughter; I am His servant. I want to be His servant. There is nobody and nothing in the universe I would rather serve, and live for, than Him.

Somebody told me God doesn't want to micro-manage our lives. I want God to order my every step. I don't want to take one step without Him. And when I do because I have walked the wrong way, I want Him to grab hold of my hand – and heart – and lead me to repentance because there is nowhere I would rather be than in His presence.

This world is getting darker, by the instant it seems. Evil is everywhere. The news is worsening by the moment it seems. But the darker the world gets, the brighter the light in my heart. Because as the world walks farther and farther away from God, I am like a little girl skipping with my little hand tight and snug in the safety and refuge of my Father's hand. Oh, how I would love to make my Father proud! To please Him, to bring Him joy!

He has taken me from darkness and filled my heart with love and light. I get down sometimes. I struggle

often. Sometimes my struggles seem insurmountable. I have a tough story. A hard one. Lots of yucky, hard, ugly stuff – some because of my own sin, some because of others' sins. But God carries me through it all as long as I bow down before Him, devote myself to Him, commit myself to Him, pour out my heart to Him, sit at His feet and learn about Him, and make it my mission to ever learn to walk in His ways.

I'm not sure I've ever met anyone lonelier than I was. But nor am I sure I've ever met anyone as over the top, sold out, passionately, head over heels in love with the Lord. How can I be lonely when He is my all and all?

Some would call me foolish. Some would call me crazy. Some would call me nuts. Some would say I have given up my life – a typical, normal, life that people dream of having anyway – for the Lord. I am crazily in love with the Lord, and I have in fact given up my life. But the life I have found in place of the one I had, and of the one I wanted, no matter how unbelievably painful it has been to turn my back on all that I have wanted to please my flesh, no matter how impossible it seems sometimes to deny my flesh as it screams out for me to fulfill its sinful desires and

dreams, the new life I have found in place of this all – this new life in Christ – reminds me of a verse a friend shared with me some years ago.

“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2).”

The joy set before me isn't just the promise of eternity in heaven with God instead of hell and the lake of fire forever apart from Him, as though the joy found in that promise is not in itself enough. But it is also the joy set before me moment by moment, day by day, breath by breath, step by step, of being in the company of, in fellowship with, in relationship with, in intimacy with the Lord, Creator of the universe, Lord of Lords, King of Kings, love of my life, now, forever, and ever more.

Lonely? Impossible now. For I am His forever!

“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it (Matthew 16:25).”

If you are lonely, and are willing to lose the life you wanted and the life you have and surrender yourself to God and to His ways and the life He wants for you to live to love and serve and glorify Him, you will find what I have discovered. Loneliness will fall away as you rejoice in the greatest relationship in the universe – a personal and intimate relationship with the Lord God almighty for now and forevermore.



The Best Message in the Universe

Ever since the first man and woman Adam and Eve sinned against God and were kicked out of their perfect lives in the Garden of Eden and lost most importantly their relationship with God, all humans have been born into sin which results in the curse leading to death and eternal separation from God in hell and the lake of fire. Why? Because we as sinners cannot be in the presence of a perfect and holy God. We all fall short of God's glory, and nothing we can

do can earn His love, forgiveness, and everlasting life.

But God loves us so much He sent His only begotten Son Jesus Christ to the earth as a man, to die a heinous death on the cross to pay the death and hell penalty for our sins by taking God's wrath at us for our sins upon Himself, and to be raised from the dead and to now sit on the right hand of God in heaven until He returns again as the final steps unfold leading to His forever Kingdom of heaven that will be filled with Christ's followers. If we are genuinely sorry we have sinned against God and repent of our sins, believe Jesus is the Son of God and died for us and was raised from the dead and is Lord, turning from our sins to a life devoted to God and His ways, we are forgiven and enter into a relationship with God and receive the promise of eternal life in heaven with Him! We are born again spiritually with a clean slate and saved from God's wrath, death, and hell and the lake of fire.

Belief in Christ as Lord is NOT an intellectual faith. Even the demons believe. True faith in Christ is an ongoing belief in Him, all that He is, did, is doing, says in the Bible, and a true trust in Him as Lord whereby we turn from our wicked ways and live

according to the ways God teaches us in the Bible. We are not called to just believe in Christ in our minds. We are called to follow Him by yielding to God our very lives and demonstrating in our hearts, words, and actions that we have turned away from the ways of the world and turned to the Lord. We are to deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow Him whereby we die to ourselves and live for Him. Countless people who believe they are going to heaven based on an intellectual belief, an emotional experience, church attendance, good works, etc., will be turned away by Christ and end up in hell and the lake of fire forever apart from God because they neglected to understand and put into practice that believing in, and following, Christ is a WAY OF LIFE of living for God!

God commands us above all else to love Him with all our hearts and our neighbors as ourselves (Mt 22:37-40). Once born again, we must go through a life-long sanctification process in which our minds are renewed by studying the Bible, our lives are transformed by God's Spirit, and we are conformed to Christ's image. Good works cannot earn our salvation, but good works should be the fruit of true repentance

demonstrating we are truly living for the Lord. Our purpose is to love God, to love others, to proclaim the Gospel message to others and to help lead people into God's Kingdom as we follow Christ, using the gifts God has given each of us to bring Him glory while rejoicing in and enjoying forever fellowship with Him!

Spend time with the Lord daily, studying the Bible and learning to live by it, praising and worshiping Him, pouring out your heart to Him, praying and seeking His face, listening for His voice which will always line up with His Word, and loving and obeying and revering and fearing and honoring God through faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

Assemble in fellowship with fellow followers of Christ as God commands us whether in a church, Bible study, and/or house church.

As the world draws to an end, and God's judgment nears, evil and false teaching abound. Check everything you hear and read against the Bible because God only and always speaks in line with His Word. Anything not in line with His Word is not from Him.

Live day by day, breath by breath, to love and serve

the Lord with all your heart forever! Rejoice in Him!
Grow in Him! Live to bring Him glory forevermore!



Scriptures

“As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one:” Romans 3:10

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;” Romans 3:23

“Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.” Eph. 5:6

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23

“The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.” Mt. 13:41-43

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God...Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

John 3:3-6

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Rom. 10:9

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Acts 2:38

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” Matthew 16:24

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and

perfect, will of God.” Romans 12:2

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

Romans 8:29

“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:” Colossians 1:13

“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” John 8:12

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Romans 10:17

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:” John 10:27

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” Mt. 7:21



Special Invitation

If you would like a free copy or copies to distribute of my *Finding the Light* Gospel tract, which includes my personal story along with the life-changing message of the Gospel written in a clear, simple, straightforward manner, please contact me using the contact information on the back page of this devotional. You can also see a copy of it on my ministry website.

Love & blessings, **Lara**



About Lara Love

I am a 100% Jewish follower of Christ, evangelist & author & special needs & senior rescued dogs mom devoted 24-7 to loving & serving the Lord and helping people to become and remain forever followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For loads of love, encouragement, inspiration, & help, and to read my story & see my books, Gospel tracts & devotionals, & Daily Inspiration online, and to meet the ministry's very special dogs, please visit me and my ministry online & feel free to get in touch if you are led!



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