



Loneliness & **Sadness**

Life After Your Loss

The phone rings, and for a brief moment you think it might be your loved one. Friends and family invite you out, but it's easier to stay home than wear a smile you don't feel. The absence of your loved one stings in a million ways, but there are things you can do that will help soothe the pain.

In this week's video and Step by Step exercises you'll discover that:

- **Sadness can slow you down to assess where you're struggling & what might help.**
- **Sadness lessens as you make adjustments in your life.**
- **Making meaningful connections eases loneliness.**



Video outline

Use this outline to write down important concepts, encouraging words, or questions you may have while viewing the video.

Responding to loneliness

Avoiding common temptations

Making connections

Drawing closer to God

Responding to sadness

Facing a possible depression

Common symptoms

Suicidal desires

Approaching God in sadness

Step by Step

Daily comfort & encouragement



Krissie's story

"I wanted to be alone; I thought the rest of my life would be like that. I almost found comfort in being alone. But as time went by and I was alone and kept myself in a dark room, I did start to feel isolated. It's hard to figure out how life still happens without your loved one."

Sometimes it might feel easier or even comforting to be alone, but isolation can quickly turn into loneliness. This week you'll discover how meaningful connections can ease your loneliness and how alone time can be used to give your difficult feelings over to God.



1 It's hard to be around people

People may invite you to spend time with them. Part of you wants to go, but staying home just sounds easier. Then you won't have to "put on a happy face," deal with awkward comments, or confront a new reminder of your loved one's absence.

But you weren't made to be alone. In the Bible, God talks about Christian "fellowship." It's where friends get together to encourage one another—supporting and uplifting each other through life's ups and downs.

God's message to you

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another."
(Hebrews 10:24–25a)

1. **Describe any struggles you have with being around other people right now.**

2. Sheryl has been avoiding other people because she doesn't want to pretend to be happy. What practical things can she do to make it easier to be around others (e.g., at social events, church, work)? What are the dangers if she continues to isolate herself?

3. Today's Bible verses describe fellowship—God's design for friendship. What does He want friends to do when they get together?

Remember

- Fellowship helps relieve loneliness.
- You can take steps to make it easier to spend time with others (e.g., attend church or an event with someone who will run interference for you).

2

A sign of healing, p. ix



Adjusting



One difficult thing has been our associations with former friends—the kids Emily played with, their parents, etc.” – Albert

“I don't like to do yardwork, but it has to be done.” – Shay

As you make adjustments in your life after loss, there will be two main types of changes to consider.

Relationships: Death creates changes in your social network. You need other people in your life both to receive their help when you need it and, eventually, to offer them help when they need it. However, the people you reach out to might not be the ones you were closest to before your loved one's death, but there are people out there who want to help. Such connections are a source of stability in your life.

Roles/skills: If your loved one lived (or worked) with you, you may need to change or expand your daily and weekly roles. This might mean learning new skills, such as handling finances, lawn care, or cooking. While learning new skills is challenging, it can also spark your continuing development as a person. Changing your roles will also be true if the person was someone you took care of (such as a child or a chronically ill person); you may find yourself at a loss because you suddenly have too much time on your hands.

Consider what adjustments are needed:

1. Think of someone you don't normally interact with who might be able to understand what you're going through.
2. What tasks or responsibilities did your loved one handle for you?
3. Who might be able to help you learn a new skill you'll need?
4. What roles did you have when your loved one was living that you no longer have now?
5. What might you be able to do that you didn't have time for earlier?

3 Being real with God

"To lament is basically to say to God, 'Let me tell You where I am right now.'" – Dr. Larry Crabb

*"Lament is the honest cry of a hurting heart wrestling with the paradox of pain and the promise of God's goodness." – Mark Vroegop**

God's message to you

"I prayed, with hands lifted toward heaven, but my soul was not comforted. I think of God, and I moan, overwhelmed with longing for his help. ... I am too distressed even to pray! I think of the good old days, long since ended, when my nights were filled with joyful songs. I search my soul and ponder the difference now. Has the Lord rejected me forever?" (Psalm 77:2b–7a NLT)

1. **Have you avoided being completely honest with God about your grief? If so, why?**

* Mark Vroegop, *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019), 26.

2. **Why do you think God wants you to know that godly people have cried out to Him and felt as if He wasn't listening?**

Remember

- Lamenting (pouring out your hurts to God) is a healthy thing to do. There are many examples of this in the Bible.
- Getting real with God helps you connect and have a real relationship with Him.

4 I feel hopeless. What now?



You had special plans with your loved one and looked forward to future days and events. Since the death, you may feel those dreams and plans have shattered. Maybe you're feeling abandoned or misunderstood by friends or family. Or you're in financial straits. Or you need to leave your home and move.

Trying to face all these difficulties at once is no doubt overwhelming. At times it may seem pointless or hopeless to go on, and suicide might seem like the only option. But it's not.

Hope is possible

The comforting fact is, other people have gone through the struggles you're facing and made it to a place where the feelings aren't so intense. They've found help through seemingly impossible situations, and found guidance for making important decisions. Knowing that other people have been in this same place is an important reminder that hope is possible, even now.

What you need is a different point of view to see your way out of the darkness and chaos in your life. There is always someone to talk to about your struggle. And if you're feeling so hopeless that you're contemplating suicide, reach out for immediate help:

- Local police
- Doctor
- Fire department
- The nearest emergency room
- A pastor of a local church

Or call the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: 988



Healing through *Writing*

Learning from solitude

Are you struggling with sadness or loneliness? Use these prompts to work through your feelings and reflect on what you're learning about yourself and God in this alone time.

- **How has your loved one's death affected your relationships?**
- **Have you struggled to unburden your heart since the death? What makes it hard to do so?**
- **Write out your lament to God: Share with Him your hurt, anger, confusion, loneliness, etc.**

Chart your progress

Place a check in the boxes to identify how you are feeling this week: emotionally, physically, etc.
Or, even better, insert a word to describe how you are doing.

	BAD	OKAY	GOOD	GREAT
Emotionally				
Physically				
Spiritually				
Relationally				
How your life is in general				

My Healing

Krissie's story

"At the end of the day when my kids have gone to bed and it's silent and I don't have anyone to talk to, I value that time of sitting in silence. I use that time for positive things, not just to go over everything I didn't have, but to remember and be thankful for the things I did have. I started praying this prayer that 'If it was just me and God at the end of the day, I would learn to be content with that.' And that's not how I feel all the time; I'm human. But I try to value that time of solitude and use it for good and not use it to bask in my loneliness and what I don't have."

Next session

Get tips to stay healthy while you grieve.