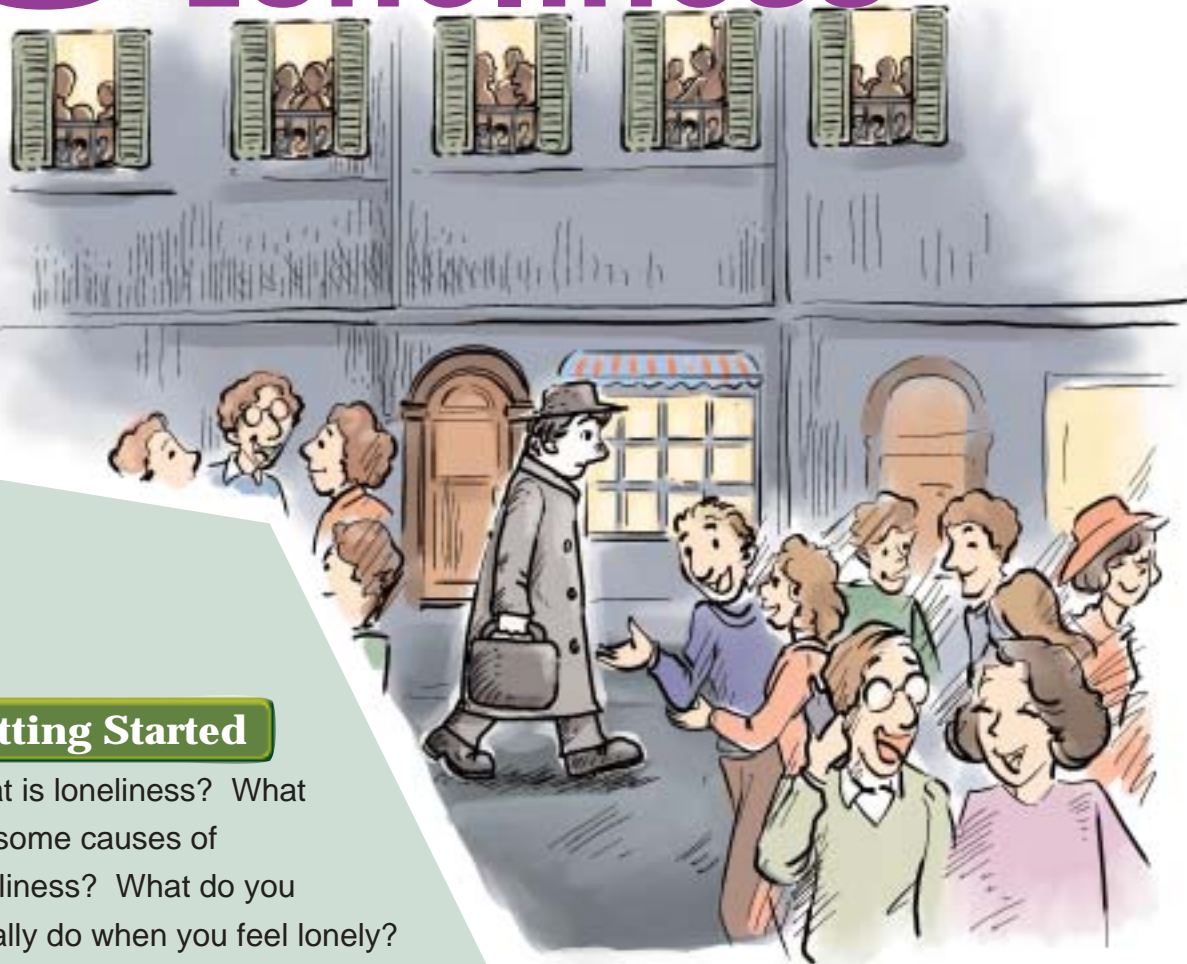


Understanding Loneliness



Getting Started

What is loneliness? What are some causes of loneliness? What do you usually do when you feel lonely?

Everyone feels lonely sometimes. If you go to a new school, move to a new city, or start a new job, you might feel like you don't fit in with everyone else. Or if you stay at the same school, city, or job for a long time you might start to feel like none of your friends really understand you. You might think, "If only I had a best friend," or, "If only I had a boyfriend/girlfriend." or "If only my family spent more time with me, I would never be lonely again." But even if you have a wonderful family, best friend, or boyfriend/girlfriend, they can't be with you all the time. How can we keep from feeling lonely, even if we are alone?

Improving Your Vocabulary

to fit in (v phrase) – to feel like you belong; like you are a part of something

examine (v) – to look at something very closely; to study something closely

beyond (prep.) – out of reach; at a greater distance than

escape (v) – to get away from someone or something

allot (v) – to give out a certain amount

Reading God's Word

Psalm 139: 1-18

1 Lord, you have examined me and you know me. **2** You know everything I do; from far away you understand all my thoughts. **3** You see me, whether I am working or resting; you know all my actions. **4** Even before I speak, you already know what I will say. **5** You are all around me on every side; you protect me with your power. **6** Your knowledge of me is too deep; it is beyond my understanding. **7** Where could I go to escape from you? Where could I get away from your presence? **8** If I went up to heaven, you would be there; if I lay down in the world of the dead, you would be there. **9** If I flew away beyond the east or lived in the farthest place in the west, **10** you would be there to lead me, you would be there to help me. **11** I could ask the darkness to hide me or the light around me to turn into night, **12** but even darkness is not dark for you, and the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are the same to you. **13** You created every part of me; you put me together in my mother's womb. **14** I praise you because you are to be feared; all you do is strange and wonderful. I know it with all my heart. **15** When my bones were being formed, carefully put together in my mother's womb, when I was growing there in secret, you knew that I was there— **16** you saw me before I was born. The days allotted to me had all been recorded in your book, before any of them ever began. **17** O God, how difficult I find your thoughts; how many of them there are! **18** If I counted them, they would be more than the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you.

Taking a Closer Look

1. How well does God understand us?

2. What are three examples the Bible reading gives of God's knowledge of us?

3. Why does God want to be "around us on every side"?

4. Why is God "to be feared"? Why should we praise him?

5. How are God's thoughts "difficult"?

6. Are we ever really alone?

Taking Action

1. Is it possible to feel lonely, even when you are with many people? Think about a time in your life when you felt lonely. How can we fight loneliness?
2. What are some ways people try to fit in? Do we have to try to "fit in" with God?

Memory Verse: Psalm 68:5-6 (New Living Translation)

⁵ Father to the fatherless, defender of widows – this is God, whose dwelling is holy. ⁶ God places the lonely in families; he sets the prisoners free and gives them joy.

Reviewing the Vocabulary

Fill in the blanks using the new vocabulary words.

1. No prisoners have ever _____ from the prison, Alcatraz, in California.
2. I don't know much about computers. They are _____ me.
3. I just started going to a new school. I hope I _____ with my classmates.
4. The patient has been waiting a long time, but the doctor has not _____ her yet.
5. We will _____ one notebook, two pencils, and two pens to each student.

For further study, see Deuteronomy 31:6; Joshua 1:5; Psalm 34:18; Isaiah 49:15,16.



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