

## Alone For The Holidays

The holiday season is often filled with joy, laughter, family, and a time of good cheer. But for many, it can be the loneliest time of the year. Whether it is the first Christmas with an empty chair at the table, or memories of things you use to do during the holidays with loved ones who are now gone, or the absence of companionship, all can make this time of year very heavy for many. Loneliness at Christmas is real. So, if I find myself alone, what can I do to make it through the holidays? How can I overcome my loneliness? Does God care?

Christmas is a day the religious world celebrates the birth of Christ. In Matthew's gospel account, we are told that it was prophesied that Jesus would be called Immanuel (Matthew 1.23). The name Immanuel means *"God with us."* Realizing God is with us can help us during our period of solitude. Even as we sit in silence, we can take comfort in knowing that we are never truly alone. Jesus endured tremendous suffering so we could be in a relationship with God. Because of that relationship, God whispers, *"You are seen. You are loved. You are not forgotten. You are not alone."* The sweet psalmist of Israel said, ***"The LORD is near to the broken-hearted and saves the crushed in spirit" (Psalm 34.18).*** Loneliness may seem to overwhelm us, but it cannot separate us from the nearness of God. Even when human company is scarce, the incarnation declares that we are never truly alone.

Jesus entered a world of rejection and suffering so that we could know the companionship of God Himself. The manger whispers: *"God has come." "I am here for you." "You are greatly loved."* Loneliness may press us, but it cannot separate us from the love and presence of God. In our solitude, we need to remember that our worth is not measured by how many people surround us, but by the love of the One who created us. Our self-worth is in the fact that we are children of God and our Father values us greatly.



Loneliness may cause a hole in the heart, but spiritually, it could be an opportune time to strengthen our relationship with our Father in heaven. In the isolation of your home, in the quietness of the moment, we can honestly pour out your heart to God. The apostle Peter tells us, ***"For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayer" (1 Peter 3.12).*** God sees us in our solemnity and hears us when we call.

Sometimes, the best antidote to being alone is to reach out to others. Pick up your phone and call someone you love. Invite someone out for a meal or have them in your home to enjoy time together. Attend all worship services and activities of the congregation. God design the church family to be there to encourage you, support you, and to help you on your journey into the eternal presence of God. Yes, the holidays may be hard to endure, but one day, heaven will be our home, and we will rejoice and be filled with joy forevermore.

Gary

# Why Do I Need God's Love?

Psalm 119.41

- 1) Have you ever craved for someone to love you?
- 2) We thrive on love and go wherever it may be found.
- 3) Do we realize the blessing of God's love?

## I Need God's Love Because...

### I) \_\_\_\_\_ It, I Feel...

- A) \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 1) Illustration: Wandering without the love of God.
  - 2) Jesus said... (John 10.14, 27).
- B) \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 1) There is a \_\_\_\_\_ within me.
  - 2) Prodigal son (Luke 15).
- C) \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 1) The Lord loves you as you are, not as you wish to be.
  - 2) God would love me more if....
- D) \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 1) Fear grips us when we face uncertainly, loss, death.
  - 2) God, where are you when...?
- E) \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 1) Loneliness is one of the deepest pains of the human heart.
  - 2) God said... (Genesis 2.18).

### II) \_\_\_\_\_ Love Is \_\_\_\_\_.

- A) Human love often comes with conditions.
- B) What happens when we fail, disappoint, or fall short?
- C) Is God's love that way (Romans 5.8)?

### III) God's Love Heals My \_\_\_\_\_.

- A) Every one of us carries wounds—regret, shame, rejection, fear.
- B) Why do I feel unloved?
- C) Leah (Genesis 29.31-35; Psalm 34.18).

### IV) God's Love Gives Me My \_\_\_\_\_.

- A) We tend to define ourselves by what we do, what we own, what others say about us.
- B) Our true identity rests in the fact that we are \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_  
(I John 3.1).

### V) God's Love Sets Me \_\_\_\_\_.

- A) Many live enslaved to sin, fear, guilt, what others say about them.
- B) Jesus said, "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8.36).

**Conclusion:** Will you let God's love be the answer to your deepest need this day?

# CONNECTION

**C** Good morning church family! This week I saw a news story that really inspired me, and I want to share some thoughts about it with you. Here is the headline: *“Oklahoma City High School Team Returns Championship Title After Scoring Error.”*

**R**  
**N**  
**E**  
**R** The Academy of Christian Studies had won its first girls’ basketball title ever on a last second buzzer beater. But the head coach had a “sinking feeling” that something wasn’t right. That night, he watched the game video and discovered a scoring error. The other team was not credited for a basket on the scoreboard that would have given them a 1-point victory. He told his team of the error, and they unanimously voted to appeal their own victory. The appeal was denied, because once the game ended and the score officially posted, it could not be changed. The team decided to give the championship trophy to the other school and renounce all claims to the title. Finally, the league agreed to make it official. Doing the “right thing” cost these girls something they had dreamed of, worked for, sweated and bled for—a championship. But something they were not willing to pay for it with was their integrity.

“What a great example of sportsmanship” many news stories claimed, and it was. But what about an even greater example of Christ-like values? It got me to thinking, “what a teachable moment!” I wonder if any other coaches shared this story with their teams and talked about the value of integrity and personal honor over external glory?

Every day, God places small opportunities in front of us—moments that may seem ordinary on the surface, yet carry the potential to shape a heart, strengthen a faith, or plant a seed of spiritual growth. These “teachable moments” rarely arrive on a schedule. They often appear in the middle of everyday life: a news story such as this, something we see or hear during a car ride with our children, something in nature, or even when we ourselves have stumbled and how we chose to respond.

Jesus made use of teachable moments constantly. He pointed to birds, flowers, coins, mustard seeds, storms, and passing crowds—using whatever was at hand to connect earthly moments to heavenly truth. He wasn’t waiting for a classroom; He made the moment a classroom. As disciples, we can do the same. Here are some ideas to help us take advantage of teachable moments.

1. *Be Present Enough to Notice* - Unplug, heads up, eyes and ears open!
2. *Connect the Moment to God’s Truth* - Turn ordinary moments into spiritual ones.
3. *Share Your Faith Naturally* - You don’t need a prepared speech, just be honest.
4. *Embrace Imperfect Opportunities* - You may feel unprepared, but God often works through our simple efforts.
5. *Model the Gospel in Real Time* - Our example is often the most powerful classroom of all.

Every moment holds potential. Look for opportunities this week to turn the ordinary into the eternal. You’ll be blessed!

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## MORNING WORSHIP (10 AM)

**Welcome** - Layton Garner

**Song Leader** - Jonathan Bartee

**Song** - We're Marching To Zion

**Song** - I Know That My Redeemer Lives

**Song** - It Is Well With My Soul

**Opening Prayer** - Zach Brookshire

**Scripture** - Psalm 119:41

**Song** - Abide With Me

**Lord's Supper** - David Birdow

**Prayer for Contribution** - David Birdow

**Song** - Jesus Hold My Hand

**Why Do I Need God's Love?** - Gary Williams

**Song** - Trust and Obey

**Announcements** - Les Keele

**Shepherd's Prayer & Dismissal** - Ross Tomlinson

Our Code for Tithe.ly

**Giving**



QR Code for

**Attendance**



**Attended Nursery:** After communion, we have an attended nursery available for ages birth to 3 years and a mother's nursing room.

Single-side in-ear mono earbuds with personal receivers are available for those with hearing difficulties. Please see the sound booth at the back of the auditorium for assistance.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS

**Monday, December 8**

Esther 6-7; Psalm 9; Acts 27

**Tuesday, December 9**

Esther 8-10; Acts 28

**Wednesday, December 10**

Micah 1-4; Psalm 46; Revelation 1

**Thursday, December 11**

Micah 5-7; Psalm 130; Revelation 2

**Friday, December 12**

Isaiah 1-2; Psalm 146; Revelation 3

**Saturday, December 13**

Isaiah 3-6; Revelation 4; Psalm 93

**Sunday, December 14**

Isaiah 7-9; Revelation 5; Psalm 150

## Last Week

Bible Class	120	Wednesday	92
Worship	201	Contribution	\$ 7,294.18
PM Worship	43	Budget	\$ 14,216.88

## Times of Assemblies

Bible Class:	9:00 AM
Sunday Morning Worship:	10:00 AM
Sunday Evening Worship:	5:00 PM
Wednesday Evening:	7:00 PM