

Dear Emmanuel, I Feel so Lonely



■ by Debi Mitchell, MS, LMFT

“...She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means ‘God is with us’).” -Isaiah 7:14

Loneliness dwells in the human heart. Widows experience loneliness. Latchkey kids and the elderly understand loneliness. We feel lonely when denied our loved ones' presence and touch. The holiday season increases loneliness for many. The pandemic increased loneliness for many more.

My annual bronchitis symptoms began with coughing and extreme fatigue. I went to urgent care four days later for a boost to beat it. I discovered I tested COVID positive on day five. I began considering how to remain even more separate from my household. I don't handle extended isolation well; I experienced momentary panic. Then I remembered: God is with me. God's presence means we are never alone, providing joy in our loneliness. I feel lonely sometimes, but knowing I am not alone changes everything.

Oxford gives two definitions for loneliness:

1. It describes loneliness as a feeling: “sadness because one has no friends or company”.
2. Oxford also equates loneliness with a state of being: “the quality of being remote; isolated”. (www.lexico.com)

I experienced intense loneliness at age 22 after my husband died. Gary's death triggered an avalanche of change. My friends and church family struggled. Not knowing what to say or do -- afraid of increasing my sadness -- most felt too uncomfortable to contact me. Lying in bed at night, unable to sleep, I felt everyone moving on without me. I wondered why no one cared. I considered myself invisible. My focus on my feelings allowed deception to grow unchecked.

One night, I walked in the rainy darkness and began screaming at God. Although I later repented of my attitude, my argument with him brought a stark reminder. He was walking with me at 1 AM in the rain, ready to listen, although I felt completely alone. I have never felt alone like that since.

Emmanuel brought joy to some isolated people at his birth. Luke describes God grabbing the shepherds' attention with God's birth announcement wrapped in angelic praises. Can you imagine following angelic directions to a newborn baby? Our Savior is born! God walks with us (Luke 2:8-20).

- Continued on Page 2 -

Article taken from the December 2020 issue of *PRESSING ON*, a Publication of Chicago Christian Counseling Center
Chicago Christian Counseling Center has locations throughout Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana

www.chicagochristiancounseling.org

708.845.5500 | info@chicagochristiancounseling.org

facebook.com/ChicagoChristianCounseling | Text CCCC to 22828 to join our email list

Promoting health and wholeness through professional counseling, consultation and education from a Christian perspective.

Dear Emmanuel, I Feel so Lonely

■ by Debi Mitchell, MS, LMFT

- Continued from Page 1 -



The Apostle Paul bluntly informed Colossae that **only Christ's redemption and reconciliation makes God's holy presence possible**. Our evil qualities made God an enemy, creating separation. "Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault" (Colossians 1:21-22).

The Apostle Paul prayed thanksgiving over the Ephesian church, "...Even before he made the world, God loved us and ... decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure" (Ephesians 1:4-5). Yes, the Creator of the universe loves us that much! Emmanuel -- that baby in the manger -- grew and chose to sacrifice himself so we could be in his presence. What unspeakable joy to be loved so much. I can't grasp the concept Emmanuel could want to do that for me. For us. But he did. "And it gave him great pleasure...."

I tell my clients, "**Feelings aren't truth.**" We feel lonely surrounded by others. We may believe we have no friends. Feelings lie to us. Don't be deceived. God truly is "a friend who sticks closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24). When we focus on people's rejection, we feel lonely. Consider this instead.

I once asked a couple to imagine the spouse knowing his/her every thought, feeling, and choice before the engagement -- and then still choosing love and marriage. Can you imagine? We cannot hide our past or present. Imagine any person knowing every future mean thought, negative feeling, and bad choice. God knows our every intricate detail, and he chooses to stay with us (Psalm 139). And it gave him great pleasure! Let's make this our focus -- and experience deep joy instead.

King David said it beautifully, "You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever" (Psalm 16:11). No matter how lonely we feel, we are never alone. The knowledge God is with us changes everything. Emmanuel's presence provides joy, even in the midst of our loneliness.

"For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." -Romans 8:38-39 ■



Debi Mitchell, MS, LMFT, is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and sees clients in our Schererville, IN, location.

Article taken from the December 2020 issue of *PRESSING ON*, a Publication of Chicago Christian Counseling Center
Chicago Christian Counseling Center has locations throughout Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana

www.chicagochristiancounseling.org

708.845.5500 | info@chicagochristiancounseling.org

facebook.com/ChicagoChristianCounseling | Text CCCC to 22828 to join our email list

Promoting health and wholeness through professional counseling, consultation and education from a Christian perspective.