



Missionary Evangelism to Corrections

Sharing the gospel & Christ's love with those in corrections since 1982

"I was in prison and you came to me" Matt.25:36cESV



The Purpose of & Overcoming Loneliness

For our staff day we screened a documentary called "Ernie & Joe: Crisis Cops", listened to the panel discussion and livestreamed a seminar on loneliness with June Hunt from Hope for the

Heart. This month is suicide prevention month. Hope for the Heart has some excellent resources on this. The seminar was full of information about loneliness, including June's story of emotional hurt and anxiety. Her father had three families and her pain was to the point of wanting to end her dad's life and her own life at different times. The lies that nothing would ever change and that people only loved what she could do for them, such as providing resources, but did not love her were the two reasons that kept her isolated. As she learned to work with people and to challenge those lies with the truth of God, her life grew and the ministry expanded. Many resources are available from the Hope for the Heart Ministry.



Songs about loneliness, fellowship with God and Him changing our hearts were part of this day of encouragement. Much of this article is from the seminar and the Keys to Living on Loneliness from HFTH. There are many kinds of loneliness. Many of them can be brought on and are represented by change.

C-Circumstances—divorce, death of a loved one, empty nest, loss of a job or home, stagnant job growth or limited career path, major move

H-Holidays—unfulfilled expectations, separation from family or friends, loss of traditions or familiar celebrations, memories of the past, lack of plans, singleness

A-Affliction—physical impairment, compromised mental

Loneliness cont. on pg. 2

Sept.-Oct. 2022 MEC Newsletter

MEC Spotlight Gerald Erickson

Gerald Erickson or Jerry, as most of us knew him, was very much of a support to us at MEC. When Saul and I first started attending Lakes Free Church in Lindstrom many years ago, Jerry was one of the first to pray for us. He was the leader of an Adult Bible Fellowship called Crossroads (which has now changed its name to Ambassadors) and he would invite me to speak to the group each year.



Jerry did not want a short devotional at his funeral but a full sermon. He loved the Word of God which he was very knowledgeable about. He was full of seriousness, kindness, fun and faith, teaching his family much about a good work ethic, starting on the farm. As grandparents he and Dorothy made Christmas memorable for the grandchildren. They took many trips to different states which inspired a love for the country and the world.

His son Brad shared that earlier Jerry did not understand some of the battles he (Brad) went through, but later became very supportive and would drive miles to meet with him. Brad wrote a song about the aftermath of injurious words and the need for forgiveness and healing before the sun goes down or it would be too late.

Jerry was a leader in church and with the Gideons. He did not just lead groups but was interested in and encouraging to individuals. He organized outings for his friends in which others were also included. He was meticulously organized and others depended on him, knowing that they could rely on him consulting the notebook he always carried in his pocket. Seeing needs that others may not have taken notice of and bringing them up, so that something could be done about

Spotlight Jerry cont. on pg. 2

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or emotional wellness, chronic or terminal illness, aging, abuse

N-Naivety—taking on responsibilities previously performed by another person, lack of experience in new areas of decision-making, disloyal family members

G-Goals—career change, retirement, job advancement, pursuit of higher education

E-Estrangement—rejection by others, cheating spouse, removal from customary environment, marital separation, living or working in new surroundings, rebellious children, conflict with friends or coworkers



Photo K. Kouchpeydeh
unsplash

Two of the questions she asks are Where is the challenge in your life? and what needs to change? These [Loneliness cont. on pg. 3](#)

Before the Sun Goes Down

Oh the sun is slanting from the sky
The day is turning into night
As earlier I turned away from you
And all those words I wish I hadn't said
The way you sadly hung your head
Are haunting me
Now I know as the sun is flickering its final rays
Any moment we may pass the far horizon of our days
So hear me now
Before the sun goes down

I love you
I need you
And I'm sorry for the way we fell apart
I forgive you
Will you forgive me too?
I just want to make things right before too long
Before the sun goes down

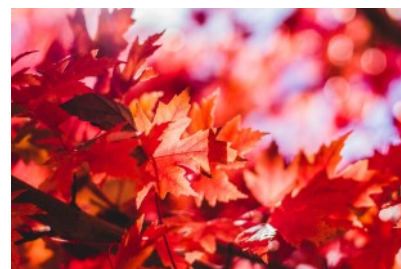
Oh those things that push us far apart
The things that hurt the human heart
Are often caused by simple little word
Yet the aftermath of injury
Forgiving words so easily flee
From the scene

them, would get results. The most recent project was starting a van fund, so that those who had need of transportation they could easily get into would have access to it.

[Spotlight Jerry cont. from pg. 1](#)

He told a whole lot of stories, many of them about his best friend Jesus. His life was one of faithful service in thanksgiving to God. Because of what Christ had done, paying the price and forgiving his sins he made Christ, his savior and LORD. Then he invited others to do the same. Jerry fought the good fight and is sure to hear, "Well done, my good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21).

God gave Jerry 93 good years before taking him home in August of 2022. He was born in Granada, MN, graduated high school, farmed and served many years in East Chain Lake. He married Dorothy in Rockland Il, and they had four children: Tim Judy, Brad and Rod.



K. Selby

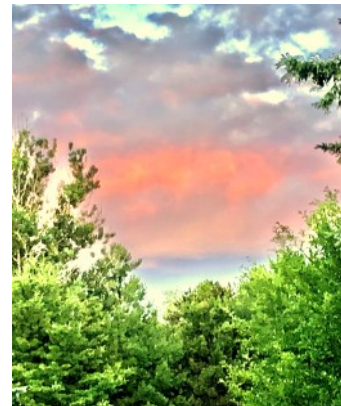
But we know as the sun will someday shine its final rays

Any moment we pass the far horizon of our days
So say right now
Before the sun goes down (chorus)

Any day
We may be with the Lord
so I pray
For the courage to say
The words that bring healing
Words that keep us together
Say them now (chorus)

I just want to make it right where we went wrong
Let us make it right between us "fore too long
Before the sun goes down
(Make it right now)
Before the sun goes down
(Make it right now)

*Brad
Erickson
March 1995*



do not happen except through the change agent who is the LORD. Some people do not change, but the Bible and our lives are full of examples and we can see where we need to do so.

Story after story of people and the different approaches they took to overcome loneliness show us that this is universal and that there are ways to diminish and help dispel loneliness through connection God with God, understanding ourselves and others.

Bible verses are not magic formulas but they are very effective in changing our hearts and minds. Here are some of the many which can help us with understanding loneliness and the way God helps us. He created us with needs for fellowship and with the need to trust Him with. Personalizing these can help put new things in our hearts and minds.

Psalm 38:9 “You know what I long for, Lord; you hear my every sigh.”

Isaiah 41:10 “Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

Psalm 68:6 “God sets the lonely in families.”

James 4:8 “Come near to God and he will come near to you.”

Ecclesiastes 4:10 “If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.”

Romans 8:35-37 “Can anything ever separate us from Christ’s love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.”

Psalm 62:5-6 “My soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; He



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Ministry Shout Out

September is Suicide Prevention Month!

The number of people that end their own lives every year in the U.S. is alarming, but we can all help prevent suicide.

Here are two great resources:

Dawson McAllister’s The Hope Line at

www.thehopeline.com

Suicide Prevention at

www.hopefortheheart.com



We hope that some of these resources give you awareness of the sad reality of suicide, the motivation to pray and some tools to help.

NOTE: If you are having suicidal thoughts and intend to harm yourself, call 911 immediately. You can also call the following suicide prevention hotline anytime.

This free, confidential service is available 24/7 and exists to help and support you. Remember, you’re not alone. Help is available – and there is hope.

Call 1-800-273-8255 (National Suicide Prevention Lifeline)

is my fortress; I will not be shaken.”

Deuteronomy 31:8 “Yes, The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”

Isaiah 43:18-19 “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! ... I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.”

Philippians 4:6-7 “Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.”

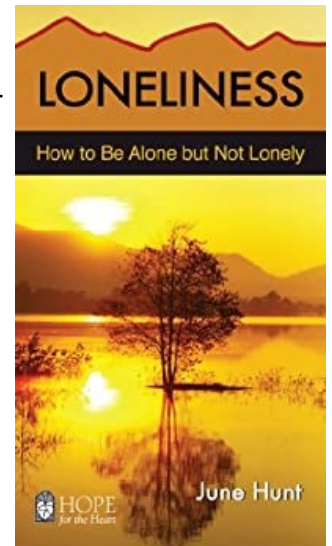
Proverbs 13:20 “He who walks with the wise will become wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed.”

Psalms 27:10 “Even if my father and mother abandon/forsake me, The LORD will hold me close/take me in/receive me.” (combined versions)

Galatians 1:10 “Am I now seeking the approval of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.”

Practical Tips for Overcoming Loneliness

- ⇒ Analyze our thoughts – Nobody likes me, everybody hates me – I’m going to go eat worms. Proverbs 14:12 There is a way that appears right but in the end it leads to death.
- ⇒ Use the language center of the brain to analyze your emotions. Take every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ. PRAY – turn our stinking thinking into a prayer.
- ⇒ Engage the prefrontal cortex – the executive function or problem-solving part of the brain. Protect it from head injury and engage it to determine what you can do to think solid thoughts that align with God’s will. If you overanalyze, live with constant demands, apologize all the time or otherwise hurt yourself and others, find a way to stop.
- ⇒ Disarm the loneliness producing thoughts with the truth of God. He is the way the truth and the life and wants us to reflect Him. Pray for the ones who need it to have a changed life and allow God to soften your heart.
- ⇒ Help others when you can. You have spiritual gifts which are for the common good. (1 Cor. 12:7)
- ⇒ Identify ways you can meet needs Develop a plan to reach out Bear one another’s burdens and fulfill the law of Christ. (Gal. 6:5)



- ⇒ Let us not become weary in doing good... in due time you will reap a harvest... especially for believers (Gal 6:9-10)
- ⇒ Serve one another in love (Gal. 5:13)
- ⇒ Listen to inspirational Music which uplifts your spirits
- ⇒ Be creative – Find your art and pursue it. Write a song, cook a meal.
- ⇒ Add a Pet to your life
- ⇒ Identify the problem, instead of leaving be a part of the solution
- ⇒ “Seeing Yourself Through God’s Eyes” Bible Study
- ⇒ Find someone to pray with in person and when you cannot do that call the anonymous prayer lines Billy Graham, His Radio, Crossroads , Family Broadcast or K-Love

Photo: June Hunt from HFTH website interview

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