

The purpose of the first paragraph is to reveal stats and quotes from mainstream sources about the growing struggles teens may have regarding each topic. The purpose of the second paragraph is to reveal God's perspective by seeing what the Bible says regarding each topic and how we can receive help and guidance in our life's purpose through a relationship with Jesus.

LONELINESS

Loneliness is felt in a bedroom alone or a large crowd of people. There's a difference between being alone and being lonely. 48% of people ages 18-22 reported loneliness⁹⁷. 10% ages 16-24 "always or often" are⁹⁸. It may come from anxiety, lack of friends/communication/understanding, etc. many times with family or friends. It compares to the dangers of smoking and obesity, and can negatively affect stress, inflammation, the heart, dementia, sleep and more⁵⁸. The more time teens spend on smartphones¹⁰ and social media⁹⁹, and less in-person, the more common loneliness is. There's as many ways to connect as to be excluded⁵⁹. Someone may have 500 online friends but no one there in a time of need⁵⁸.

The Bible's characters felt lonely (Jesus, David, Jeremiah), but God doesn't want us alone (Gen. 2:18). When friends (Prov. 18:24) or family (Ps. 27:10) fail us, God's with us (Isa. 41:10). For those lonely, God see's you (Ps. 138:6), offering comfort in darkness (Ps. 23:4) and a part to play (Eph. 4:16), coming near to you as you draw near to Him (James 4:8). Jesus promises to be with you to the end (Matt. 28:20) with inseparable love (Rom. 8:38-39).

BIBLE VERSES TO CONSIDER

Genesis 2:18 "The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone."

Proverbs 18:24 "One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."

Psalms 27:10 "Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me."

Isaiah 41:10 "So 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."

Psalms 138:6 "Though the Lord is exalted, He looks kindly on the lowly; though lofty, He sees them from afar."

Psalms 23:4 "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me."

Ephesians 4:16 "From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

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

Matthew 28:20 (Jesus) "and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Romans 8:38-39 "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,[a] neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Matthew 18:20 "For where two or three gathers in my name, there am I with them."

Revelation 3:20 "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me."

1 Corinthians 6:17 "But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit."

Psalms 133:1 "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!"

1 Corinthians 1:10 "I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought."

Deuteronomy 31:6 "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."

Psalm 68:5-6 "A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land."

People who were lonely in the Bible...

JESUS

Mark 15:34 "And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?")"

Matthew 26:56 "Then all the disciples deserted him and fled."

DAVID

Psalm 25:16 "Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted." (see also verse 17-21)

JEREMIAH

Jeremiah 15:17 "I never sat in the company of revelers, never made merry with them; I sat alone because your hand was on me and you had filled me with indignation."

STATS & QUOTES TO CONSIDER

“When teens spend more time on smartphones and less time on in-person social interactions, loneliness is more common.”

“Today’s teens may go to fewer parties and spend less time together in person, but when they do congregate, they document their hangouts relentlessly—on Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook. Those not invited to come along are keenly aware of it. Accordingly, the number of teens who feel left out has reached all-time highs across age groups.

Health risks associated with loneliness and social isolation are comparable to the dangers of smoking and obesity, increasing mortality risk by up to 30%.

Loneliness is a significant predictor of poor health.

Loneliness actually has the same effect on mortality as smoking 15 cigarettes a day, which makes it even more dangerous than obesity

Young people with the highest rates of social media use reported very similar feelings of loneliness to those who barely use it

While some people may compensate by finding connections on social media, that can provide a false sense of relief

"I have students who tell me they have 500 'friends,' but when they're in need, there's no one," Khubchandani says.

It creates a biological response, Murthy says, that leads to chronic inflammation, damaged tissue and blood vessels, and an increased risk of heart disease, arthritis and diabetes.

Even teens with a lot of friends can feel lonely, says Katie Reeves, a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner for the Children's Health Council in Palo Alto, California. "There's a real loneliness that's possible with kids who appear to be social," Reeves says.

Reeves says she sees a lot of social kids who say they feel misunderstood, or that their parents, friends, or family members don't really get what they're saying. That feels isolating, too

Social media does have an impact on loneliness.

So far, research shows that virtual contact isn't adequate. Social media provides countless avenues for teens to connect. Yet it offers just as many ways to feel excluded—and doesn't replace personal contact.

Loneliness and social isolation was most common among youth ages 18 to 22. Known as Generation Z, this group had loneliness scores of about 48%

Another study found that loneliness and social isolation lead to a 30 percent increase in the risk of premature death.

Loneliness impairs health by raising levels of stress and inflammation. As a result, the risk of heart disease, arthritis, Type 2 diabetes, and dementia increases. Moreover, loneliness has been shown to lower immunity and disrupt sleep

Young adults are more likely to feel lonely than older age groups, says a study from the Office for National Statistics.

The research found that almost 10% of people aged 16 to 24 were "always or often" lonely - the highest proportion of any age group.

A study published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine last year surveyed 7,000 19- to 32-year-olds and found that those who spend the most time on social media were twice as likely to report experiencing social isolation, which can include a lack of a sense of social belonging, engagement with others and fulfilling relationships.