

Ron Armstrong • March 2 & 3, 2019

### Didn't See That Coming: Sudden Loneliness

1 Kings 19:1 Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 2 So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them." 3 Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, 4 while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." 5 Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.

All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." 6 He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

7 The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." 8 So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. 9 There he went into a cave and spent the night.

And the word of the Lord came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 10 He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord .... The Israelites have rejected your covenant ... and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

11 The Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. 12 After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. 13 When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

**A. We live in a world of highly connected loneliness.**

1. We have greater ACCESS to people than ever before; yet feelings of loneliness are reported as higher than they've ever been.
2. Churches, culture, and technology got it wrong. "Connection" is convenient, but we want "CLOSENESS."
3. Sometimes alone is good. Solitude is a gift from God, but isolation isn't. Solitude can restore the soul, but isolation brings DESPAIR.
4. Lonely people have friends too. Loneliness arises from the GAP between the relationships we want and the relationships we have.

Closeness  
you  
need

Closeness you have

5. Loneliness is not a sign of a failure or a personality flaw. It's the feeling that helps you identify a NEED.
6. My loneliness is a sign that:
  - a. I should DO something.
  - b. Or let God do something.
  - c. But it's not normally a sign for someone ELSE to do something.

### **B. Move the closeness line "up" and the need "down."**

1. Set your technology LIMITS.
2. Choose a closeness strategy.
  - a. "Show yourself FRIENDLY."
  - b. Offer an INVITATION.
  - c. Value the other person.
3. Embrace some of God's gift of SOLITUDE through finding a special place and prayer.