

THE CURE FOR LONELINESS

BRAD BEGGS

What makes for a truly happy life?

Harvard Study of Adult Development spent decades trying to find out

- Tracked 724 young men
- Beginning in 1938
- Spanning socioeconomic, academic, family status, etc.

The key to happiness is connection

1. Social connection matters
2. Quality matters more than quantity
3. Good relationships protect us

Proverbs 27:17

Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens the other.

50% of Americans are experiencing loneliness

73% Gen Z feels lonely, largely because of social media

→ Loneliness isn't the absence of people, it's the absence of **connection**.

THE TRIAL OF LONELINESS IS FORMED:

- 1** When we disconnect our desires from our faith.

Genesis 16:1-6

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female servant whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said to Abram, "Behold now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as

a wife. And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress. And Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me!" But Abram said to Sarai, "Behold, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please." Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her.

- Abram, God, and Sarai all wanted the same thing: for Abram and Sarai to have a family → But Sarai orchestrated her own solution rather than waiting on His timing.

Matthew 5:48

You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Perfect = complete

Are you pursuing your **relational desire connected to God?**

2 When we disconnect our identity from our worth

Genesis 16:6-8

But Abram said to Sarai, "Behold, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please." Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her. The angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness on the way to Shur. And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai."

- Hagar means foreigner or outsider, and **likely wasn't her real name.**
- Where have you come from and where are you going? ← God already knows the answer. He's telling her to stop fleeing, and start reflecting.
- Too often, we measure our worth by our wounds when we should be measuring it by His Word.
 - You are loved, worthy, valuable, treasure, not alone, planned with a purpose, made in the image of God and He determines your worth.

Where are you going?

3 WHEN WE DISCONNECT OUR TRIALS FROM OUR PURPOSE.

Genesis 16:9-11

The angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her." The angel of the LORD also said to her, "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude." And the angel of the LORD said to her, "Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael because the LORD has listened to your affliction."

Genesis 16:13

So she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "You are a God of seeing," for she said, "Truly here I have seen him who looks after me."

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

James 1:2-4

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Genesis 21:15-20

When the water in the skin was gone, she put the child under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot, for she said, "Let me not look on the death of the child." And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept. And God heard the voice of the boy, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What troubles you Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. Up! Lift up the boy, and hold him fast

with your hand, for I will make him into a great nation.” Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. And God was with the boy, and he grew up.

- God opened Hagar’s eyes to see the well of water.
- Trials give us tunnel vision. → But God’s provision is that He is always with us.

God chose an abandoned, abused, suffering, single mom to be the first person in the Bible a personal name.

It doesn’t matter how big or small, how important or trivial our sorrow, God sees us.

- **Not only do we have a God who sees our loneliness, we have a Savior who understands.
Jesus experienced loneliness so we could experience relationship with God now and forever.**

Matthew 28:20

Before ascending to heaven Jesus said, “...behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

If you feel lonely, call on God. **You are not alone.**