

## Life Week 2022 Devotion – Day 3

### God Chose YOU to Belong

Perhaps you've heard that there's a new epidemic in town. According to the latest studies, over one-third of Americans are infected by it, and in some demographics, up to 60% of the population suffers. In the elderly, the contagion increases one's risk of cognitive decline, dementia, and death. Infected youth are more likely to suffer from depression, anxiety, and substance abuse.

The name of this invasive epidemic? Loneliness.

In a perfect world, loneliness wouldn't exist. In Genesis 2:18 God declares, "It is not good that the man should be alone," and then He proceeds to destroy any potential for loneliness by gifting Adam and Eve to each other. Created to walk and work alongside each other, they were purposely and perfectly designed to be one with each other and with Him. There was no room for loneliness in the Garden of Eden, only belonging.

However, when Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, they brought division. They broke the bonds of unity, separating themselves from God and unraveling the ties that knit them together. Their wholeness shattered into isolated bits; their sin alienated them from God and from each other. In this moment, loneliness was born.

Yet, Jesus makes all things new. He came to mend the brokenness, destroy the dividing wall of hostility, and reunite God with His beloved creation. No longer strangers and aliens, we have become "fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19). We find our belonging in Him.

And Christ's work doesn't end there; He pieces together the fragmented and fractured relationships of our day, too. Christ's love and forgiveness empower us to love and forgive others, rebinding us to each other.

Though once strangers, we now belong. We are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession," and we are blessed with the opportunity to "proclaim the excellencies of him who called [us] out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). One of those excellent messages? God chose YOU; you have belonging in HIM!