



Part 1: Together But Lonely. What Changed? // Jeff Brodie // January 7th, 2024

Something has shifted in our culture. We feel more lonely—some experts even describe it as a silent pandemic. It's not merely about being physically alone but feeling a sense of isolation within. How do you find genuine connection in our lonely world? In this series, we'll help you discover why you're experiencing loneliness and uncover powerful insights from the Bible about forging deeper connections, cultivating meaningful relationships, and discovering a purpose that can help you move from existing to true belonging.

Scripture: [Genesis 1:26, 2:18 NLT](#); [Ecclesiastes 4:7-12 NLT](#); [Acts 2:42-47 NLT](#); [Matthew 26:26-38 NLT](#)

Bottom Line: Meaningful relationships aren't something you fall into, they're something you have to fight for.

Discuss:

1. Have you ever experienced a time when you weren't physically alone but still felt like you were alone? What circumstance sticks out to you the most?
2. Jeff shared that as consumption becomes more convenient, connection becomes more inconvenient. Where have you seen this in your own life? Why do you think people feel lonelier or have a harder time connecting with others?
3. Read [Ecclesiastes 4:7-12 NLT](#). Describe the journey of realization of the person in the passage. Why do you think our culture sees independence as the marker of success?
4. Read [Acts 2:42-47 NLT](#). As you read this picture of the early church, what stands out to you? How do you think they measured their success? How does this compare to how we often measure our success?
5. In what ways do you struggle with the fact that being a follower of Jesus is about interdependence and surrender in a culture that values independence and consumption? What could be markers of an interdependent life for you? How can you switch your mindset to focus more on surrender and less on independence?

6. Looking at Dunbar's number, while we can have 1500 acquaintances and 150 friends, our cognitive ability for closest friends is between 15 and 5.
 - a. Would you say you have 20 close or very close friends outside of your family who know you well? Why or why not?
 - b. What are the challenges in building meaningful relationships where you are completely known?
7. Have you worked to have two meaningful conversations this week? If so, how did it go?
8. As a group, what could you do to take your relationships to another level of meaning? How can you move yourself to a more meaningful level of conversation in your group? What would excite you about those meaningful conversations? What makes you hesitant?

Moving Forward: This week read [Matthew 26:26-38 NLT](#). In this passage, you see Jesus' desire to have his closest friends with him when he faces his most difficult challenge. What friends do you have in your life that will help you face your most difficult challenges?