

DETOXING LONELINESS

Scripture used: [Genesis 2:15-18 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

In this latest message as part of the DETOX series, Pastor Hurmon reminds us that we are created for sacred connections, both vertically with God and horizontally with others. In fact, both of these dimensions are affirmed when Jesus says in Matthew 18:20: “For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.” By fostering these relations, God empowers us to detox our lives and the world around us.

In today’s passage, we find the verse: Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.” Indeed, Adam surveys Creation and does not find his own “kind.” He is lonely. God gives him Eve, and this verse is about far more than romantic love. Rather, implicit in this verse is the promise of a family, a clan, a tribe, a people, a nation - all of which will come about as a result of God’s promises. Relationally, our connection with God and others involves ways to be seen, loved, known, and understood. We need this kind of sacred connection with God and others, and we need to be intentional to take steps to seek it.

KEY POINTS

- 1) **The US is facing a loneliness epidemic** – 60% of college students declare themselves to be “very lonely.” The book “The Healing Power of Human Connection”, by Vivek Murthy (US Surgeon General) describes the importance of relationships. Loneliness carries a physiological burden and often manifests in mental or physical illness or destructive behavioral patterns. We generally need three kinds of relational connection. First, we need emotional connection, that is, a relationship with mutual affection and trust. Second, we need social connection, people to play with and enjoy activities with. Third, we need collective connection, people with whom we share a common purpose or goal, like a team.
- 2) **Connection is about the right fit.** We can be the right person in the wrong group. We often think it’s our fault, that we are the “wrong” person, not good enough in some way or other. But that is a lie. We must learn that until we find the right fit, loneliness can be experienced even in crowds. And at the same time, the presence of healthy relationships allows us to thrive whether we are with others or alone for a time.
- 3) **God asks that we connect with Him, and that we relate *inside out*.** We must learn to relate to people around us by talking about what’s going on in the inside. An example from Vivek Murthy’s book: A young woman went to university in Pennsylvania, and was completely lost without a sense of community. She almost dropped out. She took baby steps, starting with talk therapy, then inviting people to have coffee with her. She led by sharing her own feelings, and she found others also felt lonely and isolated. She created a physical space for people to get together and have a discussion about developing community, and ultimately she found the community she longed for by initiating connections and creating it for others.
- 4) **The brokenness of this world breaks relationships.** We learn a poignant lesson from Adam and Eve. Two people who shared so much, turn on one another, as rebellion and fear feed disconnection. The focus on ourselves, and protecting only ourselves, is poison. That story is replayed in our world: with the division around climate change, immigration, vaccines, masks... People go into small corners, maximizing their corner while minimizing others. Loneliness and isolation drive us into harmful behaviors.
- 5) **We need to reach out.** God’s invitation is to leave our loneliness, to stop pretending, to build bridges across differences, to make sacred connections, to be transparent, to detox ourselves and the world.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - How satisfied are you with your current relationships? Is your vertical relationship with God healthy? Your horizontal relationship with others? Are there those around you who need a sacred connection (a sense that they matter to God) that you might be overlooking right now?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Consider [Genesis 3:1-12 \(NLT\)](#). In this passage, we see the breakdown of the relationship with Adam and Eve. Consider the breakdowns in relationships that you have witnessed over the last 18 months - what patterns do you notice in Genesis 3 that match the patterns in our daily lives? How were Adam and Eve ultimately reconciled to one another? How can we move forward in relationship with those who have hurt us or with those we have a hard time seeing eye to eye with?
- 3) **DO** - Consider a small step this week of reaching out to build or strengthen a relationship. If you’d like to connect more at NBCC, make sure you fill out a connection card to join a life group or serving team!