

## LONELY BUT NOT ALONE

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When I was 13, my parents divorced. During that time, I thought and felt like I was all alone and no one cared. Although that wasn't true, my family's new reality led me to think and feel that way. My friends and family were there, but I did not feel connected to anyone. As I matured and grew in my faith, I learned that being connected to others is not limited to who I can see. I can be alone but never lonely, because God is always with me.



It can be hard to distinguish between being alone and feeling lonely. What we see and the circumstances around us shape our thoughts and feelings. So how do we help our children understand the difference between lonely versus alone? Here are two principles to keep in mind.

**1. Alone is about the physical, not emotional. *Alone*** means *without other people; without any others*. If a person is alone, that doesn't have to mean they are unhappy or bothered by something. It simply means that there are no other people around. Emphasize to your children that because we are Christ-followers, we are never alone. In [Deuteronomy 31:8](#), God tells the Israelites “*The Lord will lead you into the land. He will always be with you and help you, so don't ever be afraid of your enemies.*”

From time to time, even Jesus needed to be alone. He withdrew himself from others, but not from God. He knew God was always with him, and he needed time alone with his Father.

**2. Loneliness is an emotional state and a response to our circumstances. *Loneliness*** means *being unhappy because you are not with other people or feeling like your emotional or relational needs are not being met. Loneliness can even elicit other feelings such as feelings of sadness, isolation, or depression*. We can be in a room full of people yet still feel disconnected on the inside. God's promise of his presence offers us joy to replace our sadness. It serves as a reminder that no matter how we may feel, Jesus is our comforter, redeemer, and friend. “*You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand*” ([Psalm 16:11](#)). Let's teach our children that God's presence is the source of joy.

Talk with your children about how God has given us a Comforter, the Holy Spirit ([John 14:16](#)), who will help us and always be with us. The Holy Spirit connects us to God the Father and the Son. The Spirit reminds us of God's promises of [John 14:26](#)—his presence and joy. When children experience times of sadness or loneliness, remind them they can ask for the Spirit to help them.

Set aside time on a regular basis to talk with your children about loneliness and other emotions. Allow them to share their big feelings with you. God provided grandparents, family members, and other mentors as people that our kids might trust to be safe places. Use Scripture to reassure your family of God's promises.

- [Jeremiah 29:13](#)
- [Isaiah 54:10](#)

- [Psalm 9:9](#)
- [Mark 9:23](#)
- [Ephesians 2:18](#)

Want to dig deeper? Check out this article from Family Fire: [God Help Me Overcome My Loneliness](#).

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