



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Week 2, Loneliness

May 15th & 16th, 2010

Small Group Warm-Up

This weekend Pastor Mike mentioned three lonely battles: times of transition, opposition, or rejection. Think of a time when you have struggled with loneliness as a result of one of these. Share a little about that struggle. How did you find a way out of that period of loneliness?

Opening Prayer

Father God, thank you that you are always present to offer us your love and guidance. Help us to seek you in our seasons of loneliness. Give us wisdom to work our way through these seasons to better days.

Discussion Questions

1. Read all of 2 Timothy Chapter 4

2 Timothy is another letter Paul wrote from prison. This imprisonment was worse than when he was under house arrest in Rome where his friends could come and visit him. This time he was in a stinking dungeon and his friends had difficulty locating him. Paul wrote this letter shortly before he was beheaded under Nero's orders.

- Have you ever been through a time when you suffered persecution or opposition from others because of your Christian faith? If so, describe that experience.
- The Apostle Paul gives us an incredible example of courage in the face of opposition. He literally gave his life for his faith in Jesus. Have you ever considered whether you might have to someday risk your life for your faith? We all take some risks because of our faith—sometimes we take a financial risk by giving sacrificially. Sometimes we take a physical risk by traveling to a foreign country to share the gospel. What are some faith risks can you think of?
- Pastor Mike mentioned several ways we try to escape loneliness: workaholism, materialism, escapism (substance abuse, casual sex, etc). Have you ever gotten trapped in a negative, destructive response to loneliness? Where did it lead? How did you get out of that trap?
- We all know that the institution of marriage has crumbled in our society. It is common practice for couples to live together without the bond of marriage. We often hear couples say that a marriage license is "just a piece of paper." What are your thoughts?

2. Read 1 Corinthians 13:5-7. Does this passage describe emotions, passions, or decisions? Which is most reliable: emotions, passions, or decisions? Are there any decisions you need to make in order for a relationship you have to move past emotion and passion and toward a decision for greater health and godliness?

3. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 Pastor Mike said that a relationship without a commitment is like using a rental car. When you rent, you don't have any concerns about the long-term maintenance of the vehicle. You only use it for your short-term purposes. Have you ever felt "used" by someone? Do you know someone who is being "used" by someone? What advice would you give them?

4. There are three positive choices we can make when we are facing a season of loneliness:

1. **Release the pain**, rather than rehearsing it over and over.
2. **Stand in faith**, knowing God will never desert you.
3. **Turn to God** for help, wisdom, strength and courage to take your next right step.

Which of these three choices do you need to make today?

Closing Prayer

Jesus, help us to release any pain we still feel in regard to a past event or broken relationship. Help us stand in faith, knowing you are always with us. Help us to take our next right step away from loneliness and toward connection.