

How to Sense God’s Presence and Commune with Him: Never Be Lonely

Rev. Edward D. Seely, Th.M., Ph.D.

God has created us with a built-in awareness of his existence and a desire to know and have a relationship with him. That awareness is darkened (Acts 26:17-18) by human sin and evil that has come from Satan and his demon followers. That darkness is removed when human beings begin to believe in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Light of the world (John 8:12 NASB), who in himself reveals God to us and whose Holy Spirit enables us to believe.

Once we believe in Christ Jesus, indeed in the whole triune God,¹ we want to learn more and in so doing to develop our relationship with God. The minority of people worldwide who do not believe in God, or in a divine being of any kind, are constantly searching for someone or something above them who will provide meaning to life and security, whether they admit it or not.

At the same time, and very much relatedly, we are in what is being labelled an epidemic of loneliness, which has many negative effects on those who experience this lack of relational communion with other human beings and most of all with God.² The causes and results of such loneliness with respect to other humans is complex and the subject for another time. In this brief paper, I offer help for how to have an uninterrupted and ongoing relationship with God and experience his constant presence—with the result of never being lonely.

I would like readers to know that I write this paper from my Providential vantage point of victory over vulnerability for loneliness. Many years ago, my precious wife of 48 ½ years, Carol, died of what was diagnosed as an “atypical form of Parkinson disease.” I love her, as I always have and forever will, and I miss her greatly. She is, and always will be my only wife, as I am her only husband.³ I daily experience the extraordinary and lasting power of the deeply profound

¹ For more information on the triune God, see my PowerPoint program, “[Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology—With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions.](#)”

² [Barna research group](#) in an email notice, December 8, 2021. See also “Are we ready for the approaching loneliness epidemic?” by Federica Cocco, Opinion Data Points, *The Financial Times*, November 24, 2022. Such negative effects on individuals of the lack of these relationships include, but are not limited to, smoking, eating badly, alcoholism, high blood pressure, insomnia, weak immune systems. This loneliness phenomenon has negative effects also on societies. Cocco cites evidence found by psychologists Roy Baumeister and Jean Twenge that “feelings of social exclusion can make people more fearful and aggressive: with few superficial interactions our sense of reality can become distorted. Another study found a link with violent extremism. Hannah Arendt painted loneliness as fertile ground for terror in her 1951 classic *The Origins of Totalitarianism.*” Current news media report the same, e.g., the Walmart supervisor who shot and killed six co-workers in Chesapeake, Virginia, was quoted as saying, “Yeah, I don’t have a social life....” (*Reporter-Herald*, “Mass Shooting: Walmart shooter left ‘death note,’ bought gun day of killing,” by Ben Finley and Matthew Barakat, The Associated Press, November 26, 2022, p. A5) The loneliness phenomenon has skyrocketed in the last 10 years, not only in the United States, but also in other so-called “developed” countries. One should ask, “developed” in what ways, and in what other ways do we need to develop, including regaining what has been lost in modern times, such as the many blessings of multigenerational living, where younger people help their elderly kin and in the process gain much wisdom and other life learning from those relationships, as was done in Bible times and is still being done in so-called “undeveloped” countries.

³ As Jesus taught, marriage applies to this phase of life, since there is no marriage in the resurrection. (Matthew 22:30). We will be together in heaven and in the resurrection in the new heaven and the new earth (Revelation 21:1ff.), but in a special relationship and love bond, which I know Carol also desires, that has continuity with our

one flesh love bond that occurs in God-given marriage (Genesis 2:22-24; Matthew 19:4-6), in which she continues to be a vital part of me. She is, and always will be, an essential part of who I am; I am no longer the same person I was before I met and married Carol. She helped me develop and improve in many ways that I would not have been able to do otherwise.

This time apart from her causes times of sadness each day. When asked how I am doing by family members and some close friends, I have responded on occasion, “I’m living my worst nightmare, but God is getting me through it.”⁴ One of the ways he is helping me is reminding me that this time of separation is temporary; we will be together again and with him forever together in his eternal service, including in his worship and very presence! And yet this time apart, while, thanks be to God, is temporary, is turning into a long temporary. In those times of sadness, I find great comfort in being able to ask God to tell Carol what I’m thinking that will give her added joy and to let her know what I’m doing to try to finish well what we started and nurtured together all our many years as husband and wife, in our family, and as partners in the ministry to which God called us. It is a huge joy, to make this request of God in brief prayers each day, and doing so greatly lifts my spirit, pulling me out of my times of sadness, knowing that God will grant my requests that he sees will bless her. I rejoice that, while I can’t talk with her right now, God can; indeed, she’s standing right there with him!

What follows are some of the many other ways pertaining to prayer that God is helping me to live meaningfully and productively and serve him as he is calling me to do in this period between the time when he brought Carol home and the time when he will bring me home, when, thanks be to our triune God, she and I will be together again and with our loved ones and all God’s other people in Christ Jesus in his eternal service, including in his worship and in his very presence! In these and other ways, God can help you overcome the challenges of life you face.

1. Understand that sin separates us from God who is holy, holy, holy as well as being love to the core of his being. God will not permit that which is sinful and does evil to be in his presence.
2. Believing in and following Jesus Christ alone (John 14:6), makes it possible for us to be in God’s presence (Colossians 1:9-23). Faith in Jesus Christ as our only Savior and Lord credits us with his righteousness (Romans 4:1-25, esp. 18-25), and obeying his commands demonstrates the genuineness of our faith. (John 14:15-21; 15:1-16:1)
3. As a Christian, God has called you as well. In historic Christian theology, the term for this calling is vocation (> Latin, *vocare* = to call). Every believer, who is in and follows the Lord Jesus Christ, can serve the Lord in his or her own family, in the church, at work, in the surrounding community, and elsewhere in the world. Christians always have important work to do. For help identifying God’s call for you, begin with your pastor.

unity, our marital bond, here on earth. This continuity is both denoted and connoted by the original Greek word, *καίνος* (*kainos*), which means new in nature or quality, i.e., renewed, and which is the word for new in Revelation 21:1 and related Bible passages, not νέος (*neos*), new in time or origin, i.e., brand new. For more on the important distinction between *kainos* and *neos*, see the “Essential Christianity” PowerPoint cited above.

⁴ See also my essay, “Preparing for Living Again as an Unmarried Person,” and the related video clip, “Managing Grief: Thanking God in and for Everything,” both of which are on the [Marriage](#) page of my [general Website](#).

See also the PowerPoint program, [Essential Christianity](#), and use the Find feature to locate such subjects as calling, vocation, service, and spiritual gifts. God has important work for you to do, which gives great meaning, value, and significance to your life.

4. Join a church that preaches, teaches, and faithfully lives according to the Bible, and attend worship in that congregation at least weekly. In so doing, cherish these brief times each week in which you can nurture your relationship with God and develop a relationship with his people who have been regenerated, born again, i.e., experiencing a new birth in Jesus Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. (John 3:3-21 NASB; 1 Corinthians 12:3) This special fellowship, the Bible calls *κοινωνία* (*koinonia*), which means fellowship, communion, association, partnership, sharing, participation, close relationship, and fellow-feeling, also occurs on other occasions with fellow believers in Christ Jesus.⁵ (Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 John 1:3-7)
5. Recognize the huge difference between solitude and loneliness. The latter, loneliness, refers to a very negative, including debilitating, feeling of being all by oneself and inadequate, without a connection with any other living being. The former, solitude, refers to an important time when one intentionally sets him or herself apart temporarily from involvement with other people and with the pressing matters of life in order to read in quiet a passage of Scripture, commune with God in prayer, and daily develop his or her relationship with God. He or she may even sing one or more verses of a related hymn.
 - a. Read a passage from the Bible, pray, and pray in a special place in your home. Pertaining to Bible reading, prayer, and praying in a special place in your home, see my paper, [Aspects of Prayer according to God's Word](#).

Christians all over the world have these special occasions of Bible reading and prayer at different times of the day. For many years, I would arise early, read the Bible, and pray. Now in my later years, I very much look forward to my time of reading God's Word and then prayer before bed at night; I always feel that I'd much rather read God's Word and pray than sleep! I begin to read and pray, and I don't want to stop!

- b. Also talk with God throughout the day. As the Holy Spirit guided the Apostle Paul to write, "Pray without ceasing." (1 Thessalonians 5:17) That doesn't mean to pray constantly throughout the whole day and avoid responsibilities and other important matters, but it does mean to pray regularly, including spontaneously each day as opportunities arise.
 - 1) Ask him to forgive you when you do something wrong. (Dear God, please forgive me for...and please help me to not do it again.)
 - 2) Thank him as you recognize the good things that occur throughout the day; they're all from him. (James 1:17) Throughout the day, as I have a good thought about something; I hear good news; someone says or does something nice; the

⁵ Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary, The - The Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary – Zeta-Kappa.

weather is pleasant, including in many important ways, such as God answering my prayer to hold off the rain just until I can finish mowing the lawn, since it's the only day I could do it this week; and for countless other good developments, I greatly enjoy this simple but meaningful prayer: "Thank you Father for...!" As I pray that brief prayer, I sense how close he is and that I'm not alone, indeed, I'm never alone.

- 3) Ask him what you should do pertaining to a particular question. On such occasions, I've wondered what I should do or say about a particular matter, so I've asked God, "Dear heavenly Father, please let me know how I should handle this situation," and many times he's given me a good idea, that I know I never would have thought of, even before I finished asking him the question!

Typically, his answer comes immediately, sometimes shortly thereafter, or a little later, but always in the right timing, which is clearly Providential upon reflection. When the answer comes earlier, he gives it to me directly; when it comes later, he gives it to me through another believer in Christ as we talk about the matter and God speaks through him or her.

In all these ways, a crystal clear awareness emerges: I sense God's closeness and all-sufficient, constant, and perfect help. I am never alone or lonely, and if you take carefully all this we're considering, you'll sense you aren't alone and won't be lonely either.

- 4) Pray for others throughout the day. As you think of a loved one, ask God to help him or her, e.g., "Dear God, please help _____ (spouse, son, daughter, friend, fellow church member) to feel better soon and be all better soon after."

While I'm reading the newspaper, I often pray for people in trouble and their families. For example, "Dear God, please help all the people affected by the hurricane. Please grant them all they need as they seek to restore their livelihood, and please help their loved ones as well, especially all who are your children or who will be. Please also bless all the churches and parachurch organizations who are assisting that they and those they are serving may be safe and well."

With all the mass murders and other shootings, as I read about these tragedies, I pray, "Dear God, please comfort the loved ones of those who've been killed. Please grant healing to those who've survived. Please enable them to find the peace which transcends all understanding and that comes only in you, gracious Lord Jesus Christ. Please help all of us whom you have called to be your witnesses to speak your truth in love; send the Holy Spirit to work through us, I pray, that your kingdom may be extended and nurtured throughout our country and the rest of the world as well, so that human hearts and minds may change, be healed, and mature in Christ Jesus, that such tragedies may be averted, and that all may have hope."

As you read in the newspaper or online, and/or see on TV, accounts of a war, you can say, “Dear Father in heaven, please soon bring this war to a conclusion that is just and right in your sight, and in the meantime, please help all the people involved according to their needs, especially all who are, or will be, your children in Christ.”

Ask your pastor if your church has a prayer ministry. Some congregations have daily email prayer requests; these requests are a special blessing to respond to by asking God to help them in ways only he can do and also in and through the church and others. Some churches also have a weekly prayer group meeting, where those who wish can come and pray to God with brothers and sisters in Christ for the needs of others; for example, the congregation in which I am a member has a “Global Prayer Group,” which meets once a week to pray for needs all over the world: local, county and state, national, and international.

- c. Such praying facilitates developing a relationship with God. Praying in conscious awareness of communicating with God, who is a personal Being, is supremely joyful, satisfying, helpful, and fulfilling!

We never pray to an abstract concept or to some entity in the sky that can never respond or help in any way. Of course, we never pray to an idol of any kind, for God has commanded us to never do so. Only he can help us in ways no other being can; certainly no idol, which isn't even a living being; doesn't breathe; and can't even stand up itself, much less help a human being in any way! (Exodus 20:3-5; Isaiah 40-48) In Christ we belong to God, who is our all-sufficient help and hope. (Psalm 121:1; Psalms 25:5; 33:20; 62:5; Jeremiah 14:22; Romans 15:13; Colossians 1:27; 1 Thessalonians 4:13; 1 Timothy 1:1; 4:10; 5:5; 6:17; Hebrews 6:19; 11:1; 1 Peter 1:3,13,21; 3:15; 1 John 3:3)

6. See this document for further suggestions for praying: [Aspects of Prayer according to God's Word](#).
7. Participate in a small group Bible study and develop special friends who are also believers in and followers of Christ Jesus. You'll be warmly welcomed to the small group, and you don't have to say anything in the group unless and until you want to do so. In the group, you'll learn God's Word; you'll learn from others how the Lord is working in their lives; and sooner or later, you'll be able to help others by informing them of your experiences in your walk with the Lord.

In all these above ways, you'll learn more about who God is and what he is like. You'll develop your relationship with him, and you'll sense more and more how he is with you wherever you go, indeed that he is with you always (Matthew 28:20) and that he will never leave you nor forsake you. (Joshua 1:5; Hebrews 13:5) You'll grow in your understanding and experience of God and how he relates to you individually and corporately.

As we've been reflecting in the preceding, God relates to us individually when we are not with other people, and he communicates with us corporately in very unique and special ways in and through his church, whom he calls the body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:27) In these ways, we are never alone and certainly not ever lonely! Following the above interpretations and applications from Scripture, over time, you'll grow in your discernment of his constant presence and all-sufficient love and care for you and for all his other children throughout the whole world, brothers and sisters in Christ "from every nation, tribe, people and language." (Revelation 7:9)