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**Walk the Line Bible Study**

**by Kris Swiatocho**

**SAMPLE CHAPTER (8 Chapters Total)**

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**Chapter 3:**

**Walk the Line:**

**Loneliness versus Alone-ness**

**Lord, Why Have You Left Me Alone?**

“Why, Lord? Why am I still single? Why have you left me alone? I am so lonely. I can’t stand it. I hate always being by myself. I simply hate it.”

Loneliness comes up as the number one thing that Christians who are single complain about on the many polls completed through the Singles Network Ministries. This is especially the case if the person was once married, ending a dating relationship, or if they had kids who are no longer living at home. That loss of company in their life has caused such emptiness, making it hard to function sometimes. The loneliness seems to overpower any sense of wisdom on their part and can even lead some people to make bad choices for friendships, dating relationships, and eventually marriage partners. They would rather put any person in their life (whether from God or not), than to feel lonely.

Personally, until my dad’s death, I had never experienced utter loneliness. Sure, I had been alone and would miss friends and family sometimes. However, this sense of hopelessness was something that I had never experienced as a Christian. My dad had been sick for many years with Alzheimer’s. I had the honor of moving in with my parents during the last nine months of his life to help take care of him. He left this earth and went into the arms of the Lord. For the next year after his death, I would find myself lying on the couch, in a state of depression and deep hopelessness.

So, why would I feel any loneliness? Why would I feel so hopeless? Well, the loss of a family member, friend, or spouse by death or distance, loss of a career, or loss of anything significant can lead to these emotions. The loneliness and hopelessness are not based on God’s truth. For a Christian, these emotions can be sinful, and can be something the enemy uses to attack us. The loss of my dad left me alone but not lonely.

**Feeling lonely is:**

**Feeling alone is:**

**The Fine Line Revealed:**

As a Christian, when you say you are lonely it may be because you are, in fact, alone. Being alone is a real place we sometimes find ourselves in, whereas, being lonely is something a person experiences. To say, “I feel alone” is being honest, because in some cases we are, and it isn’t much fun.

Jesus felt alone many times in various ways. He understands what it feels like to have the whole world on your shoulders, with no one to help you carry the load. Even though Jesus had twelve disciples who were there to help Him, they would abandon Him over and over.

***Read Luke 22:4-6***

*And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. They were delighted and agreed to give him money. He consented, and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present.*

Judas would betray him.

Many of you know what it feels like to betrayed—to have that one person you cared about the most lie to you. Maybe it was an ex-spouse, business partner, or friend who betrayed you. They were smiling to your face while at the same time being dishonest with you. Losing trust may cause you to feel lonely.

**Q: Who has betrayed you? Share.**

**Q: How does it make you feel to read about Judas and what he did?**

***Read Matthew 26:34***

*“I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown Me three times.”*

**Peter would deny him.**

Maybe you got into a situation where you needed your friends to be there. You needed the support of your family, only to have them deny you. Friends who said they had your back but when things got really tough, the phone calls went unanswered and emails bounced back. Peter would deny Jesus, even though he had promised to stand by Him.

**Q: Have you ever been in a situation like Peter where you denied Christ? What about a time you didn’t share your faith when God asked you to?**

**Q: Share a time when you were disowned, forgotten, or rejected? How did it feel?**

**Q: How do you think Christ felt when Peter abandoned him? What about when we abandon Christ?**

***Read Luke 22:45-46***

*When He rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, He found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. “Why are you sleeping?” He asked them. “Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.”*

**Jesus’s disciples would fail him.**

How many of you have had folks let you down? Maybe you led a team at your company or your church, only to have your teammates fail to follow through on an important project. Some people might have quit, causing more work for you. Even Jesus could not escape those who would fail to help Him in His hour of need.

**Q: Why did Jesus tell the disciples to pray?**

**Q: How often are you tempted to do things you know is wrong? Share some of those things.**

***Read John 19:25-27***

*Near the cross of Jesus stood His mother, His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw His mother there, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, “Dear woman, here is your son,” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.*

Jesus’s disciples would abandon Him.

Your former spouse said you would be together until death do you part, but “death” of the marriage turned out to occur five or ten years after you both said “I do.” Maybe a parent abandoned you as a child or withheld support from you as you grew older. Perhaps the child you raised, loved, cried and worried over has abandoned you. They may return in the future like the prodigal son, but in the meantime, it feels horrible to experience rejection after having loved your child so unconditionally.

Jesus understands abandonment. When Jesus was hanging on the cross, only one disciple showed up: John. Where were the other men He spent the last three years, day and night, 24/7 with? The ones whom He taught, encouraged, and trained to take over for Him? If Jesus, who is perfect, would have His closest friends abandon Him, then surely we are going to have people abandon us. The issue is not if it’s going to happen, but when—and how do we handle it?

Jesus focused on the present, asking His best friend and mother to care for each other. He focused on Mary Magdalene and Mary, wife of Clopas. Mary Magdalene would be the first to see that Christ had risen from the dead; the first “evangelist” so to speak. Although most of His disciples did abandon Him at the cross, they would not abandon Him afterwards. His teaching, His love for them, His example would come through in the end. So yet, again, Jesus is showing us that through the things that would cause most people to feel lonely and hopeless, they are in fact merely causing us to feel alone. But Jesus had God and so do we. We have a choice in how we live through these situations. We have a choice in how we use circumstances to bring glory to God.

**Q: Why do you think the disciples abandoned Christ at the cross?**

**Q: What kind of relationship did John and Mary Magdalene have with Jesus that was different than the other followers?**

**Q: When we trust Christ as our Savior, we are given responsibility. As we grow, as we are obedient, this responsibility increases. Mary Magdalene, Jesus’s mother, and John would be given more to do after Jesus’s death; what is Jesus asking of you?**

***Read Deuteronomy 31:6***

*Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.*

**We are not truly alone.**

Jesus reminds us: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28). This should give us comfort when we are trying to carry burdens such as kids, a home, finances, elderly parents, or work. Here is a cool thing: when you know the Lord as your Savior, you are never truly alone or forsaken. God is always with us, giving us comfort, encouragement, and hope.

God is still there, despite what the world does to us, despite betrayal and abandonment by humans, He has not moved or changed. Doesn’t that make you smile? Doesn’t that make you rejoice? The lost are lonely because they are alone in every sense. There is no comfort from the Holy Spirit and, no hope of an everlasting life in Christ. All the more reason we have to keep our focus on reaching the lost versus feeling discouraged about ourselves.

**Q: How does knowing that you are not alone, that God is with you, make you feel?**

So then, for those that are not married, why are we physically alone? Why hasn’t God brought me someone?

First, sometimes we are physically alone because that seems to be the only time God can get our attention. When we are alone (the kids are gone, the house is empty, work is done) and all we have is silence and God, we are forced to talk (and listen) to God. The problem is that most of us do whatever we can to avoid this quiet alone-ness. We watch TV, talk on the phone, play on facebook, eat, shop, and whatever else we can do to avoid talking with Jesus. We avoid having to hear Him say that this is where we are going to be for now. But in avoiding seeking God in the alone-ness, we are also avoiding hearing God say He is with us. We avoid all the plans He wants to share with us. We avoid all the things He wants to tell us that will help us in this journey as single adults. God wants to empower, encourage, and equip us. Our “alone” times should be precious and valued.

So, why hasn’t God brought someone to help fill in these “alone” times? Well, you have asked the million-dollar question. I simply do not have the answer you seek. I just know God is still in charge and knows best. For me, it doesn’t appear getting married has been a part of His plan up to this point. But thank God, because of my singleness, I have been able to encourage so many others to live full and complete lives without being married. I have been able to write, speak, and teach all over the USA and abroad, imparting that our only hope is found in Christ. When the enemy whispers, “You are so lonely, no one will ever want you,” you will have the knowledge and strength to rebuke the enemy because you know the truth. You do have hope, and even though right now you are physically alone, you do have a relationship with Christ.

**Q: As a married person or a single person, when has being alone physically been a good thing? What has God revealed?**

**WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO WALK AWAY WITH?**

**What is God saying to you right now?**

[Close in prayer; option to list prayer requests here so you can pray through the week for each other.]

**ASSIGNMENT:**

1. Spend more time “alone” with God, allowing Him to speak into your life. Go to the next level in trusting Him for all things.

2. Start journaling what God is saying to you about this area.

3. Pray for someone you can help who is feeling lonely because they do not have the hope of Jesus Christ in their lives. Spend some time with them, share your faith, encourage them and allow God to lead them to Christ or be encouraged in Christ.

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