



## LOOKING TO DEVELOP YOUR FAITH?

Gather is a monthly resource from IPHC Women to help you connect women in your local church to Jesus Christ and each other.



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## ALL BY MYSELF

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*by Whitney Davis*

A recent Cigna survey revealed that nearly half of Americans always or sometimes feel alone (46%) or left out (47%). Fully 54% said they always or sometimes feel that no one knows them well. In a culture that is plagued with comparison and the felt need to “keep up with the Joneses,” women are struggling with isolation and loneliness.

Theodore Roosevelt said it best in his infamous quote, “comparison is the thief of all joy.” We live in a day and age where social media has made us the most connected culture to date, yet in its promotion of connection, the feeling of isolation has become overwhelming to the point where it has robbed us of our joy. We scroll through seemingly picture-perfect images on our social media accounts of strangers and even friends. Whether we intend to or not, we allow

these images to infiltrate our very being to the point that comparison takes over, and we begin to feel less than.

As women, we tend to struggle with our identity. We want to be seen, loved, valued and we want to have a voice. We say we want to promote change for the better in this world and encourage others, but we have become our own worst critics and have devalued our worth in such a way that we are unable to reach out to empower others. There is a certain pressure to project an image of perfection that is just simply that; an image. We get caught up watching others who appear to be better women, better wives, better mothers, better leaders, have it all together, never miss a workout, those who are soaking in financial blessings, and those who always seem to get what they want. We

must remind ourselves these are glorified realities. There is also pain, rejection, frustration, arguments, imperfection, and much grace behind those images; we don't tend to see that.

### **Some truths to ponder about isolation:**

#### **1.) ISOLATION CAN BE SELFISH AND PERHAPS THE EASY WAY OUT.**

Proverbs 18:1 states, "One who has isolated himself seeks his own desires; he rejects all sound judgment."

Most of the time, it is easier to stay in bed, stay home, or choose not to show up for an event. When we are struggling with our self-worth or our circumstances, it often feels daunting to "show up" and try to immerse ourselves into activities that involve being with others. Sometimes it feels like too much effort to connect with others and expose our weaknesses. However, this passage in Proverbs informs us that this isolation is not sound judgment.

#### **2.) WE REALLY ARE BETTER TOGETHER.**

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 - "Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble."

Comparison has led to competition, and perhaps we feel inadequate and do not want to expose our true selves to others. Women who refuse to let isolation win and choose to show up for one another help each other succeed. What an encouragement we find here in Ecclesiastes! Because we sometimes choose isolation, our friends don't know that we have fallen and need a hand. Sure, it won't be easy at first, but allow your friends to help you and offer the same investment in return.

#### **3.) THERE IS SAFETY IN NUMBERS.**

Ecclesiastes 4:12 - "A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided

cord is not easily broken."

We are not meant to be alone. From the beginning of creation, the human design did not include isolation. God created Eve for Adam because he knew it wasn't good for man to be alone. We also find throughout scripture that we are created to be in community. We should be a community of women who have each other's backs. We need to fight for our sisters.

Most importantly, we must not isolate ourselves from the Father. When battling against loneliness, it is of utmost importance to daily carve out time to read God's Word and pray. Jesus is the ultimate friend and fulfills the deepest levels of our pain. After choosing to connect with Jesus first, then you should look outward at steps you can take to prevent being isolated in your everyday life. Don't allow the glances you take at the races other women are running to sway you from your purpose or your identity in Christ. It is our responsibility to walk out the plans the Lord has for our lives, and we cannot do that when we are choosing to live in isolation.

We must cheer on our sisters and, in all sincerity, show up for them, pray for them, and speak encouragement to them. We are daughters of the King, fearfully and wonderfully made, loved, valued, and full of purpose. As we walk confidently in who we are in Christ, we can walk out the calling He has on our lives and still be joyful in the things He is doing in those around us.

The bottom line is we have a whole lot of living to do still. There is much Kingdom work to be done. The Lord wants us to be real, to share real struggles and real victories with one another. We must stay the course. We must sink ourselves into the specific purposes that we are called to fulfill. Don't allow comparison to steal your joy or force you into isolation. Walk confidently in who you are in Christ and be the biggest cheerleader for others who are trying to do the same thing.



### CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1.) Talk about a time that you have struggled with feeling isolated or alone.
- 2.) What has helped you in times of loneliness?
- 3.) How has the Lord been faithful to you during difficult seasons where you may have felt isolated?
- 4.) Talk about some ways women can be there for one another to fight against isolation and promote community.

### CALL TO ACTION:

- 1.) Reach out to a friend you trust this week and ask them to pray and believe with you about a specific need in your life.
- 2.) Make a phone call or send an encouraging message to a friend this week to check on them. Take it a step further and invite them to coffee or dinner.

### **Commit this week to fight against isolation:**

Memorize Isaiah 41:10 this week: So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

**Commit to spending time daily in prayer and reading your Bible this week.**

