

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE



**NEVER
ALONE**

Thank you for downloading this FREE SAMPLE of the DNowStudies 4-session Bible Study, NEVER ALONE.

Never Alone is an amazing resource for your DNow or Retreat weekend. By leading your student through this study, you'll not only challenge them to live out their faith in a powerful way, you'll equip them to do it long after your event is over.

Before jumping into this sample, make sure you check out all the amazing features that **DNow Studies** puts at your fingertips. There really is nothing else like it anywhere...

What You'll Find In This Sample

- A Sample of a Small Group Lesson Plan
- A Sample of the Student Book
- A short version of the ***Never Alone*** Overviews

Of course each of these components, and dozens more, are available to your teachers through their Online Lesson Manager. This PDF simply gives you an idea of the main content of ***Never Alone***.

If you have questions, email us at dnow@leadertreks.com.
Or, give us a call at **1-877-502-0699**.



Did you know that Small Group Content is just one of the many components you have access to with the purchase of a DNow study?

DNowStudies gives you the resources you need to create transformational DNow or Retreat Weekends. Take a look at what's included in your purchase of **Never Alone**.

- Large Group Speaker Outlines
- Large Group Videos
- Large Group Motion Background/Loop
- Large Group PowerPoint Slides
- Promotional Tools: Web Banner/Poster Files
- Promotional Tools: Promo Videos
- Parent Resources

Throw in built-in **Tools and Training** for you and ALL your leaders, a streamlined Teacher Management tool, and of course your Small Group Lesson Plans and you begin to see how DNowStudies really can help make your Disciple Now and/or Retreat Weekend exceptional.

ALSO AVAILABLE:

Student Resources to Complete Your Event

NEVER ALONE

Student Books

Biblically-solid and creative—perfect for students to stay engaged during your event.

Soft T-Shirts

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NEVER ALONE

Are you lonely?

In this study, you will discover that loneliness is a common human condition, how God provides for us in our loneliness, and how to reach out to others who may also be feeling lonely. You will dig into the fact that we are never truly alone, even in our most isolated times. Thankfully, loneliness is not what God wants for us. He has provided help and resources during the lonely seasons of life for our good and his glory.

That's what this DNow event is all about: **learning God is always with you—that you're *truly* never alone.**

SMALL GROUP OVERVIEW

Small Group Session 1

- **Session Title:** Nothing New or Uncommon
- **Main Scripture Passages:** Psalm 25:14–16; Philippians 4:6–7; Romans 12:15
- **Session Overview:** The goal of this session is to help you and your students reflect on their situation regarding loneliness. If they're feeling lonely, they'll evaluate what the cause of it is. Maybe they're experiencing literal isolation, or their experience of friendship isn't meeting their expectations. It also touches on the fact that loneliness can lead to decreased mental and physical health, so it's best to talk about it with someone else, especially God.

Small Group Session 2

- **Session Title:** God with Us
- **Main Scripture Passages:** Psalm 139:7–10; Romans 8:38–39; Psalm 23:4
- **Session Overview:** The goal of this session is to help you and your students learn that God has vowed never to leave his children. No matter their circumstances, past or current sins, or feelings—the love and presence of God are sure, steady, and reliable.

NEVER ALONE

Small Group Session 3

- **Session Title:** Part of the Family
- **Main Scripture Passages:** John 1:12-13; 1 John 3:1a; 1 Corinthians 12:13
- **Session Overview:** The goal of this session is to help you and your students learn that being part of the spiritual family of God makes a big difference in their lives. No matter where we go now, we will always have a family.

Small Group Session 4

- **Session Title:** Reaching Out
- **Main Scripture Passages:** 1 John 3:17-18; John 13:34; 1 John 3:10
- **Session Overview:** The goal of this session is to help you and your students learn the practical ways to reach out to the nonbelievers who are lonely and hurting around them. Making the first move in caring for someone else can make a big difference in that person's life and could ultimately draw them to Christ.

LARGE GROUP OVERVIEW

Large Group Session 1: Psalm 102:6-7

Large Group Session 2: Joshua 1:9

Large Group Session 3: Ephesians 2:19-22

Large Group Session 4: 1 Peter 4:8-11

STUDENT BOOK DEVOTIONAL OVERVIEW

Devotional 1: Hebrews 4:14-16

Devotional 2: Jonah 1

Devotional 3: Revelation 21:1-14, 22-27

Devotional 4: Ruth 2

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE



**NEVER
ALONE**

SESSION 1: NOTHING NEW OR UNCOMMON

.....

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

GOAL:

The goal of this lesson is twofold:

1. *This small group lesson is designed to help you and your students reflect on their situation regarding loneliness. If they're feeling lonely, they'll evaluate what the cause of it is. Maybe they're experiencing literal isolation, or their experience of friendship isn't meeting their expectations. It also touches on the fact that loneliness can lead to decreased mental and physical health, so it's best to talk about it with someone else, especially God.*
2. *It is also designed to make it easy for you to facilitate and teach students. That is why the Small Group Leader Guide is packed with easy-to-use instructions, timeframes, and questions that promote thinking and draw out real responses.*

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- A copy of the Small Group Leader Guide for you and any other facilitators.
- A Student Book for each participant.
- Be sure to check out the Live It Out section ahead of time to prepare. You'll need:
 - *a pile of old magazines (preview them before distributing to make sure they are appropriate)*
 - *enough scissors, glue sticks, and large pieces of blank construction paper for each student.*

TEACHER PREP VIDEO:

Don't forget to take a minute and watch the teacher prep video found in your DNow Studies account. It's a short video that will take you through some of the need-to-knows before you dive into this lesson with students.

WHAT'S INCLUDED: SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE OR STUDENT BOOK

This table outlines the parts of each lesson and provides an approximate timeframe that you can adapt to meet the needs of your group.

LESSON ELEMENTS (and brief description)	INCLUDED IN SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE	INCLUDED IN STUDENT BOOK	APPROXIMATE TIMEFRAME
LARGE GROUP TALK REVIEW W/OPENING QUESTIONS Recap the teaching. Get discussion going by sharing answers from the end of the Large Group Talk.	✓	✓	3–5 minutes
A SECOND LOOK A look at how Christ's presence impacts your everyday life—followed by discussion questions.	✓	✓	10–15 minutes
A LITTLE DEEPER Dig into Bible passages that were not in the Large Group Talk. See what else Scripture says about this topic.	✓	✓ (w/discussion questions)	10–15 minutes
LIVE IT OUT An experiential activity to help students reinforce and internalize the lesson—followed by discussion questions.	✓		15–20 minutes
APPLY IT A practical application for students to do this week.	✓	✓	2–3 minutes
STUDENT DEVOTIONAL A short devotional for students to do on their own.		✓	

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SMALL GROUP SESSION ONE

NOTHING NEW OR UNCOMMON

THE FIRST MEETING

Since this is the first small group meeting for this event, take the time to lay the foundation for the whole event.

- *If your students don't know each other, cover introductions and consider an icebreaker (see leadertreks.org/freebies for several icebreaker and team-building activities).*
- *Make sure to cover the schedule and ground rules for the event, especially if you are staying at a host home.*
- *Tell students why you are here. You are probably sacrificing some time and comfort to be a small group leader and, chances are, it's worth it! Let students know why you care so much about them and why you want to invest in them to help them grow. Tell students why you think they're great and why it's worth it for you to be a small group leader this weekend!*

LARGE GROUP TALK REVIEW

Take a minute to review what students just learned in the Large Group Talk. Have them pull out their notes, and ask them to share what their answers were for the two questions found on **page 4** of the Student Book (see below). Consider having students share their answers with a partner, and then ask for two or three volunteers who might want to share with the whole group.

Question 1: What expectations do you have in your friendships? Are those expectations currently being met? Why or why not?

Question 2: Is there a sin (yours or someone else's) that might be affecting your relationships with others?

A SECOND LOOK

*Read this story together and answer the following questions, found on **page 6** of the Student Book.*

In 1972, Albert Woodfox was convicted of killing a prison guard (he "steadfastly claims innocence") and endured solitary confinement for a staggering 40 years until he was released in 2016 on his 69th birthday. Mr. Woodfox stayed in a six-foot by nine-foot cell for most of the day and was allowed outside for up to an hour three times a week—alone in a small cage for "exercise." When people have almost no contact with other human beings, their physical and psychological well-being can decrease drastically. Thankfully, because of the studied adverse effects of solitary confinement, anything more than 15 days is now deemed "cruel, inhumane, and harmful" by the US National Commission on Correctional Healthcare.¹ We are not meant to be alone. God knows that our physical and mental health are negatively affected when we have no contact with others.

Discuss

- In what ways have you felt lonely in the past or currently?
- On a scale of 1–5 (5=the most), how misunderstood do you feel by others?
- Do you desire to have many friends or a few deep friendships? Why?
- About how many hours a day are you completely alone from other people?
- About how many hours a day do you interact with the people who are physically around you (not including interactions on social media)?
- Trick question: About how many hours a day are you in the presence of God, who loves you (and is everywhere all the time)?

A LITTLE DEEPER

We know that God didn't design us for solitude but for community and connection with others. When we do feel lonely, however, it's best to go to God and also talk with another mature Christ-follower about it. The fact is that loneliness can lead to decreased mental and physical health. God wants us to come to him with our burdens and experience the support of the body of Christ in our pain.

Read each Bible passage and answer the questions, found in the Student Book on **pages 7 and 8**:

PSALM 25:14–16

*"The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him,
and he makes known to them his covenant.*

*My eyes are ever toward the Lord,
for he will pluck my feet out of the net.*

*Turn to me and be gracious to me,
for I am lonely and afflicted."*

Discuss

- Does it surprise you that King David felt lonely and afflicted? Why or why not?
- What might it look like for God to be gracious to you in your particular situation?

Say Something Like: David felt trapped when he wrote this psalm, but notice that he went straight to the Lord with his feelings of loneliness. God welcomes our prayers and requests for help!

PHILIPPIANS 4:6–7

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Discuss

- What are you most anxious about when it comes to feeling alone?
- Why should we go to God with our anxious feelings?

Say Something Like: When we fear being alone or anxious about finding good friends, go to the Lord with your requests. And don't forget to thank him for the friends and family you do have!

ROMANS 12:15

"Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep."

Discuss

- Why would God instruct us to join others in their sorrows and joys?
- What does it communicate to you when someone celebrates or cries with you?
- Who can you go to when you feel lonely—someone who will listen well and be with you?

Say Something Like: God wants his family to be there for each other! Find someone mature in the faith whom you can confide in. If you can't think of anyone, ask God to bring someone to mind.

LIVE IT OUT: Loneliness Collage

What you'll need: A pile of old magazines (preview them before distributing to make sure they are appropriate), and enough scissors, glue sticks, and large pieces of blank construction paper for each student.

Say Something Like: Most people will go through a season of loneliness. And even though it's a common feeling, each person experiences a unique loneliness because each person is different, has different experiences, and holds different expectations within their relationships. Today we're each going to express our unique loneliness in the form of art.

Instructions

1. Have each student grab a piece of paper, a glue stick, and a pair of scissors.
2. *Say something like:* Think of a time when you felt lonely. Remember the situation, how you felt, the people involved (or not involved), and what you did with those lonely feelings. We're going to spend 20–30 minutes making collages that represent your personal feelings of loneliness. If you have never felt lonely before, thank the Lord! Use this time to imagine what it would be like to feel lonely. Be intentional with the colors, words, and images you use.
3. After everyone finishes their collages, ask for a few volunteers (don't call on anyone) to talk about their artwork.
4. *Say something like:* Even though not everyone shared their collages, we can know that most—if not all—of us have felt lonely before. It's important to remember that we're not alone in these feelings and that each person has unique perspectives and experiences.

Debrief

- What, if anything, surprised you about this activity?
- Did your collage come out the way you expected? Why or why not?
- How does sin play a role in the loneliness you've experienced, whether it came about from others or within your own struggles? How did you express that in your artwork?
- How does knowing that many people are lonely change your perspective on your own loneliness?

APPLY IT

What can you do this week to battle against any loneliness feelings that may come your way?

Be specific:

What are you going to do?

When are you going to do it?

Is there someone who can keep you accountable?

Leader's Note: Whenever students make applications, challenge them to be specific. It's one thing to say, "I'm going to trust God more." The truth is, our students won't really know if they did this, or if they grew in trust over the week. It's another thing to say, "Every morning this week before I eat breakfast, I'm going to tell God that today is his and that I trust him, and I'm going to ask him to give me the strength to replace worries with trust." Challenge your students to answer the questions under the "Be Specific" section. You can even have them pair up, share their applications, and ask for accountability from their partner.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Schedule: Let students know what's happening next in the schedule and what they need to do or bring with them.

Student Devotional: The Student Book contains a short devotional for students to do on their own. Remember to point this out to students and let them know if and when this fits into the schedule of the weekend. The devotional that corresponds with this lesson is found on **page 35**.

¹ Brie A. Williams, MD, MS, "Older Prisoners and the Physical Health Effects of Solitary Confinement," *National Library of Medicine*, December 2016, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5105008/>.

NEVER ALONE

INTERACTIVE STUDENT BOOK

INTERACTIVE STUDENT BOOK

NEVER ALONE

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:

Never Alone

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ISBN: 978-1-939031-58-7

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Published by LeaderTreks
28W468 High Lake Road, Unit 7
West Chicago, IL 60185
www.leadertreks.org
877-502-0699

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WELCOME TO NEVER ALONE

Are you lonely?

In this study, you will discover that loneliness is a common human condition, how God provides for us in our loneliness, and how to reach out to others who may also be feeling lonely. The four lessons include:

- *Nothing New or Uncommon*
- *God with Us*
- *Part of the Family*
- *Reaching Out*

This study will dig into the fact that we are never truly alone, even in our most isolated times. Thankfully, loneliness is not what God wants for us. He has provided help and resources during the lonely seasons of life for our good and his glory.

HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW AS YOU GO THROUGH THIS STUDY:

God wants to connect with you.

In fact, he's looking forward to it. But how ready are you to connect with him? As you go in and out of the sessions and devotional times, make sure you are willing to listen to him and learn from him. He promises that he will come near to you if you come near to him (James 4:8). Try it!

What you put into this study is what you'll get out of it.

There are people all around you who have spent a lot of time praying for you and getting ready to invest in you. You'll probably meet some new people, hear some new speakers, and get a chance to spend some quality time with God and with friends. Take advantage of it! Ask hard questions. Commit to being authentic and honest. God wants to use this time and these people in your life.



INTRO

NOTHING NEW OR UNCOMMON

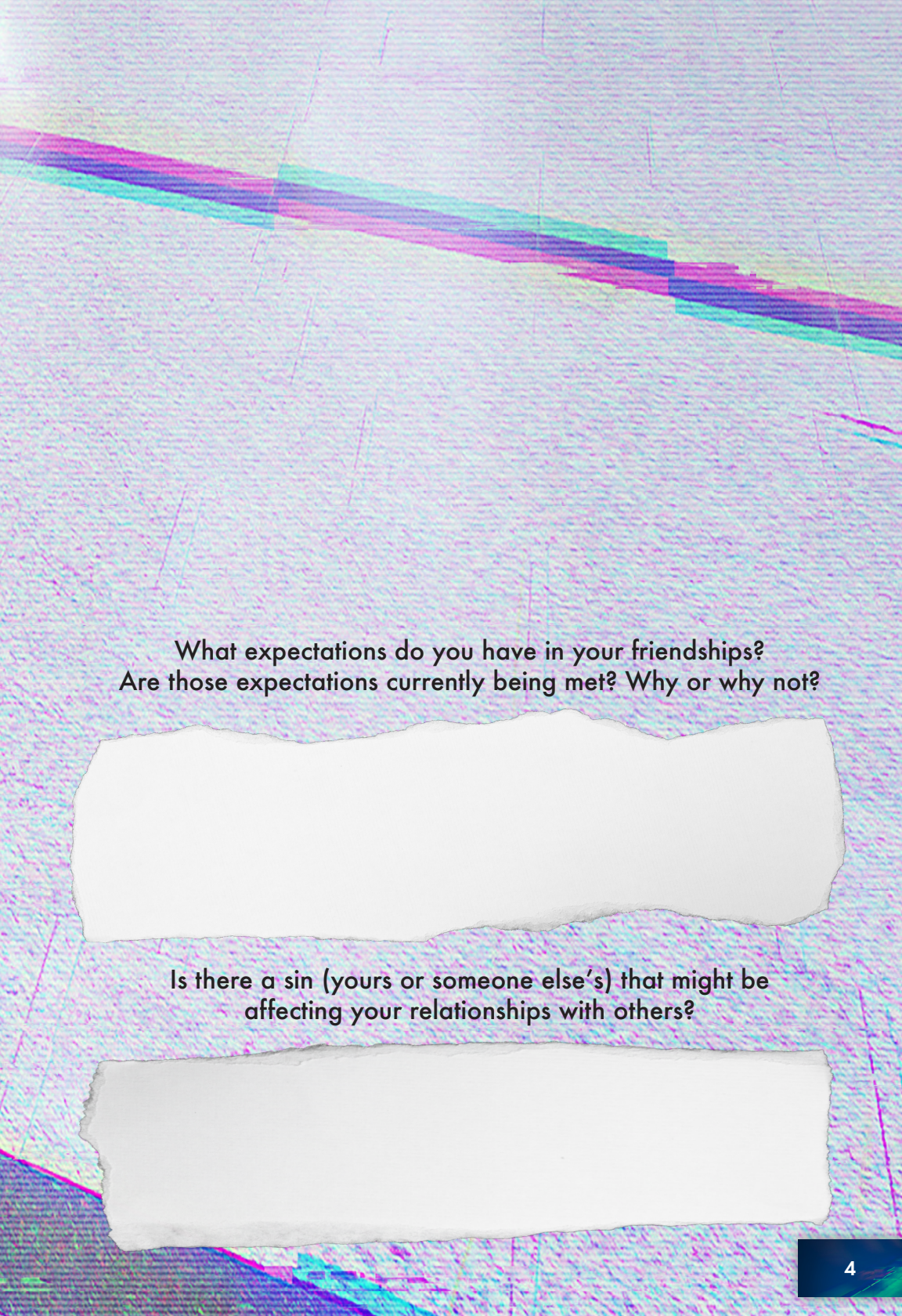
If you've ever felt rejected, misunderstood, or just plain lonely, you're not alone! Almost everyone will go through a season of loneliness that can feel painful and isolating, as if no one else understands or wants to be near us. Sometimes we really don't have other people to lean on, and in other cases, we might be surrounded by people but feel uncared for and left out. It's all a massive collision of our own worst fears and the sin we're all born into. No one *wants* to feel lonely, and rest assured—this is not what God wants for us!



LARGE GROUP

NOTHING NEW OR UNCOMMON

These two pages are designed so you can take note of anything that stands out to you and that you think is worth remembering during the large group talk. This talk will set the stage for the rest of the session. Consider writing down main points, quotes, Bible verses, and any questions that pop into your head.



What expectations do you have in your friendships?
Are those expectations currently being met? Why or why not?

Is there a sin (yours or someone else's) that might be
affecting your relationships with others?



A SECOND LOOK

SMALL GROUP

NOTHING NEW OR UNCOMMON

In 1972, Albert Woodfox was convicted of killing a prison guard (he “steadfastly claims innocence”) and endured solitary confinement for a staggering 40 years until he was released in 2016 on his 69th birthday. Mr. Woodfox stayed in a six-foot by nine-foot cell for most of the day and was allowed outside for up to an hour three times a week—alone in a small cage for “exercise.” When people have almost no contact with other human beings, their physical and psychological well-being can decrease drastically. Thankfully, because of the studied adverse effects of solitary confinement, anything more than 15 days is now deemed “cruel, inhumane, and harmful” by the US National Commission on Correctional Healthcare.¹ We are not meant to be alone. God knows that our physical and mental health are negatively affected when we have no contact with others.

In what ways have you felt lonely in the past or currently?



On a scale of 1 - 5 (5=the most), how misunderstood do you feel by others?

1

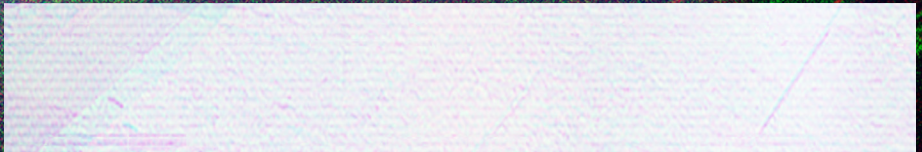
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4

5

Do you desire to have many friends or a few deep friendships? Why?



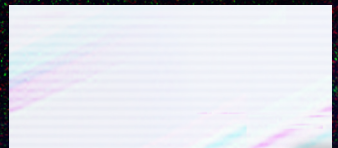
About how many hours a day are you completely alone from other people?



About how many hours a day do you interact with the people who are physically around you (not including interactions on social media)?



Trick question: About how many hours a day are you in the presence of God, who loves you (and is everywhere all the time)?





A LITTLE DEEPER

SMALL GROUP

NOTHING NEW OR UNCOMMON

We know that God didn't design us for solitude but for community and connection with others. When we do feel lonely, however, it's best to go to God and also talk with another mature Christ-follower about it. The fact is that loneliness can lead to decreased mental and physical health. God wants us to come to him with our burdens and experience the support of the body of Christ in our pain.

Psalm 25:14–16

"The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant. My eyes are ever toward the Lord, for he will pluck my feet out of the net. Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted."

**Does it surprise you that King David felt lonely and afflicted?
Why or why not?**

**What might it look like for God to be gracious to you
in your particular situation?**

Philippians 4:6–7

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

What are you most anxious about when it comes to feeling alone?

Why should we go to God with our anxious feelings?

Romans 12:15

“Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.”

Why would God instruct us to join others in their sorrows and joys?

What does it communicate to you when someone celebrates or cries with you?

Who can you go to when you feel lonely—someone who will listen well and be with you?

APPLY IT

What can you do this week to battle against any loneliness feelings that may come your way?

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO DO IT?

IS THERE SOMEONE WHO CAN KEEP YOU ACCOUNTABLE?

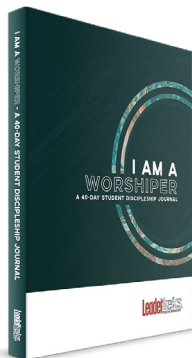
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KEEP GOING!

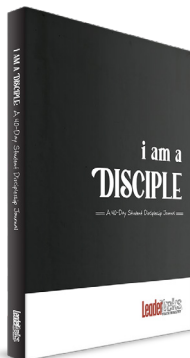
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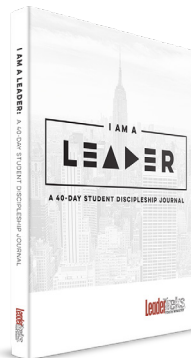
**I AM
NEW**



**I AM A
WORSHIPER**



**I AM A
DISCIPLE**



**I AM A
LEADER**

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