



Running on Empty – Week 3 – Loneliness
Spiritual Formation Guide

We hope you'll use this guide to take the teaching from Sunday's service and reflect on it with a few friends or with a group. If you have questions or want to talk more about how to take a next spiritual step, contact us at info@wschurch.org.

Scripture:

The LORD God said, "It's **not good** for man to be alone. I will make a **helper** suitable for him."
Genesis 2:18

Where does my help come from?
My help comes from the LORD...
Psalm 121:1-2

"God places the lonely in families."
Psalm 68:6

Reflection Questions:

- What stood out to you from Sunday's worship service? Is there a moment, a lyric from a song, something from the message, etc. that you've continued to think about since Sunday morning?
- **You are not alone.** This week, what is one way that you experienced that?
- Chip spent some time looking at the moment when God created humans in Genesis 2. Read the scripture and the verses around it. What does this story show you about the value God places on companionship? What questions do you have for God?
- "Longing for companionship is a basic part of being human." How have you observed this in others? In yourself?
- Chip shared a list of 10 things that tend to interfere with if not block our movement toward finding meaningful companionship with others...
 - Beware of your self-absorption.
 - Beware of your increasing need for convenience.
 - Beware of addictions of consumption.
 - Beware of shame.
 - The hardest things to throw away are the things that *almost* work.

- Tribalism is a lame alternative to real community.
- Online connections are better suited to *serve* [in-person connections] than *replace* in-person connections.
- Choose the difficult path.
- Aim to BE a good friend.
- There's no shortage of opportunities to meaningfully connect with others

Take a moment to look over this list. Mark the ones that stand out to you as ones you want to pay attention to. Share with someone, if you're willing.

- Read Psalm 68:6. Who are people in the church community (here at West Side or beyond) who have helped you experience being part of God's family?
- Look over the prayer & practice prompts. Take some time to do them now or make a plan to set aside time for it this week.

Prayer:

- **Pray that God would show you the faces of some people to pray for:**
 - People who have loved you and showed you that you are not alone.
 - People who may be lonely and need to be reminded that they are not alone.

Write down their names as God brings them to your mind. Thank God for each of them. Ask Him to guide you to reach out to a few of them this week.

Practices:

- **Mr. Rogers Exercise** — Take a silent minute to think of people who “have loved you into being.”

He says, “From the time you were very little, you’ve had people who have smiled you into smiling, people who have talked you into talking, sung you into singing, loved you into loving.”

- Who is that for you?—Who is it that has loved you into loving? Who are they? Who were they?
- Who was WITH YOU when you were feeling alone?
- Who listened to you when you were hurting?
- Who was present with you in your pain, and would have shouldered more of it if they could've?

They gave you an extraordinary gift of help... and when they did, God was touching your life and wiring you up to go be that person for others.

What has God made clear to you as you've reflected on this?