

Central Study Hour Sabbath School Lesson Notes for *Family Seasons*

Lesson 4: When Alone

SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read the Title and comment on the picture.

Read the memory verse and the first paragraph of the narrative. No family? Friends? Neighbors? A landlord? *How many people who live alone could die and only be discovered because bills are not paid?* People that know you and communicate with you should be normal life, *right?*

Share the New York Times article from the second paragraph.

Share the “Overview” section From the Teachers’ Comments on page 52 (some good things here!).

Share highlights of the last paragraph of the Sabbath Afternoon narrative.

SUNDAY: COMPANIONSHIP

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. *What’s the basic idea in these verses? What principle of life is being addressed in general?* Companions/friends can help each other out. There is an advantage over facing things alone.

Read/Share highlights of the first two paragraphs of the narrative.

What principles can we learn about dealing with loneliness from the following verses?

Read John 16:32-33 – Even when scattered and alone we can experience what Jesus said when He was left alone. “Yet, I am not alone, because the Father is with me.”

Read Philippians 4:11-13 – “Whatever state” we are in we can “be content” because through Christ’s strength we can “do all things.”

Share highlights from the third paragraph of the narrative. God made us for companionship.

With lots of people all around, can a person still be lonely? Yes, you can be lonely in a crowd. “Some of the loneliest people live in big cities where they often have interaction with others.”

Read the box and discuss the question at the bottom of the page. Is this a great failing among us? Do we get too busy to reach out and care? Are we unsure if people want us to reach out so end up doing nothing? Are we so focused on our own lives that we don’t notice others enough?

MONDAY: THE UNMARRIED LIFE

Are there advantages to not getting married?

Read the first paragraph. *Is this a valid argument to remain single? Did the Apostle Paul agree with this?*

Read 1 Corinthians 7:32-34. (Note that by “things of the world” Paul means the necessities of life; job, home, food, clothing.) Paul essentially sees it the same as the girl who quickly accepted calls to the mission field twice. He says that the single person can commit fully to the Lord’s work, whereas, the married person has to commit much time to job and pay to take care of house and home.

Read the second paragraph of the narrative. (“Most people...”)

Share the key points (on the specific circumstances of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea regarding marriage) from the third and fourth paragraphs of the narrative.

Share the highlights of the final paragraph.

Ask the question from the box at the bottom of the page. *Do we just need to make a greater effort to reach out to others?*

***For other thoughts on singleness, go to the Teachers’ Comments.

1. *Do we have a singleness problem or an aloneness problem?*

Cite Gen. 2:18. Share the second full paragraph on p. 53 (“All too often...places of work.”).

2. *Is it good for a woman to be alone?*

Share the first full paragraph on p. 54 (“Just as aloneness...strength and accountability.”).

3. *Can all our needs be met exclusively by God so that we have no need of other people in our lives? Can other people meet needs that are for God to fulfill?*

Share the paragraph at the bottom of page 54 (“Some have wondered...Creator can satisfy.”).

Persons often put the loved one in a place, so to speak, that only God can fill in their life. It won't work, and then the marriage is a disappointment. Without a relationship with Jesus, “relationships can become skewed, or worse, idolatrous.”

TUESDAY: WHEN MARRIAGE ENDS

Sin has devastated humanity, especially the family and marriage. Almost every family, even solid ones, have elements of dysfunction. Divorce causes sobering dysfunction to many families. “People going through this terrible experience run a gamut of emotions.” Grief may last for several months or years. Fear of the unknown, of being able to cope, and of making ends meet financially are normal anxieties with divorce. Often depression, anger and, yes---loneliness are part of the package, as well. Most of you have likely seen someone close go through this. Maybe some of you here went through this yourself.

What broad principles concerning divorce can we gather from the following verses?

Malachi 2:16 – The Lord hates putting away.

Matt. 5:31-32 – 1. Putting away is by divorce.

Why does the Lord hate divorce? It's not because He gets mad at people for doing wrong, but because He sees all the pain divorce brings to people's lives. He hates the hurt that it causes.

2. Fornication/adultery is the only acknowledged cause for divorce.

3. An unbiblically divorced wife had to remarry for support in the ancient world, therefore, was forced to commit adultery. And the man who married her also committed adultery. Women can more easily be unmarried today as they can often support themselves.

Matt. 19:8 – Divorce was never meant to be, but was allowed in the OT because of the hardness of men's hearts.

1 Cor. 7:1-13, 15 – If one spouse becomes a Christian and the other is not, the Christian should remain committed to the marriage. If the Christian ends the marriage on the basis that the other does not believe, the Christian should remain single or be reconciled to the spouse. If the unbelieving spouse chooses to end the marriage, the Christian spouse is free.

How can we help a person facing divorce? Should we try to help?

Share the third paragraph (“The Church as...restoring wounded relationships.”).

Discuss the question in the box at the bottom of the page.

WEDNESDAY: DEATH AND LONELINESS

Share highlights from the second and third paragraphs.

Read the fourth paragraph.

What do the following texts teach us about death and about how people struggle with it?

2 Sam. 18:33 – David mourned Absalom's death. Death brings great grief.

Gen. 37:34 – Jacob was heart broken believing that Joseph was dead.

Rev. 21:4 – In the earth made new, there will be no more death. Some day in the future, suffering, evil, and death will be all forever gone.

1 Thess. 4:17-18 – Comfort is found in the promise of the resurrection of our lost loved ones when Jesus

comes. This is a fantastic hope!

Isaiah 57:1 – The righteous are taken away from the evil to come. In some cases, God allows a person to pass away so they don't have to deal with some future evil that may be overwhelming. In many cases, God allows a suffering person to pass away to bring their suffering to an end. Being relieved of their suffering is often a way we find consolation when we lose a loved that had a serious illness.

Read the last paragraph of the narrative.

Discuss the question in the box at the bottom of the page.

THURSDAY: SPIRITUALLY SINGLE

Share the key points (from Natalie's story) in the first three paragraphs of the narrative.

What encouraging words do we find in the following verses for those who may feel spiritually single?

Isaiah 54:5 – “Thy Maker is thine husband.”

Hosea 2:19-20 – God will betroth thee to Him in righteousness, judgment, mercy, and faithfulness, and “thou shalt know the LORD.”

Psalms 72:12 – God will deliver the needy, the poor, and them that have no helper.

Answer: God will come especially close to a person in need for spiritual companionship but can't get that in their marriage relationship.

Share highlights from the last large paragraph. Some may have a good marriage and just long for spiritual agreement and unity to come someday.

FRIDAY

It was noted that Enoch had pressing labors to reach the lost of his day, and that to gain greater strength for that work, “he would withdraw, to spend a season in solitude, hungering and thirsting for that divine knowledge which God alone can impart.” As a result of this communion with God, he began “to reflect the divine image.” This showed by a radiant light “upon his countenance.” *Gospel Workers*, p. 52.

Read/share from the remainder of the narrative (following the GW 52 quotation).

CONCLUSION

Discuss Question #1 on Friday's page.

1st: Don't allow people to be left out based on appearances (poverty, ethnicity, obesity), or because of circumstances (going through divorce, loss of a spouse, spouse is not a member).

2nd: We must make a greater effort to get to know people so we become aware of who needs more genuine fellowship/friendship.

Everyone needs to socialize beyond the friends that we already have!

We must be intentional