

# DEEP SIX STUDY

October 3rd, 2021

## ***The Story Project – “A Family That Endures Divided Times”***

**MESSAGE HIGHLIGHTS** (You can view the full message on Facebook or at [live.capecodchurch.com/live](https://live.capecodchurch.com/live))

**Opening:** In this most “connected” of times – when we have hundreds of “friends” on social media and can contact each other instantly, 24/7 – loneliness is an epidemic like never before. The good news? God’s Gift of Life comes with the antidote for loneliness: a Family that endures in a culture that divides.

### **1. Three Myths of Loneliness** (Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 2:18)

- Even before the pandemic began, loneliness had already become an epidemic in the US; a 2019 survey noted that 36% of the general population – and as much as 79% of those within the younger generations – reported struggling with “significant loneliness.”
- Our culture promotes **3 Myths of Loneliness** that are fueling the epidemic:
  - a. I Have to Agree With You to Be With You – Disagreements, big and small, are dividing us like never before; our ability to overlook them in our relationships seems to be gone.
  - b. I Am Strong Enough By Myself – Our American culture still avidly promotes the virtue of “tough individualism” that portrays a reliance on others as a form of weakness.
  - c. Social Distance Doesn’t Matter – The ultimate lie of the social media age is that I can have “friends” without actually sharing my life in a vulnerable way with other humans.
- The Creation narrative (Genesis 1&2) tells us clearly that we weren’t made to be alone.

### **2. Three Gifts of a Family That Endures**

- God’s Gift of Life is a *relational* gift. Throughout The Story, we see that God’s intent is to make one people – a family – through Jesus. Jesus gave that family a name: “my Church.” The word “church” may evoke good or bad images, but we should see it as “A Family That Endures.”
- In these divide, lonely times, God offers us **3 Gifts of a Family That Endures**:
  - a. A Table To Gather Around (Luke 5:29-30; 1 Peter 4:8-9) – The Church offers a place for the Family to be together, a “rock” to cling to in the middle of a raging cultural current pulling us apart. Jesus creates a “table” for us where we can share our lives...and food!
  - b. A Place to Be Unique and Weak (Galatians 3:28 NIV) – From the beginning, the Church has united the diverse and welcomed the struggling; the Family offers a place to be uniquely who we are without being afraid of exposing our weaknesses to others.
  - c. A Father We Can Follow (Galatians 3:26) – At the “table” we find a Father we can trust and build our lives around, united as his children through our faith in his Son, Jesus.
- For many of us, a good next step is to “pull up a bit closer to the table” – to get a bit more involved in the Family as we seek to overcome loneliness. For the Church, our goal should be to become that welcoming Family that makes those around us ask, “How do they do that??”

## ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

*These passages may provide additional insights related to the subject of this week's message. Verses from NLT unless otherwise noted.*

Matthew 12:46-50; John 12:1-3; Ephesians 2:17-22; Ephesians 4:1-4; James 2:1-5; 1 John 3:1-2

Video of the Week: [God](#) by the Bible Project

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Amid the “epidemic of loneliness,” we all find ourselves feeling lonely from time to time. What actions or thoughts have you found most helpful in overcoming your own episodes of loneliness?
2. Of the “Three Myths of Loneliness” mentioned in the message, which one would you say contributes most to the loneliness epidemic among the younger generations (Millennials and Gen Z)? Explain your answer.
3. Read Genesis 1:26-27 again. How would you explain to someone who’s never encountered the Bible before what it means when it says humans were created “in the image of God”?
4. There are those who would say (especially if they’ve had a bad experience with “church”) that they can worship God and have a relationship with him without ever connecting with a community of others who are doing the same (i.e., a church). How would you respond to that assertion?
5. Gathering around a meal is a recurrent theme we see in the accounts of Jesus’ ministry. In your view, why is food such a great catalyst for fostering relationships within the Family of God? Or perhaps it’s just a coincidence that Jesus ate with people a lot?
6. Read Galatians 3:28 again. “Uniting the diverse” sounds really good in a time when our disagreements about so many things divide us. What would you say has to happen in a church for that uniting of a bunch of people with diverse beliefs and strong opinions to really take place?