

# Created for Connection (Genesis 1:26-31)

Combating Loneliness pt. 1  
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## THE BIG IDEA

Because we are made in God's image and likeness, we are created for connection with other people. When we isolate ourselves, we deny the image of God within us, which leads to loneliness.

## OPENING

- When have you felt the loneliest?
- What's your favorite song or movie about loneliness or isolation?

## DIGGING DEEPER

- All Christians believe that God created the galaxies. This belief is summed up in the first part of the Nicene Creed: *"We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen."*<sup>1</sup> How does believing in God as the Creator make a difference in how we view the world?
- Re-read Genesis 1:26. The 16<sup>th</sup> century Reformer Johannes Brenz says, *"When God says, 'Let us make humankind,' we should understand the Father to be speaking with the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is the holiest senate and the most sacred of councils that was ever convened. In this council of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, it was concluded and ordained that humankind would be created in the image and likeness of God, and that they would be partakers of the divine blessedness and preside over all the other creatures on earth, in the sea and in the sky, and thus be like God on earth."*<sup>2</sup> What does this imply about the creation of the human race?

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<sup>1</sup>Nicene Creed, *ECO Confessional Standards*, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Cited in Timothy George (editor), *Reformation Commentary on Scripture* (InterVarsity), Vol. 1, p. 41.

- The U.S. Surgeon General defines loneliness as “*a subjective distressing experience that results from perceived isolation or inadequate meaningful connections.*”<sup>3</sup> What evidence do you see of loneliness in our world today?
- In my message, I rely heavily on Karl Barth’s interpretation of the image of God. Barth was a Swiss Reformed theologian from the early twentieth century. Barth’s “*point here is not simply that humans exist in two genders, but that each human...is a fitting counterpart for God and can enter into a personal relationship with God. What we are as male and female is what makes us personal and capable of relationships with one another and with God”<sup>4</sup> How does this idea relate to the idea that God is a Trinity, one God who eternally exists as three persons?*

## PUTTING IT TO WORK

- How have you inadvertently sabotaged connecting with other people in your life?
- Spend time in prayer this week, thanking God for creating you in the image and likeness of God.

## PRAYER REQUESTS

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<sup>3</sup>*Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: The U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community*, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup>Craig Carter, “Karl Barth and the Imago Dei,” in *Go Figure: Figuration in Biblical Interpretation* (Wipf and Stock), p. 129.