

Epic Cycle 7: Overcoming Loneliness and Jealousy

How to Have a Student-Led Meeting:

- Welcome everyone and open in prayer
- Explain First Priority (a Christian group, but you don't have to be a Christian to attend)
- Read the memory verse, questions and challenges
- A student reports weekly attendance on FPTB phone app
- A student sends meeting reminders to the group
- Close in prayer

Memory Verse: “: “So encourage each other and help each other grow stronger in faith, just as you are already doing”. 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Week 1-Equip

This week we will talk about how loneliness affects us and why it is important to be connected to others.

1. After God created the first human, Adam, “the Lord God said, “It isn’t good for man to be alone; I will make a companion for him, a helper suited to his needs.”.” God then created Eve.

Genesis 2:18

Questions:

- A. Why was it not good for Adam to be alone?
- B. Does God intend for us to have companions too? Why?

2. In the Bible, we read about David who suffered with loneliness and isolation: I am hurt and lonely. Turn to me, and show me mercy. Free me from my troubles. Help me solve my problems. Look at my trials and troubles. Forgive me for all the sins I have done (**Psalm 25:16-21**).

Questions:

- A. Why is loneliness so painful?
- B. What is David doing in these verses and why is this important?
- C. Have you ever cried out to God? If yes, please explain the circumstances.

3. In **John 16:32**, **Jesus** tells his disciples the following: “Take careful notice: an hour is coming, and has arrived, when you will all be scattered, each to his own *home*, leaving Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me” and In **1 John 4:13** we read: “We know that we live in God and God lives in us. We know this because he gave us his [Holy] Spirit”.

Questions:

- A. What does it mean to “abide” in Christ and why is this an important aspect of the Christian faith?
- B. How does **John 16:32** encourage us when we feel alone?
- C. How do you handle feeling alone or lonely (share the positive and negative)?

Action: Make an effort at school today to talk to someone new or reach out to someone you haven’t spoken to in a while.

Challenge: Pray for a friend who needs to know Jesus.

Week 2-Prepare

Often, we look at what others have and feel jealousy- their looks, grades, abilities, wealth, etc. If jealousy is not dealt with, it will turn into bitterness. Today, we will talk about why jealousy is destructive and what we can do to avoid it.

1. In **James 3:14** we read: “If your heart is one that bleeds dark streams of jealousy and selfishness, do not be so proud that you ignore your depraved state” and **Ecclesiastes 4:4** reads: Then I thought, “Why do people work so hard?” I saw people try to succeed and be better than other people. They do this because they are jealous. They don’t want other people to have more than they have. This is senseless. It is like trying to catch the wind.”

Questions:

- A. Why are selfishness and jealousy included together?
- B. Why don’t we want others to have more than us?
- C. Why does jealousy turn to bitterness (if it’s not dealt with)?

2. In **Hebrews 13:5** we read: Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have because He has said, “I will never leave you; I will always be by your side.”

Questions:

- A. What does it mean to “be content”?
- B. Why is being grateful related to being content?
- C. How does God’s promise to “always be by your side” help you to be content?

3. In **Galatians 6:4** we read: Let everyone be sure that he is doing his very best, for then he will have the personal satisfaction of work well done and won’t need to compare himself with someone else.

Questions:

- A. How is personal satisfaction related to doing your best?
- B. Why does this protect you from comparing yourself to others?
- C. Spend the next few minutes talking about how these verses **PREPARE** you to be content (not jealous of others) and name one area of your life where you will choose to be content (grateful).

Action: Spend time in prayer by yourself this week thanking God for all that you have, for never leaving you, and for His promises.

Challenge: Invite at least two new friends to attend next week's INVITE meeting.

Week 3-Invite

This week, a student should share a story of how God is moving in their lives, and another should share the gospel message and invitation (SEE BELOW). Please remember to use the Response Cards [found on the First Priority of Tampa Bay website under the Students tab], and then report attendance/decisions for Christ on the First Priority of Tampa Bay phone app.

Gospel Message (To be read out loud to the group):

- Admit that you are a sinner. To "sin" means to make a bad choice, and sin separates us from God.
- Believe in Jesus and put your trust in Him. Christ's death on a cross two thousand years ago was an act of selfless love. He took on the whole sins of humanity, making it possible for all people to encounter God.
- Confess Christ Jesus as your Lord and Savior. This means acknowledging that you want Him in your life.

Invitation/Prayer (ask students to bow their heads):

If this message is speaking to you today, and you want to trust in Jesus as your Savior then pray this simple prayer to yourself: Dear Lord, I have sinned and this has separated me from you because you are a Holy God. In your word it says that Jesus died for me, and his grace is extended to me so that I can be forgiven. Today, I pray that you will come into my life and be my LORD and help me to trust in you and live in a way that is pleasing to you. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Follow UP Plan:

Once you've shared the gospel and invitation, collect the Student Response Cards (can be downloaded from the First Priority website) and then follow these steps:

1. Student leaders commit to praying for and contacting any student who has made a decision for Christ and/or has questions.
2. When contacting these students, student leaders will want to:
 - Answer any questions they may have
 - Offer to pray for them
 - Invite them to the next week's HELP Week meeting
 - Invite them to your church, if they don't have one
3. Return all Student Response cards to the student leader or teacher (Response cards or information on the cards must never be given to an outside adult or organization/ church)

Challenge: Follow up with your friends who attended today's meeting and ask how you can pray for them.

WEEK 4-Connect

In this cycle, we have talked about the dangers of loneliness and how to combat jealousy by being content with what we have. This week, we will talk about friendship and why it is important.

1. **1 Thessalonians 5:11** reads: "So encourage each other and help each other grow stronger in faith, just as you are already doing".

Questions:

- A. Why do we need good friends to help us grow in our faith and can they encourage us when we are struggling?
- B. If someone in your group is struggling with loneliness, how would you encourage them? What is one way you can help them?

2. **Philippians 2:3** reads: If you've gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you *care*—then do me a favor: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends. Don't push your way to the front; don't sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.

Questions:

- A. What is "being in a community of the Spirit" and why does this matter?
- B. Why must you forget yourself "long enough" to "lend a helping hand" to someone else?
- C. How do these verses help you to be a better friend and to **CONNECT** with others?

3. For the remainder of the meeting, discuss ways for your First Priority group to organize a service project for the school- contact a First Priority representative if you need suggestions.

Action: Set a date to execute your service project and make a plan to talk with your team about it.

Challenge: Invite a friend to your church or youth group this week.