

Belonging

“Then the Lord God said, it is not good for man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.” Genesis 2:18

“For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, Abba Father (Daddy, Daddy!). And the Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.” Romans 8:15-16

Everyone longs to belong.

None of us wants to be alone, isolated, disconnected, left out or left behind. Belonging, being connected to others, is a natural need of our hearts. Relationships matter. Relationships mean that we belong somewhere with someone or something.

God has cared about belonging from the very beginning.

The Lord looked over all He had created and declared that it was very good (Genesis 1:31). *“Very good”* included Adam and Eve. Initially, Adam was all alone. That was not good. But God took care of that. He made Eve. Adam was blown away by her loveliness and companionship. Lonely no more! Our first parents belonged to God and each other and would have lived happily ever after, enjoying fellowship with God and one another. But belonging became an issue when they made a fateful decision to disobey the Lord.

Sin created a barrier between Creator and creation. Adam and Eve, the pinnacle of God’s creative works, turned their backs on God and were kicked out of paradise (Genesis 3). When they bounced out of Eden, belonging went out the window.

Humankind’s future looked bleak. But all was not lost. On their way out of the Garden of Eden, God promised that mankind would reconnect with Him. Our Creator promised a Savior who would bridge the gap between God and men. One day mankind would belong again. But for century after century, what seemed like eternity, man longed to belong to God again.

Belonging Is In Our Blood

You and I love to belong. Family, church, community groups, social clubs, sports fan clubs, fraternities and sororities, lodges, civic organizations, political causes, social media like Facebook, even gangs....we all like to belong. It is amazing and sad that

young men and women will join up with a violent gang to belong to something. The gang colors, logos, secret handshakes and gang language send a message that I BELONG.

Belonging meets our need to be needed, to feel valued and important, to participate in something bigger than ourselves. To belong means that I matter. I fit somewhere. I fill a spot. I am doing more than just taking up space. I am a vital link in the chain of humanity.

The number one concern expressed by Americans today is that they are lonely. Loneliness equals not belonging. You and I can feel lonely in a time when there are more people on earth and more things to do than ever before.

Some people are so desperate to belong that they will hastily marry the wrong person, associate with unscrupulous people, merge with organizations and businesses that aren't honest, join groups that require that they compromise what they believe, or hook up with persons and things they shouldn't hook up with.

Belonging can be disrupted by divorce in families, children being placed in foster care, firing from jobs, excommunication from religious groups, betrayal from friends or acquaintances, a life crisis that shakes our self-confidence and ability to get along with others, or an event/experience that cuts us off from the people we thought we belonged to.

I am a product of a divorced family. A broken home broke my heart and left me wondering where I belonged. In my adult life I have experienced rejection from being released from my professional responsibilities and associations. I have known the heartache of betrayal from people I trusted. I have been mocked, trash-talked, taunted and suffered for sharing my Christian faith.

I have felt the twinge in my heart of what it means to not belong anymore. I have been forced out or walked out of places where I once belonged. Not belonging is difficult for me, and most likely for you too.

We Belong Because of Christ's Blood

When I became a Christian, the belonging issue was no longer an issue for me. Who I belonged to and where I belonged was settled when I was born again

According to Romans 8:15-17, I am a child of God who belongs to the family of God. Wow! A kid from a divorced home belongs to the family of families. An eternal one where I will never not belong again. And I have an inheritance in Christ that no earthly family could ever match (Romans 8:18).

Knowing that I belong to the Lord has helped me endure and overcome the times I mentioned when I felt disconnected, when I struggled with belonging. Throughout scripture is a recurring theme that God is our Heavenly Father and we are His children. We have a Father in heaven whose name is holy and who loves His children.

In Ephesians 2:8-14, which I encourage you to study, God sent His Son Jesus to break down the wall that separated us from belonging to Him. You and I “*who formerly were far off, have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*” From far off (distant and disconnected) to near (close and connected) ...sounds like belonging to me!

I have decided that belonging to God is enough. That doesn't mean that I don't value and desire to belong to people. Of course I do, just like you. But when push comes to shove, and people shove me out, God never will. He will never take a hike on us, even if people do. **We belong...period. That is what His unconditional love in Christ is all about.**

I thank God everyday that I do have family, friends, brothers and sisters in Christ, co-workers, and people in the community where I belong. I am not alone. I belong. That is a very good thing for me, and you too!

Here's How To Begin Belonging

- ✓ You belong to God because God's Word says so. Believe it. Receive it.
- ✓ Don't let the devil or anyone else tell you differently. Rebuke the lies.
- ✓ Reject rejection.
- ✓ Abandon abandonment.
- ✓ Be done with the sting of betrayal.
- ✓ Forgive people who have dumped you and left you alone. Release them and their offense against you.
- ✓ Do your part to restore relationships with people where belonging is an issue.
- ✓ Confess the Word that you are a child of the Living God. I AM GOD'S KID!
- ✓ Reach out to people who don't belong. Invite them to come to know Christ.
- ✓ Rejoice everyday that you belong and are not alone. Because you belong sing a song of praise to God!

YOU, YES YOU, BELONG. The Holy Spirit lives in you. The Lord Jesus Christ is with you, for you and working on your behalf. So enjoy today. Look out your door and declare “Look our world. Here I come. I belong to God and so can you.”

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