What the Bible says about dealing with loneliness

First, some causes of loneliness....
Loneliness doesn't develop overnight. It can be the result of a lifetime of influences that shape our personality. Or it can evolve after a major transition or trauma. Often we are unaware of the subtle forces that can slowly lead us into self-imposed isolation.

Some people tend to be loners because of circumstances in their childhood development. For example, growing up with an un-affectionate or overly critical parent may make one shy away from intimacy with others. Some people simply never learn to communicate well or get along with their peers. Others have overly aggressive or demanding personalities that make people withdraw out of intimidation. Conversely, people with low self-esteem often withdraw from social situations they believe will lead to rejection. Loneliness can become a lifestyle for the person who struggles with poorly developed interpersonal skills.

There are also many social factors that contribute to loneliness. We live in an age in which modern technology has made it easier to do things without other people and without leaving our homes. Television is the chief culprit that robs us of time with relatives and neighbors. For some, especially the elderly, the increased likelihood of becoming the victim of a crime keeps them from venturing out of their homes. Also, because our society is more mobile than in the past, families may relocate several times for career advancement or other reasons, which tends to discourage the development of deep friendships.

Loneliness can result from "situational factors," circumstances in life that increase the possibility of isolation. People who are unmarried, divorced or widowed are more likely to encounter loneliness simply because they are more likely to be alone. However, loneliness can also occur when a marriage relationship doesn't produce the closeness we expect. The student separated from home, the leader who must remain aloof from his subordinates, the individual with a disability or disease -- all face a greater chance of loneliness due to a situation in their lives.

Often loneliness brought on by developmental, social or situational factors leads to problems that only worsen loneliness. Alcoholism, drug abuse, family breakdown and other social ills are frequently rooted in loneliness and usually lead to greater alienation from meaningful human contact. The proliferation of gangs, religious cults and other deviant social groups can be attributed largely to people's need to belong somewhere and their failure to find acceptance in a traditional setting.

Whatever may be contributing to your loneliness, there is a way out. It begins with confronting a cause of loneliness that every human being must come to terms with -- the spiritual loneliness of being separated from God. Each of us has a need to connect with something larger than ourselves in order to fill the spiritual vacuum that exists within us all. The Bible is God's plan for developing the most important relationship in our lives.

Bible examples of loneliness

David – 1Samuel 30:1-25, especially verse 6.
Elijah – 1 Kings 19:1-21, especially verses 9-15, 18
Jesus – Mark 1:35-38  (seeking solitude can actually be a defense against loneliness.)
Luke 22:45-46; Mark 14:50, 72,  (Because of others' human weaknesses)
Mark 15:34 – because of what Jesus was doing for us
Paul – 2Timothy 4:10-18

Solutions -

James 4:8 - "draw near to God and He will draw near to you."
Hebrews 11:6; 10:19-33
Ephesians 2:11-22 - what Jesus did takes away the distance and disunity between us and God, one another.
Romans 8:15-17
John 14:2-3; 16-21