

## Living in Hope with the One Leader Study Series

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### Title: *Connected or Isolated?*

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**In these turbulent times, with government-mandated social distancing and lockdowns in many parts of the country, one of the great challenges we face is how to be and stay connected. We're focusing here on connections in addition to normal work/business relationships.**

### The Good and the Bad

If we can draw one positive benefit from this pandemic crisis, it's that some of our busyness, the chasing after temporal things, has been stripped away, exposing our need for true relationships. We all are wired to engage in meaningful relationships, yet too often we are so caught up with living life that we miss these heart connections. The flip-side challenge is that with forced social distancing, it is very easy to be isolated and alone. We are left wondering *Who really cares?* or *Where are my real friends?*

In these times we can learn and apply three important lessons from Larry Crabb –

*“Beneath all our problems there are desperately hurting souls that must find the nourishment only community can provide or die. The greatest need in modern civilization is the development of communities—true communities where the heart of God is home, where the humble and wise learn to shepherd those on the path behind them, where trusting strugglers lock arms with others as together they journey on.”*

### Here are three connection points that we can start now –

1. **Begin with a heart connection with the Lord; be in community with Him.** When our lives are disrupted and our daily routines are upended, it is all too easy to put time with the Lord on the shelf. If we miss this connection, all other connections—even exercising wisdom at work—will go out the window.
2. **Establish a connection with those on the path behind us.** The Lord wants us to serve those behind us in need. We can do this spiritually, emotionally, or physically. This shepherding includes discipling or mentoring others. There are numerous people who may be on the path behind us (or in the ditch beside it) who need the Lord. We can be that light of hope and help to those who are searching.
3. **Connect with our families and fellow believers with whom we are traveling.** We can lock arms with one another in prayer, in serving, encouraging, and being there. We can mutually help one another in many ways.

## The Great Challenge and Opportunity

The great challenge is not to become isolated or be alone, because that is when we are most vulnerable and the enemy can easily take us out. Fight the tendency to isolate, reach out, care, and be there for someone else.

**Henri Nouwen** says, *“Nothing is sweet or easy about community. Community is a fellowship of people who do not hide their joys and sorrows but make them visible to each other in a gesture of hope. In community we say: Life is full of gains and losses, joys and sorrows, ups and downs—but we do not have to live it alone. We want to drink our cup together and thus celebrate the truth that the wounds of our individual lives, which seem intolerable when lived alone, become sources of healing when we live them as part of a fellowship of mutual care.”*

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