Monday
In a Season of Loss, Release Your Grief

“Pour out your heart to him, for God is our refuge.” (Psalm 62:8b NLT)

The Bible says when you go through a season of loss, the first thing you need to do is release your grief. Tragedy always produces strong emotions - anger, fear, depression, worry, and sometimes guilt. These feelings are scary to us, and we don't know what to do with them. When we have experienced a major loss, these enormous feelings bubble up within us. If you don't deal with them now, it will take you far longer to recover. In Matthew 5:4, he says, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted” (NLT). It's OK to grieve. When somebody is a Christian, we know he goes on to Heaven, so we don't grieve like the world. We're not grieving for their sake; we're grieving for our own sake, because we're going to miss them.

What do you do with your feelings? You've got to deal with them. You must release your grief. You don't repress it or stuff it down. You don't rehearse it and go over and over it in your mind. Release your grief first so that God can begin to heal your heart.

Tuesday
The Value of Hard Places

"So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you." 2 Corinthians 4:12

Being forced into hard places gives us a whole new perspective on life. Things we once valued no longer hold the same value. Small things become big things, and what we once thought big no longer holds such importance. These hard places allow us to identify with the sufferings of others. It keeps us from having a shallow view of the hardships of others and allows us to truly identify with them. Those who speak of such trials from no experience often judge others who have had such hardship.

Those who have walked in hard places immediately have a kinship with others who have walked there also. They do not need to explain; they merely look at one another with mutual respect and admiration for their common experience. There is nothing like sharing personal experience in a
given situation. A Church member lost her husband. In spite of numerous counsels she could not be comforted, until another man who had lost a wife came along. Surprisingly, she could relate with him and she was immediately comforted.

Wednesday
Simply Obey

"But Naaman went away angry and said, 'I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy'" (2 Kings 5:11-12).

Naaman was a distinguished and highly respected army general who needed healing from Leprosy. A young servant girl of the king's house suggested that the prophet Elisha could heal him. He followed her advice and Elisha sent a message to him to do the following: "Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed" (2 Kings 5:10). However, when the instruction came as to what he was to do, it seemed ridiculous to him. Like many of us, Naaman expected God to perform His miracle through Elisha in a dramatic and "religious" way.

Sometimes we fail to recognize that God can work through a simple act of obedience that seems unrelated to the problem. God told Joshua to walk around Jericho seven times to win the battle. He told a man to put mud on his eyes to be healed. He told Peter to catch a fish to get a coin to pay his taxes.
There are other times God calls us to use the natural to receive a breakthrough. Sometimes we simply need to change our diet or go see a doctor to see a breakthrough in our health. Sometimes we need to change the way we are doing our work to get a breakthrough in our careers. Ask Him what steps you are to take for your breakthrough.

Thursday
Self-Seeking Spirit

'A dispute arose among them as to which of them would be greatest.' Luke 9:46

What's at work in this story in Scripture? A self-seeking spirit. As long as your motive for serving is to make yourself look good, you'll never enjoy God's approval. And His 'well done' is the only thing that counts. The ability to serve behind the scenes, and do it with joy, comes from the knowledge
that ultimately your service will be recognized and rewarded by the only One whose opinion counts.

Why did Jesus feature a child that day? For three reasons: 1) A child is teachable. When you're finished learning, you're finished. 2) A child is trusting. When you promise a child something; they believe you, act on it, and expect it to be so. 3) A child is tender-hearted. Seek the interest of the Lord and not your own. Proclaim Him.

Friday
Made For Relationship

“It is not good for the man to be alone.” (Genesis 2:18)

You were made to have a personal, intimate relationship with Jesus Christ, a relationship that God is dying to have with you. In fact, His Son did die so you could have it. The real reason so many Christians are lonely is because they're sitting when they should be serving. All around us is a world full of people who are lonely and waiting to be cared for. That elderly person who hasn't had a visit in two years. That teenager who is all messed up and wonders. That single adult who goes home every night to a lonely apartment. That widow who has just buried her husband. That employee who heads for the bar every night after work because there's nothing else to do.

The world is full of people waiting to be loved. Stop saying, "I don't have any friends!" and start saying, "God, who can you use me to minister to? Who can I show your love to?" If all you did for the rest of your life was commit yourself to being a friend to people who are lonely, you'd make something significant of your life. That would be a valid, worthy life goal. Get involved in a ministry. You will go through lonely times in your life, but you'll never go through it alone if you have an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ.

Saturday
Beware, You Are Not Standing

"Simon, Simon, satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." Luke 22:31-32

Have you ever perceived yourself to be at one place spiritually only to discover that you were actually far from this place? Peter perceived himself to be so spiritually strong that he was prepared to suffer greatly for his Master. Yet Jesus knew where Peter really was in his own pilgrimage. He knew that Peter's enthusiasm did not match his reality. He was suffering from an attitude of self-righteousness. So, how did Jesus help Peter match his perception to his reality? Peter was the object of a divine setup.
First, notice that satan asked permission to sift Peter as wheat. Jesus determined that satan would be used to bring Peter to the maturity level both Jesus and Peter really desired. And Jesus was praying that Peter would pass the test. Jesus told Peter that he would deny Him three times that very day. Peter could not believe what Jesus was saying. Sometimes the lessons we must learn are very painful. This experience was necessary in Peter’s life. It was necessary to purge Peter from his sin of self-righteousness. What about you? Where are you standing?

Sunday
Do You Need a Breakthrough?

"...while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. He instructed me and said to me, 'Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding'" (Dan 9:21-22).

There are times in our lives when we simply need a breakthrough from God. Maybe you need a new job or a breakthrough in your finances, direction on a big business deal, or maybe physical healing from an illness. Sometimes we need to hear from God directly for situations in our lives. Daniel was seeking God to understand why the nation had been in captivity for 70 years. He began to fast and pray. At the end of this time an angel of the Lord appeared to him. It is clear the angel came to Daniel because of his fasting and prayer and his seeking God for answers.

Bible says, "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart" (Jer 29:13). The problem with most of us is we are unwilling to seek God for the answers. Seeking God requires an intentional focus that may require prayer and fasting. Do you need a breakthrough? Consider committing to a time of fasting and prayer.