Monday
When You’re Lonely, God Is with You

“The first time I was brought before the judge, no one came with me. Everyone abandoned me. May it not be counted against them. But the Lord stood with me and gave me strength so that I might preach the Good News in its entirety for all the Gentiles to hear. And he rescued me from certain death.” (2 Timothy 4:16-17 NLT)

When you’re lonely, where is God? He’s where he has always been - right beside you. He is with you even if you don't feel it. The Bible says over and over that if you have a relationship with Christ, then God is with you all the time. He says “I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20b NIV). He's always with you. You're never really fully alone.

A few years ago, Olaitan and I flew to Santiago, Chile to attend the BWA Annual Gathering. About halfway through the almost 12 hour flight from Santiago to Miami, we went through the most horrendous storm we could ever remember. We were pitching and jolting. The plane was tilting, and everybody was getting antsy. They were obviously disturbed by the circumstances. What did we do under the circumstance, we simply prayed and reminded God we were in the aircraft. We landed safely.

Tuesday
A Callous Spirit

'...You do not know what manner of spirit you are of.' Luke 9:55

The disciples had a problem with their attitude and on each occasion, Jesus called their attention to such. Let's look at one and see what we can learn: A callous spirit. Instead of believing Christ to feed the crowd with five loaves and two fishes, they said to Jesus, 'Send the multitude away' (Luke 9:12 NKJV).

Years ago, the story is told of a man who decided to visit the Churches of two well known television ministers he liked. After hearing the first, he asked if he could say hello to him. But the minister's 'handlers' said no, suggesting he phoned to arrange an appointment. Disappointed, he went to hear the other minister, and was invited to lunch with him following the service. Feeling valued, he handed the minister a cheque for four million dollars. Only as you stay in touch with people's
needs, can God use you to meet those needs in real time. The saying goes, 'People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.' So, do you care?

Wednesday
Bitterness Perpetuates Loneliness

“The first time I was brought before the judge, no one came with me. Everyone abandoned me. May it not be counted against them.” (2 Timothy 4:16 NLT)

The Bible gives us some guidelines for what we should do when we are going through a season of loneliness. They are illustrated in the life of Paul in 2 Timothy 4, when he was in prison and awaiting his execution. Paul, probably, the greatest Christian next to Jesus, was on trial in Rome, and not one person stepped forward to defend him. Not one! He was absolutely by himself. Nobody stepped forward to say, "This is a good guy. He's alright." Yet Paul did not say, "Those jerks — after all I've done for them all these years!" Instead, he said, "May it not be counted against them.” In other words, he was not going to let himself become bitter. Because bitterness always makes loneliness worse.

When you feel lonely, you need to minimize your hurt. You need to play it down and pray it up. Refuse to become resentful, because bitterness will eat you up. Bitterness and loneliness go together because they become a cycle. You become lonely. Then you start feeling bad about it and have a pity party. Then you become bitter. Your bitterness makes you even lonelier, which makes you more bitter. Soon, you're a hardhearted, depressed person that nobody can get close to.

Thursday
God Always Works For Your Good

"We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28 NIV)

God has a purpose for every season of your life - the lonely seasons, the sad seasons, the seasons of success, the seasons of waiting, the seasons of grief, etc. This is one of the basic truths in the Bible. If you're a believer, nothing comes into your life that hasn't been filtered by your heavenly Father. Your life is not a random series of freak accidents and occurrences and circumstances. God never does anything by accident. He has an appointed time for everything in your life. Even the bad times? Yes.

Don't misunderstand me. God does not have to plan all the problems in your life. He doesn't need to. You come up with them yourself! Bad times happen because of the bad decisions you make. And, they also happen because of bad decisions other people make, where you're an innocent vic-
tim. God doesn't have to plan bad things; he is not the author of evil. But God can draw good out of each event in your life. That means every single event, no matter how dark or shameful or how guilty or bitter you feel about it, God can bring good out of it. He can work for your good. God will do it. He has an appointed time for everything.

Friday
Moving in Presumption

"Nevertheless, in their presumption they went up toward the high hill country, though neither Moses nor the ark of the Lord's covenant moved from the camp." Numbers 14:44

The people of Israel were brought out of Egypt to enter a new land—the Promised Land. This land was not handed over to them freely; it required the removing of God's enemies through battle. It required a partnership between God and the people. As long as the people remained true to God, they were victorious. God was angered at the people for their lack of faith. Moses had to intercede on their behalf. Once they realised what they had done, it was too late. But they thought their repentance was enough to right their wrong. They presumed this was all that was necessary.

Moses informed them they were deceived in their presumption of God's favour. They went to battle against the Amalekites only to be soundly defeated. Those who returned did not understand why they lost the battle. Anytime you keep God out of your affairs, you will be on your own. God will allow you satisfy yourself. He will never impose Himself on you. Do not be presumptuous. Depend on God for all you need.

Saturday
Retirement or a New Assignment?

For a man may do his work with wisdom, knowledge and skill... (Eccl 2:21).
He didn't begin this job until he was sixty-nine years old. He had already had a successful Hollywood movie career and decided to try his hand at politics. He would be known by one job more than any other. He would also be known as one of the United State's greatest statesmen. He had a faith that was genuine but not intruding or very public, but you knew where he stood. He always treated people, even his detractors with grace. He was known for his extraordinary love he had for his wife.

The man was Ronald Reagan, and he did not begin his greatest work until he was sixty-nine years old. By this season of life, most are thinking of retirement in Florida. Ronald Reagan decided to run for the Presidency of the United States and successfully served two terms as the 40th President. It was Reagan's faith that led him to see the Soviet Union as an "evil empire." He'll be remembered as the President who brought down communism in the Soviet Union. Consider this: Your greatest work may yet be ahead of you. Don't let age keep you from being used by God.
'...But where sin increased, grace increased all the more.' Romans 5:20

You need a lot of grace in marriage. Even in the best of relationships, things happen that cause misunderstanding and hurt. Every marriage brings together two people usually from different backgrounds and practices. Success requires a life of give and take. One party must surrender an aspect of life or the other to the other partner. Without this, there will be no peace at all. Focus on the positive.

If you think your spouse is stubborn, feeling loving toward them is hard. But if you exercise grace and choose to see them as persistent and tenacious, loving them becomes much easier. You may need to ask God to take away what you don’t want in your spouse and He will do so. Learn to give and take to make your marriage work.