

APPENDIX 6

THE NEED FOR GODLY FELLOWSHIP

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Mid-1977 I had the opportunity, and it was an opportunity — a very unique one as far as I was concerned — something can be very unique to visit Lagos, Nigeria. Now that's an unusual state to our Western mind. It's about 2/3 Islamic and our local elder there, he's now a local elder, he was ordained at the Feast '78, he wasn't a local elder at the time, he was a deacon. His name Latif Adelery. He was here for the conference maybe some of you had the chance to meet him. Latif is Nigerian, he speaks about 8 different Nigerian languages and he's a very valuable man helping out Mr. Jackson in that area. Mr. Jackson speaks English — the British are not so sure they want to call it English — but at any rate, he speaks American and Latif is his right arm there to be able to help him out in the mail reading, in the driving, going thru borders and checkpoints and talking with individuals.

Latif, as I say, the first name is Muslim, he wasn't Muslim, he's converted from that in Nigeria. He told me by the way that he had learned to pray, when he began to pray to God, he prayed in the Muslim fashion which means he was facing Mecca and his backside was higher than his head. But, he says, God heard anyway and he got everything straightened out and he's able to get around and now he's a local elder in the church, he spent years in Burming and so on, so he's quite a fellow. But we were sitting at the main hotel in Lagos, it was the main hotel at that time, called the Eko Holiday Inn which may strike you as funny but it's designed in a very Nigerian way and outside, because the weather is beautiful out there, very hot and muggy, you know, steamy weather generally but you sit outside and I happened to be sitting with Latif and Peter Nathan who is now the kind of business manager for Black Africa. We were sitting together and I looked over and saw a crowd of five Nigerian men. They were in Nigerian garb, and I don't know if you know the garb they wear, but it's extremely colorful. It's kind of a long robe with kind of a baggy trouser with it, made usually of a very high-quality material, even silk and it's embroidered in fancy colors, you know, gold, and shines and so on — especially in the sunlight. They have a little pack, kind of a pill-box pack that goes with it. And they were sitting there, the five of them, it was kind of late in the afternoon, after working hours, and they were just having a good session. They were talking, and the five of them were sitting in a circle and you could see they knew each other for years — at least that's the impression I got and I had been watching them for about a half an hour it seems. I don't know what the conversation that Latif and Peter got into, but I was just watching these men because they were so interesting. Here they were in their native garb and they were talking and gesturing and they'd sit back in their chairs; there was no table in between them — they had a table on the side — and they'd talk, and one would lean over and talk to the other one and they'd shared, and then they'd talk, all five, and then three and two, and then the other two and the other three and they'd go back and forth. They were just talking and sharing and they were agreeing with each other and they were disagreeing with each other. But it was all a very pleasant, very beautiful kind of relationship that these five men had, sitting there having a beer in the Eko Holiday Inn in Lagos, Nigeria.

I had just been noticing their talking and laughing and their fellowship together, their companionship, which was striking — it was unusual to see that way. Nobody was left out, everybody was a part of the group, everybody was accepted, everybody was shared in, everyone was enjoying it. I saw the courtesy that they extended to each other — it was striking the way they handled themselves in that situation. I saw the joy that they had in each other's fellowship or comments or the laughter they would have at somebody's crack or remark — there was none of this stuff that so marks our society. But they really enjoyed each other and I saw a real brotherhood in those five men — they certainly

weren't brothers, but they were all close to the same age, and if they were, I feel sorry for the mother who had that many kids that close together. It would be very difficult. But as I say, all accepted each other and all respected each other and they enjoyed each other's company very much.

At that time, I'd been spending quite a bit of time with Mr. Armstrong in his trip through Southern Africa and you've heard the sermon where he starts off and he talks about the Kingdom of God and the relationship and the purpose of human kind where he was very much in that and I was hearing the gospel presented to different audiences with different approaches time after time — of course, in conversation and various meetings with the state leaders, and the purpose of human life, and God's plan and the desire there that God had in mind. It was very much impressed on my mind. And as I saw that, with this background that Mr. Armstrong had put in my mind with all this visiting we had done, and seeing the friendship of the five men who were sitting there and the way they were enjoying each other's company and going back and forth and participating in the conversation; in quite a different area — it was another culture. Their culture was totally different than mine. You could see that by their dress. They were talking in a language I couldn't even understand one word of, it was either Ebo or Hausa, whichever one, and I didn't even know what tribe they belonged to. It was a total different race, a different geography. Here I was in Lagos, Nigeria where everything is different and the trees and the swampy things are just quite different; a different part of the family tree that descended from Adam, a different group — but here they were in this fellowship. I said to myself... "That's it"... "That is very pleasing to God...and it is exactly what he wants, and that's what His plan's all about. This idea that they were sitting together — that is exactly what He wanted.

Take a look at John, chapter 1 — if I can steal a line from Mr. Armstrong here — John, chapter 1. He says in verse one — it's a scripture in the Bible that goes back the very furthest...it goes back before there was a heaven and earth, before there was an angel, before there were stars, before there was a moon, before the sun shawn — shined, I'm sorry, shawn is British, I guess — I happened to learn a new vocabulary. Every time you move...when I went to Britain I had to learn a new vocabulary and words to avoid and then you go up to Scotland and they're slightly different — pretty much the same, but slightly different — and you go out to Australia and they're different again, you know different things for different people — and back in South Africa you start all over again and now I'm coming back to America and I've had to, you know, and I can almost say nothing and I have to be careful of which word is where.

It says, "*In the beginning was the Word.*" This goes right back to Jesus Christ being from the very beginning and that goes back as far as you want to go back, or as far as it's possible to go back. "*And the Word was with God,*" was there with the Father, or the one who became the Father — at this particular juncture, He wasn't the Father; He hadn't begotten anything yet. "*And the Word was God*" — He was a part of that God family — there were the two and there was nothing else. Now that's difficult for us to comprehend — two Beings with NOTHING ELSE. They had a relationship that was unbelievable, and it is to our human minds, basically unbelievable. They were perfect in everything they did. They were perfect by any standard; the highest standards we can imagine. They never sinned in any way. They never tried to take from the other one; they were never selfish. Whenever they spoke to the other, it was always complete trust and confidence between the two — there was a complete, open sharing — they'd known each other forever, and the relationship they had was total trust, total generosity. They were all-wise; there was no wisdom that they lacked. They were all-knowing, they were immortal; they could never die; their life went on, they had life in themselves, as He said. "*The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.*" In Him was life. They had life inside themselves. Our life, it says, is in the blood and if it's poured out, we're gone. But they had life inherent in themselves. But they were just the two — and the life was the light of men; they were able to impart that later on to bring life to you and I so that we'd have life as we know it. "*And the light shines in the darkness and the darkness comprehended it not.*" It didn't understand what was being done. These two Beings who had had this incredible relationship, the One was always on the top, by the way. God the Father, as He was called, was always the Senior and the Other was always the Junior, and there was total cooperation. They had the same mind; They had

such a mind that later on the younger one, or the lesser one — not younger was able to say, “*if you’ve seen Me, you’ve seen the Father.*” Because we look at things — the basic issues. I suppose one might like a blue shirt and another one a yellow, but the basic issues — they looked at everything exactly alike, and their minds were in harmony there, as I say, they were generous and they were all-wise, but they were alone — there was only the two of them. There was nobody else; there was nobody to sort of talk it over with, to kind of share with. And, from what we can gather, the plan they put together — they were LONESOME. They wanted to add other beings. They had life and they wanted to share it — they wanted to give it to other people; other beings who were like them — who had the same characteristics. They decided to share life. They wanted a community of people — more than just the two of them. I mean, they’d known each other forever and they decided they’d like more people to be involved in that community. They wanted diversity; they wanted different personalities — They didn’t want all exactly the same personality, they wanted different ones, they wanted different outlooks, they wanted to be able to share.

In the same way, these five men were sitting around in Nigeria. They wanted to be able to say, what do you think about this? And one man would say, well I think this and another one said well I think that and they went back and forth and they enjoyed each other’s minds, they enjoyed each other’s outlooks and they wanted to be able to share in that way — but there were just the two of them. Mind you, their minds were so superior to anything we know, probably it would be quite different in the whole relationship because of the enormity of the minds and the depth — it must have been fascinating. But still they wanted to produce other beings, but they wanted other beings that were not just there to sort of fill up space. They wanted other beings who were not selfish — they didn’t want someone who was going to foul the rest and say, “No, I won’t go” and fight and scream and say “That’s mine” — they didn’t want that. But they wanted beings who were not selfish; who would shun sin; who said, “No, we don’t want that wrong way — we want the right way. They wanted beings who were generous, who would share what was theirs and give. They wanted beings who were wise and who would enjoy the other person’s outlook and his viewpoints and his feelings. They wanted beings who were equally immortal as themselves, but who always had a respect for God — God would always be the Leader — and always would have a respect for their fellow beings, which came down to us as the basis of the law. First commandment, God’s always the One on top. He’s the Father and there’s certain things about that and our relationships with each other that God and Christ — they never lied to each other; they never bear false witness; they never distort the truth to each other, they never seek their own advantage. They never...they shunned that — that’s the wrong way. That doesn’t produce the good relationship that they knew from the very beginning. They wanted a Godly community.

You know, it’s kind of instructive about how God pictures the World Tomorrow. You and I picture it in different ways. Have you ever thought of looking at it how God pictures it; what He’s looking forward to — exactly what He sees about the plan that’s terrific — where He says, “I rejoice at this — I like this.” I know the idea your children have — some of you have children, I suppose — or brothers or sisters, whatever — the likely idea of a lion and a lamb — that kind of turns them on. I’d like to have a lion, you know — and this snake business, where they won’t harm, you know, and spiders won’t be creepie-crawlies and all that sort of thing.

This is often the way people picture the World Tomorrow. They picture the plowman overtaking the reaper, and kind of a happy family, and growing up in a peaceful environment where there’s no war, which is all very good. But what does God picture about it? What is it that He likes?

I’d like you to look at Zechariah, chapter 8 — the book of Zechariah... “*Again, the word of the Lord of Hosts came to me saying, Thus says the Lord of Hosts, I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy and I was jealous for her with great fury, Thus says the Lord.*” I am returning to Zion — here’s what Christ says. I am returning to Zion and will dwell in the middle of Jerusalem. He’s going to dwell right smack dab in the middle of it. Now why is He going to do that? Who’s going to be around Him? “*And Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts, the Holy Mountain, thus says the Lord. There shall yet, old men and old women dwell in the streets of*

Jerusalem — every man with his staff in his hand for very age.” He’s looking forward to a time when He’s in the middle of Jerusalem dwelling there, that there are people there who live long lives, who do various things, who go His way. And the streets of the city shall be full of people playing in the streets thereof. He likes that idea — that there be a lot of people there, dwelling and playing safely. We won’t have to worry about somebody mugging your kid. He likes that idea. The idea of a community of people together and sharing. It says, *“Thus says the LORD of Hosts, if it be marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvelous in my eyes?”* says the LORD. From my point of view, it’s marvelous! It may be great for people, but isn’t marvelous for me too! That Jesus Christ — the LORD — the Word that we read about there who was in the beginning — was looking forward to different people being in the community in the city. He says, I’m going to dwell in Jerusalem and it’s going to be full of people who are going to be doing things and going places, sharing. It’s a community. That’s exactly what He wanted at the very beginning. Take a look at Jeremiah 33, beginning verse 9. Talking about bringing back the captivity in verse 7. And He will build them, cleanse them of their sin, take away the way where they sinned against Him (verse 8). They went the wrong way, they followed the wrong way, and they got all the wrong results. So He says, I’m going to clean them up, bring them back, and He says in verse 9, *“And it shall be to me a name of Joy (bringing all these people back), a praise and my honor before all the nations of the earth which shall hear all the good that I do unto them.”* They are going to say, *“Hey, God really blesses those people.”* *“And they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and all the prosperity that I procure unto them. Thus says the LORD, again there shall be heard in this place which you say shall be desolute without man and without beast (Jeremiah had to say that for a time), even in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem that are desolute without man and without inhabitants and without beasts, the voice of joy”* — He wanted to hear it ringing out! Kids playing and fellowship and young families and people in parties and socials mud sitting around having a beer together after work, a bunch of fellows sitting around talking just enjoying each other! Enjoying the company. The voice of joy, the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, the voice of the bride, the voices of them that shall sing, *“Praise the LORD of Hosts!”* when they follow that way, you see. And they follow the way that God has established. It’s going to bring a terrific community, a joy and fellowship together, which was what they wanted in the first place. It’s what the whole plan was about. *“For the LORD is good and His mercy endures forever and of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the House of the LORD. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land as at the first, says the LORD.”* He goes on down, talks about sheep and so on dwelling there.

You know, with that background and having just completed the Passover as we’ve done, you might find it interesting to look at Luke 22. When you realize that the Father and the Son were working out a plan to have other people who have the same value standards they do, the same law, the same respect for the Father and His way, that weren’t, as I said, fouling the nest. Imagine what this particular meal meant to Him. In Luke 22:14: *“And when the hour was come, He sat down and the 12 apostles with Him.”* Now here was the beginning of His government. Here was the beginning of the government that was going to lead into the time when they were all in the God family. These were the beginning men of it, over the 12 tribes of Israel. Can you imagine the Christ who had been with the Father, just the two of them at the beginning — there were only two — and He was sitting at a dinner with twelve men that He enjoyed, some of them He had been with since a very young age, and of course, as disciples for three years and a bit. And now there were 12! Can you imagine how Christ looked at that! From the point of view that there were only two of us. And now these few out of all these masses that are out there are called to be a part of my government. One of them was going to betray Him, which He knew. A very sad thing. It must have grieved Him deeply that it even had to take place, but there it was. It was prophesied, it was set up that way, prophesied from the very beginning. But the 12 were there. And He said, verse 15, He said unto them, *“With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.”* Do we understand that maybe a little more deeply than we did before? He was so eager — this dinner, His final dinner as a human being here, before His plan went into effect that He was to be killed and crucified and go through all the difficulties: the beating, the scourging, then raised back to God level, and to work with His church to bring other people in through these 12 men, to guide and direct and to do His work up there, and to send them out to preach the

gospel, the Good News that it was going to be all the earth that was eventually going to be encompassed with this particular government. But at this particular time, it was only a small bit. So you see a little more deeply how He said, *"I desire to be at this meal with you."* And as if to reinforce it — and to reinforce it — He said, *"Far I say unto you, I will not anymore eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God."* I'm not going to have the Passover again. I'm not going to have wine — until the Kingdom of God is set up. I'm going on a 2,000-year wine fast, because I'm so looking forward to the real thing, that I'm not going to be involved in wine until then. I mean, He wanted that. That was the purpose of their whole plan — to have different individuals.

I don't know whether the apostles were single or married here. It doesn't say. Do you get the idea that only married people were involved in things like that? It doesn't say whether they were married or not at this particular juncture. We know most of them did marry, but we don't know every one. But any rate, here they were. Thirteen men, gathered around a table. And He said, this is what I'm looking for. I've desired to eat this, I've desired to be a part of this. They already had different personalities and outlooks, and He had already said you're going to be over the 12 kingdoms, and He was enjoying that! And the last dinner — He wasn't enjoying the part after that last dinner, as we read later on. But that had to come to pass, and as He said in John (I think the very bravest scripture, I won't turn to it) 18 where He said, when Peter said, *"No, you're not going to go through with this, I'm going to fight off the Roman Empire with my sword"* — you got to admire Peter's enthusiasm and his pluck, when he lopped off Malchus' ear. Christ said, put up your sword. The cup that my Father has given me to drink, shall I not drink it? In other words, the troubles, the difficulties that were there before I reach the Kingdom of God, before I'm able to do it and bring all mankind to the Father, shouldn't I drink that cup He put there for me? And all of us have to do that ourselves to be able to say, Well, I'm going to hoe the row that I'm called to hoe, and I've got to do it and here I am, and to be able to do it just like He did, in the same way. And of course, He had His which was obviously far more difficult, far more arduous than ours. But He desired those 12 men (to eat with Him). He appreciated every one of them. He mentions it was John He loved, but you know He loved every single one. He says that later on. And He told them, *"By this shall all men know that you are my disciples that you have that affection for each other."* Remember that in the dinner, when they had that closeness? It will stick out that you are my disciples. That's the kind of people I want, to dwell with Me forever — sit around and do things and accomplish and then relax and fellowship and enjoy the different people — the diversity, the godly community of people who always respond, with the Father at the very top, and who always are concerned with the fellowship among the other beings. That's what the plan's about!

Take a look at Rev. 19:5. *"And a voice came out of the throne, saying, praise our God all His servants, you that fear Him both small and great."* Bring Him praises, all His servants. *"And I heard as it were a voice of a great multitude, a voice of many waters, and a voice of mighty thunderings saying, allelujah, for the LORD God omnipotent reigns."* I think we are waiting for that — when He reigns — and we start singing out praises to Him. *"Let us be glad and rejoice, give honor to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His wife has made herself ready."* These are the people who are going to be a part of His family forever. And how does He celebrate it? Well, first He gets them nice and dressed up. He says in verse 8: *"And to her it was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white."* White linen is the righteousness of the saints. *"And He said to me, write, blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."* He is going to celebrate His reign with a big banquet. And He says, I want them all together. I want them all there. It's a fellowship, a community, a rejoicing, as much as it was for those five men in Nigeria, but how much more with a full banquet. This is what He celebrates it for. He's looking forward to it. This is when He's going to have wine again. Right back here. That's what the plan's about — to bring many, people in, through all the hardships and difficulties they have to face in life. But then, after He knows they won't go the wrong way, that they'll always have the Father on top, they'll always look to the welfare of others. They'll even sacrifice themselves. Then He says I'm going to put them in the family forever. And I'm going to enjoy it! And He said, *"Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the lamb! And He said unto me, these are the true sayings of God."* This is what He wanted them to do. God based His whole law and the things which have come down to man which mankind rejected as a

whole, has turned away from, on love. On what we call love. It's an outgoing concern for the other people, for their welfare, for the feelings of others, for the needs of others, a concern for their welfare and well being.

Love, brethren, is social. If you are stuck on a desert island somewhere and you're sitting out there and there's a tree with three coconuts on it and you, you will have difficulty expressing love and outgoing concern. You will be able to do it with the Father. You'll be able to talk to Him. You'll be able to deal with Him and meet with Him in a way and talk with Him, but as far as being able to sit down and say, "Wow, wasn't that a spectacular sunset!" "Or, do you think we're going to get any fish today?" Have you ever found yourself — and I think we all have — maybe sitting in a movie, and you go in by yourself — I've done this in years gone by; I haven't gone to many movies lately. But I was there by myself, and I leaned over to the person sitting next to me, and there's nobody there and arghghrghrgh!! And you want to say something! You want to share. You want to comment on it. And there's nobody there! A terribly lonesome feeling comes on you. No, love is between people. It's between minds. As I say, that coconut tree with its three coconuts hanging there, you have a difficulty expressing an affection for. It has some difficulty expressing it back! To say, "it's nice to have you on our island!" It's absurd. Love is based on two or more minds interacting, isn't it? Saying, what do you think about something? There's sort of a joy of association there, having a different person to communicate and share or even write to or whatever. This is what it's about. A caring and sharing and enjoying fellowship.

The opposite of love is a hermit who decides I'm fed up with all of it. I don't like any of them! He's given up on everyone. Wants nothing to do with anybody. He never hopes to see another human being. And there are people who get so hurt, so upset from various circumstances — some their own fault and some not — that they get to the point where they don't want any fellowship, any caring or receiving care, any communication. They say, in effect, I only trust me. The rest of you guys I don't trust and I want nothing to do with you, I don't want to see you. That's the opposite of what God wanted to be. He didn't want to be a hermit. He didn't want to sit off there by Himself. "There's just the two of us, but at least we can trust each other." No, He said, let's bring other people into this group. Let's make it a little bit bigger. He even told Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply. Look, we want many people. Paul said He was trying to bring many sons to glory. It's part of the whole plan.

Lonesomeness, on the other hand, is becoming epidemic in our society. It's becoming such an enormous problem in our society. And it's interesting that the farther we go from God's law, the farther we go from love and companionship. God's law is called the law of love. The farther we get away from that, the more lonesome people feel, regardless of the size of the crowd they are in. It's surprising that now that people have multiplied on the earth and there's hardly any place on the earth where you can go and get away. It's striking coming back to the United States that you've got wall-to-wall city here. Where do you grow food? It just seems to me wall-to-wall city. It's strange that in all of that lonesomeness is becoming epidemic. A need for love and companionship. Doctors and psychologists know that few come to them and say, "You know, doc, the real problem is, I am lonely." They know that, they understand that. They say, life is boring. I just feel unhappy, I don't know why, but I'm unhappy all the time. I just feel off. Or they'll say, I've been drinking too much, I'm overweight — I've been fighting it and I'm struggling along, I can't sleep, I'm irritable, and I feel basically unfulfilled — would be the bottom line somewhere in all that.

Other signs, medical people find, would be people that brag a lot. I do this and I do that and the other, a fair lot of talking about themselves. That they talk too much or too loud or shoot off some way. Others come in quite quiet, timid, seemingly fearful. But one sign for sure of all those different ones, regardless of the particular problems involved, is discouragement. It's something everybody faces, and it seems to be the sign of our age. And for the church, brethren, it's one of the most effective tools the Adversary has. He can't deceive us on doctrine; at least it says he can't deceive the very elect. Some are pulled off on doctrine, but basically it's not doctrine that causes people to drop out. The easier way is to make you feel you can't make it. That it's too tough, the standard's too high,

there's no way you can perform. Discouragement is his number one tool, I think, against the Church of God. In that discouragement is a terrific lonesomeness. You feel you are alone against the whole world and nobody is out there pulling on your team. And when you're down, who's going to help out? It is a terrible problem and it is a problem that everybody faces — single, married, otherwise. One preacher once said that the happiest people in the world are married people. And then he said, "And the most miserable people in the world are married people." I think that's true. There's nothing worse than a bad marriage.

But few people would say, I'm just a frail human being and I am lonely. My daughter said, "It's strange. People sing about it. It's in all the songs or a large portion of them. But they don't talk about it." The song writers seem to be able to hit it on the head and express it. The lonely feel depressed, miserable, have a very heavy heart, but they don't know what to do about it. It's just there. Because it's not generally recognized what the real problem is, it's impossible then to find a solution. And people do the wrong thing, take the wrong solution. First they do, generally speaking, is give up on people. They say they can't trust them, open up to them, share, and they draw up inwardly — whether they are still showing pizzazz outside or not. They become self-obsessed. As you start drawing away from others, all there is is yourself. And that's all they have to think about. They use their symptoms then for a reason not to fellowship. They say, I'm so depressed, who'd want to be around me? So they don't go around anybody. The symptom becomes the reason for not solving the problem. The person goes downhill — who'd want to be in my company? Poor me. Worse, they become addicted to props. There are props you can put under yourself to hold yourself up. Chemical usually: booze or even drugs. As if they are saying, look, I'm so lonesome I'm just going to stay in oblivion. I'm going to hide behind this chemical stuff. I don't want to face my problems, people, or me. Almost all the doctors now know: chemically addicted people are lonely. That's the real cause.

People become addicted to other things: perhaps their work. You find people who never go home. It's not that they have so much work; they are avoiding situations. It makes them feel needed and gives a certain joy, but really it's an escape — becoming addicted to things because they've given up on people. Or they become addicted to their house, maybe a hobby — and they're always there rather than with people, rather than at socials. They might become addicted to an animal — I can only trust Fido, man's best friend (because he never says a word). They get all wrapped up in non-human company because human company has become so painful and distressing.

Then come the real problems if it's not checked and stopped. There's a constant anger that can build underneath, a constant frustration that keeps boiling and the blood pressure begins to rise. Or anger disguised as depression. Such constant frustration leads to serious problems such as mental breakdown, irrational behavior, physical illness, alcoholism, drugs, and eventually suicide. "I am so lonesome, nobody cares about me, nobody thinks about me, and this whole earth is too tough to face by myself. If I can just bow out." Emotional psychologists today say that lonesomeness is probably the number one problem of our age. Interesting when you consider that God's plan had in mind the exact opposite. And God's way leads exactly away from it.

How do you begin to solve the problem? It's easier to have a little glass of wine at home alone — sit there alone and have dream of grandeur. You must consider the feelings of the other person who also has his lonesomeness, problems, life story, and defenses to contend with. And that's one of the commonest signs of lonely people: they tend to lack an awareness of other people's problems. Because of the situations they find themselves in — and not necessarily their own fault — they become self-conscious and self-obsessed. The way to solve it would be to nurture other people's lonesomeness. Nurture other people's feelings. You generally find that when you become involved with one group, they complain about another group — I don't care which group is which. The group becomes wrapped up in themselves, their obsessions, which is very difficult not to do in our society. They are too busy nurturing themselves. That's the basic key. It's also basic Christianity.

Take a look at Matt. 5:3. A part of God's beginning plan. He says, "*Blessed are the poor in*

spirit.” Their own view of themselves is low. *“For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”* Those are the ones we want, Christ is saying, in the kingdom of heaven. *“Blessed are they that mourn.”* Does it mean, mourn for themselves? No, it means those who look out at the world and see the difficulties there, and they mourn for others. They see their needs, their hardships, and they can translate that out empathetically to other people’s needs. Occasionally we all have to mourn for ourselves when we see certain situations we get into, problems, our own stupidity and sins. But the basic point He is talking about are those who mourn for the whole society, with the world the way it is going, with the individuals in it, the people in hardships. And they feel for them, they mourn. They actually mourn — grieve for them. *“For they shall be comforted.”* It’s going to come right. It’s going to be fixed. *“Blessed are the meek.”* The ones who are willing to think that somebody else can teach me something. The ones willing to drink in of other people’s ideas, feelings, to listen to their stories rather than always wanting to tell their own. *“For they shall inherit the earth.”* Those are the people we want governing. *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness.”* For the right way — that way of give — that pleases God. That makes you pleasing to God and a person He wants to have around. *“For they shall be filled.”* They will be filled with righteousness, and they will completely under all circumstances go the right way. And I frankly can hardly wait till I do everything right. I get so tired of doing things wrong. As a human you can only take in so many things, you can only look on the outward, you have this nature that keeps going the wrong way and sometimes you go right along with it. In fact, far too often.

“Blessed are the merciful.” Does it mean merciful to yourself? When you look at it that way, remember Judah, when he was trapped — Tamar had outwitted him, she’d played the role of a harlot, took his ring. Soon as he found out that his daughter Tamar was with child and her uncle wasn’t around, he says “Let her be burned!” She said, “The father is the guy that had these,” and she handed back his bracelet and staff. All of a sudden burning didn’t seem so important. He was merciful to himself. With our faults we say, well, we can forget that. I’m trying. With the other guy, I know his attitude is rotten. We tend to be merciful to ourselves and unmerciful to other people. This is the exact opposite of the way God wants us to be.

“Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.” They have an open desire, aren’t deceitful, deal with others openly and are concerned with their welfare. They are pure in their motives and desires.

“Blessed are the peacemakers.” The ones who make peace rather than war. Sometimes you have to talk straight, privately to your brother alone: “I can’t understand what you are doing there.” The one who gets the problems out. Because the Kingdom of God is going to be problemless. There are going to be people who don’t make problems, and they get them out when they do come up. We are not going to have somebody forever complaining about the food. Complaining about whatever is not going to be around forever. When you have a peaceful attitude, a cooperating one, almost any system will produce — a lot more than when there is a constant pulling and tugging. The boss says, here’s how we’re going to do it, and everybody cooperates. That’s peacemaking. For they shall be called the children of God. Because they are going to be born into that family.

In I Cor. 13 He talks about love. It’s a matter of the outgoing concern. Verse 4: *“Charity suffers long.”* It puts up with difficulties. It’s willing to make peace. And it’s kind. It doesn’t mean kind to self, it means kind to others around. It doesn’t envy or vaunt itself. It doesn’t get puffed up or behaveth itself unseemly. It doesn’t have irrational behavior. Does not seek its own — own rule, ideas, wants, welfare. Is not easily provoked (although sometimes God does become provoked). Thinks no evil — looks for the best, trying to look for the good. Rejoices not in iniquity — doesn’t really enjoy finding somebody is in trouble, but rejoices in the truth. Bears all things. Believes all things. Has a positive outlook. May even be called a little naive now and then. Hopes all things, is enthusiastic and supporting. Endures all things. The doctors have found in group sessions that the loneliest people never nurture others — never consider the other person’s feelings. They insist that they have their fair share of time. They get their watch out and say, well his time’s up, it’s my turn. It doesn’t matter that the guy might be coming to a great point of interest or coming over some threshold that would be beneficial to him at this particular time — it’s my time now. When others are speaking, they don’t listen. They’re self obsessed and maybe a little critical too. Christ said in Matthew 6 that if we forgive others their sins; He

forgives us too. And so we need to do that. Even carnal doctors come up with the idea that people need to learn to share. They saw the fruits of the other way. They said, let's look around and see someone else who is lonely and try to help them. Not gauchely: "Are you lonely?" Standing there cow-eyed. No, not that. Look around at those whom you come into contact and begin to perceive their lonesomeness and fasten your mind there. 99.9 percent of the people, if it's done in the right way, will respond. They'll respond with a friendship because most people are dying for friendship. It's a very real friend.

A wise man said if you're lucky, you'll be able in a lifetime to have as many close friends as the fingers on one hand. It's a rare thing to have a close friend. If you are able to be one, then you're going to have far more. So the doctors suggest that you develop a skill, do it and share it with somebody. Whatever it might be: tennis, racquetball, sewing, or just walking along the beach. I like walking along the beach, you want to come with me? No pressure. We're just going to do something. We're not going to sit at home and rusticate peacefully in the rocking chair. If you do that, you're asking for a babysitter. After your 40 something, then relax over a cup of tea or something.

Learn to nurture others. That's biblical love. It's an outgoing concern. It is exactly what God wants. He says that love is keeping the commandments, and one of the commandments is "*Honor your father and your mother.*" One of the problems they've found with lonesomeness is the difficulty with families disintegrating. This is especially true for those in a college environment. Most homes now are like a motel where you hang your hat except that you don't wear a hat. Pass through, have a meal, go separate ways. Other people in your family are lonely. You can be sure of that. They would appreciate things. The kids are out with their peer group, doing absolutely nothing. They don't think they are lonely but they are. They're lonely sitting right in the middle of a bunch of kids. They think they won't be lonely having all these people around. It doesn't work that way. It's an awful shock to find out these kids don't really like me. Close families where they talk and do outings and sports and share the family experience. There's never a lonesome person in the middle of a close family. Everybody in a close family feels accepted. Malachi says we are supposed to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers. Help society by building a close family. God's law deals with the whole family. It doesn't mean just father and mother — the whole family, aunts, uncles, cousins, the whole neighbors really. When's the last time your family had a family reunion? Wouldn't it be something for Church of God people who understand the commandment and the need for community God's trying to build, to put it together? You'll find them all dragging their feet: "Aw, I don't want to see Uncle Willy!" Shouldn't we be the ones suggesting it, because we understand the need for it more than anybody else. And we understand what the lack of it is doing in our society. Nurturing others is the key to solving lonesomeness. And it's based on God's law right from the beginning.

I remember my college days in Pasadena. The strings in me used to get so uptight, sometimes tighter than others. They all get extremely tight and all play high C. All of them! The problems and tensions and stresses start to get to you. I had a technique that worked. I'd pray about the problems of the guys in the dorm, and wouldn't bring up one of mine. Before you know it, my problems didn't disappear, but they did seem more manageable. Able to control. Not over my head as they did before. One of our greatest needs as human beings is to be understood by other human beings. To be able to share in an open way. We all have deep problems right down there that hurt us. We all have hopes and dreams and apprehensions. We feel we're not getting a fair shake out of life. To have another human being you admire, love, have confidence in because it was built over a period of time — friendship takes time (there's no set time), that you can share your feelings with. I'm always struck by Job. His three friends came for seven days and they so grief-struck for what had befallen Job that they sat there for seven days and never said a word. Their sympathetic feeling was so great. They thought, I'll just sit there beside him. They made one mistake: at the end of seven days they began to talk to him. They began to preach at him. It was the last thing Job needed. Then Job thought, Oh no! Now my friends are against me as well. His wife gave him the encouraging news: Curse God and die! You're right at the bottom when you're there. Now they're blaming me for things I didn't do. His friends were coming across with simplistic answers, not the right story. Well, you must be a bad guy really underneath it all. They lost their charity. When they said nothing, they were spectacular friends. The solution isn't to hunt for a good friend. It's to be like that. They'll seek you out.

There is one person who is always available whom we all know and is always a friend. There does come a time when you have to stand alone. That's the Father. Take a look at Psalm 73. That great Being who initiated the plan. Who said let's have more people in this! The One who sent Christ to do the things He was sent to do: creating. Some assignment: I want you to go down there and build Adam.

The ultimate sharing is with the Father. David understood this because he was after God's own heart. Notice in verse 23. The beginning of the Psalm shows all the problems. David was discouraged and down. "Nevertheless I am continually with you." Sometimes you feel you're not. "You have held me by your right hand. You shall guide me with your counsel and afterward receive me to glory. Who have I in heaven but you?" He was talking to Christ. There was nobody else he could trust or share with. This one being he had come to know since a lad. He had a close relationship with Him. No matter what problems happened — and David had problems — I'm a David's life reader — "and there's none upon earth that I desire besides you." There's nobody on earth who's going to come close to the relationship with the Father because people are people, very fallible. "My flesh and my heart fail but God's the strength of my life and my portion forever." He's the one who strengthens me. "For lo, they that are far from you shall perish." His purpose was to bring those close to Him and give them life. Christ said, "I have come that they might have life and have it more abundantly." Those that are far from Him are going to perish.

Ps. 27:8: I read this psalm when I'm discouraged. Verse 1 and 2 are spectacular for discouragement. "When you said seek my face, my heart said unto you, your face LORD will I seek." You bet, okay, that's what I'm going to do. Part of the Christian life has to be somewhere down the line standing alone. You have to face that. Look at whoever you like in the Bible. They had to come to the place where they said, "everybody's left me." And here I am. If your outlook is that God is first, other people who have that outlook are going to be close to you. You are going to appreciate them more and more. He says preferring the brethren — there will be a closeness among those who are called out. Imagine the single people who are not in the church, don't have the fellowship. They have the difficulties, enormous problems and they're just totally alone in this society where nobody is their friend. Fellowship with God's people is the whole point. That's the point of I John. If we are following God and are close to Him, we are going to enjoy each other. We are going to fellowship with each other and we are going to be together. And appreciate each other.

I want you to notice something in Lev. 26. It's astounding to me. We tend to think of the part where He says what's going to happen if you don't keep the law. But in the early part, He says, if you keep My commandments, here's all the physical blessings coming. Notice in verse 11 one blessing that is certainly not physical. "And I will set my tabernacle among you, and my soul will not abhor you." Here will be a community of people who will accept God's rule and all the blessings that will come from that. And He said, I want to dwell right there with them. I want to see them going right down the streets, into the shops. In their weddings and socials — in all the things they do — I want to be there. "I will walk among you and be your God and you shall be my people." And then He blesses as only He can do with His presence. Blessing every single activity when those people are following His way.

It's so pleasant to be together and to fellowship. We need fellowship, brethren. Don't allow the single life to make you a separate entity, off by itself. You are part of the body that is growing — the group to be brought into sharing eternity with God. I'd let everybody know by your presence. I learned in Spokesman Club there are 3 P's to get involved with before any activity: prayer, preparation, and participation. Let them know that you are here and involved. Let them know: I'm in!!

Those Nigerian fellows didn't know God but the pleasant fellowship there was certainly a start in the right way. I hope you see the need for godly fellowship, being able to be a part and not get off separate, because the whole part of God's plan was to have other beings, diverse, a community of people who always have the Father on top, always respect Him above all, who respect each other and build such a pleasantness in their association that God says, I want to dwell with them forever and make them a part of me, dwell in my land, share with me. I want them around to joy and fellowship.