

**4/5/06**

**Encouragement for Today**

“Close To You”

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**Key Verse:**

Psalm 31:23, “Love God, all you saints; God takes care of all who stay close to Him, but He pays back in full those arrogant enough to go it alone.” (MSG)

**Devotion:**

If you are old enough to remember the 70’s brother-and-sister group The Carpenters, then you probably know their song, “Close To You” by heart. For some reason, this song is one of those that I often find myself humming for no apparent reason. It just seems to get stuck in my head. The other day, I found myself singing the familiar lyrics in my head yet again, and began to think about the spiritual significance of the lyrics. Though intended to be a contemporary love song, on this day I spent some time thinking about being close to my First Love.

I wondered: Is it possible to be close to God in the midst of a busy, demanding life? Is it realistic to “be still and know that He is God” (Psalm 46:10) when everything else in my life is calling out for my attention? How can I endeavor to make sure I am “close to You” God? Oh, how I long to be close to You!

I have hit upon a few suggestions that perhaps will help us draw close to God in spite of a busy life:

- Commit to getting up just 15 minutes earlier each day to spend time with God. This short amount of time will not drastically affect your sleep, yet it will drastically improve your habit of spending time with Him. Increase this time as you are able.
- Think of God as your friend (John 15:15) How do you spend time with your friends? You talk to them and carve out time for them regularly—otherwise the friendship would grow stale.
- Find a quiet place in your home to be your prayer closet. For me, this is the shower! The pounding of the water drowns out the noises in the rest of my home so that I can focus my attention on Him and Him alone. I look forward to talking to God there each day.
- Start a prayer journal or spiritual journal to document particular Scriptures that speak to you, prayer requests and answered prayers. Document your children or grandchildren’s spiritual growth and questions. Whatever you want your journal to include—use your imagination and creativity to make your journal your own.
- Don’t know what to study? Do word searches in your concordance on words that are coming up in your own life—words like “joy,” “peace,” “faith,” etc. Get your Bible out and read the Scriptures mentioned in these devotions each day. Read the whole passage and not just the one verse.
- Play praise music in your home. I find it beneficial for us to crank up our local Christian music station about lunchtime each day. This helps me to refocus my day and my attitude. (Check out “Because,” the music CD by Gwen Smith at the end of this devotion.)
- Be intentional about drawing close to God. Learn to listen for His voice, follow His leading and respond accordingly.
- Forgive yourself when you can’t or don’t do these things. Try again the next day.

Use these suggestions in your own life and also spend some time thinking of other ways you can draw close to God that will work for you personally. Drawing close to God is not “one size fits all” thing. It will vary according to each individual person. Above all, remember that He longs to be close to you, and to know you intimately. When you draw close to Him, His Word says He will draw close to you (James 4:8). Take comfort in this and feel the wonder of being close to Him no matter what other demands are pressing in on you today.

**My Prayer for Today:**

Dear Heavenly Father, like the song says, I long to be close to You. Help me to find ways to do that in the midst of all that I have on me each day. Help me to not get caught up in my busyness and forget You in the process. You are my all in all and I adore You. Thank You for wanting to be close to me. **In Jesus' Name, Amen.**

**Application Steps:**

Pick a few of the suggestions that particularly speak to you and commit to trying them this week.

Consider finding an accountability partner who will faithfully ask you whether you are making God a priority.

Look up the Scriptures I have mentioned and read them in the Bible. If one speaks to you, then read the whole passage where you found it.

**Reflection Points:**

What in your life is competing with God right now for your attention? Is it something God placed in your life (for example, your children) or something you have taken on (for example, a volunteer position)? Remember that Satan sometimes uses good stuff to keep us from God's best. Keep your priorities in place and God will honor you for it. "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33, NIV)

**Power Verses:**

Psalm 34:18, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

Isaiah 40:11, "He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them close to His heart; He gently leads those that have young."

Jeremiah 30:21b-22, "I will bring him near and he will come close to me, for who is he who will devote himself to be close to me? Declares the Lord. So you will be my people, and I will be your God."

**Additional Resources:**

[A Busy Woman's Guide to Prayer](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_busyWomansGuide.htm), by Cheri Fuller

[http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources\\_busyWomansGuide.htm](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_busyWomansGuide.htm)

[Running on Empty](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_runningEmpty.htm), by Arron Chambers

[http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources\\_runningEmpty.htm](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_runningEmpty.htm)

[Because \(music CD\)](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_because.htm), by Gwen Smith

[http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources\\_because.htm](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_because.htm)