

5/1/06

## Encouragement for Today

"Anxiety"

Melissa Taylor, Proverbs 31 Speaker Team Member

### Key Verse:

John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid." (NIV)

### Devotion:

I am experiencing more anxiety in my life than ever before and I don't know why. While the world around me seems to spin aimlessly out of control, I often feel like I'm drowning, gasping for air, and fighting my way out.

How can this be happening to me? I love God. I believe His Word. I'm active in my church. I'm a speaker and a writer with Proverbs 31 Ministries. I'm a mother of four and the wife of a terrific husband. I live in a comfortable home in a nice neighborhood. I have great friends. So what is wrong with me?

Have you ever felt like this? I believe the main reason anxiety takes over is due to what my mind is focusing on. I listed many of my blessings in the previous paragraph, but that's not where my mind seems to wander. Instead, I have been dwelling and fretting. My mind dwells on problems, usually problems that are beyond my control. That leads to fretting. Fretting leads to anxiety.

Sometimes I go looking for comfort: a hug from my husband, a call to a friend, a piece of chocolate cake. While very nice, these prove to be extremely temporary. Only one thing seems to assure me that I will be fine. That's the Word of God.

When I am feeling most helpless and anxious, I can faintly hear God saying, "It's Me – come to Me, My child." In her book, *Becoming a Woman Who Listens to God*, Sharon Jaynes writes:

*Have you ever had times in your life when you needed a holy hug? I know I have. There have been days when nothing else would do but for Jesus to wrap His loving arms around me, remind me of His precious promises, and calm all my fears. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27). "In this world you will have trouble," Jesus warned. "But I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).*

The next time you are feeling anxious, join me in receiving a "holy hug," and allow "Jesus to wrap His loving arms around you." Go to God, your loving and all powerful Father, and lay it all down before Him. Let's make it a daily practice to give Him our burdens. We need to be intentional on trusting Him to solve the problems surrounding us.

As Sharon Jaynes so eloquently writes: *God is God. He does what He pleases, and I must trust Him. When we can't see His hand, we must trust His heart. I have come to the same conclusion as David, the psalmist, "One thing God has spoken, two things I have heard: that you, O God, are strong, and that you, O Lord, are loving" (Psalm 62:11-12). God is strong – He can do anything. God is loving – He will always do what's in our best interest.*

Our enemy, Satan, would love nothing more than to hold us captive by keeping our minds set on that which makes us anxious. Then he knows we aren't focusing on or listening to God. Dwelling and fretting are strongholds from the devil himself. Use the power of God in you to knock out anxiety, because remember, *God is loving and strong and He can do anything.* Let's trust Him to do just that!

### My Prayer for Today:

Most wonderful God, how I need You each and every minute of my life! I need Your guidance, direction and assurance that everything will be okay. I know You are in control. I know You will provide for all my

needs. I know You will take care of me and my circumstances. Help me to trust You and not to dwell and fret! Lead me along each day with total faith in You! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

**Application Steps:**

Phillippians 4:6-8 offers great life applications when we are worried, fretful, or anxious. Follow Paul's advice when he says, "Don't worry about anything. Instead, pray about everything." If you find yourself absolutely unable to quit thinking about your problems, seek Christian counseling for help or join a Bible study group where you can get the encouragement and support you need.

**Reflection Points:**

What do I think about most of the day?

Am I fretting and dwelling over circumstances beyond my control?

Am I able to enjoy this life the Lord has given me?

**Power Verses:**

Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." (NIV)

John 16:33, "I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world." (NLT)

Psalms 55:22, "Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall." (NIV)

Philippians 4:6-7, "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done. If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus." (NLT)

Romans 12:2, "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but be a new and different person with a fresh newness in all you do and think. Then you will learn from your experience how his ways will really satisfy you." (NLT)

**Additional Resources:**

Becoming a Woman Who Listens to God, by Sharon Jaynes  
[http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources\\_becomingAWoman.htm](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_becomingAWoman.htm)

Getting Over the Blues, by Leslie Vernick  
[http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources\\_gettingOver.htm](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_gettingOver.htm)

Coming Out of the Dark, by Mary Southerland  
[http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources\\_outDark.htm](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_outDark.htm)