

## From One Busy Mom to Another

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I am going to share a little secret with you. When a person writes or speaks passionately about a topic or an issue, it is almost a 100% guarantee that the person has a personal history with that topic. God seems to like to use our own words as they leave our mouth to not only minister to those around us, but also to minister to our own self. Call it cathartic. Call it cheap therapy. Whatever you call it, I think it is a powerful way God chooses to speak to us. Maybe He knows that we can be so bull-headed that the only person we are going to listen to is our own self!

So, here I am writing an article on busy-ness. The fact that I was given this specific subject must say something about me! As I prepared to write, I acknowledged to the Lord that I AM a busy person and need His guidance to know what He would have me say to myself and to others. God has worked on my busy lifestyle for years. It is a frequent discussion topic between my Lord and me. I am going to share a few things God has worked on with me in the past, and things that I need to hear again and again.



### 1. Do the Next Thing

As a married working mother of three small children ages 1, 4, and 6, I am constantly on the go. Laundry, lunches, play dates, extracurricular activities, grocery shopping, meal planning, housekeeping, exercise, work schedule. . . . It has been said many times: There just aren't enough hours in a day! Life "have tos" and "shoulds" paired with worries about life and our loved ones can leave us feeling overwhelmed. Overwhelmed can turned to hopeless and helpless, which spirals fast to the likes of depression.

We were never meant to spin our wheels planning our life away. God wants us to live in the moment (responsibly). When Elisabeth Elliott, a well-known author and missionary mother, was asked how she managed to "do it all," she replied: "I just do the next thing."

Matthew 6:34 backs up this way of managing stress: "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

When life starts to feel overwhelming and my "to do" list has started to feel oppressive, I throw it away and just ask myself: "What is the next thing?" At any moment, the next thing might be to help my daughter get a glass of water or prepare lunch. "Doing the next thing" helps me focus on the moment RIGHT THEN rather than obsessing over details days away. I don't want to get to the end of life and realize that I spent most of my life focusing on the future. I want to learn to embrace the moment. Doing the next thing helps.

Want to know another secret? I get way more accomplished when I practice this idea, too! It seems that Matthew 6:34 really does have our best interest in mind!

*Discipleship question:* How often do you live in the moment without worrying about the past or planning for the future?

## **2. Chuck Perfectionism**

Are you a self-proclaimed perfectionist? Do you suffer from paralysis of analysis? I am not a perfectionist. There was a time when I tried to be. I wanted to wear that badge. Then I discovered that true perfectionists end up so caught up in doing everything right that they are either too afraid to start something, or rarely finish anything. If you are holding on to the identity of a perfectionist, chuck it. Success in juggling the many roles of motherhood requires flexibility and the ability to be okay when things do not go as planned. If you invest time in beating yourself up for not doing something "perfectly," consider this fact: That is time you are not investing in your children, your home, your marriage, or your job. Life is too short for perfectionism. It makes a person and the people around them feel worse. Get over it and move on.

"But", you might say "God's Word tells us to 'be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect'" (Matthew 5:48). Yes, and how is our heavenly Father perfect? He is perfect in love, mercy, grace, and peace. When I think of God's perfection, I don't think first of the things He is busy doing. I think of Who He is. The parallel passage found in Luke 6:36 states: "Be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful." God told Moses: "I am that I am" in Exodus 3:13. He did not say: "I do that I do."

*Discipleship question:* Are you known more for what you are or for what you do?

## **3. Why are you busy in the first place?**

Life is just busy. Period. Busy-ness for a mother is fairly normal. There will be a day in time when you will miss the busy-ness. That being said, it is a good idea to check in with yourself and with God and ask a hard question: "Do I feel a need to keep myself busy for a reason?" Are you keeping yourself busy in order to avoid anything? Do you struggle with the ability to relax? Is busy-ness an identity that you like to wear to make yourself feel important? Exodus 20:3 tells us that we are to "keep no other Gods before" our heavenly Father. Is "busy-ness" an idol in your life?

These are tough questions, but important ones for our own Christian discipleship. Busy-ness can be a good thing. Life full of activity and energy is rewarding and fun. Be sure to leave room for God to speak to you and continue to work on your heart, mind, and soul.

*Discipleship question:* Do I keep myself busy as a way to avoid pain or to make myself feel important? Am I addicted to "busy-ness"?

Many of us are in busy seasons of life. I am in a busy season right now and feel God's peace and control through this time in life. However, letting go of perfectionism and learning to "do the next thing" would benefit many of us. It could also be that the Lord is calling you, as He has done with me in the past, to lay some things down. Perhaps He is wanting to "de-tox" you from "busy-ness." Spend time in prayer and let the Lord speak to you about your "busy-ness" today.