



Introduction

Hi friend,

There is something so relieving about *finally* climbing into bed at the end of a long day.

The tasks have been completed. The errands have been run. The text messages have been answered (Well . . . most of them).

But there is also something daunting about bedtime. It's almost like everything I forgot to think about during the day greets me for a late-night chat I don't want to have.

Anxiety begs me to fixate on the intricate details of a situation I can't control.

Uncertainty and doubt shake my confidence about what I know to be true of God.

Fear taunts me with potential worst-case scenarios I have yet to consider.

Stress recalls the tasks I said I would do today and now have to do tomorrow.

And suddenly the relief I felt is gone. *How can I be ready to sleep when there's so much to worry about?*

I understand these feelings and personally know how hard it can be to quiet runaway worries. I can't tell you how many sleepless nights I've had because I've tossed and turned over circumstances I was facing. But here's what I'm challenging myself to remember: even when it feels like the weight of the world is on my shoulders, Jesus has overcome the world (John 16:33).

That's why I'm so glad you've opened the pages of this devotional. Here, you're amongst friends who get it. You're seen and safe and understood. As you read a devotion before bed, I pray the worries that usually rush to your mind are settled and the fears that usually flood your heart are soothed.

And with a clear mind and peaceful heart, sweet dreams will be yours.

love,
Lysa

day one

The Most Powerful Name

Lysa TerKeurst

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid."

MATTHEW 1:20

Imagine being Joseph in the moment he found out his future wife was pregnant. He knew the child wasn't his. His mind must have fired off all kinds of assumptions and dreadful possible scenarios that could have caused this situation.

And his response? He made plans to divorce Mary in secret (Matthew 1:19).

After Joseph considered the divorce, an angel visited him in a dream: "But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit" (v. 20). Joseph went to sleep with the weight of his decision weighing on him, and God sent an angel to direct him and protect God's plan.

God had a plan for Joseph. His assignment was to bring forth the child and name him "Jesus" (v. 21). And the enemy's tactic to mess that plan up could have been many things. Shame. Anger. Division. Confusion.

But the angel of the Lord saw what was really keeping Joseph from staying in alignment with his assignment from God: *fear*. Make no mistake, the enemy wanted Joseph to be afraid.

The enemy wants you to be afraid tonight too. Not the healthy kind of fear that keeps us safe and alert. No, the horrible kind of fear that whispers worst-case scenarios, absent of hope and full of dread. The kind of fear that keeps us tossing and turning all night about situations we can't control, people we can't change and outcomes that feel so uncertain. *Doesn't it feel like sometimes you can't think straight when you're afraid?*

Fear says, "Entertain my entanglements. Linger in my lies. And drink deeply from my darkness." And while we're distracted with fear, the enemy pickpockets our purpose. Cripples our courage. Dismantles our dreams. And blinds us to the beauty of the Lord's great plans.

On the surface it may not seem like your assignments are like Joseph's at all. But they're actually incredibly similar. As a child of God, you, like Mary and Joseph, are to bring forth Jesus. Not in a physical sense but you are to bring forth and proclaim the name of Jesus in everything you say and everything you do . . . even when you're afraid.

Proclaiming the name of Jesus brings power, protection and a perspective that crushes fear. It is the name above every other name (Philippians 2:9) Joseph may have gone to bed afraid but in his dream, he hears the name Jesus for the first time, and he wakes up empowered to be obedient to God's plan.

Wow. The name of Jesus causes the chains of fear to be released from Joseph. And I believe God wants us to experience the same right now.

- The relationship with unresolved conflict you feel stumped on? *Call on the name of Jesus.*
- The financial situation causing you to be paralyzed with anxiety? *Call on the name of Jesus.*
- The frustration you're still thinking about from earlier today? *Call on the name of Jesus.*
- The parenting conversation you're dreading? *Call on the name of Jesus.*
- The medical diagnosis you didn't see coming? *Call on the name of Jesus.*
- The friend who asked you to pray for them but you have no idea what to say? *Call on the name of Jesus.*

Calling on the name of Jesus can be our first response instead of what we do when nothing else seems to be working. He is Immanuel, God with us. Simply whispering his name unlocks the kind of power found only in His presence.

Oh friend, some of the most impactful prayers I've ever prayed are where I simply say the name of Jesus over and over again. Before you go to

sleep tonight, call upon His perfect name. You can know with confidence
"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1).

Jesus, I speak Your name over the situation that's causing me the most angst right now. I can't navigate it on my own. I can't bear the weight on my own. I need Your help. I know Your power is made perfect in my weakness, so I am asking You to come near to me. As I go to sleep tonight, help me remember that You are with me and You are in control. I release my fears into Your faithful hands. In Jesus' Name, amen.

day two

A Stack of Failures and a God Who Sees Our Hearts

Nichole Suvar

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."

1 SAMUEL 16:7 ESV

When the dark, the feeling of failure weighing heavy. My mind begins to think through the day, taking note of everything I didn't get done.

My efforts feel insignificant. Obligations where I continue to fall short stack up like a burdensome pile of books on my chest. It causes my breathing to shorten, and I stare at the ceiling as tears silently fall.

Maybe you've been there too. Convinced you are doing nothing that matters, you conclude that *you* do not matter. The weight of failure robs you of sleep, and you toss and turn as your mental list of deficiencies grows. Why do we classify so many things as failures? Why does our lack of grand accomplishments make us think we got nothing done? Even if we had an entire day where we got nothing done—why does that matter?

When did we start believing we are the sum of our accomplishments and our production? It happens when we focus on who we are and what we do instead of *whose* we are.

God needed to remind the prophet Samuel of this, too, when Samuel was looking to anoint the next king of Israel. Samuel was sure the next king would be one of the taller, stronger, more mature sons of Jesse. When God said “no” to the whole lineup, He reminded Samuel of this truth:

“But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart’” (1 Samuel 16:7).

The same goes for us too. We live in a world that glorifies the grand, big, and amazing. The stranger who becomes a YouTube sensation, the neighbor who writes a book that reaches number one on the bestseller list, and the seemingly random person who makes a Facebook video that goes viral.

When these things happen to normal, everyday people, exciting things feel possible for us too. But when life moves at a normal, even mundane, pace, we might feel as though if we aren't grand, we aren't anything.



David was a shepherd. He devoted his entire day to keeping sheep alive. We could look at a simple life like that and see insignificance. But God knew David's heart, and He chose him as king.

God sees us differently from how the world does. God doesn't look at us as the sum of our accomplishments. Our God looks at the heart. We are made in His image to reflect His glory.

We were chosen to love and share His goodness. If each day we are walking in God's Truth, making steps toward what He has called us to do and remaining faithful, then we are exactly where we are supposed to be. Perhaps a few of us are called to lead thousands, but more of us are called to lead a few. Those few may have sticky hands, endless jabber, and eyes that reflect our own. Our numbers do not matter, but our faithfulness does.

Heavenly Father, today I feel like I didn't get anything done, and yet the demands on my time and energy don't stop. I want to feel like I'm accomplishing something meaningful for Your Kingdom. Help me see my daily responsibilities as You see them. Help my heart focus more on loving and reflecting Your goodness than making a name for myself or checking more off my to-do list. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

day three

Exchanging Anxiety for Rest

Susan Meilnoil

It is vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.

PSALM 127:2 ESV

My tumultuous relationship with sleep began during the time that was, as I see it, the fracturing of my mind. I was newly married, in my early twenties, working full-time for five attorneys, and holding the weight of the world on my shoulders. So much to prove with so little time.

I was already prone to anxiety, so my overburdened mind and body were fertile ground for anxiety and depression's hostile takeover.



Exchanging Anxiety for Rest

Once these two unwelcome guests settled into my life, nighttime was the most challenging part of my day. The setting sun allowed the shadows of all the “what ifs” to loom over me. And my husband’s tranquil breathing was a reminder that all the world rested while I lay awake clutching my fears.

What if something terrible happens? Who will defend me when I am utterly defenseless? The questions raged as the thoughts overwhelmed, and I stayed awake.

I imagine that Solomon, the author of Psalm 127, had endured a few sleepless nights of overthinking before he concluded that it was useless, writing in verse two, *“It is vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.”*

The King James version uses the words *“eat the bread of sorrows.”* The Hebrew noun and verb in this little group of words have the meaning of *actively feeding* on hardship, pain, grief, offense, or sorrow.

Yes, I was in a season of anxiety, but I had to be painfully honest with myself—I was choosing to actively chew on my sorrows. Instead of succumbing to sleep, which I so desperately needed, my mind ran wild with horrific scenarios.

I wasn’t fighting fear and anxiety; I was feeding it and losing precious sleep.

God created us to need rest, and He designed limitations into our frames. Not as a cruel restriction, as my anxious mind would have me believe, but like Psalm 127 says, as a gracious gift. God knew well that His feeble creations would forget their limits and attempt a power grab. Every. Single. Day. So, at the end of each day, He cleverly designed us to become inactive and surrendered.

Of all the things God has given, rest is the one that is most dear to my heart. It becomes that much more precious when it is hard to come by. Because of this, the simple act of sleeping has become a gesture of worship for me. When I lay my worries and my head down, I acknowledge I am not God. Resting says I agree with the psalmist who tells us God is in control, and whatever may or may not happen is in His hands. Sleep is necessary for our bodies, and it can be an act of worship when our perceived control is exchanged for rest.

Friend, never forget you are His beloved, and He gives you the gracious gift of rest. Your fears matter to Him, so be brave and humbly hand them over to the One who can handle holding them.

Father, You say I am Your beloved, and You give me sleep. Help me to believe this truth tonight so I may rest my weary mind and heart. Hold my worries and give me the strength to leave them in Your arms even as I awake. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

day four

Even on the Bad Days

Stacy J. Lowe

*Therefore, there is now no condemnation
for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

ROMANS 8:1 niv

Some days I really don't like myself. Especially on days when I'm impatient and irritable. Days when my attitude is not the greatest, and I don't love others like I should.

Perhaps those days happen because I'm overly stressed or didn't get enough sleep the night before. Or maybe my introverted soul is just worn out from too much interaction with too many people. Whatever the reason,

when those days come around, I often become my own worst critic and beat myself up for it. Repeatedly.

Why can't you just get it together? I wonder, feeling certain I'm the only one ever to have days like this. Except . . . I suspect I'm not the only one. I suspect perhaps you, too, have days where you're not at your finest. In fact, maybe you're having one now.

The Apostle Paul could relate. In Romans 7, he talks about this ongoing struggle of wanting to do what's right but inevitably doing what's wrong. Loving God but still fighting against the sinful nature within.

Just a few verses later, though, in Romans 8:1, he reminds us: "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus . . ." No condemnation. You know what that means? It means my worth is not based upon my performance. My worth is based upon the price Jesus was willing to pay for me, and He paid it all. Even on my bad days, even when I'm struggling to love myself, His love for me never changes. It stands firm and secure. Always.

So what do I do with that?

- I remember that I'm not just tolerated but cherished by my Father.
- I remember that a bad day doesn't devalue my soul or somehow make me less-than in His eyes.
- I remember that because I belong to Christ, when God looks at me, He doesn't see my failures and mistakes; He sees the holiness of His Son.

This doesn't excuse any wrong action on my part, but it does mean I don't have to live in defeat. Sometimes I need that reminder.

