

How a Working Single Mom of 5 Stays Close to God

There once was a time that I would consider myself a gentle and patient mother. Although I'd be hard-pressed at this point to remember when that was. It just seems like I've been living in a perpetual state of annoyance and frustration, which makes me anything but gentle.

I'm finding myself close to tears more than not. I'm a dam ready to burst. And I'm afraid of the day that it happens, because the occasional trickling and leaking is pretty discouraging and quite a sight to behold.

There are days I just want to holler, "I can't do this anymore!" Not even I don't want to—I can't.

Actually, I've said that a lot. God has heard that refrain often over the past few months. And yet each morning I get up and do what needs to be done ... not necessarily with a good attitude and definitely without a lot of sleep, but I do it. And the only reason that I can is because God enables me to, otherwise I'd be hiding under the covers—no, make that under the bed or in the closet or in the attic, somewhere where I'd be very hard to find.

I want desperately to do the mommy-thing well, the teacher-thing well, the student-thing well, the daughter, sister, friend things well. I don't think I'm doing any of them with much success, or consistent success. I definitely feel like the fussy mommy, the scatterbrained teacher, the pathetic student and the nut job daughter, sister friend right now.

I hate to even write that—I feel like I should have a better attitude about myself. I am God's precious daughter, not a failure. It just feels like I am.

But are my feelings accurate? I don't think so. In fact, I know they aren't. Even if they aren't accurate, I do know my feelings well—and they are all over the place sometimes.

I wish that I could figure out how to get out of this funk. I just don't see a way. I don't see a way for more sleep or rest or even quiet. I don't see a way for more time to study, prepare or assess. I don't see a way to spend more time with my children, more calm, fun and less harried, less stressed time. I don't see how to get my house ready to sell so I can move into a better living situation. I don't see how to do anything easily or quickly.

We are in a difficult living situation right now and I don't know how to change it yet. My job is time-consuming (to put it mildly) and sometimes I feel so confused and behind and overwhelmed by all that needs to be done and all that I want to do. My children all need me desperately and I want to give them so much more than I feel capable of giving right now ... I'm running on empty. (A description that doesn't match with my dam about empty of everything but tears.)

I believe this is a part of single difficulty of doing it all. And unless you have been a single parent, it truly is hard to comprehend or understand. Lately, a lot (A LOT) of people have given me advice, mostly unsolicited. I really would prefer not to be told what I need to change or not change, to think or not think, to pray or not pray, to do or not do, to feel or not feel ... honestly, I think I'd rather just pray and read the Word to get that information. But, I think because I'm single and harried people feel they must help ... sometimes that help is so hurtful though. Just being honest. (I digress ... I believe that last paragraph should be a different blog—but here it is anyway!)

Okay, so now I've shared all my fussiness with you, what do I do now? How in the world do I move beyond this emotional, difficult, overwhelming, and frustrating place?

Honestly, I don't think I can.

I don't think that I can change much about my life and maybe I'd feel a whole lot better if I stopped thinking that I could.

I don't believe that God wants me to spend my time trying to figure out how to get out of the life I'm living. I believe He wants me to *live* ... live where He has me with His strength, peace, hope and love in my life.

This week I'm trying to remember that my God is sovereign. Not only sovereign, but good and faithful. That even though I'd really like to "fix" my situation, I'm beginning, just beginning, to get the fact that I don't need to fret. Oh, how I fret! After all the many ways God has shown himself faithful, I find myself continually twisted up inside like a pretzel—worried, anxious, frustrated. How and why is that even possible?

I've been trying and trying and trying to make things happen, but things don't seem to be moving forward like I thought they would. I keep having to wait on things. I hate waiting. Really.

But tonight I'm reminding myself that God will only call me to wait if it is best. And I want best. Best is best.

So tonight, I'm going to bed in a few minutes and I'm determined to sleep more than 6 minutes. In the morning I'm going to pray hard and trust God's goodness and timing ... but I'm also going to pray hard that things get better, easier and less stressful.

I can trust Him. My God is good all the time ... all the time!

Sue Birdseye is an author and single mom of five kids that range from 4-years-old to 17-years-old. Her book, *When Happily Ever After Shatters* (Tyndale House) is in bookstores. This is

adapted from her blog, .