

This Ministry Trap Can Steal Your Heavenly Joy

I was nearly to the end of my rope. I was working full-time, youth pastoring part-time, and writing/editing a book on the side. Two of our four children still lived at home. I had neither a maid nor a nanny (but I did have an amazing husband who learned to do the grocery shopping!). I felt guilty if I said no. I mean, who else would do it (whatever “it” happened to be)?

I had just gone into the chapel in our office during my lunch break for some one-on-one time with the Lord, but I didn’t even have the resources to think of what to say to Him. Trying to listen for His voice sounded even more overwhelming. I finally just sat down on the floor and said out loud, “Father God, can I just be with You right now?”

It felt so good to sit there, like when you’re with your best friend hanging out, and you’ve spent long enough together to be OK with silence. Neither of you feels the need to give or receive input. It’s enough to know they are there with you.

One of my favorite Scriptures is Psalm 46:10a: “Be still and know that I am God.” Interestingly enough, the context for this passage is not a serene setting. It describes nations as being in an uproar, kingdoms falling and the earth melting. I get a mental picture of two children squabbling in the backseat of a car, getting louder and louder until Dad turns around and says, “For crying out loud, be still!” The New American Standard Version even uses the term “Cease striving.”

In that little chapel room, I had to acknowledge I had done my share of “striving.” Being still was the posture I needed. My breathing calmed, my pulse rate slowed. I was reminded that the deadlines that were causing me so much stress were not a

problem to God. As my daughter often says, “He is not up in heaven wringing His hands, wondering what he’s going to do about this or that situation.” He cares, but He is not worried. He is God.

Knowing He is God puts everything else in perspective. I am not God. I can’t fix everything. I can’t do everything. I don’t need to. God can handle it. He has unlimited resources. Guilt shames us into “striving” instead of “being still.”

Certainly, there are times God calls us to action. But we must go into action with the right attitude—knowing He is God. No matter what deadlines I face, He is God. No matter what the news media says, He is God. No matter how I feel, He is God. Even if I feel like my world around me is crumbling, He is God. {eoa}

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