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WHEN ANXIETY STRIKES, SEEK GOD FIRST

By Diana Trautwein

SEEK GOD FIRST

"Seek first the kingdom, keep the righteousness of God in view; (you better) seek first the kingdom – he said, all of these things will be added to you." (from *Consider the Lilies* by James Ward)

Lord, songwriter James Ward has borrowed the words of the gospel – Your "good news" – and written truth: good truth, necessary truth, but such hard truth for us to live!

The author of Proverbs writes: *Do not let loyalty and faithfulness forsake you, bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart ... Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight* (Proverbs 3:3,5).

Again, Lord, truth – good, necessary, and hard.

Peter also writes: *Cast all your anxieties on him, for he cares about you* (1 Peter 5:7).

We are getting it from all sides, Lord God, aren't we? What it all comes down to is this idea of ***trust***. It's about getting our priorities in order and paying attention to what we view. It's about remembering who we are and – most importantly – who *YOU* are. Why is that such a tough thing for us to do?

We are puzzling creatures, Lord, choosing to look in the wrong direction time and time again, to follow our worst instincts, to try like crazy to keep some control over our lives, our loved ones, our plans, our minds, our circumstances. Yet what we know to be true is that there is not much in this life over which we have any real control.

You know us so well, don't You? You know our penchant for anxiety, our desperate need to hold onto the reins, our yearning for the puzzle pieces to fit together perfectly. So, you teach us this good, necessary, and oh-so-hard truth over and over again: TRUST

LET GO. Believe in Your goodness. Relinquish our conniving and all our anxious plotting, and ***rest*** in the truth that YOU are the one who sees the end from the beginning. YOU are the one who cares for us, who promises to walk with us no matter what life throws our way.

With sometimes frightening regularity, we learn of friends lost to us through death – people we love who are gone from our presence. It always feels too soon – at least to our way of understanding.

We have other friends who are walking through difficult times, facing hard things that we do not understand. Maybe *we* are the ones hearing news we did not plan on and did not want to hear.

It seems like no matter where we look, there are so many things that can cause anxiety.

When these hard things happen, our go-to mode is almost always the *opposite* of what Your Word says to us. We *do* worry. We *are* anxious. We *do* forget to trust You, only You, to set things right with this world of ours.

Forgive us for our faithlessness and our disloyalty. Forgive us for allowing our fears to push us into trying to manipulate people and circumstances, to pull strings, to work behind the scenes in feeble attempts to make everything turn out how we think it should.

Hear our prayer, O Lord! Heal us from all those broken parts that push us to Mach-10 levels of anxiety. Help us bind Your goodness around our necks like a beautiful, shimmering shawl that can wrap our worried hearts and over-anxious minds in warmth and release. Help us to write these words on our hearts: ***Trust in the Lord. Trust in the Lord.*** Amen.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- Is something worrying you? As 1 Peter reminds us, you *can* give it to the Lord and trust Him. What steps could you take today?
- Are you grieving a loss today? Use our printable *Coping with Grief* to help you move forward with your grief.
- Is anxiety your constant companion? Could you shift your focus from your circumstances to who God is and how very much He loves you? Find helpful suggestions in our *Anxiety Exercises* printable for how to draw into God's loving presence.