ANXIOUS *for*

NOTHING

FINDING C ALM *in a* CHAOTIC WORLD

By Max Lucado with Jenna Lucado Bishop

**Let your Gentleness Be Evident to All**

 Read Philippians 4:4-8 / specifically v 5 for this lesson NIV

OPENING REFLECTION by Jenna Lucado Bishop,

*Not too long after my daughter was born, I reached out to my cousin Dana for parenting advice. With four kids all grown and out of the house, she had years of parenting experience. I had days. I was desperate for her wisdom.*

*She sent me an email listing morsels of wisdom that I quickly gobbled up. She told me to be silly, get dirty, and play dress up. She told me to pray, pray, pray. She told me to sleep anytime I could and spend quality, uninterrupted time with my daughter.*

*And then there was this one: Find your poker face. When my daughter falls down and hurts herself, she will cry a lot less if I respond with a calm face rather than one that shows fear. Fast- forward fifteen years. She may walk in the door, tears running down her face, confessing something I thought my innocent baby girl could never do. If I respond with calmness, she may share more. But if I react in fear, she may retract.*

*Find your poker face and practice it, Dana wrote.*

*I have to admit I was once that fifteen-year-old girl, confessing something my parents never imagined I would do. And I’ll never forget my dad’s [Max's] response. He didn’t react with yelling or instant punishment. Instead, he calmly held me as I cried. He reassured me of his love for me.*

*And then he did something interesting. He told me to promise him that if I ever found myself in a similar situation again, to call him and he would come and pick me up. Dad knew the trial would probably resurface, and when it did, he wanted to be with me.*

*The calmness of my dad’s response was contagious. My fifteen-year-old self calmed down. I knew I could share anything with him and still be loved.*

*We have a heavenly Father who is with us through every trial. And he invites you and me to talk to him about each one. So the next time you look into the face of a problem, look into the face of your Father. He will never react with impatience or condemnation. Only gentleness.*

Think of someone in your life who is contagiously calm. How does that person display gentleness even during tense times?

OR answer this question...

What challenges are testing your gentleness right now? What strategies have you used to stay calm?

Have you been rejoicing in the Lord always?

How has rejoicing in the Lord been working for you?

Read John 6:1-13 familiar story but slow down to underline words that stand out to you! Each person will have a different word or words that stand out.

What was one thing that stood out to you from the Scripture?

Why do these words stand out to you, and what fresh insight do they bring?

In verse 6, Jesus tested Philip by asking where to buy bread for all the people. What was Jesus testing? Does Jesus still test our hearts today by putting large tasks in front of us? I don’t know what test Jesus is testing you with personally. Maybe globally our test is, how do we live in our world with Covid 19? How do we live in this world but not of this world?

We not only have the choice of how we will perceive trials, but we also have a choice as to how we will react to them.

The Greek word for Gentleness in Philippians 4:5 describes a temperament that is seasoned and mature. A gentle person is level-headed and reacts to stress with steadiness and fairness.

Contagiously calm people trust that God is always in control and encourage others around them that everything will be okay.

How can we exude gentleness in tough times? By looking at Paul’s promise in Philippians 4:5 “*The Lord is Near*.”

When we believe the **lie** that God has left us, our loneliness amplifies the problem. That’s why we have to clutch the **truth** of God’s nearness with both hands.

In the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand, his disciples never asked him for help. Instead, they decided the problem was too big and told the creator of the world what to do.

When we face a problem, instead of telling Jesus how to fix it and starting with what we have, let’s remember what Jesus has. He is with us and will give us everything we need to overcome our difficulties.

Exodus 3:7-12. What fear does Moses express to God in Verse 11? How does God respond in verse 12?

Read Genesis 15:1; Deuteronomy 31:8; Joshua 1:9; and Isaiah 43:2. What is God’s promise in each verse? What common theme do you see running through these verses?

Again and again throughout his Word, God promises to be with us. Think about a time when God’s presence calmed you in the middle of a storm. How did god’s presence change you emotionally, spiritually, and/or physically?

Paul says the key to finding gentleness is believing that God is near. However, just like Jesus’ disciples, we easily forget he is with us and waiting to help us. What are some things that prevent you from not only knowing but also believing God is near?

When have you, like the disciples, faced a trial and took actions into your own hands before turning to the Lord?

Galatians 5:22-25; Philippians 2:13; and 2Peter 1:3. What promise is given in each of these verses?

According to these promises, where is your source of calmness? How does this alleviate the burden to conjure up calmness on your own Power?

Jesus tells us there will always be troubles in life. But we have the choice to respond to those troubles with gentleness or with frustration. Considering the biblical promises just read, what specific steps can you take to respond calmly instead of react sharply when anxieties weigh heavily on your shoulders?

John 16:33, Jesus says, “Take heart! I have overcome the world.” How did Jesus overcome the entire world? What has Jesus overcome in your personal world?

On your phone create a picture or text of the words “The Lord is Near” to be a simple reminder over and over each day that you view those words. If you do not know how to do this on your phone ask your child or grandchild or young friend to do it for you they will take it as a challenge!

Closing prayer Bible verse Isaiah 41:10

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.