

LAURA HARRIS SMITH, N.D.

GIVE IT
TO GOD



AND GO
TO BED

Stress Less, Sleep Better, Dream More

“It’s rare that a book is filled so beautifully with mind-challenging metaphors, soul-stirring stories and spirit-revealing truths, but this book delivers! If you know people who struggle with sleep deprivation, unforgiveness, spiritual oppression or chronic physical issues, I urge you to get them this book—they will love you for it.”

Dr. Bill Greenman, president, Global Purpose Strategies

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Dr. H. K. Vickery, chairman, Oliver-Mann, Inc.,
A Cancer Solution Mission

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For Campsmith

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Nightly video blessings for Laura's "10 Days to a Lifetime of Deeper Sleep and Dreams" program can be found at www.LauraHarrisSmith.com/GoodnightVideos

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have people ask me all the time how I accomplish the quantity of work that I do. They either jokingly say that I run circles around them, or they roll their eyes and say they get exhausted just watching me. Well, I have a few secrets, and I humbly but highly recommend them to you: (1) Honor the Sabbath with a *full* day of rest each week (see Exodus 20:8–11), and God will multiply your speed, favor and proficiency during the other six days. (2) Put only good things in your mouth so that God can renew your youth like the eagle’s (see Psalm 103:5) and you feel decades younger than you actually are. And (3) Pray for a “double portion,” as Elisha did (see 2 Kings 2:9), so that you experience an extra dose of God’s Holy Spirit and thus live a life of double blessing and adventure.

But while doing all of those things will get you a life teeming with opportunity and productivity, it also begs for more spiritual warfare in the form of constant resistance. So my final trade secret is this: Choose wisely a prayer team of mature people who have your best interests at heart . . . who will intercede for you daily . . . who will wave torches of fiery prayer and scare away the little foxes and wolves for you . . . whom you can email with an SOS

Acknowledgments

and suddenly have from them an inbox full of prophetic insight and encouragement . . . who will love you in all your forms, keep your most private confidences and *never* judge you. Be willing to let them come and go as they need to, for there are seasons. But just make sure you love and spoil them, for at the end of each project, you will find that they were your secret sauce. And here are the ingredients in mine at the time of the writing, editing and publication of *Give It to God and Go to Bed*:

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Some of you have been with me for more than a quarter of a century! With others, it feels as though we have been family for even longer. Every prayer you pray is like liquid gold, and I honor you today for every prayer—large and small—that you have sown into me, my family, my business and my ministry. May it all boomerang back to you! I love you so. Now on to the next assignment!



THE DISTRACTION DOWN THE HALL

How has your day been, so far? On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being “very much” and 1 being “not at all,” how stressful has it been? Think about your stress level right now. Perhaps you just had a mind-consuming workday, and a looming deadline has you planning an evening of even more work. Perhaps you are outnumbered by children and cannot remember the last time you got a full night’s sleep. Maybe you bought this book at an airport kiosk and are finally relaxing after rushing to make your flight. Or maybe you are lonely and are missing the bustle of your once-active life or the company of a lost loved one. Stress takes on many forms and looks different for everyone.

I have prayed for this book to be so saturated in peace that when you pick it up and open its pages, you actually take a deep cleansing breath, feel your shoulders drop, and forget your deadlines

and distractions for a while. Reading it may be your one daily act of self-care, and I want you to feel as though you are having a conversation with a good friend who is devoted to seeing you happy and healthy. Imagine having someone just waiting to sit with you and help you manage the day's challenges, who will guide you toward a less stressful and more productive tomorrow. Well, you do have someone like that. While I am not He, I know I am called to help you practice His presence. Since one of the Holy Spirit's names is "Helper," just think of me as the Helper's helper.

Here is my vow to you: I am devoting myself to helping you change the way you process your daytime stresses and nighttime burdens. If you will glance over this book's chapter titles, you will notice that each one contains a preposition: "The Monsters *in* Your Closet." "The Weapons *under* Your Pillow." "The World *outside* Your Window." "The Writing *on* the Wall." The entire book is set in your bedroom, where we are going to tuck you in, get you to sleep, revive your dream life and fill your prayer life with purpose and peace. So whatever your *pre*-position as you begin, prepare yourself for taking a new position altogether.

With each chapter, you are going to find yourself better equipped to pick your battles and not live under the sway of constant confrontation. But because of your new posture, you will also experience what feels like fewer battles since you will be making the daily divine exchange that empties out the battlefields of your life—your worries exchanged for God's weapons. Your worry does not fight off your enemies. But God's weapons do.

My six children were spread out over a period of about sixteen years (they were all about three years apart), so we never had a lot of fighting in our house since each child had his or her own time as "the baby," and then matured into a new phase of childhood

by the time the next one came along. Not only that, but practically speaking, a thirteen year old does not fight with a three year old, and a sixteen year old does not fight with a baby. And my two closest in age were numbers three and four—the middle children—and they were so calm and steady that they were not given to fighting (they still are not). So we really did not have much fighting among our kiddos. Granted, foolishness is still bound up in the heart of a child. I was also still outnumbered and definitely had my work cut out for me, but I do not remember ever having to break up a physical fight or a sibling screaming match. The things Chris and I fought in our home were more corporate and internal—our minimal finances, our maturation as very young parents, my unpredictable health—but we fought these things as a team and rarely had to deal with the sideshow of sibling rivalry.

My oldest daughter, on the other hand, also has six children. And she had them in *six years*. When the twin boys were nine months old she got pregnant with the third boy, so she had three in diapers or pull-ups when she got pregnant with the fourth. Then two more singletons and she was done, and now they all are school aged. That means they will all be learning to drive (and all be added to insurance policies) at about the same time, all be in college (or be looking at colleges) at the same time, and all be moving out in what will seem like the blink of an eye. But it also means that right now, they are all sharing the same toys, spaces, friends, and one day soon, girlfriend and boyfriend pools. Jessica's maternal career looks very different from mine, although we have the same number of children.

Is it harder to do all your mothering at once over a shorter number of years, or have it spread out over 36 years, as was the case with my husband and me? (Only in the last year have we

become empty nesters, and we already have eleven grandchildren, with grandmuffin number twelve now on the way!) There are challenges in both scenarios, and grace for both. But I remember when Jessica's young teens were tiny, and they would come over to play at "Papa and Lollie's" (our grandmuffins' names for us). Usually, there was a spat to mediate or a toy to get back into the hands of its rightful owner.

These half a dozen siblings did amazingly well, and they will all be great at fractions because they had to share everything and split it six ways. The three boys are so close in age that they basically functioned as triplets, so they were together nonstop, had no memories apart from one another, and were each other's greatest allies. Yet in the blink of an eye, they could pivot and become archenemies! I remember once when they were preschool aged, one boy took a toy from another and ran off with it. Before I could intervene to issue justice, "brudder" had run to retrieve it, but not without a tug-of-war and a shove that left the offender in tears, flat on his back on our concrete floors.

We need to learn how to pick our battles, letting Papa God fight for us so that we are not stressed-out, worrisome, workaholic insomniacs.

Of course, immediate remorse came and the shover quickly said he was sorry, for he truly was. But afterward, Chris had to sit him down and say this: "If you would have come to Papa when he stole that toy from you, then I could have handled it for you so you didn't have to fight. But now, Papa can't punish him because you've already punished him for me, and trust me, he would have remembered Papa's punishment longer and would never steal anything from you again!"

So it is with you and me, friend. We need to learn how to pick our battles, letting Papa God fight for us so that we are not stressed-out, worrisome, workaholic insomniacs. Who wants to work with that? Who wants to be married to that? Who wants to *be* that? No one! And it certainly is not good PR for God when His earthside representatives behave that way.

The truth is, someone steals something from you every day, and has done so ever since a childhood playmate took your first treasured toy. Some days it is just minutes stolen that you could not afford to lose, or a lost parking spot that cost you extra energy, or a moment of peace that you lost because of someone else's selfishness. But other days, the losses are more substantial. You may discover that something or someone has stolen your idea, your promotion, your reputation, your spouse or your child.

I am not suggesting that you do nothing about these injustices or that you just put on a funny movie to forget that they exist. Stress is real, pain is hard and loss is unjust. But I am suggesting that at some point each day, after the sun goes down, you will have to make the choice to give it all to God and go to bed. The alternative is that your troubles do jumping jacks in front of you and keep you up too late either eating in the kitchen, vegging out on the living-room sofa or slaving away in your home office. Those other rooms and the activities you do in them distract you from making your way down the hall to the bedroom, where you rest and sleep, and where prophetic directional dreams await you.

I see three main thieves that keep you from making that walk to your bedroom each night: stress, work and worry. Let's expose the criminal activities of each of these thieves individually so you can catch them in the act and put a stop to them stealing your sleep, your dreams and your health. We will start with your invisible enemy, stress.

Stress—The Invisible Enemy

Even as you read this, stress may be affecting your physical health without you even knowing it. You may think that your headaches are the result of some undiagnosed ailment, or that your chest pain is surely the sign of a heart attack.¹ You may think that your overeating or undereating is tied to age-related metabolic demands, or that your insomnia is solely due to hormonal changes. It would also be easy to dismiss your lack of productivity at work as being a sign that it is time for a career change, or to figure that your marital dissatisfaction is a sign of the need for a relationship change. In truth, all of these are symptoms of stress. And ignored stress eventually becomes physical *distress*.

There is no end to the unnecessary medical prescriptions written for stress-induced conditions that could all have been averted, had people dealt with the symptoms at their emotional sources. Nothing I ever write is intended to keep you from staying on top of your physical health and visiting your doctor with serious concerns. Quite the opposite. Yet what I am suggesting is that there would be fewer physical concerns in your life if there were less stress.

For example, digestive issues, insomnia, tobacco usage, obesity, diabetes, depression, high blood pressure, social withdrawal, lack of focus, angry outbursts, restlessness, muscle pain, libido changes, fatigue and all the symptoms in the paragraph above are common effects of stress, according to Mayo Clinic,² the hospital ranked number one in the nation for the fifth consecutive year.³ If you are experiencing two or more such symptoms, I urge you not to dismiss them, but to examine your life and look for the stressors. That is why I started out this chapter by asking how stressful your day has been so far, on a scale of 1 to 10. I hope you were able to

answer with a low number. If not, then there is the likely possibility that ten years, five years or even one year from now, your physical health will take a drastic turn for the worse if you do not act now.

What is stress? Let's look at the practical definition of both the noun and verb forms, for starters:

Stress (*noun*)

1. strain, pressure, (nervous) tension, worry, anxiety, trouble, difficulty; informal hassle.
2. importance, weight.
3. emphasis, accent, accentuation; beat.
4. pressure, tension, strain.

(*verb*)

1. emphasize, draw attention to, underline, underscore, point up, place emphasis on, lay stress on, highlight, accentuate, press home.
2. place the emphasis on, emphasize, place the accent on.
3. overstretch, overtax, push to the limit, pressure, make tense, worry, harass.⁴

Whether your stress is a noun or a verb, it has the potential to keep you up at night and prevent you from experiencing the life of peace you were born again to have. The reason for this is found in that second definition of *stress* as a noun: “importance, weight.” The things that have the greatest potential to stress you out only have it because they are important to you. I hope it goes without saying that you should not be getting stressed out over the grocery clerk who packs your groceries too slowly or the driver who cuts you off on the interstate. Those people have no real “importance” in your life, and your interactions with them should bear no real “weight” on your day. If you are given to blowing your stack over

such insignificant events in your day-to-day life, you are most definitely in danger of developing a stress-induced illness.

It is the things and people who *do* have “importance and weight” with us who have the greatest potential to bring us stress, however, because they also have the greatest potential to bring us joy. That ex-spouse or loved one who hurt you was only able to do so because he or she was important to you. The relationship weighed something on the scales of your life. It is the same with any true friendship you lose. The loss was great because the love was great.

Now look at *stress* as a verb. Do you feel like the third definition—overstretched, overtaxed, pushed to the limit? How about pressured, tense, worried or hassled? If so, it is vital for you to become aware of how to decompress nightly so that your sleep can be sweet, your peace can be full and your health can be protected. By the end of this book, you *will* be able to face your distress and learn how to de-stress. You need God on the scene of your stress, serving as a filter. Before a stressful situation highjacks your day and enters your life, you must consider how you will deal with it and be prepared in advance.

What many do not understand is that stress, anxiety and tension left unchecked can become neurosis. Just listen to this definition of *neurosis* by author Susan M. Turley in *Understanding Pharmacology for Health Professionals*:

The symptoms of neurosis include anxiety, anxiousness, and tension—all at a more intense level than normal—as well as a feeling of apprehension with vague, unsubstantiated fears, but there is never any loss of touch with reality. The treatment of neurosis involves the use of antianxiety drugs, which are also known as anxiolytic drugs or minor tranquilizer drugs. Neurosis is also treated with antidepressant drugs and specific drugs from other

categories. Psychiatric drugs are used to treat diseases of the mind, otherwise known as mental illnesses.⁵

But believe it or not, neurosis treatments and antianxiety medications come with a long list of anxiety-causing side effects of their own, and here they are according to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH): nausea, blurred vision, headache, confusion, tiredness, nightmares, drowsiness, dizziness, unsteadiness, problems with coordination, difficulty thinking or remembering, increased saliva, muscle or joint pain, frequent urination, and sometimes even rash, hives, swelling of the face or lips, difficulty swallowing, hoarseness, suicidal thoughts and even seizures.⁶

Turley goes on to define *depression*:

Depression is a mood disorder that is characterized by insomnia, crying, lack of pleasure in any activity, increased or decreased appetite, inability to act or concentrate, with feelings of guilt, helplessness, hopelessness, worthlessness, and thoughts of suicide and death. These symptoms occur daily, interfere with life activities, and last longer than two weeks. The treatment for depression involves the use of antidepressant drugs.⁷

Turley's descriptions are correct, and she is also correct when she describes that the typical treatment for depression involves the use of antidepressant drugs. But the side effects can be devastating. Once again, they are listed on the NIMH website in keeping with those released by the FDA: nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, sleepiness, thoughts about suicide or dying, attempts to commit suicide, new or worsening depression, new or worsening anxiety, feeling very agitated or restless, panic attacks, trouble sleeping

(insomnia), new or worsening irritability, acting aggressively, being angry or violent, acting on dangerous impulses, an extreme increase in activity and talking (mania) and other unusual changes in behavior or mood.⁸

Now you know how stress can affect you physically and emotionally. But I will tell you that, as pastors, my husband and I have also seen stress gravely affect people's spiritual health. One day they are stressed about their work—whether it be a demanding boss, a lack of promotion, budgetary cutbacks or a contentious co-worker—and if their stress is left undealt with, they are suddenly taking out their frustrations on handy congregants, and even on their pastors.

I remember one time we had a congregant whose once-enjoyable job became so stressful that he seemed to go through a personality change. Once full of winning smiles, he was now always talking about how bad things were at work. He never talked about a solution, or about finding another job. He just grew increasingly more frustrated and increasingly more unreliable. He began stepping down from his duties at church in order to manage his occupational stress. When some church leaders spoke into his life out of concern, he brought up that he felt he might need to change churches. The situation had a happy ending, but only because he finally dealt with the source of his stress instead of rearranging his life to accommodate it. He had to learn his own worth so that he could set a course for his future and not let himself be taken advantage of.

Likewise, it is in your best interest—body, mind and spirit—not to let your stressors go unchecked. Face them head-on. We will deal more with how to do that in chapter 9, but next let's take a look at a second thief that will try to entice you away from peaceful sleep—work.

Work—The Enticing Seducer

Another distraction that keeps you from heading to bed each night is work. Oh, how I love work! In my idea of a perfect world, I would never have to sleep and could just work all day and night. I would never grow tired, get mentally dim and have to turn in for the night. To be honest, it is the greatest temptation of my life—the seduction of sleeplessness. I battle it the way some people battle addiction or the lust of the flesh. I literally get a second wind about midnight each night, and since the world has finally gone to sleep and is no longer texting or calling me, I feel as if a window of productivity opens up and I am able to climb through it, sprout wings and fly.

My secret wish is that there is no sleep in heaven. Rest, but no sleep! I get so much accomplished after midnight that I feel as if I have cheated tomorrow out of a few good working hours that no one else in the world is getting. Granted, I almost killed myself doing that for several decades. Then in 2012, it all came crashing down when my sleep defiance caught up with me and I wound up in adrenal burnout. This condition is a severe adrenal insufficiency caused by stress, sleeplessness and other factors. When you do not or cannot sleep to replenish yourself each night, your body must manufacture its energy from other sources in order for all your body systems to keep operating and for you to feel like getting out of bed in the morning. Most often, your body places the demand on your adrenaline and cortisol hormones to accomplish both. The trouble is, once you run out of adrenaline and cortisol, your days are numbered.

Also called adrenal fatigue or adrenal exhaustion, the worst manifestation of this condition is in stage 4, when your internal organs and body systems shut down entirely. By the time I was

diagnosed I was already in stage 3, and basically I was told to “make changes or die.” My nutritionist told me that if I survived at all, it would take me 18 to 24 months to turn myself around. Another name for this condition is Addison’s disease, a disorder many people first heard about after the death of John F. Kennedy. It was said that he had it so badly that had he not been assassinated, he would have been dead anyway within a year.

Although some of its names suggest fatigue or exhaustion, I never experienced those as severely as some people with the condition, who say they cannot even get out of bed. Because of my strong constitution, I never really felt so drained that I could not function. And due to the work ethic I inherited from my parents, I just kept pushing myself day by day through my busy life. Most of my days were twenty-hour days, or close to it. Yet I definitely noticed a difference when I asked my body to climb a flight of stairs, or when I tried to stay on my feet all day.

While in my early forties, at five foot two and under 110 pounds, I went in for an annual doctor’s checkup and showed a dramatic increase in my cholesterol and blood sugar levels. On the decrease was my adrenal function as my reproductive system came to a screeching halt—all confirmed by blood, urine and saliva tests. My body temperature got down to as low as 94.5 (one morning it got as low as 89.9, confirmed by a second thermometer), which revealed an apathetic thyroid. This meant a sluggish metabolism that eventually came to a stop and resulted in unwanted weight gain.

Not only had my adrenals quit producing sufficient adrenaline (necessary for energy), but they had also all but quit producing cortisol (necessary for reducing stress). Even my digestive track was showing the presence of bad bacteria in my small intestines, which is dangerous for many reasons, including that it leaves your immunities compromised since more than 70 percent of your

immune system is in your gut. My pancreas was in total rebellion, and blood tests showed I was pre-diabetic. This was after an entire lifetime of perfectly healthy blood sugar that, if anything, always registered a bit on the low side.

My neurological health took a hit, too, in the form of a sudden increase in the small seizures that I had been experiencing for almost forty years by this point. Since sleep deprivation is the number-one seizure trigger, my lack of good sleep health led to poor neurological health. All of this and so much more was highjacking my life, including a mysterious brain fog that I simply could not shake, even on the days when I felt my strongest and most like myself. My creative juices also seemed nonexistent, and I experienced writer's block for the first time in my life.

Still, I was not making the connection between my excessive work, my lack of sleep and my failing body. Then I began doing research for a book I was writing called *Seeing the Voice of God: What God Is Telling You through Dreams and Visions* (Chosen, 2014). I had felt led to introduce a new spin on dreams books by including in mine medical studies on the body's sleep stages, along with other nutritional nuggets such as how to increase dream recall through the use of certain vitamins and minerals. I knew I had to start by interviewing a sleep study doctor, and after contacting the offices of numerous pulmonologists in Nashville with my request, one nibbled. You can read those studies for yourself in *Seeing the Voice of God*, but suffice it to say that as I sat in Starbucks the day of our interview, feverishly taking notes, I had no idea that God was setting me up to discover what was wrong with me. He was using work to make me study sleep, because it was work that was keeping me from sleeping.

As the doctor I interviewed explained that day, the first consequence of sleep deprivation is hormonal failure. You would think

that when I heard that fact, I would have had a lightbulb moment. But I did not. Keep in mind that this was before I was diagnosed with adrenal burnout. Still, the symptoms were there that every hormone in my body was decreasing. Now, as a naturopath, I know that since hormones are synthesized largely from cholesterol (along with every cell in your body), that was why my high cholesterol levels had climbed higher.



If there is one thing I have learned from this experience, it is that if you do not go to bed and sleep, your organs will go to sleep for you.



My body was fighting itself to produce hormones, but it was a losing battle for both sides. I was never going to regain sufficient production of my thyroid, adrenal or reproductive hormones if I did not make changes.

I had a thirty-year sleep debt to pay, and the bill was coming due. If there is one thing I have learned from this experience, it is that if you do not go to bed and sleep, your organs will go to sleep for you. I had thought that because I ate my veggies, exercised regularly and avoided bad fats and sugary foods, I was in good health. But even if you do all of that, sleep deprivation can still take you to an early grave if you do not set new habits. It was time for me to do just that.

Since my liver also showed signs of struggling, I could not just start popping pills tailor-made for each organ, because then my liver could not process them all. I had to use food as medicine and get a crash course in herbology, vitamins, minerals and more. With the steps I took and the changes I made, what should have taken up to two years to turn around took my Great Physician and me only six months to accomplish.

You can read the full story of how I survived in my book *The 30-Day Faith Detox: Renew Your Mind, Cleanse Your Body, Heal Your Spirit* (Chosen, 2016). That was the book I wrote that came from the whole adrenal burnout and recovery experience. It still blows my mind that now, tens of thousands of people from all over the world have followed the same month-long, total-temple cleanse I presented in that book and have found healing—physically, emotionally and spiritually. You may want to follow the regimen I outlined there yourself. It truly is a reset button for the body, mind and spirit, and not a day goes by that I do not hear from people who are beginning or ending their faith detox journey. They express their excitement, list their accomplishments and testify about the medications they have come off of and the healing they have found in their relationships. God is so good! But also remember that the key to good physical health is no longer just diet and exercise. It is now diet, exercise *and* sleep. And as I now believe and will never tire of saying, *sleep doctors could put all the other doctors out of business, because once you fix your sleep, you fix your whole health!*

Before it is too late, you must learn to take the stressors we have discussed and give them to God, shut your laptop and stop working, and then will yourself to go to bed. We will discuss more in chapter 2 about how to improve your sleep health and get your sleep debt paid. But first, let's look at the third thief that steals our sleep—worry. This final one excels at causing distractions that often keep us from going to bed, or that keep us wide awake once we get there.

Worry—The Sleep Stealer

Have you ever heard of kudzu? It is an aggressive vine known to almost everyone in the United States, although its origin is from the

other side of the world (Japan and southeast China). In my part of the country, we refer to it as “the vine that ate the South.” You can see it growing on the roadside along most interstate systems, and it is a perfect example of a plant that was introduced with the best of intentions but with the worst of outcomes.

Kudzu first came to America in 1876 as a display at the Japanese Exhibition of the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. Immediately after the gathering, all plants in the exhibit were ordered destroyed. By the turn of the century, however, you could buy kudzu in mail-order catalogs, as many people did in an attempt to bring shade to their garden arbors and homes. In the 1930s, kudzu was introduced to America intentionally by the Soil Erosion Service (SES) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) for the purpose of combatting soil erosion in the Southeast. I only know this history because I used to have a friend whose father was responsible for helping make the decision to bring kudzu to America—a decision that many in the CCC (a work relief program employing millions of people on environmental projects during the Great Depression) would go on to regret.

True, kudzu vines provide protection of a sort for wide-open landmasses by preventing soil erosion, but the problem with this climbing perennial is that it can overtake entire fields of vegetation—grass, trees, flowers and more—in no time at all. In fact, it grows up to a foot a day in the early summer, so that old adage about how you can “watch kudzu grow” is actually accurate. And it basically strangles whatever it touches by slowly wrapping itself around its host. Not only that, but its tuberous roots can reach a depth of twelve feet in older patches and can weigh as much as two hundred to three hundred pounds.

This marvel plant, which was once intended to provide shade and relief, actually kills. Inch by inch and foot by foot, the landscape it

invades becomes a thing of the past. Just google the words “kudzu overtaking vegetation” and check out some of the alarming images, including those of how it soon “eats” non-cropland areas such as old buildings, vacant lots and abandoned structures.

Friend, worry is like kudzu. It feels so constructive at first, as if it will produce some sort of solution to whatever problem is nagging you as you are trying to get to sleep each night. Truth be told, worry actually can make you stay up troubleshooting and problem solving until the wee hours, and then you never get to bed at all. But the troubles never get solved as worry wraps itself around your mind and steals your sleep. And for all you daytime worriers, worry can entangle your every waking thought and cause you to make decisions entirely out of fear and not faith.

Just like what kudzu does to whatever it touches, if left unchecked, worry will creep and crawl its way into your decision-making and even your dreaming, if you let it run amuck. Listen to Jesus’ words to you about your worry:

Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

Therefore do not worry, saying, “What shall we eat?” or “What shall we drink?” or “What shall we wear?” For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Matthew 6:25–34 NKJV

I have a good friend in Nashville named Trish Beverstein who has a perennial lily field just outside her house. She planted it years ago, and soon after, she began to view it as a reminder and a refuge based on this Matthew 6 passage. When the trials of life come, instead of toiling, spinning or worrying, she just goes and sits in her lily field. It reminds her to seek first the Kingdom of God and then expect excitedly for God to provide her the answers she needs. I have had a front-row seat to Trish’s life for decades, and like clockwork, that is what God does for her every time.

Trish and I share a love for many things—nutrition, health and beauty products—but there is no cosmetic like happiness. I am certain that Trish’s beauty can be directly attributed to the peace and joy she gets while sitting in her lily field “considering the lilies.” Maybe you should plant a lily field, too. Or at least get yourself a lily flower pillow for your bed as a reminder. Then each night, let it woo you to your bedroom, and as you take it off your bed and let it drop to the floor, let go of your worries with it. Refuse to toil and spin. Choose rest.

As we end this first chapter, I want you to answer the questions below, which will help you itemize the three categories of distractions we have talked about that keep you from getting to bed each night and resting peacefully. Write down your stressors,

your work deadlines and your worries, which you will refer to later, when you finish the book. As you read each of this book's ten chapters at your own pace, do the same thing. *You are not done with each chapter until you complete its vital accompanying questions.*

Once you are done reading this entire book, you can then start my "10 Days to a Lifetime of Deeper Sleep and Dreams" program, which I introduce in chapter 10. Not only will you use the information you have learned from each chapter along the way, but you will also use your answers to the questions for each of the 10 chapters. Obviously, the program will take you 10 days after you finish reading the book. As you go through it, I encourage you to review each chapter's questions and answers, one night at a time, just before bed. After your review, go to the online link I will provide in the 10-Day program. That link will take you to a special video you can view where I will pray a prayer over you about that day's topics.

But first, here are today's questions and closing prayer:

QUESTIONS AND PRAYER

1. List three stresses or worries that you face on a regular basis right now.

2. Describe your relationship with your work at present.

Pray this out loud: Father God, please show me the daily distractions that are joining forces to prevent me from ending each day in peace. Highlight for me those places where I choose to toil and troubleshoot instead of trusting You and heading down the hall to my bedroom each night for sweet rejuvenation. Help me to have healthy boundaries for my work and to never allow it to steal my focus from You. In the name of Jesus, Amen.