

Why isn't a  
pretty girl like you  
**MARRIED?**

*and other useful comments*

Nancy Wilson

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# Introduction

**Y**ears ago my husband and I were attending a church dinner where part of the program included asking all the “singles” in the church to stand. At that time there were only three, my oldest daughter and two young men. When my daughter’s turn came to be introduced, my husband said, “She’s not single. She’s a daughter!”

Ever since that evening, I have felt uncomfortable with the term *single* when referring to unmarried men and women in our church. Today our numbers have swollen, and we have many unmarried men and women of “marriageable age” as part of our growing church community. Our individualistic culture wants to label unmarried people as *singles*, but in the covenant community of God, there are no *singles*. God calls us *family*: brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers in Christ. We are each to be wonderfully connected to the other as part of a church community, where each person is needed and attached to others in her own family as well as to the broader church family.

In a healthy covenant community there will, of course, be many married couples with children of various ages; but there will also be widows, couples who do not have children, old

people, college students, and unmarried men and women. In our church it is not uncommon for us to attend several baby or wedding showers a month. It's very easy to focus on the needs of these young women who are becoming wives or mothers, and forget to look out for the needs of the widows, childless couples, elderly saints, or unmarried men and women. This is why we need to stir one another up to love and good deeds. We are to minister to one another in various ways, and if we were all the same, life would be boring indeed. Fruit is never uniform; it is scattered about, some branches more heavily laden than others. Fruit is messy, but it is delightful. The church community is much the same. An unmarried woman is just as much a part of the covenant community as the mother with ten children. And she can be just as fruitful as the mother with the large family, even if her fruit doesn't look the same. In the providence of God, each of us has a unique place among the saints.

Still, even if we adopt a new terminology and do not call unmarried women *singles*, we have to stop treating them as singles. I know it's burdensome to always be using the term *unmarried*, and it does put undue emphasis on the marital status. But I don't like referring to these women as maids or maidens either. That seems very clunky and out-of-touch. In this book I use the term *unmarried women*, but I don't think it is evil to use the word *single*. My point here is to remember they are part of the covenant community and not unconnected to the rest of us. This requires wisdom for all the church, because the women in this category have a difficult time today finding their place in the world as well as in the church community. They can feel a very real pressure and expectation to get married. Many of the saints make well-meaning (but thoughtless) comments that exert this sort of pressure. "Why isn't a pretty girl like you married?" Responding to such comments requires a gracious spirit and a liberal dose of good humor.

## CHAPTER 1

# “Why Isn’t a Pretty Girl Like You Married?”

*and other useful comments*

**N**o doubt we have all heard people say this or, even worse, have said it ourselves. Unmarried women, depending on how long they have been in the “still not married” category, could no doubt make an impressive list of thoughtless comments spoken to them by well-meaning people, often at social gatherings, and especially at friends’ weddings. I have heard of some pretty horrendous comments, but I have reminded the women who have been the recipients of such comments to attribute the best of motives. Most of the time people are trying to be funny, or they are trying to make conversation, and it is all they can think of to say. We really must think the best of them. Taking offense at insensitive comments only makes for bitter women. If you can quickly bring to mind a list of people who have said unkind things about your unmarried state, perhaps you need to confess some hard feelings and bitterness. Let it go.

If we are going to talk about unmarried women living in community with lots of married people, we have to be determined from the outset that we must get along. And we must even do better than that: we must love one another and be

quick to forgive. I suggest that you accept the fact that people, even dear, sweet, Christian people, can say and do atrocious things. And if they weren't saying stupid things that hurt your feelings about being unmarried, then they would be saying something else that would be a temptation. Married women are not immune to such things. So realize that this is just a fact of life, and until the world changes, we will all be exposed to comments that are either deliberately rude at worst, or at best thoughtless and unkind. We might as well determine now that we will handle this like Christian women. And how exactly is that?

First of all, handle it with grace. A gracious spirit answers with gracious words. Peter tells us that "the Lord is gracious" (1 Pet. 2:3); Christ was known as gracious (Lk. 4:22), and Ecclesiastes says that "The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious, but the lips of a fool shall swallow him up" (10:12). It is easy to be annoyed or offended. We don't need grace to do that. But it requires grace from God to return good for evil, to overlook an insult, and to respond to an unkind comment with kindness. We are God's people; we must imitate Him in this.

Sometimes we really are too hard on others. They meant no harm. They did not realize it would hurt your feelings. They thought they were being friendly or funny. In fact, they meant it as a compliment! After all, they said you were pretty. But our tendency is to take it hard. We immediately attribute motives and assume they were intending to hurt us. This is where we have to lighten up a little and have a sense of humor about it. People generally are insensitive and say stupid things without thinking. That is why the Scriptures are so full of exhortations about the tongue. Assume that for each hurtful comment you have ever received, you have probably spoken at least a dozen to others. This will then give you a spirit of humility yourself. Let others' unkind comments be sermons to you, teaching you



to be far more sensitive and caring to others than you have been before.

When saying this, I am not pretending that comments like these are no big deal. I know they are hurtful, unkind, insensitive, rude, and unloving. They can cause discouragement, embarrassment, annoyance, and even bring on tears. They can easily stumble you and lead to self-pity or cause you to doubt the Lord's mercy toward you. My point is not that these comments are no big deal. Rather, I want to encourage you to learn to deal with them with grace and wisdom. You want to process them like a Christian woman, not like a worldly woman. Sometimes half the battle is recognizing what is happening. If you can see it coming and identify it as a temptation, then you can ask God to give you a gracious answer and not stew about it later, thinking about all the very witty things you could have said to put that person in his place! If you know this is a stumbling block, and it is, then pray preventively that God will keep you from temptation. Then you can go with a sense of humor, wondering who it will be this time to make the witty crack.

This is a universal problem. Cancer patients hear horror stories from well-meaning friends about so-and-so who died a quick death after being diagnosed with the same disease. Pregnant women hear about terrible deliveries. When I was pregnant with my first baby, a well-meaning friend asked me who my doctor was. When I told her, she replied, "He almost killed my cousin!" And then she went on to tell the gory details. If you are building a house, you will hear horror stories about other people building houses. So naturally, if you are unmarried, people will give you unhelpful, unmarried comments. Why do we do this to one another? I surely do not know. It must be our first instinct, but we should know better. But we recognize it far better when others do it to us than when we are doing it to others. So cultivate humility in this area and pray

## CHAPTER 2

# Is This an Affliction?

*And if it is, what do I do about it?*

One of the things I want to address in this book is the need to come face to face with reality and quit pretending that being unmarried is lots of fun. In some cases, it may be. And in other cases, it is a phony show. On one hand, unmarried women are encouraged to be content in their circumstances and to trust that this is “God’s best” for them; on the other hand, they are urged to view their unmarried state as an affliction from which they are seeking deliverance. So which is right?

I believe that being “single” can certainly be an affliction for those who are not gifted with celibacy. It was not a hardship for the apostle Paul. But for someone without that calling, it is a hardship and may be a form of suffering, depending on the circumstances. If being unmarried really is an affliction for you, then Scripture has much to say about how you are to view it, and we’ll consider some of those things shortly. If a woman who longs for marriage and does not have the gift of celibacy pretends that her life is easy, she will not find the help from God’s word that is available to her.

At the same time, some women really do not feel *afflicted*. They are busy, fruitful, and truly contented, though they do

pray for a husband. All women are different, and they handle things differently, so I am hesitant to call the unmarried state an affliction across the board. For some, it truly is.

When I was unmarried and out of college, I had a friend who viewed her unmarried state as an affliction indeed. She spoke of it constantly, and I remember her working on some needlework and saying, "When I get married, I'm going to tell my husband, *I did this while I was waiting for you!*" Everything she did was in relation to waiting for her husband. I remember disliking her viewpoint and wanting to adopt a different one. I remember thinking it over and determining that I wanted to spend my unmarried time with a different perspective. I didn't want to be "waiting around." I wanted to be *going* somewhere. I did not want to view my time as simply treading water, always waiting for something to happen. I thought that I should be moving forward in my Christian life, believing that God would bring someone into my life along the way.

Now I think both perspectives are lawful. I think I was happier than my friend, but I don't think she was necessarily in sin because she was constantly thinking about marriage. But she wasn't always fun to be around. She got married a few years later, and I wonder if she had the same attitude about having children. And then about the next thing and the next. We establish patterns that are hard to break.

I assumed that I would eventually be married, and I prayed regularly, not for *a* husband, but for *my* husband, whoever he was. I knew that God knew who he was, even if I didn't. So I prayed that he would be growing in faith and walking with God. I had lonely times like everyone else. I had temptations to get impatient.

At the same time, I wanted to have direction and purpose, and I wanted that purpose to be maturing in the faith, growing in my Christian life. So I tried to attend as many Bible studies and conferences as I could, knowing that after I was married

## CHAPTER 3

# Unmarried Women in the Covenant Community

**I**t's tempting to think that there really isn't a niche for the unmarried women in the church. The married women have their hands full with learning respect and submission to their husbands. The mothers have a big job managing their homes and rearing their children. Scripture lays out the duties of wives and mothers clearly, and the church provides plenty of teaching and instruction on the family. Sermons on marriage, books on courtship and childrearing, conferences for wives and husbands seem to occupy a central place in the work of the church. And of course, these are very important issues and need to be addressed. But the unmarried woman can feel at sea in all this. If she is not engaged, what is she doing really? Does everyone assume she is biding her time waiting to get married? Is that necessarily bad? What is she supposed to be doing?

Actually, many Scriptures address unmarried women as well as married women. We are sometimes too quick to divide up into the married/unmarried categories. Though the Bible sometimes singles out different groups, most of the Scriptures address us *all* as God's people, no matter what our individual station.

Galatians 3:28–29 tells us we are “one in Christ Jesus” whether we are male or female, and we are all “heirs according to the promise.” We all share the same fundamental duties as Christian people, and our first duty is to worship God rightly. This is of first importance. Paul says to “present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service” (Rom. 12:1). It is only in light of this most important calling that we should consider the specific duties God lays out for us as women—whether married or not. In other words, our primary calling is to be good Christians. Being a woman is secondary, and being unmarried follows this. In other words, you cannot be a godly unmarried woman if you are not a godly Christian. So we should consider these primary duties first.

This means that you should be giving foremost attention to how you are worshiping God. Are you a woman of prayer? Do you love God’s word? Are you striving to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength? Are you worshiping God on His day in a reverent way that glorifies Him? Are you concerned with obeying Him, no matter what others think or say? Do you love your neighbor? Are you forgiving others? Do you confess your sins? Each of us is called to live a fruitful, obedient, joyful, and abundant life according to the promise. You have a Savior. Your first duty and calling as a Christian is to love and serve Him with a whole heart all your life. This has to be our starting point, because if you are not clear on this, you will not be able to be a fruitful member of His church.

So you need to be in a healthy church, a church that faithfully proclaims the Word, and feeds and shepherds the people. Sometimes people view going to a solid church as just a lucky happenstance rather than the result of a deliberate search. If for some reason you are not in such a church, then you must make every effort to find one, even if it means relocating. In our culture today, Christians relocate for jobs, but seldom for a church.

Actually, the church you are in is far more important than the job you have. If, for some reason, it is entirely impossible for you to be in a good church, then you must be attached to some church, even if it is mediocre. You must be meeting with and worshiping with God's saints. You can still be a woman of the Word and a woman of prayer, even if you don't have a lot of encouragement. Particularly as an unmarried woman, it is very important that you be surrounded by godly, serious Christians who will be a family to you.

After you find a good church, what can you really do as an unmarried woman in the church? Women (whether married or unmarried) are often mentioned in the Bible as helpers, offering support to those who labor with the ministry; they are described as helpers *of the gospel*. In Romans 16, Priscilla (with her husband Aquila) is called a helper (v. 3). The church met in her house. That is no small thing! Mary (v. 6) is described as bestowing much labor on Paul and his band. She must have fed, cared for, and provided housing for Paul and those with him. Phoebe (v. 1) is called a servant of the church. She obviously did so many things for the body of Christ that they were filed in the "too numerous to mention" column. These women are described as serving, sacrificing, bestowing, and helping. Women like this are a tremendous resource in the church. They were in Paul's day, and they still are. But I often think that unmarried women in particular don't realize the huge impact for good they can have in the church. They don't give themselves a good job description, and they don't think they can really be very fruitful (at least in any important manner) until they are having babies. But this is simply false.

Second Peter 1:5–8 gives us all enough to do to keep us very busy for the rest of our lives, insuring that we are fruitful in God's kingdom:

## CHAPTER 4

# Headship Questions

I'm sure you have noticed that the Church places much solid emphasis on the biblical teaching of male headship and leadership in the home. But what is it exactly and how does it work in the lives of unmarried women? First Corinthians 11 tells us “the head of woman is man” (v. 3) and “woman is the glory of man” (v. 7). This is a difficult but important truth for all of us to understand, and unmarried women in particular need to know where and how they fit into this headship picture. We all want to have a sanctified view of God's ordained role for women, whether married or unmarried. But the unmarried woman can be confused. How can she relate to headship in a godly, biblical way?

Woman was made to be a helper and complement for man (Gen. 2:18). Man “is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of the man” (1 Cor. 11:7). Woman derives her dignity as a consequence of being made in God's image (Gen. 1:27). Men have been given the role of headship, and women have been given the role of helper. This difference in our calling and orientation is part of the creation ordinance; it is not something man invented, but rather what God has created for us.

Women need to understand their femininity in relation to this calling as helper and cultivate it as a virtue. This is how we can foster and maintain a high view of a woman's role in the church in the midst of a culture where the distinctions have been blurred. In other words, if men are to embrace God's calling to be successful initiators, women must likewise assume their role as good responders, easily led and of great help to the men that lead them. Of course, this is most visible in marriage where the wife submits to her own husband's authority over her. But an unmarried woman should also cultivate this responsiveness in "safe" ways within the church, being wise about how and to whom she responds in this way.

The obvious first level of authority is given to fathers. Daughters are to honor their own fathers, responding biblically to their leadership. We will consider some of the aspects of this in detail below. But what if a woman has lost her father, has an unbelieving father, or has an elderly father who is not in a position to lead her? Is she still able to assume her role as a responsive helper? Yes. Women can still fulfill their feminine role in other relationships. Consider first that all the church is to submit to its officers, elders, and deacons. Women can be helpful in and to the congregation in this way by being model parishioners, easily led by the elders, not stirring up trouble or being difficult and unwieldy. All the members of the congregation are to display this kind of submission, not just the women. But women can view it as a means of cultivating their femininity. Of course women in general are not to submit to men in general. Wives are to submit to their own husbands. Unmarried women are not to submit to a particular man the way a wife would. But all women can submit to the leadership of the church (just as the men should) and others who are in authority over them, including their bosses if they are working at jobs. So unmarried women have opportunity to be submissive and responsive, even if it is not to a husband.



Ideally, every woman in the church should be under the headship, protection, and authority of a godly man, either her father or her husband. Obviously, every wife is under her husband's headship, but what about unmarried women who are no longer living with their parents? Is each still under her father's authority? And what does this "headship" look like?

Because the modern world is a confusing place, unmarried women can find themselves in any number of situations besides living at home with their parents. And let's face it: after a certain age, all may agree it is time to move out of her father's house and be on her own. An unmarried woman, whatever her age, may be off at school, working in another town and living on her own, living with friends, living with a family, or caring for her elderly parents. There are countless possibilities, and we cannot possibly consider them all here. However, we can look at some principles that can guide our thinking and practice. It is very important to recognize at the outset that God wisely apportions our circumstances to each of us. Our parents, our families and upbringing, all the details of our relationships and background are not just known by God—they are ordained by Him in wisdom and love. He is sanctifying each of His children, and we are not in charge of our own sanctification. Our duty is to joyfully obey Him. Each woman has a story, and no two are the same. So, whatever our circumstances, God is sovereign over it all. This doctrine is the foundation that must be laid in our thinking before we come to any practical teaching or application.

*Unbelieving parents:* When a woman has not been brought up in the faith, her parents may not assume their responsibilities in protecting and providing for her. They may believe it is good for her to be on her own, making her own decisions, providing for herself. In this case, one way for her to honor them is to do just that. If her parents want her to make her own way, she should do so in a manner that not only honors them, but

also demonstrates that she understands her God-given need to be protected. This means she will look for a place to live that will enable her to be a part of the Christian community, with Christians as roommates or at least in the neighborhood. She should be eager to attach herself to a godly church where she will have biblical teaching and accountability, and she should attempt to get acquainted with families who will give her good counsel, fellowship, and friendship.

Though a woman should continue to look to her unbelieving father for advice, he may not be equipped to give it. Nevertheless, she can still ask him for input in areas where she knows he has experience and wisdom, whether it is advice about her car, her finances, or her job. She should look for ways to honor her parents, even though they may be hostile or ambivalent to her faith. This includes listening to their input and taking it very seriously. She can also honor them by calling, writing, visiting, and so forth.

In many cases an unbelieving household will have more than its share of messed up relationships. Her parents may be divorced or on the brink of divorce; her siblings may be alienated from each other and from their parents. The Christian woman may be tempted to rush in to try to fix everything that her parents have let fall to the ground, but this is not her responsibility. She must commit it all to God's oversight. She may pray and make the most of her opportunities, but she must not feel it is her job to do what her father or mother is not doing.

Some unbelieving parents want to exercise more authority over their daughter, particularly if she is still at home. This can sometimes be even more difficult for the Christian woman. Nevertheless, God is faithful. He has called each of us in our own peculiar circumstances. If a father is exercising authority over his daughter in areas of secondary importance, she should do her best to comply, knowing that God will bless her

obedience and respect of her parents. This could include things like requiring her to be home at a certain time or doing chores around the house, etc. If a father oversteps his lines of authority and requires unbiblical behavior, like asking his daughter to lie, of course it is the daughter's responsibility to refuse to obey him. No earthly authority is absolute. But when she must differ with her father's wishes, she must do so with a respectful demeanor. Her family may put undue pressure on her to marry or may even blame her for still being unmarried.

In all these things, the commandment to honor one's parents still sticks, but it would be difficult to say that an older woman, even if she is unmarried, is still required to obey her father the same way she did when she was young. She may still listen to his advice, weigh and consider his counsel, and seek to be a blessing and a joy to him, but to say she must obey her father at age thirty the way she did when she was sixteen is to be shortsighted. Unfortunately, some teach that a daughter is required to live under her father's roof all her days until she is married. Of course, she is free to do this if she wants to; but to make it a biblical command is to go beyond Scripture. The principle is to honor and respect, and this can be done while living elsewhere.

*Believing parents:* Sad to say, some Christian parents can be overbearing and tyrannical, or they can be distant and detached. Both of these can present grave difficulties for an unmarried woman. But the principle of honoring parents remains the same. When parents are legalistic, a daughter must endeavor to comply in every area that she possibly can and not rebel against them. She should seek to reason with them, but she should cheerfully submit to them where she can, knowing that God controls this as well as everything else. He is sanctifying us all, parents as well as daughters. God always blesses our obedience to Him. Some parents believe they should order every step of

their daughters' lives, no matter how old the daughters are. This is a matter for prayer. But a daughter certainly has recourse: she can pray, she can discuss her concerns with her parents; she can speak with her pastor or elders for godly counsel. But she should not assume that she does not have to obey them because she disagrees with them. Neither must she obey her parents no matter what they say. This requires wisdom. As I said above, no earthly authority is absolute. But in all areas that she *can* obey, she should do so with a cheerful attitude.

When Christian parents are distant and refuse to give oversight, it can also be a hardship for the woman who wants to honor and obey her parents. But, like the daughter with unbelieving parents, honoring them may include dealing with their lack of involvement. If they tell her to decide for herself, then she should seek godly counsel from the church when needed, and then make her own decision. This is honoring her parents.

Some Christian parents have made grievous mistakes and have lost the respect of their children. In this case, a daughter should be willing to forgive her parents when they seek her forgiveness. If they do not, she should guard her heart against bitterness and resentment. She should seek to obey the commandment and still honor her parents, even if they are not honorable in every respect. This means she does not run them down to her friends, or share their sins and failures with people who are not in a position to help fix the problem. She should speak kindly of them and treat them as she would like to be treated. She should make all possible restitution on her end, seeking their forgiveness if she has wronged them. If she has kept things from them that they should have known, she must seek their forgiveness. If she has pulled away from them and become hostile toward them, she must repent and seek their forgiveness. She must do all in her power to restore the relationship, and this may require pastoral help or oversight. Unmarried daughters must not allow themselves to become

## CHAPTER 5

# Is This Really God's Best?

Good doctrine protects us from all kinds of errors and all kinds of fears. One of the important things you must know, understand, and *believe* is that God has planned good for you and not evil. He loves His children. His providence rules His world, and He governs His people with kindness. “All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, to such as keep His covenant and His testimonies” (Ps. 25:10). If you have a solid, biblical doctrine, not only of God’s sovereignty, but also of His wisdom and love for you, this will protect you from many doubts, worries, and fears about the future, as well as keep you from fretting over the past.

Years ago, a young woman asked me what I thought about her praying for a husband. She had been taught that God didn’t know the future, so He didn’t know whether she would marry or not. This made her wonder what the point of praying could be. Bad doctrine has bad consequences. Good doctrine teaches us to ask God for the good things He created. He mandated marriage; it was His idea. So a Christian woman should be able to ask God to bestow His good gift of marriage on her. I

have sometimes told women to “tug on the Lord’s sleeve.” He likes us to persevere in prayer!

In the meantime, she can expect to be assailed with temptations to worry about the future: What if I never marry? What if I marry, but it is too late to have children? What if there is no one for me after all? What if I missed “God’s best”? These are questions that are impossible to answer because all “what if” questions are not really questions at all, but doubts. They disrupt your peace and bring troubling thoughts; they rob you of your joy by introducing fictional and future trials. Jesus warned us not to borrow trouble because each day has enough of its own (Mt. 6:34). These sorts of thoughts are temptations, and God wants you to learn to deal with temptations, whatever form they take.

Jesus tells us not to be anxious about our lives (Mt. 6:31–33). We are to cast all our cares on Him because He cares for us (1 Pet. 5:7). Worrying will only make life miserable. It is fruitless. It is telling ourselves bad stories. So how should you deal with temptations that come in the form of “what if” questions? This may seem like a simplistic answer, but here it is: ignore them. Do not answer them; in fact, do not listen to them. Rather, ask what good things God has given you to do today. Focus on today’s duties. This is a fruitful use of your time. Recognize that those “what if” questions are temptations to get you to feel blue, worried, lonely, or anxious. Do not engage in a conversation with yourself about this stuff. Ignore, ignore, ignore. And set your mind on something helpful, something that is profitable. This is how we fear God. And when we fear God, that holy fear swallows up all our other petty fears.

If you have a long history of worrying about such things, it may take you a while to change your habits. You may not even realize how much time each day you are thinking such thoughts. Start paying attention to your thought habits and reject the questions. Do not listen. If you were listening to a

radio station that started playing obnoxious music, you would change the station. Do the same thing with the conversation in your mind. Change the station.

Jesus has promised that He will *never leave you* or forsake you (Heb. 13:5). This is the reason that every Christian can be content with the circumstances God has given. He is always with us through every trial. I will deal more directly with contentment in chapter six. Thomas Watson, the great Puritan preacher, wrote that “It is our work to cast away care; and it is God’s work to take care.”<sup>1</sup> God’s Word is full of promises to us; we must believe them and rest in God’s care for us.

Another harassing temptation that can assault an unmarried woman is to fret over the past. “Maybe I should have married so-and-so after all.” “I wonder if I was being too picky . . .” “Maybe I should have gone on that singles’ retreat . . .” Notice that temptations about the future often begin with “What if,” but temptations about the past often begin with “Maybe I should have . . .” or “I wonder if . . .” And of course, these have no legitimate answer either. The only way to respond to “What if I never get married?” is to say, “What if I do?” And the only way to answer, “Maybe I should have married Steve” is to say “Maybe I shouldn’t have!” Some wise saint has said, “Don’t doubt in the dark what you knew in the light.” If it was clear that Steve was not the one back “in the light of day,” don’t begin to worry about it now. You may be feeling lonely, and that has affected your good judgment. Once you get into a worrying state of mind, you have a low sales resistance to other sins: self-pity, bitterness, self-centeredness, and so forth.

If you have sinned objectively, confess it. For example, if you knew that Steve was a godly man that you respected highly, but you didn’t want to give up your non-Christian boyfriend, then

1. Thomas Watson, *The Art of Divine Contentment* (Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, n.d.).

that is certainly an objective sin to confess. But doubts don't go away even if you confess them all day long, because you are confessing the wrong thing. Don't confess the doubts; rather, confess listening to the doubts, and then forsake the wrong doing. Quit listening! Change the station! Don't fret about the past and don't worry about the future.

Have you ever noticed how unattractive worry is on other people? Being anxiety-ridden is like taking ugly pills. This kind of worry is really self-centeredness. Being self-absorbed and worrisome is about keeping me and my life and my future all on center stage. On the other hand, a spirit that is resting in the Lord and rejoicing in Him is lovely to behold. This kind of spirit can focus on others and is not distracted with its own needs. Cultivate this kind of internal beauty and quit taking the ugly pills.

As you get rid of worry of all kinds, replace it with the right kind of thinking. You are not living out God's second best. He is writing your story, and it is a good one. Believe Him. If you are walking in faith, you have grounds to believe that your story is a blessed one. But if you are living in disobedience, you may think you need to take the pen to write the next chapter yourself. You might be afraid of what God has in store for you. But He promises blessing to those who walk in His covenant. If you are living in disobedience, then you have no grounds for assuming that the story has a happy ending. But if you are walking by faith, confessing your sins, and seeking to please God, you can know that He will bless you. Your faith may be tested, but so is everyone's. Remember that testing produces patience, experience, and hope (Rom. 5:3-5, AV). God tailors our circumstances according to our soul's needs, for our soul's good. This should be a source of comfort to us. God is concerned with the health of our souls, and we should think the same way He does.