

Are You Missing God's Kindness?

This month, I am pleased to have long-time friend and fellow pastor Chip Ingram write a guest post for Lead With Your Life. As author, teacher, pastor, and coach, Chip is a person I deeply respect for the strength of his convictions and legacy he continues to build boldly declaring God's truth. He is founder and teaching pastor of Living On The Edge, an international discipleship ministry, where his teaching reaches more than a million people per week, as well as senior pastor of Venture Christian Church in Los Gatos, California.

Are You Missing God's Kindness?

It's 3:29 AM and I'm wide awake. The interruption from my deep and wonderful sleep began at about 2:58 AM. Normally when this happens, I am bombarded by a long list of to-dos, a concern about a relationship, a conflict to resolve, or a deadline to meet.

It seems our minds seek to process and make sense of all the "stuff" we're living with and walking through. When this happens to me, I usually lay awake and pray in my mind—"casting my cares on Jesus" (1 Peter 5:7), praying through the Lord's Prayer and/or the 23rd Psalm.

Often I roll over and go right back to sleep. More often than I want to admit, I come to realize that it has been a half hour, I have unresolved issues, my anxiety is winning over my "prayer in bed" approach, and I need to get up, write in my journal, seek God's direction in His Word, and **choose** to trust Him.

Does any of this sound familiar? Anyone else find yourself wired a little too tightly, battling anxiety, exhausted in your attempts to "juggle all the balls" and "keep all the plates spinning" in your life?

If so, this blog from the Dr. (The Great Physician) is just for you.

Now, you'll notice I said, "**normally when this happens**," I'm battling anxiety or that dreaded overwhelmed feeling, but today is very different!

At 2:58 AM, I unexplainably awakened. Before I could even start to think about anything, *my mind was flooded with specific examples of how KIND and GRACIOUS my Heavenly Father has been to me.*

- I had an ongoing unresolved conflict that had been eating away at my peace of mind, and the big confrontation was yesterday...God worked, hard words were given and received, clarity replaced confusion, and humility reigned over pride.
- I was sent a blog about the power and benefit of "play," another one about "sleep" and I was profoundly encouraged by the gift of Sabbath. I took two full days off after an eight-day

trip...I didn't check email, didn't solve any problems, and like the "trickle charge" of a car battery, I felt my emotions and heart restored.

Sometimes we are so busy trying to "make life work" that we miss the life we have been given! *God is GRACIOUS and COMPASSIONATE, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast, loyal LOVE and KINDNESS.* That phrase is the Apostle Paul's motivation for ministry (2 Corinthians 5), the Apostle John's theme in his Gospel and three epistles, and what brought each one of us to new life—"It is the kindness of God that leads us to repentance." (Romans 2:4)

For us Type A's, driven on bad days and passionately filled with God's Spirit on good days, there never seems to be enough time to make a difference. But, don't miss God's kindness.

Stop! Turn off the news, the phone, the noise. Enjoy your vacation! Live in the moment. Soak in nature. Count your blessings. Write them down. Give thanks out loud. Let God *love* you, *heal* you, and *encourage* you.

Give seriousness and intensity a break. Enjoy and affirm those closest to you. It's summer, take time to rest and reflect on how *GOOD* and how *KIND* our God has been to you.

Some high-value words of perspective from Chip.

Leader, over these weeks of summer, make it a priority to carve out intentional space for God to restore your soul.