PWOC

Protestant Women of the Chapel

Materials:
-sticky nametags
-table for coats
-hangers
-(coats/ jackets)
-white board/chart paper and markers

WORKSHOP: INSECURITY

by Jaymi Brooks

LEADER'S GUIDE

RELEVANCE: Insecurity is an issue most women of all ages deal with on a daily basis. If we can be aware of the ways that insecurity presents itself and aware of our own triggers, we can take steps to live a more free and authentic life- ultimately finding our true security in our relationship with God.

CONTEXT: This material is best suited for a workshop.

TIME: 65-75 minutes for adequate interaction

HOOK YOUR AUDIENCE: (5-10 minutes)

As your participants enter the room, have them drop their coats off on a table at the front of the room to be used for this illustration (If it's not a coat season, just bring some items from home). Use the coats as a visual of "putting on insecurities." Encourage class participation throughout this exercise. As you're putting on a coat, ask them, "So, what's an insecurity that I might put on?" *Choose one of their answers, write it on a sticky name tag and stick it on the coat. Take a few seconds to talk a little bit about what that insecurity might look like. Take off the coat and put on another, repeat the process. Note: As you take the coats off, you may want to put them on hangers and display them in the room- hanging them in various places. You will likely refer to these throughout the workshop. Finish going through the coats and labeling insecurities if time permits and their interest holds. Now put a spin on it. Ask someone else to come up and "put on" an insecurity that is not their own. Name the owner of that coat and pretend that the labeled insecurity belongs to her. The one wearing the coat has assumed the insecurity of another person. Talk about what that might look like in real life.*

> *Note to Trainer: This simple exercise will give you some valuable insight into what the women in your group may be dealing with. Make sure to let them do the talking as much as possible! This will set the stage for the rest of the workshop. Giving your participants a voice and building on their ideas will help them be much more invested.*

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MAKE YOUR POINT 1: WHAT IS INSECURITY? WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

(10 minutes)

Let's take a look at a basic definition of insecurity. This is how our society would define it and likely how we have understood it. Later in our workshop we'll take a look at what the Bible has to say on the topic.

Oxford Online Dictionary Definition: in·se·cu·ri·ty /insiˈkyo͝oriti/
noun: insecurity; plural noun: insecurities

1. uncertainty or anxiety about oneself; lack of confidence.
"she had a deep sense of insecurity"

- synonyms: lack of confidence, self-doubt, diffidence, unassertiveness, timidity, uncertainty, nervousness, inhibition, anxiety, worry, unease
  "he hid his insecurity"
- vulnerability, defenselessness, peril, danger, instability, fragility, frailty, shakiness, unreliability
  "the insecurity of the situation"

2. the state of being open to danger or threat; lack of protection.
"growing job insecurity"

- synonyms: unstable, rickety, rocky, wobbly, shaky, unsteady, precarious, weak, flimsy, unsound, unsafe
  "an insecure railing"

Take a moment to circle the words in the definition that are the most accurate and descriptive to you in describing insecurity. *Give them a moment to read and circle. Once everyone is done, allow several people to quickly call out a word they circled. This will again give you some insight into their perspectives and will help you to better tailor your workshop to this unique group.*

> *Note to Trainer: It is always good to get your participants interacting with the information you are presenting. If you give them opportunities like this to make the information their own- to bring their own experience to the table- they will be far more likely to remember the concepts that you present. This activity only takes a minute, but can be very valuable.*

Insecurity is not a random occurrence. It is such a universal problem, especially with women, that we might think it's just the way things are- almost as if it's in our genes. The truth is that our insecurity is a cause-and-effect scenario with definite causers or "roots." Take a look at the list of the most common roots for insecurity taken from Beth Moore's book *So Long Insecurity.*

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ROOTS OF INSECURITY:

- **Instability in the Home** (including various types of abuse, divorce, substance abuse by a parent, mental or physical illness in the home, financial instability)
- **Significant Loss** (person, a home, a relationship)
- **Rejection** *MOST COMMON ROOT* (from a parent, friend, spouse, child, boyfriend, etc.)
- **Dramatic Change** (accident, financial crisis, even positive changes like a new move, or a new baby)
- **Personal Limitations** (learning disability, physical handicap, scar, acne)
- **Personal Disposition and Temperament**
- **Our Culture** and the pressure it puts on women to be young and beautiful
- **Pride**

ENGAGE YOUR LEARNERS 1: (10 minutes)

You can work by yourself or with a partner. Take a look at the ROOTS OF INSECURITY. Which of the categories most resonates with your personal experience? Underline it. Would you add anything to that category? If so, add it.

Think of an area of insecurity for you personally? Can you see how it fits into one of the categories?

Allow a few minutes for participants to complete this exercise, then give them a chance to share their responses with the rest of the group.

> *Note to Trainer: Sharing needs to always be optional, especially on this very personal topic. Be careful not to pressure or shame your ladies into sharing. Feel free to share your own examples. Your participants may feel safer talking about someone else's insecurity that they have observed- just caution them not to name names!*

MAKE YOUR POINT 2: HOW DOES INSECURITY MASQUERADE ITSELF?

(10 minutes)

The following two quotes are by Joseph Nowinski, from his book *The Tender Heart:* *Consider having volunteers read the quotes.*

Insecurity refers to a profound sense of self-doubt---a deep feeling of uncertainty about our basic worth and our place in the world. Insecurity is associated with chronic lack of confidence in ourselves and anxiety about our relationships. The insecure man, or woman lives in constant fear of rejection and a deep uncertainty about whether his or her own feelings and desires are legitimate. (p.17)

- Insecurity hides in anxiety and fear of rejection.

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The insecure person also harbors unrealistic expectations about love and relationships. These expectations, for themselves and for others, are often unconscious. The insecure person creates a situation in which being disappointed and hurt in relationships is almost inevitable. Ironically, although insecure people are easily and frequently hurt, they are usually unaware of how they are unwitting accomplices in creating their own misery. (p. 23)

- Insecurity often involves self-sabotage.

Point to ponder: *What is driving my insecurity? How am I a willing accomplice?*

Insecurity often masquerades as something else. We have all met über arrogant people who feel compelled to share their credentials. It's all about them and what they know and have accomplished. Arrogance can be a mask for insecurity: *I feel so badly about myself, I have to convince you that I'm worth something.*

What about a judgmental person? Being judgmental can be another symptom of insecurity. If I judge you (and in so doing decide that you do not deserve to have a voice in my life), then I protect myself from your meddling. My views remain intact and my world is not rocked. Judging can be a mask for insecurity: *I feel unsafe. It feels safer to me to hold tight to my own views and keep you out.*

How about a super competitive person? Every activity, every conversation becomes about being "one up" on someone else. Competition can be a mask for insecurity: *You intimidate me. I need to prove my worth by outperforming you- whether in conversation, in a game, or in an ordinary task.*

Ever met anyone who makes comparisons? "At least I'm not like so-and-so..." Making comparisons can be a mask for insecurity: *I feel like I don't measure up. At least I can find other people that I'm better than.*

What are other behaviors that may be a mask for insecurity? *Let your participants suggest possible answers. Below are a few possibilities if you need some help in fostering conversation. Note that they are not the "right" answers. If your participants are supplying answers, go with what they share.*

-bullying
-degrading others/ put downs
-sarcasm
-seclusion/ withdrawal
-being "clingy"
-self-abasement
-drama
-bragging
-gossip

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Recap: **Insecurity has valid roots in real-life stuff. It is a valid, although warped, reaction to what life has dealt us. Often, insecurity masquerades as something else. If we can 1) recognize the root, 2) recognize our reaction and our fears and 3) recognize our corresponding behavior, then we can begin to reverse this process and be better positioned to speak the truth of God's Word into our areas of insecurity.**

ENGAGE YOUR LEARNERS 2: (10 minutes)

In our first activity we took a look at the common roots of insecurity and hopefully related our own personal insecurity to one or more of those roots. Go back to the roots. Think about an insecure behavior you have noticed in yourself or in another person. Where is it coming from? What is the hidden lie or fear behind the behavior?

Work with a group of 3-4 people to discuss these questions. Remember that you do not have to share your personal struggles. You may use an anonymous person as an example and share what you have observed about their behavior.

> *Note to Trainer: Discussion is paramount to the learning process. This is a great way to help your participants process the information. Limit groups to 4 so that everyone has a voice. Float between the groups. Affirm their ideas, offer bits of insight, then move on. This is a valuable way to keep tabs on how your participants are taking in the information you are giving them. You may need to "re-teach" a certain concept to clarify misunderstandings.*

Give each small group the chance to share one insight from their discussion with the whole group. Keep it short and sweet.

MAKE YOUR POINT 3: **FINDING TRUE SECURITY** (10 minutes)

Have a volunteer read the following verses:

"But blessed are those who trust in the LORD and have made the LORD their hope and confidence. They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they never stop producing fruit."

-Jeremiah 17:7-8 (NLT)

The same passage from The Message paraphrase:

"But blessed is the man who trusts me, GOD, the woman who sticks with GOD. They're like trees replanted in Eden, putting down roots near the rivers- Never a worry through the hottest of summers, never dropping a leaf, Serene and calm through droughts, bearing fresh fruit every season."

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What characteristics do you see in Jeremiah 17:7-8 of a person who puts their confidence in God? *Allow your participants to name the main ideas of the verses. You may want to write these on chart paper or a white board. These words will provide a stark contrast to the words displayed on the coats. Be sure to highlight the concept of "roots" in this passage in contrast to the Roots of Insecurity previously discussed. This is a great visual of the security available to us in God.*

How does God respond to our insecurity?

- *The Lord is like a Father to His children, tender and compassionate to those who fear Him. For He knows how weak we are; He remembers we are only dust. Our days on earth are like grass; like wildflowers, we bloom and die. The wind blows, and we are gone- as though we had never been here. But the love of the Lord remains forever with those who fear Him. His salvation extends to the children's children of those who are faithful to His covenant, of those who obey His commandments.* -Psalm 103:13-18 (NLT)

- *We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves.* -2 Corinthians 4:7 (NLT)

Two key words in the passage from Psalm 103 are *compassion* and *love.* The Lord knows how frail and fragile we are- how emotionally fragile our insecurities make us- and He still loves us with an everlasting love. That kind of love is an anchor which always means Help to the rescue and Hope on the horizon. Joy comes in the morning!

So what do we do with this information? We know we have insecurities that have valid roots. We know our insecurities sometimes masquerade themselves through a variety of behaviors. We know God understands our insecurity and shows us compassion, but how do we incorporate that truth, that freedom available to us through God, into everyday life? How do we loosen the foothold of insecurity in our lives? We 1) Embrace our God-given dignity 2) Transform our minds, and 3) Set boundaries.

KEEPING IT REAL: WHAT TO DO IN THE MOMENT?

1- EMBRACE YOUR GOD-GIVEN DIGNITY: Beth Moore, in her book *So Long Insecurity,* writes that insecurity is about losing our *God-given dignity*. Our enemy is hoping we will get caught in a pitiful cycle of reacting to a sudden rush of insecurity with foolishness, then feeling even more insecure, acting even more foolishly and consequently feeling vastly more insecure. Our enemy wants to keep us digging

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ourselves deeper and deeper into a hole until we feel completely stuck in this miserable corkscrew of self-hatred.

Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines dignity as the quality or state of being worthy, honored, or esteemed. Psalm 8:5 says that God crowned humans with glory and honor and here "honor" is derived from the same Hebrew term that means "dignity." In other words, we are worthy, honored, and esteemed *because God gave those qualities to us*. We are his prize creation.

- **In the moment**, do your best to pause and ask yourself, "How is my behavior eating away at my dignity?"

- **Say out loud**, "You have crowned me with dignity. I am worthwhile and honored in your sight."

- **Recite** Proverbs 31:25, insert your name in place of "she." *She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs without fear of the future."*

2- TRANSFORM YOUR MIND: **When we are faced with insecurity triggers (i.e. when one of our roots gets exposed) we can counter the lies with statements of truth. For example: I feel demeaned or dismissed by someone. I notice that I feel the need to be critical of that person, maybe through judging them or gossiping about them. I can make a mental choice to shift my focus onto the truth from God's Word, rather than continuing in my own destructive behavior. State a truth that fits the situation, like: "God has made me worthy of respect" or "I am completely clothed by His righteousness" or "I am strong in Christ" or "What others think of me is less important than what God says is true of me."**

- **In the moment**, do your best to pause and ask yourself, "What does God say about me? What is a truth I can speak to this lie?" If you don't know, ask a trusted friend or a mentor who has walked this road.

- **Say out loud**, "My reaction is destructive to myself and others. God help me to embrace Your truth in this situation."

- **Recite** Romans 12:2 *Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*

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3- SET BOUNDARIES: We will always have triggers of insecurity and we will have to decide whether or not we're going to take the bait. It's normal to have a reaction when someone is (knowingly or unknowingly) tromping around on a painful part of our heart and life-experience. We are human beings. Our God-given emotions and visceral responses don't always show up politely. God wrapped our humanity in limber flesh and gave us emotions as a means to express ourselves and to deal with life. That being said, we still retain control over our behavior. Emotions are a tool for us; they do not dictate behavior. Insecurity does not have the right to "stalk" every other reaction. We can be hurt without also being insecure. We can be disappointed without also being insecure. We can be shocked without also being insecure. We can be unsure without also being insecure. We can even be humble without also being insecure.

In other words we set boundaries on our insecurity. We acknowledge the hurt but we don't allow it to touch the deeper part of us- our sense of worth and value. We don't allow it to cause us to question our key relationships. We don't allow it to erode our identity as God's beloved children.

- **In the moment**, do your best to pause and separate insecurity from the situation at hand. Is your insecurity tagging along with your reaction? Are you able to see its influence?

- **Say out loud** whichever is most appropriate:
  - "I can be hurt without also being insecure."
  - "I can be disappointed without also being insecure."
  - "I can be shocked without also being insecure."
  - "I can be unsure without also being insecure."
  - "I can be humble without also being insecure."
  - "I can be _____ without also being insecure."

- **Recite** James 1:2-3 *Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow."*

ENGAGE YOUR LEARNERS 3: (5-10 minutes)

Which of these tools do you think you'd be most likely to use? Which speaks the most truth to your situation? *Allow a whole-group discussion. This would be a good place to share your own story…what has worked for you? How did a shift happen in your life?*

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APPLY IT TO LIFE: (5 minutes)

You are the only one that holds the power to go ahead and make up your mind to allow God to give you the security that you desire. Nobody can force that upon you; it really does come down to the power of choice. God gives us free will. We can either walk in the Spirit and trust God to move in our lives, or we can remain in the flesh and behave carnally.

We can begin to break the cycle of insecurity this very day. This takes time; be patient with the process. Sometimes you have to "fake it till you make it." When we put these new principles and behaviors into practice, the cycle begins to break- even though we may still *feel* insecure in the moment. We can make a very deliberate choice to not act on that feeling. Insecurity is demolished one situation, one reaction at a time.

- **Psalms 40:3** *He has given me a new song to sing, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see what He has done and be amazed. They will put their trust in the LORD.*
- **Hebrews 10:35-36** *So do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord. Remember the great reward it brings you! Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that He has promised.*
- **Isaiah 58:8–9a** *Then your salvation will come like the dawn, and your wounds will quickly heal. Your godliness will lead you forward, and the glory of the Lord will protect you from behind. Then when you call, the Lord will answer. 'Yes, I am here,' He will reply quickly.*

As we move forward we'll more readily recognize insecurities in ourselves and others. We must be careful not to place judgment but merely to have compassion for others and to be able to have a godly way of responding. We take responsibility for our own behaviors while refusing to allow the behaviors of others to determine our self-worth.

How is God challenging you through this workshop? Are you willing to embrace the truth that you are worthy, honored, and esteemed? Are you willing to take steps to better incorporate truth into your life, one situation at a time? Take a moment to write down any last thoughts that you do not want to forget.

A prayer for security: Dear God, I come to you this moment because I need some things only You can give me. I need restoration, Lord. I need my dignity back. You alone know what insecurity has cost me, what trouble-even torment- it has caused me. I desperately need and want to be delivered from my chronic insecurity. I am ready to discover what it means to be truly secure. Amen.

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by Jaymi Brooks

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

RELEVANCE: Insecurity is an issue most women of all ages deal with on a daily basis. If we can be aware of the ways that insecurity presents itself and aware of our own triggers, we can take steps to live a more free and authentic life- ultimately finding our true security in our relationship with God.

1. WHAT IS INSECURITY? WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

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noun: insecurity; plural noun: insecurities

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"she had a deep sense of insecurity"

- synonyms: lack of confidence, self-doubt, diffidence, unassertiveness, timidity, uncertainty, nervousness, inhibition, anxiety, worry, unease
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ROOTS OF INSECURITY (*So Long Insecurity, Beth Moore*)**:**

- **Instability in the Home** (including various types of abuse, divorce, substance abuse by a parent, mental or physical illness in the home, financial instability)
- **Significant Loss** (person- including still birth, miscarriage, abortion, a home, a relationship)
- **Rejection** *MOST COMMON ROOT* (from a parent, friend, spouse, child, boyfriend, etc.)
- **Dramatic Change** (accident, financial crisis, even positive changes like a new move, or a new baby)
- **Personal Limitations** (learning disability, physical handicap, scar, acne)
- **Personal Disposition and Temperament**
- **Our Culture** and the pressure it puts on women to be young and beautiful
- **Pride**

ACTIVITY 1**:** You can work by yourself or with a partner. Take a look at the **Roots of Insecurity**. Which of the categories most resonates with your personal experience? Underline it. Would you add anything to that category? If so, add it.

Think of an area of insecurity for you personally? Can you see how it fits into one of the categories?

II. HOW DOES INSECURITY MASQUERADE ITSELF?

The following two quotes are by Joseph Nowinski, from his book *The Tender Heart:*

Insecurity refers to a profound sense of self-doubt---a deep feeling of uncertainty about our basic worth and our place in the world. Insecurity is associated with chronic lack of confidence in ourselves and anxiety about our relationships. The insecure man, or woman lives in constant fear of rejection and a deep uncertainty about whether his or her own feelings and desires are legitimate. (p.17)

- Insecurity hides in anxiety and fear of rejection.

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- Insecurity often involves self-sabotage.

Point to ponder: **What is driving my insecurity? How am I a willing accomplice?**

- Arrogance can be a mask for insecurity: *I feel so badly about myself, I have to convince you that I'm worth something.*

- Judging can be a mask for insecurity: *I feel unsafe. It feels safer to me to hold tight to my own views and keep you out.*

- Competition can be a mask for insecurity: *You intimidate me. I need to prove my worth by outperforming you- whether in conversation, in a game, or in an ordinary task.*

- Making comparisons can be a mask for insecurity: *I feel like I don't measure up. At least I can find other people that I'm better than.*

- What are other behaviors that may be a mask for insecurity?

ACTIVITY 2: In our first activity we took a look at the common roots of insecurity and hopefully related our own personal insecurity to one or more of those roots. Go back to the roots. Think about an insecure behavior you have noticed in yourself or in another person. Where is it coming from? What is the hidden lie or fear behind the behavior?

Work with a group of 3-4 people to discuss these questions. Remember that you do not have to share your personal struggles. You may use an anonymous person as an example and share what you have observed about their behavior. **NO NAMING NAMES!!!**

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III. FINDING TRUE SECURITY

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Characteristics from Jeremiah 17:7-8 of a person who puts their confidence in God:

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KEEPING IT REAL: WHAT TO DO IN THE MOMENT?

1- Embrace Your God-given Dignity: Beth Moore, in her book *So Long Insecurity,* writes that insecurity is about losing our *God-given dignity*. Psalm 8:5 says that God crowned humans with glory and honor.

- In the moment, do your best to pause and ask yourself, "How is my behavior eating away at my dignity?"

- Say out loud, "You have crowned me with dignity. I am worthwhile and honored in your sight. I am chosen; I am not here by chance."

- Recite Proverbs 31:25, insert your name in place of "she." *<u>She</u> is clothed with strength and dignity, and <u>she</u> laughs without fear of the future."*

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2- Transform Your Mind: I can make a mental choice to shift my focus onto the truth from God's Word, rather than continuing in my own destructive behavior. State a truth that fits the situation, like: "God has made me worthy of respect" or "I am completely clothed by His righteousness" or "I am strong in Christ" or "What others think of me is less important than what God says is true of me."

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- Recite Romans 12:2 *Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*

3- Set boundaries: We will always have triggers of insecurity and we will have to decide whether or not we're going to take the bait.

Insecurity does not have the right to "stalk" every other reaction. We can be hurt without also being insecure. We can be disappointed without also being insecure. In other words we set boundaries on our insecurity. We acknowledge the hurt but we don't allow it to touch the deeper part of us- our sense of worth and value. We don't allow it to cause us to question our key relationships. We don't allow it to erode our identity as God's beloved children.

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  - "I can be humble without also being insecure."
  - "I can be _____ without also being insecure."

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- Recite James 1:2-3 *Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow."*

ACTIVITY 3: (Whole-group discussion) Which of these tools do you think you'd be most likely to use? Which speaks the most truth to your situation?

APPLY IT TO LIFE:

We can begin to break the cycle of insecurity this very day. This takes time; be patient with the process. Sometimes you have to "fake it till you make it." When we put these new principles and behaviors into practice, the cycle begins to break- even though we may still *feel* insecure in the moment. We can make a very deliberate choice to not act on that feeling. Insecurity is demolished one situation, one reaction at a time.

- Psalms 40:3 *He has given me a new song to sing, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see what He has done and be amazed. They will put their trust in the LORD.*

- Hebrews 10:35-36 *So do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord. Remember the great reward it brings you! Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that He has promised.*

- Isaiah 58:8–9a *Then your salvation will come like the dawn, and your wounds will quickly heal. Your godliness will lead you forward, and the glory of the Lord will protect you from behind. Then when you call, the Lord will answer. 'Yes, I am here,' He will reply quickly.*

How is God challenging you through this workshop? Are you willing to embrace the truth that you are worthy, honored, and esteemed? Are you willing to take steps to better incorporate truth into your life, one situation at a time? Take a moment to write down any last thoughts that you do not want to forget.

A prayer for security: Dear God, I come to you this moment because I need some things only You can give me. I need restoration, Lord. I need my dignity back. You alone know what insecurity has cost me, what trouble-even torment- it has caused me. I desperately need and want to be delivered from my chronic insecurity. I am ready to discover what it means to be truly secure. Amen.

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