



# Encouraging Words

with Darlene Sala

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## I Shoulda...

Her name is the "Shoulda'-Finger-Pointer," and she comes around to spoil your peace of mind, especially after any kind of social event. Let me explain. The "shoulda'-Finger-Pointer" is the little voice inside that robs us of peace and joy when she makes us shake our fingers at ourselves and say, "You SHOULD have done more." Or, "You SHOULD have done it differently." Or even something as frivolous as "You SHOULD have known better than to wear that dress tonight."

My friend Joanie Feuerstein told me she knows the Shoulda'-Finger-Pointer quite well. She says, "This one gets real talkative when you've finally made it to bed after a big event, especially if you were in charge of it. Yak-yak-yak half the night! Yes, I know her quite well," Joanie moans. Oh, and let me warn you: she picks a time when you're really tired to pull this one.

As I said, one of the worst things the Shoulda'-Finger-Pointer does is to rob us of peace and joy. She centers our attention on ourselves instead of letting us put past events in God's hands and leave the results to Him. You can't change the past--it's over, and what's done is done. So what should you do?

Well, I'll just share my personal experience and maybe it will help you, too. When this happens to me, I come back to God's promise in Isaiah 26:3, that says, "You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you." You'd think I'd have that one down pat by now, but I don't. Over and over I have to put that verse into practice by centering my thoughts on the Lord, not on other people's opinions.

So next time the Shoulda'-Finger-Pointer gives you trouble, tell her to get lost! Begin to praise Him for all the blessings of your day--one by one. As you do, God's peace and joy will again flood your heart.