

4 Ways to Quiet Your Spirit Before God

Editor's Note: *Steve Hill passed away earlier this year. This is one of his classic articles.*

Many have asked me how I've been able to maintain my Christian walk over the past 30 years, even in the midst of life's fiery trials.

I'm going to share with you some of the secrets of my longevity. I'm not an old man, but I'm also not a young man. I've preached the gospel now for nearly 30 years, and I expect to preach the gospel for at least another 30 years.

The longer I live, the longer I want to live. I don't want to miss a thing that God has for me. I don't want to die and miss the revival that's coming. I want to experience the great move of God that's just on the horizon. I want to see millions get saved and whole nations come to Christ. This is what I live for, and it's the reason why I plan on living to a ripe old age. How about you?

The truths that I'm going to share with you have become invaluable to me over the years. They are a part of the fabric of my being. I live by them, and I challenge you to do the same. Learning to live by them will cause you to be rich in the Spirit. It will affect your physical and mental well-being and can even add years to your life.

The Lord wants to prepare us for the days to come. There are incredible victories ahead of us, but there are also storm clouds on the horizon.

I meet believers all the time who become frazzled and agitated when they encounter tests and trials. As long as the sun is shining and things are going smoothly, they're OK. But the

moment storm clouds appear, they become anxious and fall apart.

In John 14:27, Jesus admonishes us, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (NKJV). He said, "Let not." That means don't allow it. The choice is ours. Friend, you are the one who allows people, situations and circumstances to agitate you. Your heart becomes troubled because you allow it.

I have problems and difficulties in life just like everybody else. But I have learned not to let things get me down. I've made it 30 years in ministry, and I'm going to make it the next 30 years because I don't let stuff get to me. I simply don't allow it.

One time we had planned a huge outdoor festival in Tallahassee, Florida. Our whole purpose for the event was to win the lost. We brought in all the major Christian bands of the day, such as Petra, Mylon Le Fevre, Joe English, and DeGarmo & Key.

It was an expensive outreach, costing tens of thousands of dollars, which I personally had to raise. We had a professional stage built that was two tractor-trailer rigs long and 20 feet deep with a 40-foot-tall backdrop. It was absolutely massive. We also had a huge tent for those who were going to get saved.

After months of hard work and preparation, the week of the event finally arrived. We were fully prepared. Yet something happened that we could not prevent: rain.

Wouldn't you know it, the forecast for the entire week of the event was rain, and the weatherman was right! It rained all day Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. After five days of nonstop rain, the ground was like a massive, mushy sponge. Not exactly conducive to an outdoor event where everyone brings their blankets and sits on the ground.

Meanwhile, people from all over the southeastern United States were calling and canceling because of the weather.

By this time, most people in my shoes would have been frazzled, as were many of my friends. You know, when something like this happens, the natural tendency is to start questioning whether you heard from God or not. You start wondering if your endeavor was a dream from God or a nightmare of your own making.

But do you know what I did the night before the event as the rain continued to pour and it looked like we had a disaster on our hands? My wife will tell you what I did that night. I slept soundly!

How could I do that, you wonder? Because I'd learned the secret of quieting my spirit in the midst of the storm.

You see, I knew that I wasn't going to change a thing. The weather was out of my control. There was no sin in my life. I loved God. For whatever reason, He was simply letting it rain. Maybe a farmer somewhere was praying just a little too hard for rain.

The day of the event we met at 4 a.m. to pray. The festival was scheduled to go from 6 p.m. to midnight. It rained nonstop that day—6 a.m., 9 a.m., 12 p.m., 2 p.m. Rain, rain, rain and more rain.

The grounds were soaked. Talk about a potential nightmare. We had to cover the massive outdoor stage with huge swimming pool covers so the bands wouldn't get electrocuted in the rain!

By this time, most of my friends were coming up to me and asking what I was going to do. Very few had faith that the crusade would be a success.

Suddenly, at 3:00 p.m. that afternoon, the most incredible thing happened. The skies split open and the hottest sun I had

ever felt came out in full force. It was like a big round fireball standing right above us. You could almost see the water coming out of the ground. Within two hours, the ground became completely dry!

The change in the weather was so remarkable that the local media even used it as a major story. Thousands of people came to the event, and multitudes got saved. It was awesome!

The funny thing about it was that my friends who were all freaked out and advising me to cancel because of the rain came to me afterward and said, "I knew all along that God was going to come through."

The storms that I faced during that situation were both natural and spiritual. But I was able to hold steady and not buckle under the pressure because I had learned how to quiet my spirit in the midst of the storm.

I'm sharing a secret with you, my friend. Learn how to trust in God. It is going to be moisture to your bones, health to your body and peace to your soul. No matter what's going on in your life, learn to relax and say, "Jesus, You have everything under control."

One of my favorite scriptures in the Bible is Psalm 131:1-2:

"Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child" (KJV).

This picture is one of a child who is past the breastfeeding years but remembers that on mama's breast is the place of warmth and peace. It's the place where his hunger is satisfied. It's also the place where he hears the quiet, soothing beat of mama's heart.

Spiritually speaking, the Lord wants us to have that same sincere, childlike spirit. Everybody says they want to abide under the shadow of the Almighty. The only way to live in someone's shadow is to be close. My friend, the only way to dwell in that secret place and to hear the soothing beat of His heart is to get so close to Him that you're leaning on His breast.

This is what the psalmist is talking about. He's saying, "I'm not going to allow myself to get all stirred up about stuff. My heart is not haughty. I'm not going to involve myself in matters that have nothing to do with me. I'm going to be like a weaned child. I'm going to draw close to the Lord and stay in that place where I can hear His heartbeat. He is my place of refuge, my strength and my peace."

You see, when we're brand-new, baby Christians, the Lord loves on us in such a sweet, tender way. He'll hold and caresses us much like a mother does her newborn babe. But as time goes by, He stops babying us. He begins to deal with us differently. Why? Because if He continued to coddle and baby us, we'd never grow up to become men and women of God.

I remember when I was a baby Christian. It seemed like every time I opened my Bible, He would speak to me through a Scripture. I continually felt His presence.

But I'm not a spiritual babe anymore. I'm not in diapers. I'm not a little toddler, nor a teenager. I've passed through boot camp. I'm a soldier now—a warrior in the Lord's army. Now I often have to dig to get a Word from the Lord. As a warrior, I have to go back to the manual of His Word to receive strength and then pick up my sword and use it in battle.

But oh, my friend, when I get a little frazzled out there in the war and I hear the clanging of the enemy's armor pressing in on me, how beautiful it is to draw away and quiet myself before Him. How sweet it is to shut everything out and come

before Him with that childlike heart and say, "Jesus, I quiet myself before You. I just want to lean upon You, to draw close to You, to hear Your heartbeat."

I'm sharing with you some precious secrets from my walk with God. Here's how to quiet your spirit before Him:

1. Acknowledge God as your only refuge and strength.

The first thing that I do to quiet my spirit is to acknowledge Him as my only refuge and strength. I always start by telling Him, "Jesus, You're everything to me. You are the peace and the joy of my life. You are my salvation. You've set me free. You are my refuge and my deliverer. You are my hope. You're everything to me."

Why do you have to do this when it's time to quiet your spirit? Because there's always something trying to get between you and your heavenly Father. There's always something trying to weave its way into the throne room of your heart. But as you get on your knees and acknowledge who He is to you, those hindrances will fall by the wayside.

The great thing about it is that you can acknowledge Him as your refuge and strength anywhere, anytime. You might be at school, at your office, in your kitchen making dinner or perhaps in your car.

As you learn how to quiet yourself before Him, people will come up to you and say, "How come this situation isn't bothering you? Everyone else is in a frenzy!"

If you take these principles and learn to live by them, you'll have them in your spiritual arsenal whenever a crisis comes along.

I remember when my mother suddenly died, just after we started our church in Dallas. It hurt worse than anything I had ever felt in my life because mom had prayed me into salvation.

None of the children were ready for her to die. It came as a shock and a blow to the entire family. But I'll never forget what happened. When she died, the Spirit of the Lord came upon me. I felt His presence the entire time we were making funeral arrangements.

I wept and wept because it hurt so bad to lose her. Yet the whole time my spirit was so quiet, and I felt His presence strengthening me.

What I'm sharing can really help you in the midst of a crisis. Your child could be on his deathbed in the hospital emergency room. The situation could look grim. But you can get on your knees in the chapel of that hospital and acknowledge God, saying, "Jesus, You are my rock. You are my strength. You are my salvation and my deliverer. You are the healer." There, in that quiet place, He will meet with you.

2. Focus your attention on Him through praise and worship.

Now that I've acknowledged Him by declaring who He is—my refuge, my strength, my hope—what am I going to do with it? I'm going to focus my attention on Him through praise and worship.

I worship Him, saying, "Lord, because You are my strength and refuge, I worship You. Jesus, I glorify You. You've brought me through dark trials before, and You'll bring me through this one. You're the same God yesterday, today and forever. I worship You, Lord, in the midst of this trial. I thank You, Lord, that You're going to bring me through this, Jesus. You're so faithful."

Remember when Paul and Silas were in prison? They were not only chained; they had also been severely beaten. Most likely their prison cell was infested with rats, and diseases were rampant.

I can imagine Paul looking at the burns on his hands from the chains and the cuts all over his body. He and Silas were hurting, and their lives were in jeopardy. But what did they do? Instead of getting depressed and complaining, they began to praise God.

I can just hear them lifting their voices to God in praise in the midst of their desperation, saying, "We worship You, Lord. We worship You, Jesus. Thank You for Your presence. Thank You for Your strength. We love You, Lord."

It caught the attention of heaven, and God sent an earthquake to deliver them!

Likewise, the ears and eyes of heaven will bend toward you as you focus on Him through praise and worship.

3. Align yourself with His view of the circumstances around you.

I must use the story of Jesus in the garden during His passion as the example of aligning ourselves to God's will.

Most of us are familiar with the prayer that Jesus prayed during His darkest trial in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Luke 22:41-42 says, "He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, 'Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done'" (NIV). After agonizing and pouring out His soul unto death, Jesus resigned Himself to the will of the Father, praying, "Not my will, but Yours be done."

But something else happened to Jesus in the garden after He prayed. Notice the next verse: "An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him" (v. 43). My friend, this is so powerful. Always remember that *after* Jesus resigned Himself to God's will, the angels strengthened Him.

And so it is with you. It's after you resign yourself to God's will that the angels will come and strengthen you!

4. Don't allow yourself to take the present situation out of context.

I have learned that the course of events in God's timetable will bring me to the place of His choosing.

I love how the Holy Spirit through Solomon depicts the seasons of our lives, when he wrote, "To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven" (Eccl. 3:1, NJKV).

Whatever you're going through, don't allow yourself to take it out of context. Remember, it's a season and it's going to pass. Think about how God has brought you through difficult times in the past, and realize that He's going to bring you through this season too.

Remember the promise found in Hebrews 12:11: "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (KJV).

Here is where so many miss it. They allow their present situation to dictate everything that's going on around them. Instead, you must learn to relax and say, "This is a season, and it is going to pass. It's going to bring the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Some good is going to come out of this."

Isaiah 30:15 tells us why it's so important to learn how to quiet our spirits: "In quietness and trust is your strength" (NIV). It doesn't get much clearer than that.

Quieting your spirit will help you navigate through the storms of life no matter what you are going through and no matter what's happening in the world around you. It's an art and a spiritual discipline that will change your life and help set

the course for your future as it has mine. Why not begin today?

*Evangelist **Steve Hill** preached the Brownsville Revival for five years, was pastor emeritus of Heartland World Ministries Church and authored 13 books, including Spiritual Avalanche.*