

The Cure for a Stressed-Out Life

How would you like to live every day like you were on vacation, as if it were a day away from work? You can, if you'll learn how to really enter God's rest.

My life used to be one big struggle. I was unhappy about almost everything and difficult to get along with because of the abuse I endured during my childhood.

In the early years of my marriage, I wanted Dave to be miserable because I was miserable. And it just about drove me crazy when he stayed happy while I was unhappy. He refused to join my pity parties and accept my negative perspective of life, and it made me mad.

But eventually, his example became a great witness to me, and I began to hunger for the peace, joy and stability he lived with. I wanted to enter God's rest.

What is God's rest? It is not actually a resting, or ceasing, from physical work; it's the ability to trust God and rest in Him *no matter what you're doing or what's going on in your life*. When we enter His rest, we can remain stable in every circumstance.

We need this rest because we live in a stress-filled world. And the bottom line is, life is not worth living if you're going to be upset, frustrated and worn out from stress. This kind of stress causes health problems—headaches, high blood pressure, heart issues, anxiety, fear—and it steals our peace, joy and stability.

But we have to *learn* how to rest in God, and the first step is sitting down. It's kind of like watching babies grow and develop. They don't just jump out of the crib and start

running. First they learn how to sit; then stand, walk and run.

Ephesians 2:6 says that when we accept Christ as our Savior, God makes us “sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Now, physically, we’re still on the earth; but spiritually, we’re seated in Him.

This means our position is *with* and *in* Christ—what He’s done for us and has for us is accessible to us and belongs to us. We don’t have to worry, struggle or be frustrated about trying to change things we can’t change, such as ourselves, other people or circumstances. We can give it all to God and trust Him to do what we can’t do.

Face it, there’s only so much we can do, and we need to know when we’re finished. We need to do what we can, then back off and let God work, because trying to do something about something you can’t do anything about is one of the most stressful things you can do!

How to Get There

Before I knew what I know now, I was stressed-out trying to do what God was leading me to do. For several years during the beginning of my ministry, I led a small, weekly Bible study in my home for about 25 people. And it stressed me out! I didn’t like how they acted and wanted to change them. They messed up my house! They used up my toilet paper and never offered to buy any! Until I understood that the root of the problem was in me and only God could change me, it was hard.

But I have changed. Now I’m leading a worldwide ministry with offices in multiple countries and a potential audience of two-thirds of the globe—and I *enjoy* it!

Two key things happened that led to my freedom from a stressed-out life: (1) I learned God loves me *unconditionally*; and (2) I learned to love myself.

See, we can't give someone else what we don't have. So we have to believe God loves us and that there's nothing we can do to make Him stop.

It's the love of God that heals our wounded souls, makes us secure, gives us confidence and enables us to live without fear. And when we are loved and love ourselves, we can really love others, trusting God to do what we can't do for them. We can live in His rest!

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times best-selling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries. She has authored nearly 90 books, including her new *Living Beyond Your Feelings* (Hachette). To read her past columns in *Charisma*, go to . Visit her online at .