

The Holy Spirit's Ultimate Way to Help You Beat Stress

If you've been alive in this world very long, you know there are different kinds of stress that can affect our lives. There's nutritional stress, relationship stress, financial stress, and the list goes on and on.

We're all affected by stressful situations at times, from minor inconveniences like traffic, long lines at the grocery store or losing your keys to more extreme issues such as chronic illness, the death of a loved one or divorce. But if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, then you are equipped to face and defeat stress.

The Best Stress Buster

On my personal journey to learning about stress and how to defeat it, I discovered the importance of establishing practical boundaries, like having healthy eating habits, getting good rest and exercising consistently. As I applied these changes to my life, I started to feel good again.

But Psalm 27:4-6 (NIV) reveals something that's even more important to do: "One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. ... For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock. Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me..."

In these verses, David is saying, "Here's how you can help yourself when you're in trouble: Seek the Lord—it's the one thing that is more important than anything else!"

Notice that verse 6 says "Then my head will be exalted above the enemies that surround me." So when do we get help? After

we've spent time with God.

God's Word contains the practical instruction we need to have peace, real joy and happiness. So spending time with Him in prayer and Bible study is the main key to defeating stress in your life.

Recognize the True Source of Stress

Proverbs 14:30 (AMP) gives us an amazing promise from God. It says, "A calm and peaceful and tranquil heart is life and health to the body, but passion and envy are like rottenness to the bones." This Scripture shows us that anything other than a calm, peaceful mind creates stress. And when we worry, overthinking our problems, wondering what we're going to do, we're actually causing stress to grow in our soul.

If you're thinking, "But Joyce, I can't help it! I can't stop worrying," then I want to tell you that you can help it. Anything God tells us in His Word to do, He gives us the ability to do it. So we can learn how to have a calm, peaceful mind—through Christ—if we choose to trust Him and ask Him to help us do it.

First Peter 5:7 (AMP) says to cast "all your cares [all your anxieties, all your worries, and all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares about [with deepest affection, and watches over you very carefully." The best thing we can pray when we're struggling with worry is, "God, I'm not smart enough to run my life by myself. I need Your wisdom, grace and strength to do the right thing. Please help me."

I really want you to get this: Your ability to defeat stress is determined by what's going on inside of you, not by what's going on outside of you in your circumstances.

Peace That Trumps Stress Every Time

In John 14:27 (AMPC), Jesus says, "Peace I leave with you; My

[own] peace I now give ... to you. ...Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. [Stop allowing yourselves to be agitated and disturbed; and do not permit yourselves to be fearful and intimidated and cowardly and unsettled]."

As a born-again believer in Jesus, you already have His peace in your spirit. In this verse, He's saying, "Here's My part and here's your part: I'm going to leave My peace with you, and because you have My peace, when stressful things happen, you don't have to get upset on the inside."

I've learned that when I feel myself starting to get upset, if I remember that John 14:27 tells me to "stop allowing yourself to be agitated and disturbed," and then I can "talk myself off the ledge." In other words, instead of jumping into a problem that is emotionally driven, I remind myself, "Calm down. Don't say something you'll regret or that will make things worse. Get God's perspective of this situation and choose to believe the best of the people involved."

Knowing God's Word and trusting Him completely are the keys to living in peace. I want to encourage you to study Scriptures like Matthew 11:28-29, which says Jesus will ease, relieve and refresh your soul when you come to Him and let Him take care of you. And look at 2 Timothy 1:7, which says God hasn't given us a spirit of fear but of power, love, a calm well-balanced mind and discipline and self-control.

Spend time seeking God above all else, and you can learn how to use everything He's given you to defeat the stress in your life!