

## BEING AT PEACE UNDER STRESS---5/28/23

A Research study from 2022 suggested stress was the top mental challenge for Christians today—over discouragement, distractions, and several other challenges.

Life can certainly be stressful at times. You'll find no shortage of ideas in the marketplace to help you deal with the stress, but the Bible gives us a different way.

Jesus said in John 14:27, **"I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid"** .

No matter what you're facing, God wants to give you peace of mind and heart. How does he do that?

The Bible gives us five keys to finding peace.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ **"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"** (Romans 5:1).

On the outside, we may believe our stress comes from something related to our lives or maybe even our family. Maybe we're concerned about an upcoming decision we need to make, or maybe money is tight right now.

But our deepest stress comes when we try to live **out of harmony with God**. When we're out of tune with God, we won't have peace in our lives.

We've all made mistakes. None of us are immune from that truth. Those mistakes make us feel guilty.

But the Bible says, **"We have been justified through faith."** You may believe that doctrinally but struggle to experience that truth.

Micah 7:18 reminds us, **"Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy."**

Friends, God delights in showing you mercy. Let him!

2. \_\_\_\_\_. **"You, Lord, give true peace to those who depend on you, because they trust you"** (Isaiah 26:3).

You don't need to face everything on your own. God is with you. **Your focus determines your peace.** That's why it's so important that your first response to a crisis is, **"Lord, I know you are here with me."**

The Psalmist wrote, **"God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble . . . Be still, and know that I am God!"** (Psalm 46:1, 10). When these verses were written, 180,000 troops had surrounded the city of Jerusalem. The Israelites were under extreme stress.

What did God say to those Israelites? He said the same thing he says to us under stress today: **"Relax. I'm in control."**

3. \_\_\_\_\_ **“Those who love your teachings will find true peace, and nothing will defeat them” (Psalm 119:165).**

You already know this. The Bible isn't just a book of history; it's the owner's manual for life. If you ignore the owner's manual for your car, you'll pay the price. The same is true when you disregard the Bible's instructions. It'll add stress to your life.

God created you to abide by certain principles. Stress comes when you ignore those principles. It's not enough to teach others to obey biblical principles. **You must live by them too.**

If you're weighed down by stress right now, ask God if there is an area of your life that you're not obeying him in. **Peace comes through obedience.**

4. \_\_\_\_\_ **“Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take” (Proverbs 3:5-6 NLT).**

Often, life makes little sense. But even when we don't understand what's happening, we need to hang on to the truth that God does understand. He has a plan.

You'll find four verbs in Proverbs 3:5-6. The first three are actions God wants us to take.

\_\_\_\_\_ **in the Lord with all your heart.**  
\_\_\_\_\_ **your own understanding.**  
\_\_\_\_\_ **God's will in all you do.**

When you do those three actions, God promises to take the fourth action—**direct your path.** That leads to peace.

5. \_\_\_\_\_ **“Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs, and don't forget to thank him for his answers” (Philippians 4:6).**

Most of us love to worry. We may counsel others to stop worrying and trust the Lord, but it can be hard to take our own advice. **Worry is the opposite of peace of mind.**

Philippians 4:6-7 is God's answer to worry. God's command not to worry has no qualifiers to it. But the Lord gives us an alternative to our worries. He tells us to pray.

**You can either pray or panic.** That's your choice. Worrying solves nothing. But prayer does. God can solve anything that's stressing you. The most important conversation you can have about your worries is with God.

Many of us assume that stress is a part of life. But God wants all of us to live in peace. I like this definition of peace: **“A sense of order that comes from ordering my life according to God's will.”**

No matter what's going on in your life, you can live in God's peace.

Jesus tells us in John 14:1: **“Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me”.** So relax. Trust that God has your future in his hands.