

Biblical Ways to Handle Stress

I think the Apostle Paul would laugh at some of our goals of “stress-free living.” Not because he would have had a desire for stress, but because of the lengths we go to avoid it! We see stress as an enemy, but in reality, it is part of life—especially life as a believer.

- How can you bear one another’s burden without enduring some stress?
- How can you love and lead people without demands on your time and energy?
- How can you be on the front lines of spiritual battle without the tension of spiritual warfare?

Yes, there is stress involved in the christian life. But there is a difference between living with stress and living “stressed out.” In contrast to our stressed out living, God offers His peace (Colossians 3:15).

So how can you live with stress and simultaneously walk with the peace of God ruling in your heart?

1. _____ in the Lord. Psalm 37:4

Today, we are more prone to delight in our accomplishments or our possessions than we are to delight in the Lord. In so doing, we lose the realization of God’s unconditional love for us, and we lose the chief source of a Christian’s delight—God Himself. Especially in seasons of high demands on your time and energy, take time daily to wait on the Lord—to simply delight in His presence.

2. Decide to _____. Proverbs 3:5

God knows the responsibilities He has entrusted to your care! Trust Him. Sometimes we find it easier to trust the Lord in large trials than in the daily stress of life. But, regardless of the size or cause of our anxiety, there is peace in committing it to the Lord, and there is wisdom in refusing to lean on our understanding.

3. _____ yourself. 1 Corinthians 9:27 & Galatians 5:22-23

Sometimes we know something that would help relieve stress (such as exercise) or help us better meet the demands that come our way (such as healthy eating or a target schedule), but we don’t discipline ourselves to take steps of action toward these goals.

Spirit-filled temperance (indeed, one of the fruits of the Spirit *is* temperance) will often go further than we realize in helping us manage stress. When you’re already stressed, it seems difficult to put out the energy that is required for personal disciplines. Yet, denying the impulses of self-indulgence is often key to regulating the aspects of stress that we *can* control.

4. Deny the _____. Philippians 4:8 & Acts 20:24

Even the secular world knows that negative thinking increases stress. Focusing on the demands surrounding you only makes them appear larger, and focusing on your insufficient time or strength only makes those appear smaller! Scripture gives us the perfect filter for our thoughts.

Notice the phrase “think on.” This is to be a proactive choice on our part. When your mind is spinning and your thoughts are spiraling, biblically confront what goes through your mind. *Think on* that which focuses your heart on God’s faithfulness, and stay your mind on the Lord!

We often long for relief from stress simply as an end in itself. The goal of a true servant, however, is not relief; it is fruitfulness. Our focus is not to live stress free, but to handle stress biblically—so we can serve the Lord for a lifetime!