



If I Have God's Peace, Why Am I So Stressed?


Philippians 4:7: (NASB) *And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*




It is a given that life is stressful. We all know that the sheer quantity of input we are each exposed to from the various parts of our lives is overwhelming. Now come the decisions. Do I watch, do I listen, do I click, do I respond, do I message, do I like? Now comes what is supposed to be the main part of our day, our work, or schooling or caregiving and attempting to do a good job. Next comes our downtime, which for many is laughable. It is now in our downtime that we watch, listen, click, respond, message and like, so downtime easily becomes stress time. As Christians, we are supposed to have God's peace covering our lives. We say "supposed to" because many of us have a really hard time finding that peace in the midst of our daily chaos. Where are we going wrong, and how do we correct it?



Some people suffer from depression or anxiety. This is different from the stress we are talking about today and may require additional coping mechanisms. We recommend seeking professional help when appropriate. Listen to our three-part series on anxiety and depression.

	Episode 1124 and 1125: (Parts I and II) Does My Anxiety or Depression Invalidate My Christianity?
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Understanding how anxiety and depression affect my Christianity

	Ep.1126: (Part III) How Do We Cope With Anxiety and Depression in Our Kids?
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Learning to accept and manage our kid's emotional challenges

Let's scripturally look at how to understand, manage and deal with stress as Christians.

Philippians 4:6: (NASB) *Be **anxious** <3309> for nothing...*

Anxious: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3309 *merimnao*; (verb) to be anxious about – (be, have) care(-ful), take thought
#3308 *merimna* (noun): (through the idea of distraction); solicitude: - care

“Solicitude” means care or concern for someone or something.

These words come from:

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3307 *merizo*; to part, i.e. (literally) to apportion, bestow, share, or (figuratively) to disunite, differ: - deal, be difference between, distribute, divide, give part

In other words, distraction or being taken off course.



Observation: Biblical anxiousness in a negative sense is a distracting concern that divides one's focus.

Be anxious for NOTHING. How is that even possible?

Nothing: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3367 *mēdeís*; not even one (man, woman, thing): any (man, thing), no (man), none, not (at all, any man, a whit), nothing, + without delay

This scripture sounds like a dramatic command, "BE ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING!" How do we get remotely close to this ideal?

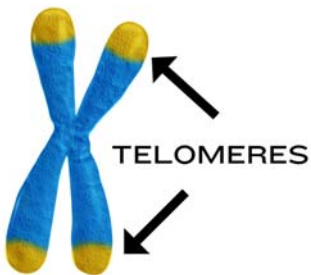
This anxiousness clearly describes our common idea of stress. Simply described, stress is a state of mental worry or tension that is caused by thoughts, emotions or circumstances. While stress can provoke us to action in a positive sense, it often has the opposite effect and provokes us towards fear, excuses, doubt, rationalization and inappropriate compromise.

Stacy Gnacinski, Assistant Professor of Health Sciences at Drake University, Iowa, defines it like this: "Stress is the psychophysiological state generated by the perception of demands (deadlines, bills) being greater than the resources available (mental energy or bank account balance) to accomplish a given task."

It comes down to the issue we face vs. our capacity to handle it. We are saying, if God is the largest part of the equation, we are in balance and can more readily handle the situation.



Our bodies are built to handle short-term stress. Some stress can be positive and provoke us to action. In the right setting, it can help us focus on danger, react quicker and have more energy. The problem is when the stress becomes chronic (long term) and we cannot shut it off.



Our cells have "telomeres," the caps at the ends of our chromosomes that keep the genetic material from unraveling. They protect our DNA from damage. Shortening with each cell division, they help determine how fast a cell ages. When they become too short, the cell stops dividing altogether. A complex interaction between telomeres and many other molecules work to prevent that from happening.

However, when our bodies are under stress, cells make glucocorticoids, reactive oxygen species, and other inflammatory molecules, all of which can disrupt normal cellular function, including maintenance of telomere length. Shorter telomere length may signal biological aging for some cells. Some studies have shown an association between chronic stress and telomere shortening, although those mechanisms are not yet known.

What is known is that chronic stress affects health and aging, and is associated with many conditions like cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, metabolic syndrome, autoimmune disease, depression and dementia.

References:

- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8920518/>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7039047/>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8434839/>




Before we dive into stress and how to manage it, we want to first visit its Christian remedy:

Philippians 4:6-7: (NASB) *“Be **anxious<3309>** for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Prayer, supplication and thanksgiving lead us to unlocking God’s peace! We cannot access God’s peace without a relationship with Him through His son, Jesus, and that relationship is based on prayer. This is the answer to negative stress.

Q. What does it mean to have God’s peace? Is it just a feeling that comes over us? Is it a heavenly gift that miraculously transforms us?

 No. It does not come like a package delivery; it comes as a process. It is something we need to pray for and work at developing.

Let’s examine what God’s peace is so we can know how it works and how to apply it.

We will present several **Principles of Peace:** 



Principles of Peace: God is the God of Peace.

We know God is love, but He is also the God of peace:

Romans 16:20: (NASB) *The God of **peace <1515>** will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.*

Peace: Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance #1515 *eirene*, probably from a primary verb *eiro* (to join)

Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon 1) a state of national tranquility
1a) exemption from the rage and havoc of war

2) peace between individuals, i.e., harmony, concord 3) security, safety, prosperity, felicity, (because peace and harmony make and keep things safe and prosperous)

Sometimes we are willing to accept something, but we really are not at peace with it –it still eats away at us.

As the God of Peace, our Father has a plan that will create eternal tranquility on all levels - both earthly and spiritual existence - for all who prove loyal to His righteousness. This scripture is very powerful - *The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.* Satan is the provoker of all disunity and stress. Our Father is the God of Peace; His plan is to crush Satan and have him removed.



Principles of Peace: Jesus is the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6: (NIV2011) *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of **Peace <7965>**.*

Peace: Hebrew-English Lexicon #7965 *shalom*

- 1) completeness, soundness, welfare, peace 1a) completeness (in number)
- 1b) safety, soundness (in body) 1c) welfare, health, prosperity 1d) peace, quiet, tranquility, contentment 1e) peace, friendship 1e1) of human relationships
- 1e2) with God especially in covenant relationship 1f) peace (from war) 1g) peace (as adjective)

Jesus is the “Prince of Shalom,” or the “Prince of Peace.” He is the conduit through which God’s plan of peace is enforced. He brings, applies and maintains all that is necessary for God’s plan to flawlessly guide all of His creation.

The **God of Peace** and the **Prince of Peace** are exactly in step with peace as a primary objective.



Principles of Peace: Peace with God can only come through Jesus.



What about Jewish people who are very peaceful in their relationship with God? Can there be any peaceful atheists? How can peace only come through Jesus when there are other peaceful people who do not believe in Jesus?



Anyone can be a peaceful person. However, we are talking about having peace WITH God. Under Jewish Law, the nation of Israel came to God through the sacrifices which were pictures of Jesus and his sacrifice. So, the Jewish nation has a relationship with God through that Law and through their faithfulness to that Law. But ultimately to be individually at peace with God, we must go through Jesus.

Romans 5:1-2: (NASB) *¹Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have **peace <1515> with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,** ²through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.*

Peace WITH God only comes through the purchasing power of Jesus’ ransom. Abraham was considered justified or “made right with God” because of his faith. We look at the Jewish nation in the same kind of light. But actual peace with God comes through the ransom of Jesus.

For Christians to have peace with God means we are being trained to bring God’s peace to the rest of the world. We are part of God’s peace. Having God’s peace is not a feeling; it is a major, earth-changing objective that needs to have its place in our lives.

THERE IS PEACE
FROM
GOD



THERE IS PEACE
WITH
GOD



PEACE COMES FROM GOD, BUT PEACE WITH GOD ONLY COMES THROUGH THE PURCHASING POWER OF JESUS’ RANSOM.

Both parts are important. When we read, *the peace of God...will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus*, that peace needs to be ruling in our lives. We want to understand the breadth of God’s peace so that we know what it is we are looking to have ruling in our lives. It is not some little feeling; it is something big and powerful.



Principles of Peace: Jesus plainly promised his peace would be given to us.

John 14:27: (NASB) *Peace <1515> I leave with you; my peace <1515> I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.*

Two words jumped out in this verse that hinder peace:

- *Troubled* means to stir up or agitate.
- *Fearful* means to be timid or afraid.

When we are troubled or fearful, we become double-minded or distracted from what is most important. Hence - no peace.



Discovering the pitfalls and remedies to distracted thinking

We do not want to be overcharged with the cares of this life. To have the peace of Jesus is to be given the ability, through God's spirit, to see the trials and traumas of life through the eyes of spiritual maturity and not through our feelings of anxiousness or fear we might have. That is what Jesus did!

My peace, I give unto you - this tells us how to cope as Jesus did, by having God's peace in his life. It is all interconnected.



Principles of Peace: Christianity is built upon grace and peace being applied to our daily lives.

The Apostle Paul often greeted the churches in the same way.

Here is how he greeted the Galatians, Ephesians and the Philippians as well as many others:

Galatians 1:3: (NASB) *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Ephesians 1:2: (NASB) *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Philippians 1:2: (NASB) *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

The Apostle Paul thought it was necessary to greet all of these churches of the brotherhood with grace and peace! He is not saying, "I hope you feel good." He is saying: "I want God's grace – His unmerited favor – and His overwhelming plan of peace and harmony to be with you and work through you." This is what it means to have God's peace.

Sidelining **Stress** with Purposeful **Peace**: Our first foundational point is realizing:



GOD'S CHARACTER AND PLAN ARE FILLED WITH PEACE.

For us to access this tranquil approach in our lives we need to accept the merit of Jesus' sacrifice and apply his peace. This opens us up to God's peace being able to have a place to dwell in our busy lives.



Does God's peace have a place to dwell in MY life?

Seeing the breadth and depth of God's peace can be breathtaking. Think about it – God wants US to have HIS peace in our lives!

God's peace seems so high and lofty. How can we expect to be able to harness its spiritual power in our little lives?

This is an important question. While the answer is simple, it is certainly not easy. Primarily what we need to do is to be willing to slow down enough and recognize when our stress is not a productive force in our life. By God's grace, this recognition becomes the basis for our ability to begin turning the tide of stress in our lives and the mark it leaves.

THERE ARE FOUR SIMPLE STEPS TO HARNESSING GOD'S POWER AND PEACE WHEN WE HAVE MAJOR STRESS:

Again - they may be simple, but not always easy.

RECOGNIZE: LEARN TO RECOGNIZE THE NEGATIVE STRESSORS IN OUR LIVES AND THEIR DEBILITATING EFFECT ON US.



The Apostle Paul himself had to do this exact thing:

2 Corinthians 1:9-10: (NLT) ⁹In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God, who raises the dead. ¹⁰And He did rescue us from mortal danger, and He will rescue us again. We have placed our confidence in Him, and He will continue to rescue us.

What negative stressors did Paul recognize? His own conclusions about his life - he expected to die but learned not to rely on what he thought because his own emotional conclusions were wrong. He created the negative stress by his own conclusion that "it's all over." But from God's standpoint, this was just the beginning.

Paul perceived he did not have the tools necessary to meet the need. We talked about how stress is created when there is an imbalance between the issue we are facing versus our capacity to handle it.



Paul expected to die, but God had other plans. He now understood that God would deliver the next victory. We need to understand that God will deliver our next victory, one way or another. The “victory” might even seem to us to be a resounding defeat.

At one point, taking Paul’s life was a victory. His life was over, and he was free from the pain and weakness of this life. It was all in God’s hands. We need the mindset that it is not OUR definition of victory, but our Father’s definition of victory that brings us peace.

Later in the same letter, Paul gave us details on what can be negative stressors and our necessary response to them. In the first chapter of 2 Corinthians, Paul explains how he was thinking in his own way.

Ten chapters later, he is expanding and showing a greater grasp in dealing with the negative stressors in life:

2 Corinthians 10:3-5: (NASB) ³For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, ⁴for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. ⁵We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

Here he is telling us what he has learned: *the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but it is through God we can bring about the destruction of fortresses IF we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.*

Again, we are talking about how negative stressors reduce our ability to remain single-minded. We need to fight these battles with spirituality.

New American Standard Version: *destruction of fortresses*
King James Version: *pulling down of strongholds*

This is a unique phrase because the Greek word for destruction or pulling down –the entire clearance of an obstacle - is only found in the New Testament in 2 Corinthians 10:4,5 and 13:10.

The Greek word for *fortresses* or *strongholds* is only found once in the Bible - here in this text. This is a fortified, military stronghold; a strong-walled fortress. Figuratively, it is a false argument in which a person seeks a safe place to escape reality. Our fortresses might be pride, selfishness, holding onto false doctrines, superstitions, aspirations of our own importance –basically, wrong thoughts and perceptions. The key, again, Paul gives us the answer, is to *take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.*



Our thoughts and feelings may trigger negative stressors and can become *fortresses* of fleshly protection and speculation. IF WE LET IT, God’s power helps us see this and manage the distracting concern that divides our focus. We must be single-minded, not divided in our attention.

Sidelining **Stress** with Purposeful **Peace**:

James 1:8 tells us, "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."



Let us resolve to recognize that negative stressors are symptoms of our fleshly heart and mind creeping into positions of influence as we attempt to serve God through Christ.

We want to be careful not to be the *cause* of our own stress – natural consequences from sin and dishonesty cause a great deal of stress. A lot of brain power goes into trying to cover up when we are in places we should not be, doing things we should not be doing, with people we should not be with, and so on. We can eliminate a lot of anxiety just by living a clean, righteous life.

This idea of double-mindedness generally has a negative connotation, but there are a lot of stressors we cannot prevent. Caregiving of any kind is extremely stressful, and those in the medical field especially can be burned out on caring for others.




Loss of loved ones can be very stressful. Our congregation has had to focus on the recent, unexpected deaths of four of our members.

People going through war or natural disasters also comes to mind.

We are not saying to throw away everything in our lives that bring stress. Instead, we suggest embracing the responsibilities we are given but learn to do so by *taking every thought captive into the obedience of Christ*. Some stressors are not ever going to go away.

One of our listeners sent us this next audio clip to illustrate how to understand the effects of stress using a glass of water.

 **Understanding stress with a glass of water, Venkat Saradhi**

- (Teacher) How heavy is this glass of water? Melissa, would you care to answer?
- (Melissa) 8 ounces?
- (Student #2) 12 ounces?
- (Student #3) 16 ounces?

(Teacher) The absolute weight of the glass doesn't matter. It depends on how long I hold onto it. If I hold it for a minute, nothing happens. If I hold it for an hour, my arm will begin to ache. If I hold it all day long, my arm will feel numb and paralyzed. Oh, the weight of the glass hasn't changed, but the longer I hold onto it, the heavier it becomes. The stresses and the worries of life are like this glass of water. If you think about them for a little while, there's no problem. Think about it for a little bit longer; it begins to hurt. If you think about them all day long and you'll feel paralyzed, incapable of doing anything. Always remember - (thump!) - put the glass down.



I love the “thump.” “Always remember...” thump! “...put the glass down.” Although not in these exact words, my dear wife Tricia is always telling me to “put the glass down.” The words she actually uses are from Scripture. She reminds me, “God invented a Sabbath for a reason –it means to rest.” Put the glass down. This is a valuable concept we should all utilize.



If we find ourselves experiencing stress –even extreme or chronic stress –it does not mean we are bad Christians or that we are failing. Thinking that way will just cause more stress! We want to go through these steps, learn them to gain a higher perspective, and therefore also gain relief.

As we **RECOGNIZE** that the negative stressors in our lives can be debilitating, this helps us move forward to the next step.

RECONSIDER: INTENTIONALLY LOOK AT THESE NEGATIVE STRESSORS IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT.



Back to Philippians:

Philippians 4:6: (NASB) *Be **anxious <3309>** for nothing...*

This verse recognizes that we are naturally anxious and stressed by a variety of things. The Apostle Paul is not making a suggestion –this is a strong and confident command –*Be anxious for nothing!* That seems absolutely impossible in this day and age!

The Apostle Paul makes it simple –do not stress about ANYTHING!

He is essentially saying: “As you fall into your stressed patterns of life, consider the consequences and **RECONSIDER** going there.”

Instead, be strong and courageous:

Deuteronomy 31:6: (NASB) *Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you.*

Do we believe this? How firmly do we repeat this promise in our own hearts and minds? If this is something that drives us, this is God's peace! It helps us to cope.

Once we have **RECOGNIZED** that there is a stressor problem in our lives and **RECONSIDERED** our natural reaction, this brings us to our third step.



RELABEL: FIND THE STRENGTH TO RELABEL A NATURAL NEGATIVE STRESSOR DISASTER AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE GOD COMPLETE CONTROL.

The disaster equals opportunity.

Philippians 4:6: (NASB) *Be **anxious <3309>** for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*



The formula here is to go to God Almighty and put our petitions before Him. This is not a quick “please help me” prayer (even though these types of prayers have their time and place); this is an intentional laying out of our issues, our stressors, and asking for help.

This is going to God as Creator of all and saying, “I am stressed, I am drowning, here is why, here is what I feel, here is why I cannot –I NEED YOU.” It is unburdening before Him! This helps to get rid of the anxiousness because we need to vent. Why not vent to God Almighty who has the power to do something about that which stresses us?

Going to God with only passing thoughts gives you blessings that pass you by.

At least Paul gave us the answer as to where we can go to exchange our concerns. Before they turn into all out anxiety, we take them to the LORD. But notice how these requests are to be made known *with thanksgiving*. We do not approach God mad or crabby that bad things are happening. No matter what, we are thankful and expectant that we will do and be better.

***Worry is the conversation you have with yourself about things you cannot change. Prayer is the conversation you have with God about things He can change.* – Unknown**

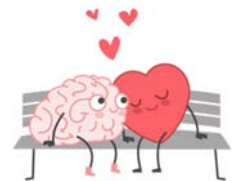


This is why I say all the time, “It is all good.” It helps me refocus my heart and my mind on the fact that God has it in control.

Rather than get all stressed out, why not try this?

Psalms 86:11-12: (KJV) *11Teach me Thy way, O LORD; I will walk in Thy truth: unite my heart to fear (revere) Thy name. 12I will praise Thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify Thy name forevermore.*

We love the way the King James Version says *unite my heart* - do not let me be divided in my thoughts and my emotions; *unite my heart to revere Thy name*. Pull me all together so that I can be single-minded in honoring You. These are the steps to managing stress.



RECEIVE AND RESPOND: MOVE FORWARD WITH THE PROCESS. IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO PUT IT BEFORE THE LORD IN PRAYER; ACTION IS REQUIRED. BY FOCUSING ON A GODLY REMEDY FOR OUR NEGATIVE STRESSORS, WE PUT SPACE BETWEEN US AND THAT STRESSOR AND MAKE ROOM FOR GOD'S PEACE TO BE PLANTED AND THRIVE.

Back to our theme text:

Philippians 4:7: (NASB) *And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

God's peace can and will come to us if we make room for it and invite it to abide with us. We have to make it an event that changes our life, not just a passing thought. God's peace is not arbitrary. God's peace is looking to live in our hearts –are our hearts open for it?



Rather than being all stressed out, why not try this?

Psalms 56:3-4: (NASB) ³When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. ⁴In God, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me?



Once we place our trust in God, we should not look to take it back. One of our core CQ volunteers, Becca, sent us many practical tips on managing stress. Here is one of the things she said:



Becca: "I have found that when I'm stressed, I have a mean inner monologue, and all sorts of bad things creep in. When this starts to happen, I recognize this is from Satan, and I actually say out loud, 'Leave me alone Satan,' because I know what he is trying to do, and I do not have to listen to him. Trying to remember that Satan works to play on our fears and anxieties, and that it's not just me that is the problem makes me feel much more defiant and wanting to lean on God and defy what Satan is trying to do."


Defy Satan! Stand firm on the holy ground
God has put us upon!



There's a reason why the reverse of "stressed" is "desserts." – Julie

Sidelineing** Stress with Purposeful Peace:**

Negative Stressors can be everywhere and our natural reactions to them can seriously diminish our spirituality.



Let us keep our eyes open to recognize them and our hearts open to reconsider them in a different light. Let us keep our minds open to relabel them as God's opportunities and our expectations open to receive God's peace and respond with His grace!

Okay, so there are four easy steps. What examples do we have of heroes of our faith following this process?

This is where the practicality of putting negative stressors away from us begins to shine. Even though Jesus was a perfect man, he continually had to put the stressors of his human life into a clear and godly perspective. While we will touch on other heroes of faith handling their stressors, our Lord Jesus will be our primary example.



The Principles of Peace we have reviewed have given us the target to strive for. That target is having God's peace being the overriding influence when stress is high.



The four steps that bring us God's peace are important as they help us focus on the changes we need to make: **RECOGNIZE, RECONSIDER, RELABEL** and **RECEIVE AND RESPOND**.

Now we look at **STRESS-RELIEVING PRINCIPLES** that give these four steps space to work. It is great to have steps to accomplish a goal, but how do we use them? Let's look at the practicality of life experience and see exactly how to apply these steps.



STRESS-RELIEVING PRINCIPLES - THE PRINCIPLE OF "EMPTY"

Jesus plainly taught us about the singular loyalty we are to have to God and His will:

Matthew 6:24: (NASB) *No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.*

Again, double-mindedness just does not work. The practicality of this is important. To serve only one master, we need to empty ourselves of any other loyalties. To empty out thoughts of, "Well, I've got to do this," or, "This is more important," or "I feel this way, so that does not apply." We get in our own way too often and we become that "second master" to ourselves. When we have two masters, we do not serve either one very well. Often what we feel is tangible and right in front of us, but what God wants is more abstract and a farther away goal. We need to focus on God's will for us through Christ.

We do not mean emptying out loyalties such as family obligations or serious commitments. We are talking about self-will and choices. We are not talking about walking away from responsibilities or not living up to scriptural principles. We are talking about the circumstances that take us away from those things. We are talking about the need to tear down our *fortresses* or *strongholds* the Apostle Paul warned about.

Jesus dramatically showed us how this principle of "empty" works:

RECOGNIZE: LEARN TO RECOGNIZE THE NEGATIVE STRESSORS IN OUR LIVES AND THEIR DEBILITATING EFFECT ON US.

Philippians 2:3-4: (NASB) *³Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*

This is saying to have selfless love for others as Jesus did. We must put away our own agenda, as it will inevitably conflict with Christ's agenda. Our agenda must be subservient to Christ's.





Psalm 32:3: (NLT) *When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long.*

The stress of a double life is heavy. It takes a lot of effort to keep lies straight. Recognize this stressor and avoid this burden.



RECONSIDER: INTENTIONALLY LOOK AT THESE NEGATIVE STRESSORS IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT.

Philippians 2:5-6: (NASB) *⁵Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, although he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,*

Jesus left the glory of being at the right hand of God, of being the Word of God, to become a mere human being and suffer. He left the most glorious position any being had ever had, aside from God Himself, to become someone small who would be tortured. This would seem like he left something great to become something bad, but in fact, he left something great to do the will of the Father which was something even greater.

Jesus' humility was beautiful. He knew his place. Look at him in relation to Lucifer. Jesus emptied himself; Lucifer was full of himself. Lucifer said *I will be like the Most High* (Isaiah 14:14). They are the exact opposite in character and their goals.



RELABEL: RELABEL OUR NEGATIVE STRESSORS AS OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE GOD COMPLETE CONTROL.

Philippians 2:7-8: (NASB) *⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. ⁸Being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

Jesus emptied his perfect human life for Adam and all of Adam's descendants. The attitude of Jesus was always – *Father...not my will, but Thine be done.*



Becca writes: "When there is something we are worrying about over and over, this is sort of like we are trying to be like God. We want to become basically a little dictator in our own lives, and when we worry, we are trying to tell God how WE want things to turn out, and if it just turns out this one way then everything will be great and good. Satan also wanted to try to tell God how things were supposed to be...and I don't want to be like THAT!"

Instead, Jesus *humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.* That is a prime example of "emptying" so that God's will can have a place to grow.



RECEIVE AND RESPOND: FOCUSING ON GODLY REMEDIES FOR NEGATIVE STRESSORS PUTS SPACE BETWEEN THOSE STRESSORS AND US AND MAKES ROOM FOR GOD'S PEACE TO BE PLANTED AND THRIVE.

Philippians 2:9-11: (NASB) *⁹For this reason also, God highly exalted him, and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Jesus emptied himself and was exalted to the right hand of God –the highest favored position under God.

We have to be willing to continually empty ourselves of self-will. We cannot make room for something better if something mediocre is already there. It does not work!

We have the good example of Jesus emptying himself to do God's will contrasted with Satan seeking to fill himself and, as a result, he will be destroyed.

Sidelining Stress with Purposeful Peace:



To empty one's self is to intentionally remove all of what was, to open space for what God in His will would put there. Even if "what was" is good, we are called to be a spiritual family and need to replace it with God's driving spirit. Negative stressors take up a lot of space.

Let us work at digging out their influence and filling the space with the seeds of God's grace and peace!





STRESS-RELIEVING PRINCIPLES: THE PRINCIPLE OF "SURRENDER"

We can empty ourselves of other loyalties but that is just a beginning.

Next, we must surrender to God's will, which may be difficult but inevitably brings us His peace:

Matthew 6:25-26: (NASB) ²⁵For this reason I say to you, do not be worried <3309> about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?

Instead of stressing about this, that and the other thing, think about the birds of the air –God takes care of them and He takes care of the details of our Christian lives. That is the principle of surrender. Let Him do His work!

Jesus showed us this process of going through the challenges in order to eventually bring God's peace. Let's look how Jesus used these steps.



Step 1.

RECOGNIZE: RECOGNIZE THE NEGATIVE STRESSORS IN OUR LIVES AND THEIR DEBILITATING EFFECT ON US.

Matthew 26:36-38: (NASB) ³⁶Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to his disciples, Sit here while I go over there and pray. ³⁷And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. ³⁸Then he said to them, my soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with me.



It is comforting to see that even Jesus was stressed and needed prayer time to be comforted and gain perspective. He recognized the depth of his stress and went to the source of comfort to put that overwhelming stress in perspective. *Sit here while I go over there and pray.* Is this not one of the best examples we have ever had as to how to handle the negative stressors in our lives?



RECONSIDER: INTENTIONALLY LOOK AT THESE NEGATIVE STRESSORS IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT.

Matthew 26:39-42: (NASB) ³⁹*And he went a little beyond them, and fell on his face and prayed, saying, my Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will, but as You will.* ⁴⁰*And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, So, you men could not keep watch with me for one hour? ⁴¹Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. ⁴²He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, my Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done.*



This second prayer shows a change in perspective. First, *if it is possible, let this cup pass from me.* Then he comes back – he has reconsidered. He already put the petition before God but now he sees it differently: *if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done.* In other words, “I want you to know Father that I will drink this cup. I will accept whatever it is.” First was, “Please let this pass.” Second was, “If it cannot pass, I am ready.”

The prayer brought him small step by small step closer to seeing things in a different light –the light of doing God’s will.



RELABEL: RELABEL OUR NEGATIVE STRESSORS AS OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE GOD COMPLETE CONTROL.

Matthew 26:43-45: (NASB) ⁴³*Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴And he left them again, and went away and prayed a third time, saying the same thing once more. ⁴⁵Then he came to the disciples and said to them, Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.*



This third step is to relabel the stressor as an opportunity. The opportunity here is *the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed.* This is the beauty of relabeling. He knew it had to happen and embraced it.

This was the very opportunity that had been Jesus’ goal throughout his human life. It would be the hardest thing he had ever done, yet he walked towards it.



RECEIVE AND RESPOND: FOCUSING ON GODLY REMEDIES FOR NEGATIVE STRESSORS PUTS SPACE BETWEEN US AND THOSE STRESSORS AND MAKES ROOM FOR GOD’S PEACE TO BE PLANTED AND THRIVE.

Matthew 26:46: (NASB) *Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays me is at hand!*

Not only does he know the betrayer is there, but he says, “Let’s go, we are going to go meet him. I am going to make it easy so that God’s will can be done.”

The grace with which Jesus would handle the last day of his human life is utterly, incredibly, totally inspirational!

Sidelining **Stress** with Purposeful **Peace**:



As we continue to work on emptying ourselves of the negative stressors and clutter on our hearts and minds,
WE NEED TO FOCUS ON SURRENDERING TO GOD'S PROVIDENCE.

- After emptying made space for seeds of peace, surrendering to God's will is the "fertilizer" that nourishes their growth.

These two examples of Jesus emptying himself and surrendering to God are about as dramatic as they can be!

**To be emptied and to surrender are really big steps.
What comes next in our quest to minimize negative stress?**

These are big steps, and they are challenging to say the least. It is so easy to give up and give in. We feel like we fail, but in reality we just need to get up and try again.

God knows us and He knows we struggle.

He will not abandon us in this struggle as long as we keep fighting!



STRESS RELIEVING PRINCIPLES - THE PRINCIPLE OF "ACCEPTANCE"

To empty out our stressors before God and surrender to His will needs full acceptance of what His will has to offer. To surrender is a moment's decision. To accept is a long-term commitment.

We left off with Jesus telling us not to be too concerned over what we eat, drink or wear –the basic cares of life. Let's continue:

Matthew 6:27-32: (NASB) ²⁷And who of you by being **worried <3309>** can add a single hour to his life? ²⁸And why are you **worried <3309>** about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, ²⁹yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. ³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith! ³¹Do not **worry <3309>** then, saying, what will we eat? or what will we drink? or what will we wear for clothing? ³²For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

He ends by telling us not to worry about these things, because our heavenly Father knows our every need.



RECOGNIZE: RECOGNIZE THE NEGATIVE STRESSORS IN OUR LIVES AND THEIR DEBILITATING EFFECT ON US.

The Apostle Paul is a great example of this. He experienced what he called a *thorn in the flesh* – something he felt was holding him back. Many surmise it was his poor eyesight, but we are not told what it was.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10: (NASB) ⁷*Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me - to keep me from exalting myself!* ⁸*Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me.*

He recognized this hardship was a negative stressor, so he prayed that it would be removed. This is classic! “This is negative; Lord, please remove it. I could run so much harder, so much faster if you just take this out of my way. You know that I can work harder for you without it.” This is a sincere plea on Paul’s behalf. He truly believed this and he prayed that the “thorn” be removed three times. He petitioned the Lord.

This brings us to Step 2:



RECONSIDER: INTENTIONALLY LOOK AT THESE NEGATIVE STRESSORS IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT.

⁹*And he has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness...*

He prayed for it to be removed but was told it was for his benefit. He was being forced to look at what he thought was a negative stressor in a different light. He needed help to see things differently.

We tend to focus on what we think is holding us back, not understanding that the experience or limitation may be ultimately used for our highest spiritual welfare.

We must think about it in a different way, which brings us to Step 3:



RELABEL: RELABEL OUR NEGATIVE STRESSORS AS OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE GOD COMPLETE CONTROL.

...Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

A paradigm shift! The Apostle Paul realized that if he can accomplish all he did WITH this issue, it shows God’s glory to be even more powerful. The negative stressor becomes an opportunity and a catalyst for growth.



Becca recommends we reframe experiences of high stress and anxiety. "Instead of trying to get rid of or push them away, see them as a springboard to 'bend your heart to God.' Times like these are an opportunity to talk to God. It can be a big change to look at this in a positive light with other experiences we have that we consider positive for our spiritual growth. Keep in mind most stressful events don't last forever. Big projects at work end, challenging moments with toddlers are for a season. We just have to practice breathing and talking to God in those seasons."



However, sometimes those stressors do not end. Whatever that *thorn in the flesh* was for Paul, it stayed with him from the time of his conversion until the end of his life. He had to cope with it and grow through it.



For me, a stressor that does not end has been Christian Questions. For 25 years this coming June, it has been an every-week demand (and I say that with the greatest reverence and respect) to be on, be ready, be studied and be prepared. I will tell you unequivocally at times it was a negative stressor. At times the anxiety was overwhelming. But by God's grace, small step by small step, we learned to take what was negative and look at it as an opportunity which turns it into something positive. Even though I do get overwhelmed sometimes, it is one of the greatest positive stressors in my discipleship in wanting to proclaim the word of God to whomever will listen. It is a stress that never goes away, thank God, because that is how we learn.



RECEIVE AND RESPOND: FOCUSING ON GODLY REMEDIES FOR NEGATIVE STRESSORS PUTS SPACE BETWEEN US AND THOSE STRESSORS AND MAKES ROOM FOR GOD'S PEACE TO BE PLANTED AND THRIVE.

This is where acceptance becomes important.


¹⁰Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

Paul sees things more comprehensively now. Beyond just his *thorn in the flesh* problem, he now graciously accepts ALL weaknesses, insults, persecutions and so on, as they are being overruled and permitted for a higher reason.



There, the apostle has one on me! He says he can see and accept it all, but I still fight, I do. I still struggle, I get tripped up, I still have that whiney little attitude. But by God's grace, it comes and goes, and each time I learn and develop a little bit further.

Sideline Stress with Purposeful Peace:



For the Apostle Paul, what began as a negative stressor became a defining moment and a purely positive experience. The stress was still there but his use of it would now glorify God.

Let us seek to lay down the stressors in our life before the Lord and find HIS peace instead!

Accepting God's will is the water that nourishes the growth of God's peace.

- We emptied ourselves to make a place for the seeds to be planted.
- We surrendered our will and put fertilizer on those seeds.
- Now, as we accept, we water those seeds so they can grow into something significant.



STRESS RELIEVING PRINCIPLES - THE PRINCIPLE OF “TRUE REST”

Being able to rest in the trials and tumult around us is evidence of God's peace having taken root in our hearts:

Matthew 6:33: (NASB) *But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*

Jesus taught us how to rest in tumult:



RECOGNIZE: RECOGNIZE THE NEGATIVE STRESSORS IN OUR LIVES AND THEIR DEBILITATING EFFECT ON US.

Let's drop in on the event of Jesus calming the Sea of Galilee:

Mark 4:36-38: (NASB) ³⁶*Leaving the crowd, they took him along with them in the boat, just as he was; and other boats were with him. ³⁷And there arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up. ³⁸Jesus himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion...*



Jesus felt the movement of the boat but was unfazed by it because he had complete peace in the power of God in his life. Everyone else was panicked! He could completely sleep through the storm. How often does something stressful keep us up in the middle of the night! If anyone should have been up stressing, it was Jesus – he had people plotting against him, the crowds around him were overwhelming, and he knew he had very little time to teach his disciples before his untimely death. Yet, he slept soundly!

The negative stressor: A boat that looks ready to fill up with water and sink.



RECONSIDER: INTENTIONALLY LOOK AT THESE NEGATIVE STRESSORS IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT.

...and they woke him and said to him, Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?

Jesus tells the wind and waves to be quiet, and the sea is calm again.

Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing? Those in the boat with Jesus are not seeing this in a different light. They are saying, “We are dying here..!”

The Matthew account of this event adds:

Matthew 8:26: (NASB) *He said to them, Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?*

Jesus tells the wind and waves to be quiet and the sea is calm again. What do you mean, why are we afraid? There is water coming into our boat! We are going to drown! The apostles were raging just like the sea!



RELABEL: RELABEL OUR NEGATIVE STRESSORS AS OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE GOD COMPLETE CONTROL.

Mark 4:39-41: (NASB) ³⁹*And he got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, Hush, be still. And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm. ⁴⁰And he said to them, Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?*

Jesus relabeled the response for them.




RECEIVE AND RESPOND: FOCUSING ON GODLY REMEDIES FOR NEGATIVE STRESSORS PUTS SPACE BETWEEN US AND THOSE STRESSORS AND MAKES ROOM FOR GOD'S PEACE TO BE PLANTED AND THRIVE.

⁴¹*They became very much afraid and said to one another, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?*

This was said in wonderment, not in doubt. What they just witnessed was beyond their imagination. It would have been beyond anybody's imagination! Jesus took the negative circumstance, and by his mere presence and the power of God in him, put it in perspective for them.


Sideline **Stress** with Purposeful **Peace**:



This experience was truly a remarkable example of just how strong the peace of God can be when it has grown to maturity in our hearts.

To rest in trial is to see our experiences through our Father's eyes.

Resting in God through our stressors is the evidence that God's peace has been planted in our hearts.



This is the plant that grows because we emptied to make room, we surrendered to fertilize the soil, we accepted to water that plant. We are now able to actually rest.

The good news is that peace is not found in the absence of problems, but it is found in the presence of Jesus. – Bible.com

..which can be in the presence of lots of problems! But if we have the presence of Jesus, we can have the peace of God.

The final principle is one that transcends the power of stress.



STRESS-RELIEVING PRINCIPLES - THE PRINCIPLE OF "REJOICING"

To rejoice in trial is the fruitage of God's peace having been planted, nourished, watered and grown in our hearts. It is evidence of a single-minded approach to daily life.

Negative stressors cannot live with that competition. This crushes the negative stressors in our lives.

Isaiah 26:3: (KJV) *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee (here is that single-mindedness): because he trusteth in Thee.*

The New Living Translation says: *You will keep in perfect peace all who trust You, all whose thoughts are fixed on You!*

Notice our focus is to be on God, not on our problems.

Romans 5:3-5: (NASB) ³*And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; ⁴and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; ⁵and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the holy spirit which was given to us.*



Negative stressors exist for all of us – what are we going to do with them?

Empty: make room to plant the seeds of God's peace

Surrender: fertilize those seeds

Acceptance: water those seeds

True rest: allow those seeds to grow into this tree of God's peace

Rejoicing: keeping the fruit of God's peace actually living in our hearts



Philippians 4:7: (NASB) *And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Do not let the negative stressors take over; instead turn them over to the peace of God.

*So, if I have God's peace, why am I so stressed?
For Jonathan, Rick, Julie and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

All quoted scriptures are from the 1995 version of NASB unless otherwise indicated.



Join us next week for our podcast on April 3, 2023

Ep. 1275: Why Did Jesus Ride Into Jerusalem?

Bonus Material and Study Questions

Do I need a “bit and a bridle” to keep me in line?

Psalms 32:8-11: (NASB) ⁸*I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you.* ⁹*Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, otherwise they will not come near to you.* ¹⁰*Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but he who trusts in the LORD, lovingkindness shall surround him.* ¹¹*Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous ones; and shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart.*

Word study: #3309 is the verb form of #3308. These both come from a word that means to apportion, share or disunite.

Anxious: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3309 *merimnao*; to be anxious about: (be, have) care(-ful), take thought

All uses, as shown in the King James Version:

Matthew 6:25: *Therefore I say unto you, Take no **thought** <3309> for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?*



Matthew 6:27: Which of you by taking **thought <3309>** can add one cubit unto his stature?

Matthew 6:28: And why take ye **thought <3309>** for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

Matthew 6:31: Therefore take no **thought <3309>**, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

Matthew 6:34: **Take <3309>** therefore no **thought <3309>** for the morrow: for the morrow shall take **thought <3309>** for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Matthew 10:19: But when they deliver you up, **take <3309>** no **thought <3309>** how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

Luke 10:41: And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art **careful <3309>** and troubled about many things:

Luke 12:11: And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, **take <3309>** ye no **thought <3309>** how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say:

Luke 12:22: And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, **Take <3309>** no **thought <3309>** for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

Luke 12:25: And which of you with taking **thought <3309>** can add to his stature one cubit?

Luke 12:26: If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye **thought <3309>** for the rest?

1 Corinthians 7:32: But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried **careth <3309>** for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord:

1 Corinthians 7:33: But he that is married **careth <3309>** for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.

1 Corinthians 7:34: There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman **careth for <3309>** the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married **careth <3309>** for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.

1 Corinthians 12:25: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should **have <3309>** the same **care <3309>** one for another.

Philippians 2:20: For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally **care <3309>** for your state.

Philippians 4:6: Be **careful <3309>** for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

Careful: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3308 *merimna*; (through the idea of distraction); solicitude: — care

All uses, as shown in the King James Version:

Matthew 13:22: He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the **care <3308>** of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

Mark 4:19: And the **cares <3308>** of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.



Luke 8:14: *And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with **cares <3308>** and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.*

Luke 21:34: *And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and **cares <3308>** of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.*

2 Corinthians 11:28: *Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the **care <3308>** of all the churches.*

1 Peter 5:7: *Casting all your **care <3308>** upon him; for he careth for you.*

Care: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3307 *merizo*; to part, i.e. (literally) to apportion, bestow, share, or (figuratively) to disunite, differ:
— deal, be difference between, distribute, divide, give part

All uses, as shown in the King James Version:

Matthew 12:25: *And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom **divided <3307>** against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house **divided <3307>** against itself shall not stand:*

Matthew 12:26: *And if Satan cast out Satan, he is **divided <3307>** against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?*

Mark 3:24: *And if a kingdom be **divided <3307>** against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.*

Mark 3:25: *And if a house be **divided <3307>** against itself, that house cannot stand.*

Mark 3:26: *And if Satan rise up against himself, and be **divided <3307>**, he cannot stand, but hath an end.*

Mark 6:41: *And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes **divided <3307>** he among them all.*

Luke 12:13: *And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he **divide <3307>** the inheritance with me.*

Romans 12:3: *For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath **dealt <3307>** to every man the measure of faith.*

1 Corinthians 1:13: *Is Christ **divided <3307>**? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?*

1 Corinthians 7:17: *But as God hath **distributed <3307>** to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.*

1 Corinthians 7:34: *There is difference also **between <3307>** a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.*

2 Corinthians 10:13: *But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath **distributed <3307>** to us, a measure to reach even unto you.*

Hebrews 7:2: *To whom also Abraham **gave <3307>** a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;*

Study QUESTIONS

Ep. 1274: If I Have God's Peace, Why Am I So Stressed?

<https://christianquestions.com/character/1274-stressed/>

See:  CQ Rewind
SHOW NOTES

1. Is stress always a negative force in our lives? How can we describe stress? What will help us balance stress? Briefly, explain the effects of long-term and short-term stress on our bodies.
2. **Principles of Peace:** What helps us to unlock God's peace? (Philippians 4:6-7)
 - a. What are two aspects of God? What does He promise to do to Satan? (Romans 16:20)
 - b. Jesus is Prince of what? How will God use him in God's (and Jesus') primary objective? (Isaiah 9:6)
 - c. How do we gain individual peace with God? What is our role in God's peace? (Romans 5:1-2)
 - d. What did Jesus promise us in John 14:27? When we are troubled or fearful what happens?
 - e. What did the Apostle Paul mean in his greetings to the early churches? (Galatians 1:3)
3. **FOUR STEPS** to harnessing God's power and peace when we have major stress:
 - a. **Recognize:** What is this step? How did the Apostle Paul do this in 2 Corinthians 1:9-10, 10:3-5? What "fortresses" do you need to destroy in your life? Why should we not be double-minded? How do we embrace our stressful responsibilities and cope with them?
 - b. **Reconsider:** What is this step? Once we fall into our natural reactions to stress, what should we then do? (Philippians 4:6-7, Deuteronomy 31:6)
 - c. **Relabel:** How do we turn a negative stressor into an opportunity? Have you ever unburdened yourself to God? How should our requests to God be framed? (Philippians 4:6, Psalms 86:11-12)
 - d. **Receive and Respond:** What do we receive if we act after putting our stressors before God? (Philippians 4:7, Psalms 56:3-4)
4. **STRESS-RELIEVING PRINCIPLES.** Applying the four steps – practical examples:
 - a. How did Jesus **empty** out other loyalties? Describe this using the four steps. (Matthew 6:24, Philippians 2:3-11, Psalm 32:3)
 - b. How did Jesus **surrender** to God's will? Describe this using the four steps. Was Jesus ever stressed? How did he reconsider his first prayer in Gethsemane? What was his goal? (Matthew 26:25-46)
 - c. How did the Apostle Paul exemplify **acceptance**? Describe his acceptance of his "thorn in the flesh" using the four steps. (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)
 - d. How did Jesus teach us how to **truly rest** in tumult? Explain how Jesus led his disciples to this rest in the context of the four steps and the storm on Galilee. (Matthew 6:33, 8:26, Mark 4:38-39)
 - e. How do we **rejoice** in trial? What "crushes" the negative stressors in our lives? Where does our focus need to be? (Isaiah 26:3, Romans 5:3-5, Philippians 4:7)
 - a. **Recognize** one negative stressor in your life.
 - b. Consider the consequences of this stressor and **reconsider** your natural reaction.
 - c. Have you prayed deeply about this so that you can **relabel** it? Do you expect to do better?
 - d. How have you made room to **receive and respond** to God's peace? Is it living in your heart?