

THE THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS SERIES



WHAT IS GOD'S HEART ON  
**STRESS?**

Excerpt from  
**KEYS FOR LIVING LIBRARY**



# STRESS

## *How to Cope at the End of Your Rope*

### What Is God's Heart on Stress?

Stress can take us down one of two paths. For many, stress leads to *unrest*. Frustrations at work, responsibilities at home, deadlines at school, unfinished to-do lists, heartbreaking headlines, and troubled relationships all pile up to an overwhelming sense of weariness, exhaustion, pressure, and unrest. And the enemy wants to use the *unrest* to *arrest* you—to hold you captive to the pressures and stresses of life.

But God's plan—His path for stress—leads not to painful unrest but rather peaceful *rest*. The enemy wants to overwhelm you with unrest, but the Lord wants you to overcome with His rest. Stress is inevitable, but hope is available. If you want to find peace in times of stress, come to the Lord and find the rest you're looking for in Him.

*"Let me teach you, because  
I am humble and gentle at heart,  
and you will find rest for your souls."  
(MATTHEW 11:29 NLT)*

**God is with you** in times of stress.

*"Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand"* (ISAIAH 41:10).

**God sees and knows** your stress.

*"But you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted; you consider their grief and take it in hand"* (PSALM 10:14).

**God wants to give you peace** when your heart is troubled, stressed, and afraid.

*"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid"* (JOHN 14:27).

**God wants to carry your burden** and give you rest.

*"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest"* (MATTHEW 11:28).

**God wants to guide you** when you're too stressed to make decisions.

*"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you"* (PSALM 32:8).

**God wants to strengthen you** when you're weak and weary.

*"He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak"* (ISAIAH 40:29).

*"God's plan for  
stress leads not  
to painful unrest  
but rather  
peaceful rest."*

**God wants to deliver you** from your stress.

*“They cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress” (PSALM 107:6).*

**God wants to comfort you** in times of stress.

*“I, yes I, am the one who comforts you” (ISAIAH 51:12).*

**God wants to use your stress** to increase your dependence on Him.

*“We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself . . . But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead” (2 CORINTHIANS 1:8–9).*

**God wants you to talk to Him** about your stress and set you free.

*“In my distress I prayed to the LORD, and the LORD answered me and set me free” (PSALM 118:5 NLT).*

**God wants you to trust Him** and be a refuge for you in times of stress.

*“Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge” (PSALM 62:8).*

**God wants you to worship Him** and acknowledge His constant presence even in times of stress.

*“I will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and who has been with me wherever I have gone” (GENESIS 35:3).*

## Key Verses to Memorize

*“Come to me, all you who are weary and  
burdened, and I will give you rest.  
Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,  
for I am gentle and humble in heart,  
and you will find rest for your souls.  
For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”  
(MATTHEW 11:28–30)*

## Key Passage to Read

**1 Kings 19:1–18**

## My Personalized Plan

As I seek to manage the stress in my life, **I will . . .**

### Seek to Be Healthy

- I will eat healthy, get adequate sleep each night, avoid harmful substances, and exercise regularly (as I am able).
- I will get regular medical checkups and talk with my doctor about my stress if needed.

*“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies” (1 CORINTHIANS 6:19–20).*

### Learn Relaxation Techniques

- I will learn breathing techniques and other exercises to calm myself down when I am stressed.
- I will take a time-out as needed to give myself a few minutes to calm down in stressful situations.

*“I have calmed and quieted myself, I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content” (PSALM 131:2).*

### Express My Emotions

- I will talk with a trusted friend or family member, wise counselor, and especially with God about my stress and emotions.
- I will journal my thoughts and feelings regularly, especially when I am stressed.

*“In my distress I prayed to the LORD, and the LORD answered me and set me free” (PSALM 118:5 NLT).*

### Draw Near to God

- I will pray and read God’s Word daily, meditating on His truths and talking with Him honestly.
- I will attend church regularly to worship, receive encouragement from God’s Word, and be with other believers.

*“All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper), and to prayer” (ACTS 2:42 NLT).*

### Keep Things in Perspective

- I will keep an eternal perspective and remember that my stress is temporary.
- I will remember God has promised me a future full of hope.

*“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (2 CORINTHIANS 4:16–18).*

### Replace Negative Thoughts

- I will identify negative thought patterns that lead me to feel more stress.
- I will replace negative thoughts with the truth of God’s Word.

*“Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable— if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (PHILIPPIANS 4:8).*

### **Identify Triggers**

- I will identify which situations, feelings, people, environments, and circumstances typically lead me to feel stressed.
- I will find healthy ways to prepare for and cope with those situations.

*“Give careful thought to your ways” (HAGGAI 1:5).*

### **Build Boundaries**

- I will identify where I can create boundaries in my life to limit stressful interactions and prevent overextending myself.
- I will communicate my need for boundaries, time, and space as needed with the people in my life.

*“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it” (PROVERBS 4:23).*

### **Take Time for Myself**

- I will do at least one thing each day that brings me joy and gives me peace.
- I will take time to rest daily, weekly (Sabbath), and yearly (taking vacation time)—and not feel guilty about it.

*“Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him” (PSALM 62:5).*

### **Be in Community**

- I will make time to be with friends and family to talk, share a meal together, or go out together.
- I will look into joining a local church, Bible study, book club, gym, exercise class, or other community group.

*“Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help” (ECCLESIASTES 4:9–10 NLT).*

### **Be Thankful**

- I will write down a few things I am thankful for each day.
- I will give thanks to God for His many blessings and gracious gifts in my life.

*“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 THESSALONIANS 5:18).*

### **Rest in My Identity in Christ**

- I will remember my identity is not in my job, performance, work, ministry, or accomplishments.
- I will rest in God’s grace and find my identity in Christ as a beloved child of God.

*“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” (1 JOHN 3:1).*

## Truth to Meditate on When You're Stressed

God's Word can be a great source of comfort when we are feeling stressed. By meditating on His truth, we can gain perspective and find peace. The Lord promises ...

*"You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you,  
all whose thoughts are fixed on you!"  
(ISAIAH 26:3 NLT)*

*"The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged" (DEUTERONOMY 31:8).*

*"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace" (NUMBERS 6:24–26).*

*"I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness" (JEREMIAH 31:3).*

*"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul" (PSALM 23:1–3).*

*"The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace" (PSALM 29:11).*

*"Be still, and know that I am God" (PSALM 46:10).*

*"The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made" (PSALM 145:8–9).*

*"The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing" (ZEPHANIAH 3:17 ESV).*

*"I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (ROMANS 8:38–39 NLT).*

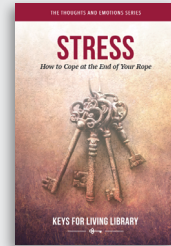
*"Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal comfort and a wonderful hope, comfort you and strengthen you in every good thing you do and say" (2 THESSALONIANS 2:16–17 NLT).*

## Go Deeper

### Keys for Living Books

Want to learn more about this topic? Check out the *Keys for Living Library* to discover biblical hope and practical help on this topic and many more. The *Keys for Living* are designed to help you—and help you help others—overcome difficulties, grow in maturity, and move forward in life.

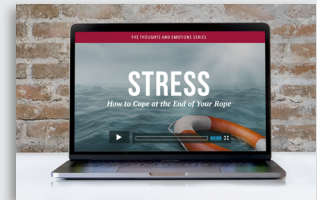
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# 4 POINTS OF GOD'S PLAN

Whether you're trying to make sense of your past, trying to overcome something in the present, or trying to make changes for a better future, the Lord cares about you. He loves you. No matter what challenges you or your loved ones are facing, no matter the pain or difficult feelings you may be experiencing, no matter what you've done or what's been done to you, *there is hope*. And that hope is found in Jesus Christ.

God has a plan for your life, and it begins with a personal relationship with Jesus. The most important decision you can ever make is whether you will accept His invitation. If you have never made that decision, these four simple truths can help you start your journey together with Him.

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD,  
‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you,  
plans to give you hope and a future.’”*  
(JEREMIAH 29:11)

## God's Purpose for You: *Salvation*

What was God's motivation in sending Jesus Christ to earth? To express His love for you by saving you! The Bible says, *“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him”* (John 3:16–17).

What was Jesus' purpose in coming to earth? To forgive your sins, to empower you to have victory over sin, and to enable you to live a fulfilled life! Jesus said, *“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”* (John 10:10).

## The Problem: *Sin*

What exactly is sin? Sin is living independently of God's standard—knowing what is wrong and doing it anyway—also knowing what is right and choosing not to do it. The apostle Paul said, *“I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway”* (Romans 7:18–19 NLT).

What is the major consequence of sin? Spiritual death, eternal separation from God. The Bible says, *“Your iniquities [sins] have separated you from your God”* (Isaiah 59:2). Scripture also says, *“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 6:23).

## God's Provision for You: *The Savior*

Can anything remove the penalty for sin? Yes! Jesus died on the cross to personally pay the penalty for your sins. The Bible says, *“God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8).

What is the solution to being separated from God? Belief in (entrusting your life to) Jesus Christ as the only way to God the Father. Jesus said, *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”* (John 14:6). The Bible says, *“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved . . .”* (Acts 16:31).



## Your Part: *Surrender*

Give Christ control of your life, entrusting yourself to Him. Jesus said, *“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?”* (Matthew 16:24–26).

Place your faith in (rely on) Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior and reject your “good works” as a means of earning God’s approval. The Bible says, *“It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast”* (Ephesians 2:8–9).

Has there been a time in your life when you know you’ve humbled your heart and received Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior—giving Him control of your life? You can tell God that you want to surrender your life to Christ in a simple, heartfelt prayer like this:

*“God, I want a real relationship with you.  
I admit that many times I’ve chosen to go my own way instead of your way.  
Please forgive me for my sins.  
Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins.  
Come into my life to be my Lord and my Savior.  
Change me from the inside out and make me  
the person you created me to be.  
In your holy name I pray. Amen.”*

## What Can You Now Expect?

When you surrender your life to Christ, you receive the Holy Spirit who empowers you to live a life pleasing to God. The Bible says, *“His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life . . .”* (2 Peter 1:3). Jesus assures those who believe with these words:

*“Truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me  
has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.”*  
(JOHN 5:24)

The information in this resource is intended as guidelines for healthy living. Please consult qualified medical, legal, pastoral, and psychological professionals regarding individual concerns.

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# QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

God gives us His Word not just for information but for transformation. The Lord wants you to “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Romans 12:2). This isn’t something you do alone, but something God does in you by His Spirit.

The following questions are designed to help you reflect on the biblical truths in this resource. Take a moment to pray and ask God to settle your mind and quiet your spirit as you reflect on His truth.

*“Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.”*

(2 TIMOTHY 2:7)

**What are two key truths, Bible verses, or “takeaways” from this resource that you found helpful—or that you simply needed to be reminded of?**

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**In relation to this topic, what behavior(s) do you need to *begin*, *change*, or *stop* in order to help you grow into the person God created you to be?**

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**In relation to this topic, what is the biggest obstacle you need to overcome in order to move forward?**

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**What might your life look like a few years from now if you do *not* make changes regarding this issue? How might your life be different if you *do* make changes?**

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**Is there anyone in your life who needs help with this topic/issue? How can you pray for them, and what is one thing you can do to encourage them?**

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**What can you give thanks to God for today?**

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*“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself  
and God our Father, who loved us  
and by his grace gave us eternal comfort  
and a wonderful hope,  
comfort you and strengthen you  
in every good thing you do and say.”  
(2 THESSALONIANS 2:16–17 NLT)*

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