

Daily Devotional April 2, 2020

If you're shut-in experience is anything like mine, there may be moments of stress that you need relief from. Just remember that if the load you're carrying seems too heavy for you to bear, Jesus didn't give it to you. Other people may have contributed, maybe your spouse, a family member, or someone else you're cooped up with, but most likely, you may have brought it upon yourself. Stop playing the blame game, and instead take responsibility for allowing outside influences to get the better of you. Take a deep breath, calm down, and reach for the antidote:

"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).

The stress management principle Jesus taught us is: Give your stress to Him. You'll never enjoy complete peace of mind until you develop a relationship with the Prince of Peace. Note, Jesus didn't say, "Come to Me and I'll give you more guilt, more burdens, more stress, and more worries," even though that's what a lot of other people seem to want to lay on you. Some people create pressure instead of relieving it! But Jesus said, "I want to give you rest. I'm the stress-reliever. When you get in harmony with me, I'll give you inner strength." Only Jesus can transform your lifestyle from stressful to satisfied.

The greatest source of stress comes from trying to live our lives apart from the God who made us, trying to go our own way, and being our own god. That is the yoke we place on ourselves. A yoke is a heavy wooden harness that is laid over the shoulders of an ox or oxen. This in turn, is attached to a piece of equipment the oxen are to pull. The yoke we carry may be sin, the excessive demands of others, the taunts of others, or possibly the weariness of searching for God.

Jesus frees us from all of these burdens. The rest that Jesus promises is love, healing, and peace in Him, but not, however, the end of all labor. Time spent with Jesus changes meaningless, wearisome drudgery into spiritual productivity and purpose.

In Psalm 62, David had been dealing with the rebellion of his people. He writes: "My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from Him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; He is my fortress, I will never be shaken."

David expressed his feelings to God and then reaffirmed his faith. He shows us that prayer can release our tensions in times of emotional stress. Trusting God to be our rock, salvation, and fortress will change our entire outlook on life. No longer must we be held captive by resentment toward others when they hurt us or create additional stress. When we are resting in God's strength, like David, "nothing can shake us."

Prayer: Lord, thank you for wanting us to cast our cares on you. Thank you that there is nowhere I can go that you are not there with me. Thank you for having a hold of my life, even as I feel like everything is crumbling around me.

Lord, I confess that I have let stress take a hold of my life, rather than You. I have let stress control my mood, my attitudes and my actions. Lord, I am sorry for this! Please Lord, help me see what is stressful in my life and help me hand it over to You. Help me to not let the stress win out.

Help me look back on all the ways You have rescued me from my stressful moments, and I look in hope to the future where You will one day rid me of all stress, forever. Help me live boldly in the truth of Your goodness and power today. In Jesus' name, Amen.