

A vibrant tropical beach scene. Two tall palm trees stand on a lush green lawn. A white hammock is strung between the trunks of the trees, hanging over a clear turquoise ocean. The sky is a deep blue with a few wispy white clouds. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and relaxing.

# Stress? Or Rest?

(Where Are You Living?)

Bill Loveless  
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***STRESS?***

**Or**

***REST?***

***Bill Loveless***

***Christ Is Life Ministries***

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# ***STRESS? Or REST?***

## **Introduction**

Stress is an inevitable part of our lives. None of us can escape it. There is relational stress, circumstantial stress, and internal and external struggles that create stress. Not to mention the stress that occurs just from living in a fallen world.

Most Christians I know are not only carrying their stresses, but they are being weighed down because of them. However, is that what God intends for us as Christians? Why do we live from stress when the promise in Matthew 11:28 is that we can live from Christ's REST?

*"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you **REST.**" Matthew 11:28*

Therefore, in this booklet we are going to contrast the effects of stress in our lives versus the impact of living from Christ's rest. In Part One, we will look at the definition of stress, nine stressors in life that we face, and the results of living from stress.

## Part One

### STRESS

*“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden....”  
Matthew 11:28a*

#### Definition of Stress

As it applies to this study, I define stress this way.

#### **STRESS:**

***Internal and external pressures of life that ROB you  
of Christ’s REST (life, joy, peace, etc.)***

There are some key points in this definition. First of all, stress is caused not only by external stressors, but by internal stressors as well. These stressors are robbers in that they rob you of Christ’s rest, joy, peace, etc. Therefore, I think it will be worthwhile to start by identifying potential stressors in your life and seeing how they are negatively impacting your life and the lives of those around you.

## **What Are the Stressors in Our Lives?**

I have come up with nine major stressors in life that impact us all. Let me first list them and then I will discuss each one.

1. Circumstantial stress
2. Relational stress
3. Physical/health stress
4. Job stress
5. World stress
6. Cultural stress
7. Satanic/demonic stress
8. Spiritual stress
9. Self-induced stress

As we go through each of these stressors, I would like for you to write down answers to the questions for each one. I will share with you at the end of the last section why I've asked you to write them down.

### **Circumstantial Stress**

We don't have to look very far to find circumstances that create stress in our lives, such as, our jobs, finances, or future security. How much stress you may be carrying depends on the length of time and severity of your circumstances.

If you are being stressed in any of these areas, what kind of stressful thoughts or feelings are they producing in you? (i.e. fear, worry, anxiety, etc.)

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## **Relational Stress**

None of us escapes relational struggles in marriage, with kids, extended family, co-workers, friends, etc. I work with hurting marriages and I see constant struggles with couples in the areas of unmet needs, false beliefs and expectations about their marriage. I also see the fleshly behaviors of husbands and wives, such as, frustration, rejection, and unresolved conflict. If you are a parent of a teenager, I don't need to tell you what kind of stress that can bring.

My wife is currently involved in the caretaking of her elderly mother who has chronic health issues. This is creating great stress in my wife's life. Many Christians have been wounded in the past by parents, a spouse, or others through verbal, physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse. Even if these events took place in the past, if the wounds are unresolved, they may still be creating stress in their lives today.

What kind of stressful thoughts and/or feelings are your relationships producing in you?

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## **Physical/Health Stress**

I know many people, including myself, have ongoing, chronic health conditions. Personally, I have struggled with chronic fatigue syndrome for over 35 years. Just this health condition alone creates physical stresses caused by too little sleep, depression, and memory struggles. Acute health conditions can produce stress if they hinder your normal productivity and activities of life.

If you are struggling with acute or chronic health issues, what kind of stressful thoughts and/or feelings are they producing in you?

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**Job Stress**

You may have a job that involves above normal or even excessive amounts of stress. Work-related events that are stress-producing may involve such things as unrealistic expectations by the company you work for, demanding deadlines, dealing with difficult bosses, employees, or co-workers; trying to get a raise; being underpaid; inter-office relationships, and fearing failure or even losing your job.

If you are struggling with stress on your job, what kind of stressful thoughts and/or feelings are they producing in you?

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## **World Stress**

Living in a fallen world creates stresses caused by terrorism here and abroad, wars, unstable financial markets, starvation, and suffering of all kinds. You have only to watch the news to see events that create stress.

What kind of stressful thoughts and/or feelings is our fallen world producing in you?

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## **Cultural Stress**

This form of stress is caused by a culture that is spiritually declining and is moving in ways that contradict Biblical principles, such as, abortion, same sex marriage, transgender issues, etc. We are now experiencing forms of personal persecution when we stand up for Biblical principles. Because our culture is moving farther away from God, it creates stresses for parents having to raise their kids in an increasingly godless society, especially considering what kids are being taught in public schools and colleges.

As a Christian, what kind of stressful thoughts and/or feelings is our increasingly anti-Christian culture producing in you?

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## **Satanic/Demonic Stress**

We not only have stressors in the seen realm, but also in the unseen realm. We are dealing with an unseen enemy whose sole objective is to steal, kill, and destroy our walk in Christ. Some of the schemes of the enemy are as follows:

- To distract you from abiding in Christ.
- To tempt you to doubt God’s sovereignty, love, goodness, grace, care, and concern.
- To tempt you to focus on yourself – your priorities, your needs, your expectations.
- To deceive you into believing that you will never be free of certain sin strongholds.
- To condemn you when you sin.

What kind of stressful thoughts and/or feelings do you think you are experiencing as a result of the enemy’s involvement in your life?

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## **Spiritual Stress**

All Christians have what I call “spiritual” stressors which can be created by false beliefs, unbelief, or failure to walk in God’s truths. To give you a better understanding of what spiritual stressors look like, let’s look at three areas of false beliefs and some examples of how false beliefs and unbelief create spiritual stress.

a. Living The Christian Life

- If you have a false belief that it is up to you with God's help to live the Christian life, then when your Christian life is not meeting your expectations, you may feel stress because you think you need to do more for God.
- If you have a false belief that it is up to you to stop sinning and you can't stop, that may produce self-condemnation which causes stress.
- If you don't believe that God can set you free from some sin stronghold, the result will be continual bondage which produces stress.

b. Your Concept of God

- If you have a false belief that God is an angry God, then you may feel stressed every time you fail in your Christian Walk.
- If you have the false belief that God will condemn you when you sin, then that will create stress every time you sin.
- If you have the false belief that God only loves you when you obey Him, then this may create stress because inevitably you will fail to obey Him perfectly.

c. Your True Identity

- If you don't know your true identity in Christ, then you will be stressed because you will be trying to put on masks to hide your insecurity, inadequacy,

fear, and unworthiness.

- If you don't believe you are righteous in Christ, then you will be stressed because you will see yourself only as a sinner saved by grace.
- If you don't believe that you are accepted and acceptable in Christ, then you will be stressed because you continue to take ownership of people's rejection.

Write down some areas of spiritual stress you may be experiencing concerning your Christian Walk, your concept of God, and/or your identity in Christ.

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### **Fleshly Stress**

There is another form of spiritual stress I call "fleshly" stress. I define "fleshly" stress as:

***INTERNAL turmoil caused by living out of your FLESH versus living from the SPIRIT.***

We see the ongoing stress caused by our flesh in Galatians 5:17

*“For the **flesh sets its desire against the Spirit**, and the Spirit against the flesh; for **these are in opposition to one another**, so that you may not do the things that you please.” Galatians 5:17*

What is the internal turmoil being created by your fleshly behaviors?

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### **Self-Induced Stress**

Examples of self-induced stressors are constant busyness, living in the tyranny of the urgent, or creating “to do” lists that must be done or else. What about the stress that results from trying to meet others’ expectations or your own self-imposed expectations.

What are some personal examples of your self-induced stressors?

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Please take a moment and go back through everything you have written down under each category and start adding up all the stresses in your life. It doesn’t take long to feel overwhelmed by the cumulative effect of all of these stressors, does it?

Here is a key question for you:

***Are you taking OWNERSHIP of the stress in your life?***

### **Taking Ownership Of Your Stress**

We know there is no escaping the stresses of life. However, as Christians are we to take ownership of these stresses? What do I mean by “taking ownership?”

***Taking OWNERSHIP means that you ALLOW your stresses to get a grip on your mind and emotions.***

Let me give you an example to explain. Let’s assume you lose your job. That certainly can produce stress. If I take ownership of that stress, then I let that stress influence my mind by such thoughts as, “What am I going to do now?” or “I don’t know how I am going to make it financially?” By taking ownership of your stress, it can produce emotions such as anxiety, worry, or fear.

What do you think might happen using this example if you did not take ownership of the stress? Take a moment to think about the stress caused by circumstances or people you are taking ownership of. How is that negatively impacting your thinking and emotions? Let me go back to the question: Do you have to take ownership of your stress? The answer:

***As a Christian, you do NOT have to take ownership of any stressor in your life.***

I will explain this truth later in this booklet. If we do take ownership of our stress, then here is the next question.

**Where Do We Go To Deal With (or COPE with) Our Stress Independent of Christ?**

If we are trying to deal with our stress independent of Christ, we look for ways to escape the stress. Another way of saying it is that we look for ways to cope with stress. Here are some ways we can try to cope with or escape our stress:

Work	Shopping	Television
Pornography	Medication	Hobbies
Exercise	Eating	Movies
Computer	Illegal Drugs	Alcohol
Cell phone	Social media	Video games

Some of the things listed above are socially acceptable activities, such as, work, television, or social media. Obviously, others are not acceptable such as illegal drugs and pornography. However, all of these can be used to try to escape our stress.

The problem with these ways of escape is that when you use any of the above to try to deal with your stress, independent of Christ, then you are just coping with the stress and not engaging God to eliminate it.

Are you coping with your stress? If so, what are some of the ways of escape you are going to in order to escape your stress? How is that working for you?

**What Are Some of the Results in Your Christian Walk of Taking Ownership of Stress?**

If you take ownership of your stress, then the following are some of the ways it will negatively impact your Christian Walk:

- It keeps you from experiencing Christ’s joy, peace, rest, etc.
- It keeps you in bondage to such things as anxiety, fear, worry, frustration, etc.
- Keeps you from abiding in Christ.
- It opens you up to Satan’s influence.
- It keeps you focused on self.
- It robs you of being available for others.
- It saps your spiritual momentum.

Write down some of the results in your life if you are taking ownership of your stress.

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**The Overflow of Stress In Your Life**

I have spent quite a bit of time talking about stress. However, the effects of your stress are not limited to you. The overflow of stress can have toxic repercussions on everyone around you.

If you take ownership of your stress all day at work, then what do your spouse and kids get when you get home from work? If you are not dealing with the stresses in your marriage, where can that lead? If you are angry at God, how can that spill over into your other relationships?

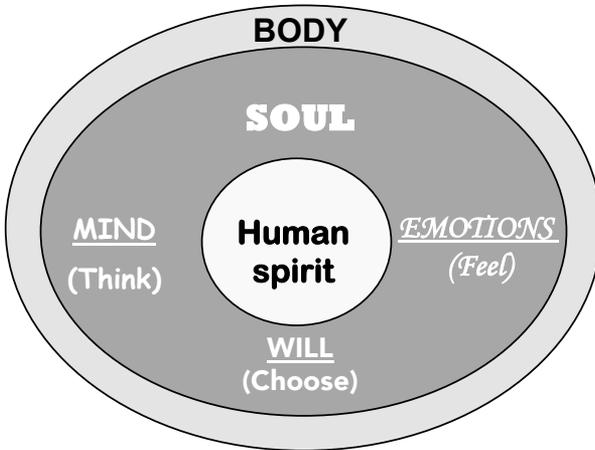
How might the stressors in your life be negatively impacting your marriage, your kids, or your friends?

**How Taking Ownership Of Our Stress Negatively Impacts Our Soul and Body**

Let's me illustrate how stress negatively impacts our soul and body. If you are not familiar with the makeup of man, then look at the diagram below that illustrates our makeup.

**The Makeup of Man**

1 Thessalonians 5:23



1 Thessalonians 5:23 describes our makeup:

*“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your **spirit** and **soul** and **body** be preserved complete...”*

This verse reveals that each of us is a three-part being. We are made up of a **body**, a **soul**, and a **human spirit**. Let's look further into the meaning of the body, soul, and human spirit.

**Body** - The body represents the **physical** body or that part of you which is seen. It is how you relate to the physical world through your five senses. This is the dwelling place of the next two parts of your being: the soul and the human spirit. They may be a little more difficult to understand because they are unseen. The body will pass away, but the soul and the spirit are eternal.

**Soul** - The soul is your unique **personality** or the psychological part of you through which you relate to people and to the circumstances of life. The soul is made up of your **mind** (Proverbs 23:7) to think with, **emotions** to feel with (Luke 10:33), and the **will** (1 Corinthians 7:37a) from which to make choices.

**Human spirit** - The third part of your being is your human spirit. Your human spirit is not to be confused with the Holy Spirit. Your human spirit is that part of your human makeup that you have from birth. However, you did not receive the Holy Spirit until the point when you trusted Christ by faith for salvation.

What is the function of the human spirit? When God said in Genesis 1:26 that He created man in His likeness, He meant that He created man first and foremost as a “**spirit**” being. John 4:24 reveals that we, as spirit beings, can worship God:

*“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”*

In addition to worshipping God from our human spirit, it is also from our human spirit that we learn from Him (Job 32:8), commune with Him (Psalm 51:12), receive revelation and wisdom from Him (Ephesians 1:17), and most importantly have an intimate relationship with God (Romans 8:16).

Now that we have an understanding of the three parts of man, let's add to the diagram the stressors we discussed earlier and how they negatively impact your soul.



Look at what these stressors do to your mind, emotions, and will.

**Mind** – these stressors produce stressful thoughts such as “What am I going to do about \_\_\_\_\_?” or “Will our marriage make it?” We continually receive these stressful thoughts to a point that in some areas of stress we become obsessed with those thoughts. What stressful thoughts are running through your mind as a result of the stressors in your life?

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**Emotions** - As we receive or take ownership of these thoughts, they negatively impact our emotions producing such feelings as fear, anxiety, frustration, etc.

What kind of emotions are you experiencing as a result of your stressful thoughts?

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**Will** – since our will makes choices based on what we are thinking or feeling, then as we take ownership of our stress, we tend to choose to live from our flesh.

For example, if I don't believe God is moving fast enough in solving my problem, I might choose to take control of the situation and try to resolve it myself or get frustrated with God because He is not moving fast enough.

Can you connect your stressful thoughts and feelings--such as, fear, anger, frustration, anxiety, and worry--to some of your fleshly choices or behaviors?

Now that we have a better understanding of stress and how it negatively impacts you, let me end this section by asking this question:

***Is taking ownership of your stress what God INTENDS for your life?***

## Chapter Two

### REST

*“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden and  
I will give you **REST.**”  
Matthew 11:28*

#### **Are We Designed To Carry ANY Stress?**

Let me begin by sharing the following truth:

**God NEVER intended for us to take OWNERSHIP  
of our stress. Why?  
It is because we were NOT designed  
to carry ANY stress.**

How can I be so sure that we were not designed to carry any stress? Let's go back to the Garden of Eden before the Fall. Since God created a perfect environment for Adam and Eve would that environment include stress? When answering this question keep the word "perfect" in mind because in a perfect environment there is no stress.

Therefore, when God created mankind, He did not design us to experience, carry, or be weighed down with stress. However, the fall of man resulted in internal and external stressors. The problem is that our design did not change after the Fall. Our design is still that of Adam and Eve with the result that we can't handle any stress no matter how minimal it might be.

## ***Our Design is to Live from Christ's Rest***

The truth is that even though we are living in a stress-filled world, we do not have to take ownership of our stress because we are designed to live moment by moment from Christ's rest. Let's look at the following three verses to better understand this truth.

Jesus says in the first part of John 14:6:

*"I am the way, the truth, and **THE LIFE**..."*

Philippians 4:19 says:

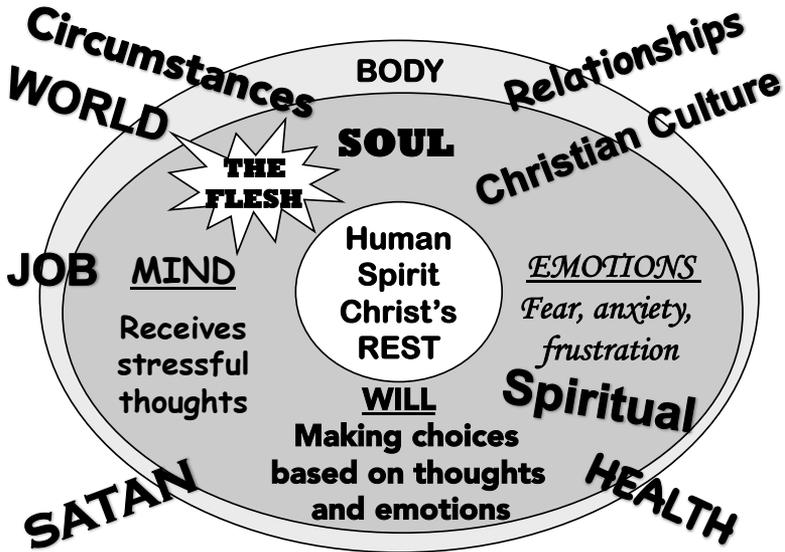
*"And my God will **supply ALL your needs** according to His riches in glory **in Christ Jesus.**"*

Matthew 11:28 says:

*"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden and I will give you **REST.**"*

When you combine these three verses, Jesus as THE Life means that He will supply everything you need including your need for "rest."

We have previously discussed that when we take ownership of stress, we see how it negatively impacts our mind, emotions, and will. Since Christ resides in our human spirit and we have the fullness of Christ in us according to Colossians 2:9, 10, then how much of Christ's rest do we contain? All of it! Let me illustrate this in the following diagram.



Therefore, since you contain all of Christ’s rest, then you can choose to live from Christ’s rest in the midst of your stress. The first part of Psalm 62:1 in the New International Version confirms this:

*“My soul finds rest in God alone...”*

The good news for you as a Christian is that you no longer have to cope with or try to escape from your stress. Rather, you can live from Christ’s rest within you. We will look at the practical application of this truth later in the booklet.

**How Is “Rest” Defined?**

“Rest” in the New Testament Greek is an·ap·ow·o/ which means: **1.** to cause or permit one to cease from any

movement or labor in order to recover and collect his strength. **2.** to give rest, refresh, to give one's self rest, take rest. **3.** to keep quiet.

Take a moment and slowly re-read through these three meanings of rest. Would you say that these definitions of rest apply to you?

In light of our study, I define "rest" as:

***A SUPERNATURAL peace in the SOUL  
that results from living from Christ's peace which  
cannot be robbed by the stresses of life.***

Remember that stress robs us of Christ's rest. However, if you are living from Christ's peace then nothing or no one can rob you of that peace. "Supernatural" means that it is a God produced rest. A verse that gives us insight into an aspect of supernatural rest is found in Philippians 4:7:

*"and the **peace of God, which surpasses all understanding**, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

Even though we can't describe a God-produced rest, we can live from it.

### **What Does Living From Christ's Rest Look Like?**

Let's look at a few examples of what Christ-like rest looks like:

- **Depending on Christ to handle your stress** – As you walk in a moment by moment dependence on

Christ, you no longer have to depend on yourself to handle the stressors of your life.

- **Entrusting every stress in your life to God** – “Entrust” means giving over to God everything that is stressful in your life.
- **Believing that God is sovereign** – Job 42:2 - God is in absolute control. We don’t have to try to control the events in our lives or try to control others. We can rest in the fact that God is in charge of us, our circumstances and our relationships. He has a good plan for your life and nothing can thwart His plans.
- **Believing that God will work everything for good** – Romans 8:28 - God knows everything that is going to occur in your life. He promises that no matter what the stressor is that you are facing, He will work everything for your good (even when it doesn’t seem good at the time).
- **Believing that you are secure in Christ** – Psalm 91:14 – Believing that you are secure in Christ creates a rest in your soul knowing that nothing or no one can rob you of Christ’s security.
- **Living in the Spirit’s power** – Ephesians 1:19, 20 - Living from God’s supernatural power means that we can depend on His power to draw us into and remain in His rest.
- **Believing that God has a solution** – John 14:6 - God has a solution for every stressful situation in life. As we seek Him moment by moment, He will reveal the solution.

- **Living from Christ** - drawing on Christ's rest moment by moment.

### **Rest Means Living In The "I AM"**

*"And they all said, 'Are You the Son of God, \*\*then?'" And He said to them, "Yes, **I AM.**" Luke 22:70*

What does living in the "I AM" mean?

***Living in the "I AM" is living in the PRESENT moment IN CHRIST.***

You see, God is not the God of "I will be" or the God of "I was." God is the God of I AM. One of our tendencies is to live in the "if onlys" of the past or the "what ifs" of the future.

Examples of "if onlys" might be: "If only I had not married this person," or "if only I hadn't taken this job."

Examples of "what ifs" might be: "what if I don't get this job," or "what if I get a serious health diagnosis." How about you?

***How much do you live in the past "if onlys" or the future "what ifs"?***

Living in the past or future robs you of the present moment in Christ. Robbing you of the "now" is one of the most effective schemes of Satan. Why? Because he knows what is available to you in Christ in the present moment to deal with the stresses in your life. What is available to you as you live in the "I AM" in Christ?

***What is available to you in the I AM in Christ is everything you NEED to DEAL with every stress in your life.***

Let me give you some examples of Christ as the I AM:

**I AM your truth - John 14:6**  
**I AM your rest - Matthew 11:28**  
**I AM your security - Proverbs 1:33**  
**I AM your confidence - 2 Cor. 3:4**  
**I AM your compassion - Psalm 25:6**  
**I AM your forgiveness - Daniel 9:9**  
**I AM your endurance - Hebrews 10:36**  
**I AM your peace - Ephesians 2:14**  
**I AM your perseverance - Hebrews 12:2**  
**I AM your trust - Romans 15:5**  
**I AM your strength - Romans 6:10**  
**I AM your sovereignty - 1 Tim. 6:15**  
**I AM your need-meter - Galatians 4:19**  
**I AM your deliverer - Psalm 18:2**  
**I AM your freedom - John 8:32**  
**I AM your victory - 1 Corinthians 15:57**  
**I AM your patience - Galatians 5:22**  
**I AM your courage - John 16:33**  
**I AM your conqueror - Romans 8:37**  
**I AM your holiness - Colossians 3:12**  
**I AM your self-control - 2 Timothy 1:7**  
**I AM your comforter - John 14:16**  
**I AM your hope - Colossians 1:27**  
**I AM your life - John 14:6**

Here are some practical examples of what it looks like to draw on Christ as the I AM.

- Example: “Lord, because of the state of our marriage, I rest in You as my **hope**.”

- Example: “Lord, because of this serious health diagnosis, I rest in your **peace** and **strength**.”

Based on the stresses you are facing today, what is it that you can rest in Christ for as your “I AM”

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### **Some Key Truths about Rest in Hebrews Chapter Four**

One of the most insightful scriptures on rest is found in Hebrews 4:1-3, 6, 9-11. Therefore, let’s look at these verses and their application to your life. Hebrews 4:1 says:

*“Therefore, **let us fear** if, while **a promise remains of entering His rest**, any one of you may seem to have come short of it.”*

Verse, one tells us that there is a promise by God that we can enter into His rest. However, the writer of Hebrews says that we should have a “holy” fear of not entering that promised rest. Why? Because the consequences of not living from Christ’s rest will result in such things as fear, anxiety, frustration, more stress, etc.

Hebrews 4:2-3 says:

*“For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but **the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith** in those who heard.  
**For we who have believed enter that rest.....”***

In verse 2 it tells us that if we don't unite God's truth with faith then we will not enter into God's rest. This is why we must separate knowing God's truth from actually believing it. Knowing is purely intellectual knowledge whereas believing is uniting the truth with faith. Therefore, God's rest is only for those who believe and walk in the truth.

We see another reason that we don't enter into the “rest” of God in Hebrews 4:6:

*“Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them **failed to enter because of disobedience.**” Hebrews 4:6*

Another reason we fail to enter into God's rest is because of disobedience. Why? Because disobedience is synonymous with independence and living independent from God cuts off the supply of Christ's rest flowing in you.

We will finish this section by looking at Hebrews 4:9-11:

*So then, there remains a **sabbath rest** for the people of God; for whoever enters God's rest also **ceases from his labors** as God did from his. Let us therefore **strive to enter that rest**, that no one fall by the same sort of disobedience.” Hebrews 4:8-11*

Once again we see that God has promised us a “Sabbath” rest. In verse 10, we see that rest occurs when we cease laboring. However, in the very next verse he says we must “strive” to enter that rest. Another translation uses the word “labor.” This might be a little confusing because we are to cease from our labor to enter into Christ’s rest but on the other hand we are to labor to enter into that rest. What is the writer saying?

What it means to cease from our labors means that we are to stop trying to be like God by our striving to be in control of the stressful situations or relationships or trying to figure out how to deal with our stress apart from God. Why? Because unlike God’s labor, our labor to deal with our stress is “vain” labor and it is vain because we will never enter God’s rest unless we first cease from our own striving.

On the other hand, we are to labor to enter into God’s rest. What a paradox. Laboring to rest. What does it mean to labor to enter into God’s rest.

***Laboring to enter into God’s rest means to  
ENGAGE God BY drawing on His LIFE and POWER  
to deal with every stress that you face in life.***

Therefore, in this next section, we are going to learn some key truths about laboring to enter into God’s rest.

### ***Key Truths About Laboring To Enter Into God’s Rest***

We have a vital part to play in entering into and remaining in Christ’s rest and that is by engaging God to

deal with every stress we face. Let's look at some practical application of what this means.

**1. Ask the Holy Spirit to REVEAL or EXPOSE areas of hidden stress.**

*“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; **examine yourselves!** Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?”*  
2 Corinthians 13:5

We have obvious “overt” stress in our lives. That is easily identifiable. However, our stress can be like an iceberg in that there is some stress that is overt or visible and some that is invisible or “covert.” I know many times I can't identify why I am stressed out. Therefore, I ask the Lord to reveal to me the source of my hidden stress. A practical step of faith might look like this:

“Lord, I am asking You to examine my life and reveal any area of hidden stress.”

**2. Ask the Lord to reveal to you how your stress is NEGATIVELY impacting your life and the lives of those around you.**

*“Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my anxious thoughts. And **see if there be any hurtful way in me** and lead me in the everlasting way.”* Psalm 139:23, 24

If you are taking ownership of your stress, then you are hopefully aware on some level how that stress is negatively impacting your life through fear, anxiety, insecurity, etc.

However, using the iceberg example again, you may not be aware of what your stress is doing to you internally and to others externally. Therefore, pray through Psalm 139 above and ask God to search and expose the death your stress is causing. A practical step of faith might look like this:

“Lord, I am asking You to search my heart and expose to me how my stress is negatively impacting my life and the lives of those around me.”

### 3. **ENTRUST your stress to the Lord.**

*“Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, **casting all your anxiety on Him**, because He cares for you.” 1 Peter 5:6,7*

Entrusting or casting your stress on Christ is essential in living from Christ’s rest. “Entrust” in the context of this study can be defined as:

***GIVING OVER to God all the stresses in your life  
and LEAVING THEM with Him.***

If you would entrust every stress as it comes along to God and leave it with Him, what do you think would be the result? Can you imagine your soul for a moment without stress? Could that occur if you continually entrusted your stress to God? A practical step of faith of entrustment might look like this:

“Lord, I was not meant to carry the stresses in my marriage so I am entrusting (giving You) those areas of my marriage that are creating stress.”

#### **4. Draw on Christ in the moment to BE your rest.**

*“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you **REST.**” Matthew 11:28*

When Jesus says “Come to Me” it is an invitation to quit trying to resolve the stressful situations or relationships in your life and seek Christ to BE your rest. Remember that all we need to deal with our stress is in Christ who is in us.

Therefore, if we will quit trying to deal with our stress independent of Christ, we can draw on Christ moment by moment to be our rest. Here is an example of a step of faith to draw on Christ’s rest.

“Lord, I am tired of my financial situation causing me so much stress. I am entrusting that stress to You and I am trusting You to BE my rest.”

#### **5. Draw on Christ to be your I AM when you experience stress.**

**“I AM... THE Life...”** John 14:6

In addition, to drawing on Christ as your rest, you can draw on Him to be the I AM for what you need concerning your stress. Refer back to page 25 and insert whatever I AM you need Christ to be concerning your stress. Here is an example of a step of faith to draw on Christ as the I AM.

“Because of the stress caused by my boss, I am trusting you Lord to BE my peace, my forgiveness, and my perseverance.”

## **6. Engage the Spirit to take every stressful thought CAPTIVE.**

*"We 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." 2 Corinthians 10:5*

This is a crucial truth because all your stress starts with your thoughts. Assume you were having a good day and you get a call saying that your son has been in an accident. The first thought that might come to mind is a stressful one of fear or worry. The question is what do we do with that thought. Here are some "spiritual" suggestions:

- a. Before you take ownership of the thought, put it on pause.
- b. Ask the Spirit if it is from Him or from the flesh or Satan.
- c. Run that thought through your Christ-like filter. It is the truth or a lie?
- d. If the thought is not based on the truth, don't take ownership of the thought.
- e. Speak truth to that thought. Example: "Lord, You are sovereignly in control of this situation with my child. Therefore, I am not going to dwell on that thought. Rather, I am going to trust you to BE my peace and rest."

If we could move into a "holy" habit of taking every thought captive, then we would not have to be controlled by our stressful thoughts.

## **7. Allow God to RENEW your mind to His truth.**

*“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by **the renewing of your mind...**” Romans 12:2a*

Do you really know how much stress is produced by living from your false beliefs about yourself, God, others, your marriage, your job, etc.? I think we really don't know the depth of the impact of our false beliefs. We talked about this under the “spiritual” stress category in part one.

Spiritual stress can be covert because we may not see how that stress is negatively impacting our lives and of those around us. Therefore, let me give you some results of having your mind renewed to God's truth:

- a. Believing the truth about your true identity allows you to rest from the energy it takes to prop up a false self.
- b. Believing the truth about God allows you to rest in His sovereignty and know that He will work everything together for good.
- c. Believing the truth concerning how to relate to one another in Christ means that you can stay in Christ's rest and not take ownership of other people's rejection, expectations, or stress.

Therefore, we must continue walking by faith in order to be set free from our false beliefs so we can then experience Christ's rest.

## **Your Stress Should USHER You To Christ**

Think about this following statement;

***All the stressors in your life are designed to  
EXPOSE your need for God and  
USHER you to Him for His PROMISED rest.***

Think about every stress as an usher, ushering you to Christ's rest. Since we are not to live in stress, allow your stress to take you to Jesus. If you choose to not to be ushered to Christ's rest, read the next section.

## **God Will MAKE Us Lie Down**

***"He makes me lie down in green pastures (Christ's rest); He leads me beside quiet waters." Psalm 23:2***  
*Parenthesis mine*

Have you ever thought that the two words "makes me" in this verse might mean that God will cause you to rest. God knows that we are designed for rest so He will cause or allow events in your life to "make" you lie down in the green pastures of His rest.

Here are the some of the ways God can make us rest:

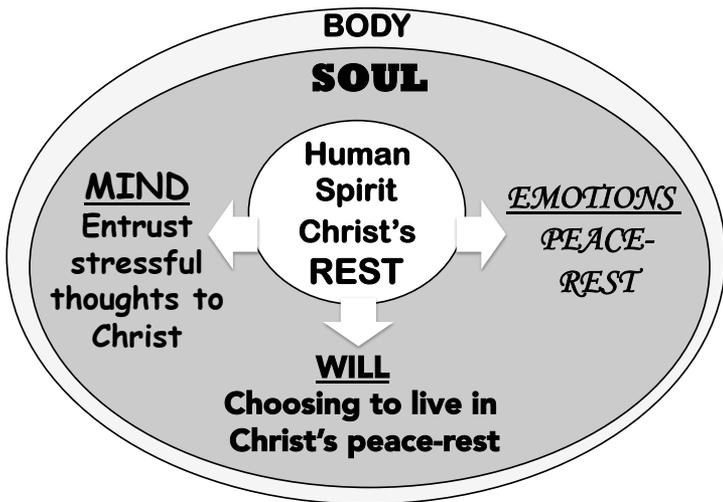
- Sickness
- Exhaustion – From things like your job, raising kids, and from busy-ness.
- Bringing you to the end of your self-life (the flesh).
- Closing all the doors of escape from your stress so that you will see that your only option is Christ.

Therefore, to avoid the Lord “making” you lie down in green pastures, I would encourage you to allow your stress to usher you to Christ’s rest.

**What Happens In Your Soul When You Live From Christ’s Rest?**

Refer back to page 17 to see the condition of your soul when you take ownership of your stressors. However, as you move deeper into Christ’s rest, He will transform your mind, emotions, and will. Look at the diagram on the next page that illustrates this.

**Living From Christ’s REST**



**Mind** – instead of taking ownership or receiving stressful thoughts, you entrust those stressful thoughts to the Lord.

**Emotions** – as your mind enters into and remains in Christ’s rest, then you will move from emotional turmoil

to feeling/experiencing Christ's peace-rest.

**Will** - will choose to live in Christ's peace-rest

This is the condition of your soul as you live from Christ's rest.

***Is it possible that this is how God has  
DESIGNED us to live?***

Can you imagine how it would change the way you look at the stresses in your life if your mind, emotions, and will were all living from Christ's rest?

***What Is The Overflow of Living From Christ's Rest?***

In addition to what the Lord will do in you as you enter into and remain in His rest, there is an overflow from living from Christ's rest. Here are a few examples of what I mean by overflow.

### **1. Attitude of Rest**

*"Have this **attitude** in yourselves **which was also in Christ Jesus.**" Philippians 2:5*

One of the promises in Philippians 2:5 is that we can have, as we are being transformed, the same attitude as Christ. In the case of rest, not only can we be resting in any given moment, but as the Spirit transforms our soul then He will develop in us an attitude of rest.

Let me use Jesus as an example. Look at Matthew 8:24-26:

*“A windstorm arose on the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but **Jesus was asleep**.<sup>25</sup> And they went and woke him up, saying, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!”<sup>26</sup> And he said to them, “Why are you afraid, you of little faith?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm.” Matthew 8:24-26*

Where was Jesus when the disciples were in a panic? He was asleep. Why? He was living from attitude of rest in the sovereignty of God who is in control. What are the windstorms and waves in your life? Would you rather be running around the boat in a panic or would you rather be (sleeping) resting in the midst of your storms?

***Not only can we draw on Christ’s rest in the MOMENT  
but through the transformation process we can  
experience an ongoing ATTITUDE of rest.***

## **2. Attitude of gratitude**

*“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; <sup>7</sup> and the **peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**” Philippians 4:6-7*

We see in the passage above that there is a correlation between prayer, thanksgiving, and the peace of God. As you pray with thanksgiving for every stress you are facing, the overflow of that prayer will be Christ’s peace.

Spend a few moments meditating on this verse and ask the Lord to give you a heart of thanksgiving for every

thing that is causing stress in your life.

### **3. Giving Rest To Others**

*“They gave themselves first to the Lord and **then to us.**”*  
2 Corinthians 8:5

Ultimately the Christian life is moving us from a self-focused to a Christ-focused life. The overflow of a Christ-focused life is that our life will be for others. As a result, through us Christ can give rest to others. Here are some examples

- Simply abiding in Christ results in Christ’s peace flowing through you to others.
- Giving grace instead of reacting in the flesh.
- Listening to other’s struggles with a heart of compassion and understanding.
- Intercessory prayer for those in stressful situations.
- Pointing others to Christ’s rest within them.

Think about it for a moment. As you walk in Christ’s rest, the Lord will work through you to draw others to His rest.

### **“Come To Me” or “Stay With Me”**

I want to end by looking at six key words. They are “Come to Me” or “Stay with Me.” When Jesus says “Come to Me,” He is saying those words because you are taking ownership of your stress and your soul is in a state of turmoil. However, what do you think Jesus says when you are entrusting your stress to Him and abiding in His rest. What He tells me is, “Stay with me.”

I share this because I would rather hear the words, “Stay with Me” than “Come to Me.” Wouldn’t you? Therefore, I pray that as you learn to entrust your stress and live in His rest that more and more you will hear the Lord say, “Stay with Me.”

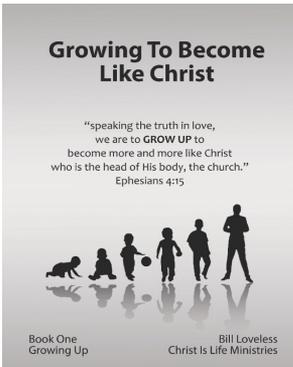
*“You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.”*

*Isaiah 26:3*

## Where Do I Go From Here?

At our website listed below, we encourage you to check out our four-part discipleship series called ***Growing Up – Growing Out – Growing Deep*** designed to teach Christians how to fulfill their purpose and calling. The first book in the series is called ***Growing to Become Like Christ***.

Book One covers the following topics:



- What it means to grow up spiritually to become like Christ.
- The difference between living “A” Christian life versus living “THE” Christian life.
- What it looks like practically to grow to become like Christ.
- What are some of the hindrances to spiritual growth and how we overcome them.
- How becoming like Christ transforms every area of our lives.

## CILM DISCIPLESHIP MATERIALS

CILM has this series and many other studies, booklets and videos at our website listed below. To purchase ready-to-use copies from **Amazon or download for free** and do your own printing, copying and binding, please go to the **Discipleship** tab of our website. We hope you will take advantage of these materials.

***Christ Is Life Ministries (CILM)***  
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(2025-07-14)

# Stress? Or Rest?

I don't know the stresses that you are facing today but I think that you will agree with me that we all face stresses in life internally as well as externally. Whether it is circumstantial, relational, health, or worldly stress, we are experiencing stress in our lives.

Unfortunately, what I am seeing is that many Christians are taking ownership of their stress with the result that they internalize the stressors in their lives. As a result, the overflow of their stress is toxic to themselves as well as to everyone around them.

The question is: Does God intend for us to take ownership of any of life's stresses or are we designed to live from Christ's rest? The promise in Matthew 11:28 is this:

“Come to Me all you who are weary and heavy-laden and I will give you REST.”

God's design is for Christians to not take ownership of their stress. Rather, our design is to live moment by moment from Christ's rest. Therefore, in this book we will be looking at:

- The sources of stress.
- The negative impacts of stress.
- The meaning of Christ's rest.
- Living from Christ's rest.



Bill Loveless is the founder of Christ Is Life Ministries (CILM), a non-profit, non-denominational discipleship ministry. CILM's focus is teaching Christians that Christ is their only source for living the Christian life, what it looks like to be transformed into Christ-likeness, and how to be drawn into a deep relationship with Him. Bill finished his earthly journey in 2024 and is now with the Lord he loves.

For further information and to see other discipleship materials being offered, please go to our website: [www.christislifeministries.com](http://www.christislifeministries.com)

