



Life Issues

Spiritual Resilience in the Face of Emotional Stressors

Psalms 147:3; 73: 25,26; Job 19:21-27; Matthew 28:20; Romans 8:28

The American Psychological Association (APA) defines emotional stress as "the feeling of psychological strain and uneasiness produced by situations of danger, threat, loss of personal security, by internal conflicts, frustrations, loss of self-esteem, and grief. Also called **emotional tension**." The scripture is replete with examples of those that have gone through situations that today's psychologists would appropriately classify as trauma. Think about Job, Joseph, David, Paul the apostle, the twelve apostles, and others who endured unspeakable trauma and came out strong. You cannot help but ask: How did they do it? The common theme amongst them is *faith in God*. Their faith in God's infinite wisdom and sovereign power gave them the strength and spiritual resilience to go through the vicissitudes of life without hurt (Romans 8:37).

A growing body of evidence suggests that a spiritual outlook is a major asset in coping with trauma. Contemporary psychologists have found that spirituality and religion provide some of the key elements for recovery from traumatic events including a strong social support group, the opportunity to infer meaning, and focus on empathy. There are several time-tested biblical strategies that has proven extremely powerful in dealing with emotional stressors including:

1. **Recognize the Problem.** The fastest way and the first step out of any distress or stressor is recognizing and acknowledging the problem. This requires honest self-evaluation and humble confession. If it is an issue with sin then it must be addressed promptly, by acknowledging it, confessing it to our Lord Jesus, and accepting Him into your life as your Lord and Savior.
2. **Praise and Worship.** Acts 16: 25, 26; Psalm 95; 100. In a bid to find meaning during emotional distress some might resolve to blaming God or others; hence, resorting to anger and hatred. Instead of blaming God we are to realize that God is always in control. He is greater than us or any situation we face, and He is always worthy of all our praises. In worshipping God, we find the strength and spiritual grit to face whatever challenges that we might be facing.
3. **Prayer.** Though the obvious reaction for believers, it might prove difficult in times of distress. It is often easier to cry, focus on the problems, than turn our attention to God. However, the Bible admonishes us to "**cast all our burdens upon Him for He cares for us.**" 1 Peter 5:7.
4. **Study the Scripture.** God's word repeatedly cautions us against worry and anxiety; it reminds us of the ever-abiding love of God for us and His power to save us. It is also our source of victory and success no matter what we are facing. Joshua 1:8; Matthew 10:29-31.
5. **Seek Community.** The Bible tells us that "**two are better than one... and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.**" Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. As brethren, the strong among us ought to bear the weak and strengthen the feeble (Romans 15:1). Isolating ourselves from the fellowship of brethren of like precious faith is a recipe for defeat in times of distress.
6. **Ask for Help.** Asking for help might be difficult for some but it is crucial for us to remember that we are not self-sufficient. You cannot always have the best advice or words of encouragement for yourself. Talking to godly friends will go a long way in helping us deal with emotional stress.
7. **Take a Break.** You are still human and the flesh needs time to refresh and recuperate. Taking a break, brisk walk, exercise, relaxing with friends and family can go a long way in restoring health and increasing spiritual resilience.

PRAYERS