

Grace Christian Fellowship

January 22 - Newsletter



Happy New Year!

One of the realities of our modern, fast-paced world is stress. We constantly hear of people being stressed out or going through burnout. We may wonder if the Bible, written thousands of years before many of the stress-inducing factors of our modern world, could have much to say about how to deal with stress. But David went through stress like few of us have ever experienced. He wrote about it in **Psalms 31**.

Whatever stresses you face now or in the coming year, David faced equal or greater ones. This psalm isn't coming to you out of the ivory tower of a king, but from the crucible of a man who has been there. In Ps 31:14-15a, David gives us the key to handling stress in our lives: "But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord, I say, 'You are my God.' My times are in Your hand." To personalize it, my response to stress should be personal trust in the sovereign, personal God.

We never know what stresses a new year will bring. A few pressure-points are predictable, but most are not. Some changes we face will be quite unpredictable and unannounced. They will barge into our lives like an intruder in the night.

The time to prepare for stress is before it hits. It's obvious from Psalm 31 that David knew God in a very personal, practical and thorough way before he got into the crisis that prompted the psalm.

David didn't learn all that about God out of the blue, in the middle of this calamity, although he no doubt deepened his knowledge of God through the distress. David had begun to know God through His Word (**Ps. 19**) as a boy tending his father's sheep.... cont

cont...Even then, God knew David as a man after His own heart (1 Sam. 13:14). So when the crisis hit, David had resources in God to lean on.

God will never allow us to go through more stress than we can bear if we trust in Him.

“God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted [or, ‘tried’] beyond what you are able” (1 Cor. 10:13). Though David’s trial was terrifying, so that he despaired even of life itself (31:13), God gave him strength to endure. God isn’t into easy solutions. He doesn’t usually remove the trial the instant we seek Him. But none who have waited on Him have found Him to fail. “He gives more grace when the burdens grow greater!”

It’s only when we trust God in the midst of severe distress that we prove His faithfulness in our own experience. Often it’s the waiting for God to deliver us that’s the most difficult thing. Think of Joseph, languishing for the better part of his twenties in the Egyptian dungeon, his feet in irons, never seeing the daylight. Why? Because he obeyed the Lord by resisting the advances of Potiphar’s wife! Why didn’t God answer his prayers? We know the outcome, but for years, Joseph didn’t know that one day he would be released from prison and promoted to second in the land. But because Joseph trusted in God, he could later say to his brothers, “You meant it for evil against me, but God meant it for good” (Gen. 50:20).

Stress will be a reality for every one of us in the coming year. But if we prepare for it in advance by sinking roots with God; if we take refuge in Him, even if the stress is a result of our sin; and, if we remember that God will never allow us to go through more stress than we can handle, we will grow stronger through it.

This year, some of you are going to feel like you’re in over your head. The stress will seem overwhelming and you’ll feel like you’re out of control. Guess what? We’re never in control, even when we proudly think that we are! God wants us to see that we’re always in over our heads! We’re dependent on Him for the next breath we take and for our daily food. Our response to stress, whether it comes from the big crisis or from the daily routine, should be consciously, deliberately to put our trust in the sovereign, personal God who is never in over His head. We need to put our times in His hand. Amen

- I hope you all had a very merry Christmas and that you enjoyed the carol service and Christmas meal.
- Thanks to Chere and Stew who cooked the lunch for us and it was lovely to have John and members of his church in Colegate, joining us.
- Georgie is still in Addenbrooks, as far as I know, recovering from her kidney transplant.
- Helen is well and enjoying the peace and quiet of her comfortable flat.

Thank you for your donation to The Salvation Army

We have just received your kind Christmas donation of £50.00 and I'm writing to say a truly sincere – and very warm - 'Thank you' to you. You are a shining star!

Our Christmas fundraising is so important and when we start our appeal, I always offer a prayer and express a hope that it will deliver the funds we need to continue our work. That's why I'm so grateful that you made a donation. The Salvation Army is busy all year round, but the winter and Christmas season is a time when we really do step up our caring work.

We're here for families who have so little, to help make sure they feel supported and that children have a small present to open on Christmas Day. We're here for older people; without us, many would have little or no company at this time of year. We're here for people who are homeless or battling addictions or recovering from forms of slavery – these people need us more than ever at Christmastime.

Christmas is a time when we think of others. Your donation will help us do more than think, it will help us deliver the care, the kindness and the practical support that is at the very heart of The Salvation Army. I'm also thinking of you and how kind you have been to help us in our work. Your thoughtfulness will have helped us deliver a much-needed little bit of Christmas love to someone in need. What could be a better gift than that?

Be assured of my gratitude and be assured also of my warmest greetings and best wishes. In case you need it for your records, your donation reference is DJKWSUCL.

May God bless you,

Lieut-Colonel Dean Pallant

On behalf of The Salvation Army

Grace Christian Fellowship

Meetings/Events

Church Service - every Sunday 11am at Saints Event Venue

Communion Service - first Sunday in the month

Charity Offering - third Sunday in the month

Revival Prayer Session - every Thursday evening 7.30pm

Zoom Coffee Morning - see Serena for invite

Zoom Monthly Bible Study - see Serena for invite

Forthcoming Events

Sunday 2nd Jan - Church Service / Nicky preaching /
Communion

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If you would like to donate to the church, you can give during the service, donate by bacs online, or go to the 'donate' button on the 'Contact' page of the website and make a payment there.

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Prayers - Let's continue to pray for Georgie, after her kidney transplant and for her continued health and prosperity.

Remember to pray for Nicky and Samuel in India and the work of establishing churches in Andhra Pradesh.

Let's also pray for the gospel to be received from the gospel tracts we've delivered to homes in the church area.

Grace Christian Fellowship is part of registered charity

Hope Community Trust - 1000798

www.gcfnorwich.co.uk gcf@norwich.myzen.co.uk

Sunday Services are held at **Saints Event Venue**, 217 Yarmouth Road, Norwich, NR7 0SQ
from 11-12.30pm