

Under Pressure: From Anxiety to Assurance

1 Peter 5:6-11

Mercy Hill Church | May 17, 2026

Big Idea: In suffering (and spiritual conflict), Christians can stand firm through humble reliance on God, watchful resistance against Satan, and hopeful confidence in Jesus Christ because of His grace & power.

1. **Humble Reliance on God (vv.6-7)**

- **Knowing God's Power (Transcendence) & Care (Immanence)**
 - Humility Before God: Humility is recognizing who you are in light of who God is – a fixed point of reference instead of a constant variable
- **Remembering God > Our Capabilities & Our Difficulties**
 - Humility & Peace vs. Pride & Anxiety and Stress
 - **Matthew 6:25-34** (Do not worry passage)
 - **James 4:10** Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.
 - **Luke 21:34** "But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap.
 - **Mark 4:38** But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"
 - **Luke 10:40** But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me."
- CEOs and "luck": <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/12/14/google-billionaire-eric-schmidt-luck-is-a-big-part-of-success.html>

2. **Watchful Resistance against Satan (vv.8-9)**

- **Be Spiritually Alert**
 - Be sober-minded: Having a clear perspective on things
 - **1 Peter 1:13** Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
 - **1 Peter 4:7** The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers
 - **2 Timothy 4:5** As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.
 - Be watchful: awake, alert – sometimes associated with prayer and Jesus' return
 - **1 Corinthians 16:13** Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.
 - **Colossians 4:2** Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.
 - **1 Thessalonians 5:6** So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake (watchful) and be sober (day of the Lord)
 - Jonathan Haidt commencement address at NYU quote:
 - "If there's just one thing from my address that you remember tomorrow, next week, and 20 years from now, make it this: Treasure your attention.
 - In 2014, when she was nearly 80 years old, the poet Mary Oliver wrote a short poem titled "Instructions for Living a Life." It goes like this:
 - *Pay attention.*
 - *Be astonished.*
 - *Tell about it.*

- It sounds simple. But paying attention is in fact one of the most challenging and meaningful things you can do. Because what you pay attention to shapes what you care about. And what you care about shapes who you become.
 - In 2005, the writer David Foster Wallace gave one of this century's best-known commencement addresses, at Kenyon College. He said, "the really significant education-in-thinking that we're supposed to get in a place like this isn't really about the capacity to think, but *rather about the choice of what to think about.*" He was right, and he seemed to anticipate that, two decades later, there would be so many powerful people and big companies trying to take that choice away from you.
 - They compete with each other to *capture* your attention. Think about that phrase. It acknowledges that your attention is valuable. But it also reveals that some of the biggest corporations in human history aren't trying to *earn* your attention, or *deserve* your attention. They're trying to take it from you.
 - Consider just one example. Meta is valued at well over a trillion dollars, even though few of us have given it any money. How is that possible? Because it invented a business model that extracts attention from nearly half of all human beings and sells it to advertisers. Other industries followed: video games, dating, gambling—even investing has been gamified and optimized to keep us all staring and swiping. We've all had the experience of picking up our phone, maybe for a good reason, only to find ourselves, an hour later, mindlessly scrolling. That's not an accident. That's our phones and apps, doing what they were designed to do."
 - John Piper quote: One of the great uses of Twitter and Facebook will be to prove at the Last Day that prayerlessness was not from lack of time.'
- **Know Your Enemy: Satan**
 - **Sun Tzu's Art of War**: "*If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat... if you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.*"
 - French poet **Charles Baudelaire** wrote in his 1864 prose poem *The Generous Gambler*: "*The greatest trick the Devil ever pulled was convincing the world he didn't exist.*"
 - Satan as:
 - Accuser (Job 1:6-2:7, Zech 3:1-2)
 - Holy Spirit convicts to lead us to repentance, trust and faith in Jesus
 - Tempter (Luke 4:2, Matt 4:3, 1 Thess 3:5)
 - Deceiver, Liar (John 8:44)
 - Gospel Coalition article on Satan: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/satan-and-demons/>
 - C.S. Lewis Screwtape Letters quote: "There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors..."
 - **James 4:7** Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
- **Know You're Not Alone**
 - 1. It's not just you
 - **1 Peter 4:12** Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it come upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you...
 - 2. Solidarity and support from the collective witness of believers

- **Parent Corner: How does your child(ren) react to and deal with difficulties, worries and suffering? What shapes their responses? How might this passage equip, prepare and strengthen their faith for future difficulties?**