

L 2 De-stressing Your Relationships

[Philippians 1:3-11](#)

On a very regular basis, we deal with all kinds of stress. Because we are all different, one area that creates lots of stress is our relationships. There are **four** things you can do to de-stress your relationships, beginning with...

Look for the good in the other person [1:3](#), [5](#)

Paul writes: *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you* ([1:3](#)). Paul is thankful for the Philippian believers because he remembers the good things about them. He focuses on the good times they had.

What do you think about when you think about people who bring stress into your life—good things or bad things? Most of us just focus on the bad things.

Do you have stressful times in your marriage? We all do. When that stress comes, how do you begin to think about your mate and what do you tend to remember about him or her? Just the bad stuff, right? Then, when you talk to your mate, you communicate the bad things you have been thinking, and that only adds more stress to the relationship. God gives us a great command to help with this problem.

First, He tells us not to use any *corrupt* or abusive talk ([Eph. 4:29a](#)).

Then, what does the rest of the command tell us?

Building people up rather than tearing them down will take a lot of stress out of your relationships. You must be honest and sincere, but when you look for the good in people, you will begin to find it; and when you say things to build them up, you will start to de-stress your relationships.

Paul tells the Philippians he is especially grateful for their *fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now* ([1:5](#)). The best way to de-stress a relationship is, "Remember the best and forget the rest." If you want to take the stress out of a relationship, focus on people's strengths, not their weaknesses; focus on the best things about them and forget the rest. With some people it may take a lot of creativity, but you can find something good in everybody. Focusing on the good and praising them for it will bring out more of their good qualities. Praise will help take the stress out of any relationship. To de-stress a relationship, **look for the good in the other person**, and...

Pray for the other person [1:4](#), [9-11](#)

Paul writes: *Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy* ([1:4](#)). Every time the Philippian believers come to Paul's mind, he thanks God for them and prays for them. Every time you think about a person with whom you have a stressful relationship, whether a spouse, a child, or someone at school or work, say a prayer for that person.

This is a good way to obey what command in [1 Thessalonians 5:17](#)?

The quickest way to de-stress a relationship is to start praying for the other person. In [Philippians 1:9-11](#) we find **three** things for which we should pray:

1. Pray the person will grow in love. Paul writes: *And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment (1:9)*. The word translated **abound** (*perisseuo, pear-is-shoe'-oh*) means "**super abound**." It pictures a river overflowing its banks. Love is the river, and the two banks that form its path are *knowledge* and *judgment*, or discernment, that reveal the direction love should flow.

But where do we get love that overflows in our lives?

How does [Romans 5:5b](#) answer this question?

To de-stress a relationship, pray the Holy Spirit would cause God's love to overflow, not just in the other person but also in you.

2. Pray the person will make the right choices. Paul continues: *That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ (1:10)*. This means we should pray they will make the right choices so they will be *without offence till the day of Christ*. The word translated **without offence** (*aproskopos, ap-ros'-kop-os*) means "**not causing to stumble**." It is the idea of not falling into sin or causing others to do so.

When there is stress in a relationship, we need to obey and pray others will obey what command in [Ephesians 4:31](#)?

3. Pray the person will be filled with the fruits of righteousness. This comes by *Jesus Christ (1:11)*. The *fruits of righteousness* is an Old Testament concept. The prophet Amos accused his people of turning *the fruit of righteousness into hemlock (Amos 6:12b)*. The Hebrew word translated **hemlock** (*la'anâ, lah'-an-aw*) means "**poison**" and denotes something bitter. Nothing poisons a relationship like bitterness.

What does [Isaiah 32:17a](#) tell us?

When used in reference to people, the word *righteousness* means right actions or treating people right.

The work of righteousness is peace in our relationships. To de-stress your relationships, **look for the good in the other person, pray for the other person, and...**

Remember God isn't finished with the other person or with you [1:6](#)

Every believer is a project under divine construction, so de-stressing relationships often takes time.

Therefore, we must remember *he which hath begun a good work in you* (and them) *will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ* ([1:6](#)). In our marriages, our homes, at work, and everywhere we must remember people are always growing and developing, so we must learn to love them the way they are. If you wait for people to become perfect before you have a good relationship with them, it will never happen. This is because there is no such thing as a perfect marriage partner, a perfect kid, a perfect boss, a perfect employee, a perfect church member, a perfect pastor, or any other kind of a perfect person.

If you want to de-stress a relationship, start thanking God that He is not through with them or you yet.

Also, as innocent as you might feel about causing the stress, you need to remember what words of Jesus in [Matthew 7:4](#)?

Paul was *confident* of God's power to change people ([1:6](#)). Are you? If you are, then be patient as God completes His *good work*. This is what faith is all about: praying for God to bring out the best in us and other people and then trusting Him to do it.

To de-stress a relationship, look for improvement, not perfection. Then, praise any improvement you see. As you praise the good, it will automatically bring out more good in the other person. Criticizing people brings out their worst; praising them brings out their best.

To de-stress relationships, **look for the good in the other person, pray for the other person, remember God isn't finished with the other person or with you, and...**

Keep the other person in your heart [1:7-8](#)

Paul writes: *I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace* ([1:7](#)). The reason Paul has such a great relationship with the Philippians is he keeps them in his *heart*. There is an old saying, "If you don't keep people in your heart, they will get on your nerves." That's true of husbands, wives, kids, grandkids, friends, associates, people at work, everybody.

That's why we have what command in the last phrase of [1 Peter 1:22](#)?

A man once went to his pastor and said, "I don't understand my son; he won't listen to a thing I say." The pastor said, "Let me repeat and see if I understood what you just said. You said, 'I don't understand my son; he won't listen to a thing I say.' Is that right?" The man replied, "That's exactly what I said."

The pastor responded, "I thought you understood people by listening to them, not talking to them. Why don't you try listening to him rather than talking to him?" The man said, "I hadn't thought of that. You're right!" Listening to people is one way to reveal we love them from the heart.

This begins by obeying what command in [James 1:19b](#)?

Because Paul knew how to take stress out of his relationships, he writes: *For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ (1:8). Paul didn't love them with human longing but with the bowels (or affection) of Jesus Christ.* This is the result of *agape* love, the first component of the fruit of the Spirit, being produced in Paul's life ([Gal. 5:22](#)).

When we allow the Holy Spirit to produce His fruit in our lives, we can obey what command of Jesus in [John 13:34](#)?

To de-stress your relationships:

LOOK FOR THE GOOD IN THE OTHER PERSON,

PRAY FOR THE OTHER PERSON,

REMEMBER GOD ISN'T FINISHED WITH THE OTHER PERSON OR WITH YOU

KEEP THE OTHER PERSON IN YOUR HEART.

Which of these do you most need to put into practice today?