

Ln 12 Strangling Stress

[Philippians 4:2-9](#)

Stress causes us to do some strange things. I read about a woman who shared with her friend: "My husband bought me a mood ring the other day. When I'm in a good mood it turns green. When I'm in a bad mood, it leaves a red mark on his forehead." In chapter four Paul tells us **four** things we must do to strangle stress in our lives.

Eliminate conflict [4:2-3](#)

Paul knew relationship problems create a great deal of stress—probably the most painful and draining stress of all because they take joy out of every area of life.

Paul also knew relationship problems get us sidetracked in our Christian lives, so he writes: *I beseech Euodias (u-oh-dee'-us), and beseech Syntyche, (sin-tie'-key) that they be of the same mind in the Lord (4:2)*. We don't know who these two women are, but Paul writes of them: *those women which laboured with me in the gospel (4:3)*. Paul tells them to *be of the same mind in the Lord*.

This is reminiscent of what command in [Romans 14:19](#)?

How can you do your best to do things that lead to *peace*? There are **three** approaches to effective conflict resolution or peace-making.

1. Compromise. This approach to a disagreement looks for common ground. It requires each person be willing to give a little, but neither should have to do all the sacrificing. Neither person gets everything, but both get something.

2. Concession. This means one person does all the sacrificing or giving in. If, however, the concession is made through pressure or coercion, the resolution will not last. Concession must be the free choice of the person making the concession.

This involves what principle in [1 Peter 3:8](#)?

3. Can it. This approach is for people with an irreconcilable disagreement. They put the disagreement "on a shelf" for a time, agreeing to disagree. Before using this method of conflict resolution, the first two methods should be tried and every effort made to reach an agreement.

To strangle stress, we must **eliminate conflict** and...

Celebrate today [4:4-5](#)

Stress is mostly attitude. That's why Paul writes: *Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice (4:4)*. How could a prisoner, who didn't know if he would be executed or released, write that? Paul could *rejoice* because he knew no matter what happened to him, God was in control and allowed his circumstances for some good purpose. How do we obey the command to *rejoice in the Lord alway*, or every day?

By remembering what wonderful verse in [Psalm 118:24](#)?

Take a blank sheet of paper and put a dot right in the middle. When you look at the paper, what do you see? The dot, right? The dot represents your problems and the white space your blessings. Our problem is the moment one black spot appears, we fix our attention on it and fail to focus on all the good things in our lives.

Have you ever asked someone, "How's your day going," and they whine, "Oh, so, so" or "Oh, it's going?" What kind of attitude is that toward a day the Lord has made? To *rejoice* in every day the Lord makes, when someone asks you, "How's your day going," say "Teerrific!" If you can't bring yourself to say

"teerrific," say "good." **Stress-free living** means we *rejoice* in today because God made it, and it's better than we deserve.

Next, Paul writes: *Let your moderation be known unto all men* ([4:5a](#)).

The word translated **moderation** means being mild, patient, or gentle. It is the idea of not getting all uptight. Basically, it means "lighten up" or "chill." Why should we lighten up? Because *the Lord is at hand* ([4:5b](#)).

The word translated *at hand* (**engus, eng-goos'**) can mean near in presence or near in time, referring to the Second Coming.

Here I think it refers to the nearness of the Lord's presence because in the next verse Paul encourages us to pray, and what truth do we find in [Psalm 145:18](#)?

To strangle stress in our lives, we must **eliminate conflict, celebrate today**, and...

Anticipate tomorrow [4:6-7](#)

How can we strangle stress when we know tomorrow is coming? Paul puts it like this: *Be careful for nothing* ([4:6a](#)). The word translated **careful** means "**anxious**." So, we are not to worry about anything. Worry is simply fear or apprehension about tomorrow or the future. How can we not worry about tomorrow? By giving tomorrow to God! How do we do that? Paul tells us in the next part of the verse: *but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God* ([4:6b](#)).

The word translated **prayer** (**proseuchē, pros-yoo-kay'**) refers to an attitude of worship and earnestness. **Supplication** means asking the Lord for something.

In our *requests* we need to remember what truth found in [Psalm 84:11c](#)?

God doesn't want to withhold any good thing from us but the problem is we don't ask ([Jas. 4:2d](#)). To pray and request *with thanksgiving* means we are thankful for God's previous blessings as we anticipate future ones. Few things strangle stress like an attitude of gratitude. It is the healthiest human emotion. Nothing makes us happier and being grateful even strengthens our immune systems.

Ungrateful people tend to be unhappy and sick.

For good mental and physical health we must obey what command in [1 Thessalonians 5:18](#)?

This verse doesn't say to *give thanks* **FOR** everything; it says to *give thanks* **IN** everything. In all circumstance you can thank God that He is with you and has a purpose for whatever happens in your life. Right now in the space provided, write down **five things** for which you are thankful, including at least two people. Feel free to share some of them with the class.

If we do what Paul says in verse six, the result will be ... *the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus* ([4:7](#)).

The word translated **keep** is a military term referring to a soldier or sentinel guarding a garrison or fort.

God's *peace* is like soldiers surrounding our *hearts* (feelings and emotions) and *minds* (mental processes and dispositions), protecting them against harmful forces like confusion, worry, doubt, and stress.

This is simply a fulfillment of what promise found in [Isaiah 26:3](#)?

The steps to **strangling stress** are: **eliminate conflict, celebrate today, anticipate tomorrow**, and...

Concentrate on good things [4:8-9](#)

To strangle stress, we must change the way we think. Stress is always an inside job; it has to do with our thoughts. Therefore, Paul tells us what we should think about.

We should think about what is *true... honest... just... pure... lovely... or ... of good report* ([4:8](#)).

This means we need to be careful about what we listen to, watch, and read because what we put into our minds affects how we feel and live.

How does [Proverbs 23:7a](#) remind us of this fact?

Strangling stress involves a deliberate, conscious choice to let our minds be saturated with the positive, good things Paul lists in [verse 8](#). If you think good thoughts, how will you feel? Good, right? If you think praiseworthy thoughts, you will go around praising and encouraging people, not gossiping and criticizing. Think of the stress that will take out of your life!

Paul concludes this section: *Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do* ([4:9](#)).

This means **strangling stress** requires obeying what command in [James 1:22](#)?

Just hearing or reading this lesson won't strangle your stress; you must *do* it. When you *do* these things, the Bible says *the God of peace shall be with you* ([Philip. 4:9](#)), and His *peace* will strangle your stress.

To strangle stress in your life, you must:

ELIMINATE CONFLICT,

CELEBRATE TODAY,

ANTICIPATE TOMORROW,

CONCENTRATE ON GOOD THINGS.