

**From Stressed to Blessed
Transformed in Our Physical Health
Psalm 23 (NLT)**

¹The Lord is my shepherd;
I have all that I need.

²He lets me rest in green meadows;
he leads me beside peaceful streams.

³He renews my strength.
He guides me along right paths,
bringing honor to His name.

⁴Even when I walk through the darkest valley,
I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me.
Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me.

⁵You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies.
You honor me by anointing my head with oil.
My cup overflows with blessings.

⁶Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life,
and I will live in the house of the Lord forever.

“What’s going on internally that’s eating at you? STRESS” – Pastor Billy Johnson

- The World Health Organization defines stress as, *“The state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation.”*
- Stress is a natural human response that prompts us to address difficult challenges.
- Everyone experiences stress to some degree.
- How we handle stress makes the biggest difference in our overall wellbeing.
- Don’t let your heart stay in a place of trouble. Getting to a place where your heart is continually at a place of peace will have an effect on your physical body (Proverbs 14:30 (NLT) *“A peaceful heart leads to a healthy body.”*).

Seven Most Common Sources of Stress:

- Worry - tormenting yourself with disturbing thoughts.
- Hurry – comes from the increased pace in our lives (created by speed).
- Crowdedness and Clutter – more people and more stuff create stress.
- Multiple Choices – create indecision.
- Loss – loss of privacy (the Internet), health, *etc.*
- Pluralism – living in a world where people are different. We're all living together, but no longer share the same values, insights, *etc.* The Internet has reduced the world.
- Fear of the Future – the “what ifs?”

SEVEN SPIRITUAL HABITS TO REDUCE STRESS FROM PSALM 23

Looking To God to Meet All Our Needs Addresses the Stress of Worry (v. 1).

- God knows we have a need, He has the resources to meet our needs, and He wants to meet our needs (Romans 8:32 (NLT)).
- Sometimes we are stressed because we have looked to people to meet our needs instead of looking to God to meet our needs (Matthew 6:31-33 (NLT)).
- God is going to meet our needs His way; we can't dictate how He meets them.

Obeying God's Instructions About Rest Addresses the Stress of Hurry (v. 2).

- So much of our stress is caused by being busy. We are often proud to be busy, which leaves little space in our lives for rest.
- Rest is the antidote for hurry.
- We must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from our lives. – Dallas Willard
- On our sabbath we need to rest our bodies (take a nap), refocus our spirits (spend some time in worship), and recharge our emotions (take part in some recreational activity) (Genesis 2:2). – Pastor Rick Warren
- Rest is reflecting and imitating God.

“If you rest from your work, you can work from your rest.” - Pastor Billy Johnson

Recharging Our Soul with Beauty Addresses the Stress of Crowdedness and Clutter (v. 2).

- Get beauty in your soul by taking time to intentionally enjoy at the beauty of God's creation.
- Go outside every day.

“Sheep won't drink from disturbed waters.” – Pastor Billy Johnson

- How much beauty do we pass each day without noticing it?

Going to God for guidance addresses the stress of multiple choices (v. 3).

- Ask God for guidance. We get paralyzed by indecision because we have not gone to God for guidance (James 1:5 (NLT)).
- God will show us which right paths to take (Proverbs 3:5-6 NLT).

Trusting God in the dark valley addresses the stress of loss (v. 4).

- A shadow never hurts anyone. – Pastor Billy Johnson
- It's never easy to go through dark valleys, but we can trust God in the dark valleys because we are going “through” them.
- The Lord is close to us in the dark valleys, and we are protected and comforted in the dark valley.

“Trust God even when you can't track Him.” – Pastor Billy Johnson

Letting God be our defender addresses the stress of pluralism, v. 5.

- Common causes of stress are conflict, opposition, criticism, and attacks.
- The natural thing to do is attack back.
- When we retaliate, we become our own defender instead of God.
- Let God fight your battles. Vengeance is mine says the Lord. If we want to be blessed, let God be our vindicator (Matthew 5:11 NLT).
- The greatest gift we can give to ourselves (young or old) is the gift of conflict resolution.

Expecting God to finish what he started in us addresses the stress of fear of the future, v. 6.

- What are we expecting? We must get to a place where we are expecting God to finish what he started in us (Philippians 1:6 (NLT)).
- Stop acting as if God is not going to finish what he started.
- If we see goodness and unfailing love, they're looking for us.

“Goodness and mercy are in hot pursuit of me.” – Pastor Billy Johnson.

- It's going to be all right (Matthew 11:28 Message)

“I move from stressed to blessed when I am yoked with Christ, and I move together in the same direction and at the same pace.” – Pastor Billy Johnson