



# **LIVING LIBERATED**

**Are we bound forever to vices,  
bad habits, addictions, and  
other sins that shackle and put  
us in bondage?**

**Today we can learn HOW to free  
ourselves from that bondage by  
the power of Jesus Christ!**

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**Steve Flatt**

**How To Handle Pressure**

# HOW TO HANDLE PRESSURE

Let's take a poll. How many of you have at least one worry? We do worry, don't we? We live in an era where we are filled and bombarded by stress, anxiety, worry, and pressure. In fact, we are literally worrying ourselves sick. The American Psychiatric Association has labeled ours "The Age of Anxiety," and their diagnosis is borne out simply by the facts. The American Academy of Physicians say that at least two-thirds of all the patients they see come to them with stress-related illnesses. Then, the three best selling prescription drugs are: 1) Tagamet, an ulcer medication: 2) Enderol, a medicine for hypertension and 3) valium, a tranquilizer.

In 1988, Newsweek magazine ran an article that projected that American businesses lose over \$150 billion a year through stress and anxiety related illnesses. Now the amazing thing is we really don't have all that much to worry about. Consider 40 percent of the things we worry about never happen, 30 percent concern old decisions that can no longer be changed and 12 percent center on criticism which is often untrue and usually made by people who feel inferior. Incidentally, most of life's critics are people who have a deep inferiority complex. A few percent of all the things we worry about relate to our health, which if we worry about will only make it worse. That leaves only eight percent of all the things that could even begin to be labeled "legitimate," needing mental attention. But, the truth of the matter is, you and I don't often hearken to those statistics. Instead, we tend to be engulfed by worry over and over again.

I want to share with you some things that Jesus had to say about a prescription for an antidote to worry and to stress. During the last week of Jesus' life, He is undergoing great anxiety. He knew He was going to die. He makes that declaration to His disciples in John 13. He tells them He's going to die and one of them was going to betray Him. In chapter 14, He states the good news that He is going away to prepare a place for them. In John 15 & 16, He tells the disciples the bad news. He says, the world is going to hate you just like it has hated me, you're going to scatter and I won't be able to find a single one of you. Then Jesus said, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace." (John 16:33) Underline John 16:33 in your Bible, then highlight "in me" with a yellow highlighter. When Christ dwells in you and you dwell in Christ, you can have peace.

Later in the same verse he said, "In this world you will have trouble." That's right. Put your hope in the world. Get involved in all worldly things, you'll have trouble. You'll have anxiety, strife and stress. But then he said, "take heart! I have overcome the world."

The umbrella statement is, if we are in Jesus, we can have peace. Our Lord gives us a prescription for overcoming worry that is tremendous. "After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: 'Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.'" (John 17:1-4)

**Why would Jesus be under stress? Why would he need to say these things about peace? He had every reason in the world.**

1. He was misunderstood.

One of the reasons you and I tend to come under stress and pressure is when we are misunderstood. They misunderstood Jesus' motive. They misunderstood his mission. They misunderstood his message.

2. He was not accepted.

Don't you feel stress when someone around you doesn't accept you? Particularly your peers. It was the peers of Jesus who didn't accept him. The religious people, the ones who were looking for a Messiah, but they turned him away.

3. He was tempted.

That's why he felt stress. Hebrews 4:15 said he was tempted in all points like as we. I'm going to go a little farther than that. I think Jesus knew temptations that you and I can't even imagine. He was tempted to take a shortcut around the cross and you and I can't identify with that. We don't have the option of saving the world.

4. He had many enemies.

Now you and I know something about that. Any one of us have some people who don't care a great deal for us, but if the truth be known, I don't know that I have anybody that really wants to crucify me, to take my life or wrench it away from me.

5. His disciples were slow learners.

That would have killed me. I'm just not as patient as our Lord. He spent over three years with them day and night trying to let it all sink in and they still couldn't figure it out. He loved them enough to die for them. I think I would have wanted to kill them. They were slow learners. He faced the stress and pressure of tremendous responsibility. Victory over sin, victory over the grave, the opportunity of salvation, the opportunity of heaven for every single human being, all that was on his shoulders. That's pressure and his time running out.

6. He was going to hand over the advancement of the kingdom into the hands of infallible men.

**How did Jesus deal with it and how does he tell you and me to deal with it?**

1. Jesus knew who to go to.

Feeling all this pressure he says, Father, I've got to talk to you. You and I need to know and practice what Jesus knew and practiced.

2. He knew why he came to earth.

He had a purpose and when he says, Father, the time the hour has come, he's saying his mission is just about complete.

3. Jesus gave up his rights.

It relieved a tremendous amount of pressure. "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you." Why would Jesus pray that the Father glorify Him? Jesus was God come in the flesh. He was part of the Trinity. He was part of the Godhead. But, you see He had to pray that God glorify Him because Jesus in coming to this earth and taking on the human form of a servant had given up his rights. Folks, I want to tell you something that too many of us don't know. It's amazing the pressure that comes from each one of us trying to protect every inch of the turf of our rights. We don't want to yield on this, we don't want to relinquish on this, and we are going to guard every right to fight for the chance. Jesus gave up his rights and it relieved a tremendous amount of pressure.

4. He had something to give.

He was granted the authority over all people that he might give eternal life. He had something to give all right; it was the greatest gift of all time. It is eternal life to everybody who would come to him, put their trust in Him and obey His gospel.

5. He did a good job.

"I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do."

**How do you and I get relief from stress and pressure that we face every day? We do the same thing Jesus did.**

1. Turn everything over to God.

Like Jesus, we too must turn everything over to God. "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." (1 Peter 5:7)  
Two observations a) God is concerned about me. God cares for me; He cares for you and He cares for all of us; b) He cares about everything in my life. He said "cast all your anxieties."

2. Understand your purpose in life.

We've been created with different abilities all for the purpose of glorifying God and serving others. When you have a purpose in life, it can help you handle pressure. Now one of the things that I do following Jesus' lead is when I feel the pressures coming in on me and I feel them like you do, when I feel stressed, I revert back to my basic purpose in life.

3. Give up your rights.

This is probably the one most of us need work on and the one that gives us the greatest difficulty because we live in a culture that is so filled with assertiveness training. It's contrary to the way the world thinks. There are five destructive emotions that damage and hamper our life - resentment, bitterness, anger, hatred, and fear. They'll eat you up and they'll spit you out and I will guarantee you that a major source of each of those five is often when people are not willing to give up their rights.

I want you to think with me for a moment. It is rare for you to have an argument over an issue if you understand and practice this principle. Now let me be clear, I'm not talking about being a wimp or a perpetual dish rag. There are a few things in life that are worth drawing a line in the sand for, but not 98 percent of the time that we do. I found that the really strong people in this world are the ones who are willing to yield their rights. It's the weak who fight for their turf. The greatest example I know is Jesus. Philippians 2:5, "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant."

I have observed in my lifetime that fighting for rights can make you do some awfully foolish things. When Abraham Lincoln lived a rich man loaned a poor man \$2.50 and after a while the poor man was unable to repay, the rich man was so upset he went to Lincoln and asked for representation. Lincoln didn't want to take the case, but he came back and said, well I'll tell you what. You give me \$10 up front and I'll take it. The man gave him \$10 then Lincoln went to the poor man and gave him \$5. He said, "you take \$2.50 of this and pay him back and you can keep that \$2.50" and Lincoln pocketed \$5.00. You see that man spent \$10 to get \$2.50 back. You may say, people don't do those kinds of stupid things. You wouldn't believe what I've seen husbands and wives accuse each other of doing as they fight for their rights instead of yielding.

4. Be a generous person.

That's what Jesus did. You give things away it relieves pressure. Be generous with your prayer, your money, and your talents.

5. Glorify God with excellence.

Do the best you can do in a day, then go to bed and put your head on the pillow. It's amazing how good you feel. Some of the stress that we feel in the world is when we know we have not done what we could have done, it haunts us. Just do your best and then feel the relief as the stress lessens.

Amazing Grace Lesson #1108

**Questions:**

1. Which statements regarding worry are true?
  - 40% of concerns do not ever occur.
  - 30% are old decisions that cannot be changed
  - 12% are based on untrue criticism

- All the above
  - None of the above
2. Peace is found in?
- Loving family
  - Financial security
  - In Jesus
3. In this world you will have trouble?
- True
  - False
4. Jesus was under stressful situations because
- He was misunderstood
  - He was not accepted
  - He was tempted
  - His disciples were slow learners
  - All the above
5. Jesus overcame stress because
- He knew who to go to
  - He knew why He came to earth
  - He gave up His rights
  - He had a purpose and something to give
  - He did a good job
  - All the above
6. We can overcome stress and pressure by
- Turning our lives over to God
  - Understanding the purpose of life
  - Giving up our rights
  - Being a generous person
  - Glorifying God
  - All the above

#### Answers to Questions

- 1. All
- 2. Jesus
- 3. True
- 4. All
- 5. All
- 6. All

