



A Daily Devotional Invitation

Stress and the Body

Feeling stressed does not mean you are weak. It means you are human. **Stress is a physiological response.**

God designed our bodies to respond to challenge and threat. Stress is the release of hormones like adrenaline and cortisol that prepare us to act, focus, and survive. In this sense, stress is not bad—it is part of how we were made.

There is a difference between **eustress** (helpful stress that mobilizes us for growth, action, or creativity) and **distress** (prolonged or overwhelming stress that wears us down from doing too much or too little).

This week is about awareness and permission—learning to notice stress in our bodies without shame, and inviting God into how we respond to it.

Scripture Reading

“And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground.”

— Luke 22:44

Reflection: Jesus and Stress

Luke tells us that Jesus experienced such deep anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane that He sweat blood—a rare but real physical response to extreme stress. This matters.

Jesus did not bypass stress. He did not deny it, suppress it, or pretend it wasn't there. Instead, He:

- **Prayed honestly** — returning again and again to the Father
- **Lamented** — expressing sorrow and anguish
- **Cried out** — asking for another way while still trusting God
- **Stayed present** — not fleeing the moment, running to addiction, or numbing Himself, or dopamine seeking, even when it was overwhelming

Feeling stress was not a sin for Jesus, and it is not a sin for you. Stress is part of simply being human.

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Stress Lives in the Body

Stress is not just something we think; it is something we *experience physically*. Our bodies often speak before our minds do.

Reflection Questions:

When I experience stress, how does my body typically respond—and what might those signals be inviting me to notice, care for, or bring to God? Common responses include:

- Fatigue or heaviness in the body
- Sweating or feeling flushed
- Rapid heartbeat or shallow breathing
- A racing or scattered mind
- Tight shoulders, jaw, or neck
- Irritability or feeling easily overwhelmed
- Headaches or stomach discomfort
- Difficulty concentrating or sleeping

These reactions are not signs of failure—they are signals. Your body is communicating that it needs care, safety, and support.

Invitation

Caring for a Stressed Body

Because stress is physical, our responses must be embodied. Scripture invites us to love God with our whole selves, which includes tending to our bodies when stress rises.

Simple, faithful next steps include:

- **Fuel** — eating regularly and nourishing your body
- **Move** — gentle movement that releases tension
- **Sleep** — allowing your nervous system to reset
- **Pray** — bringing your whole self honestly before God
- **Return to Jesus** — again and again, as your place of safety

These are not fixes; they are forms of care.

Practice

Breath Prayer for Stress

Stress activates the body's fight-flight- or - freeze response. Slow, intentional breathing helps signal safety, calming the nervous system and reducing cortisol levels.

Try this simple breath prayer:

- Inhale slowly through your nose for **4 seconds**
- Hold the breath gently for **6 seconds**
- Exhale slowly through your mouth for **8 seconds**

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As you breathe in, silently pray: *"God, You are here."*

As you breathe out, pray: *"I release what I'm carrying."*

Repeat this cycle 5-10 times. Practice this daily throughout the week.

This practice lowers heart rate, relaxes tight muscles, and helps the body move out of survival mode and into rest.

Next Steps

If God is inviting you to take a next step in embodied wholeness, consider Embodied —a space to grow in physical health as a spiritual practice, alongside others, with grace and support, visit ***embodied.church*** or scan this QR code to sign up

