

CONVERGE DEVOTIONAL



AUGUST 2025

COME TO ME

all you who are weary and
burdened, and I will give you
rest. Take my yoke upon you and

LEARN FROM ME,

for I am gentle and humble in
heart, and you will find rest for
your souls. For my yoke is easy and

MY BURDEN IS LIGHT.

MATTHEW 11:28-30 NIV

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PEER PRESSURE

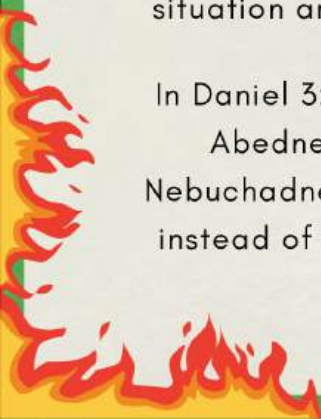
NICK LIVESAY

When transitioning from the summer season to the back-to-school season, there can be a lot of pressure in our lives. This may look like pressure from friends to make the wrong decisions when no one's around, or the unspoken pressure of trying to constantly fit in among your friends.

When I was in high school, specifically my junior year, I started feeling pressure from one of my friends to start doing sports in school. This was difficult for me because I already felt like I had enough going on just trying to balance my school work and my job.

During that time, I had to decide between doing what I wanted to do or trying to fit in with my friend by doing what they wanted me to do. After some time in prayer talking with God, He guided me through that situation and helped me talk with them about it.

In Daniel 3:1-12, we see Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego face a similar pressure as King Nebuchadnezzar commands them to worship him instead of the Lord by bowing before his statue.



66

WHEN YOU HEAR THE SOUND OF . . . EVERY KIND OF MUSIC, YOU ARE TO FALL FACEDOWN AND WORSHIP THE GOLD STATUE THAT KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR HAS SET UP. BUT WHOEVER DOES NOT FALL DOWN AND WORSHIP WILL IMMEDIATELY BE THROWN INTO A FURNACE OF BLAZING FIRE.

”

DANIEL 3:5-6

But instead of worshipping him and giving in under the pressure, we see that they remained faithful and obeyed God by choosing to worship HIM alone! We see this faithfulness continued in Daniel 3:16-18 when the three men are confronted by the king.

66

SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO REPLIED TO THE KING. . . “[OUR GOD] CAN RESCUE US FROM THE FURNACE OF BLAZING FIRE, AND HE CAN RESCUE US FROM [YOUR POWER]. BUT EVEN IF HE DOES NOT RESCUE US, WE WANT YOU AS KING TO KNOW THAT WE WILL NOT SERVE YOUR GODS OR WORSHIP THE GOLD STATUE YOU SET UP.”

”

DANIEL 3:16-18

Angry that the three men could not be swayed by his threats and pressure, King Nebuchadnezzar chose to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and throw them into a fiery furnace. Yet when he did so, something incredible happened--a fourth figure appeared alongside them.

When the three men were thrown into the furnace, they had already put all their trust and confidence in the only person who could save them: God. Even when surrounded by flames, their bodies were not harmed because of the incredible faith and perseverance they had within the situation.

Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, we will certainly come face-to-face with some times of extreme peer pressure. And although it may seem easier to just give up and give in, God brings protection and blessing when we are obedient to stand firm in Him.

God is not only willing to give us strength to stand against the pressures of the world, but He is *eagerly waiting* for us to seek Him for it! So when you find yourself in moments where peer pressure feels overwhelming, remember how God worked in the lives of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego--and how He can (and will) do the same work in you.

THINK ON IT!

Take a moment to read through Daniel 3:1-30. What might you have done in their situation?

Where in your life might you need to remain faithful and obey God's promise instead of peer pressure?

Is there a specific feeling of peer pressure you need to talk to God about? Take it to Him in prayer.





DEPRESSION

**MORGEN
RADEMAKER**

Depression is not just sadness.

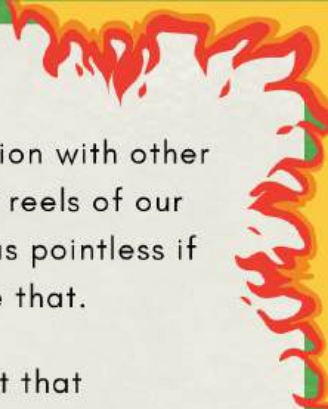
Depression is not a sign of weakness.

Depression is not something you can overcome by your own willpower. It's an illness, a distorting of the way you think, act, and feel, courtesy of the devil himself.

It's feeling empty and pointless, worthless and alone, wondering why you even exist or why you should keep existing and whether anyone would even care if you were gone.

It's one of the many unfortunate consequences of a little event you may have heard of called The Fall, a direct result of misusing God's wonderful gift of free will by Adam and Eve, leading to Satan's control over earth and warping of God's once beautiful and perfect creation.

Thankfully, God in his amazing grace had a plan to save us from wallowing in our sin, sending his only son down to earth to live a perfect, blameless life, be nailed to a cross and killed, but rise from the dead three days later and ascend to heaven until he returns to bring us home.



Largely thanks to social media, interaction with other people has been reduced to highlight reels of our lives, leaving many to see themselves as pointless if they can't live a perfect life like that.

But they miss the important fact that
these are only highlights.

No one's life is completely perfect.

Everyone struggles with something.

The difference is how we deal with our struggles.

Do we try to work it out *alone and isolate*, or *give it to God* and surround ourselves with the community of believers we've been made a part of in Jesus?

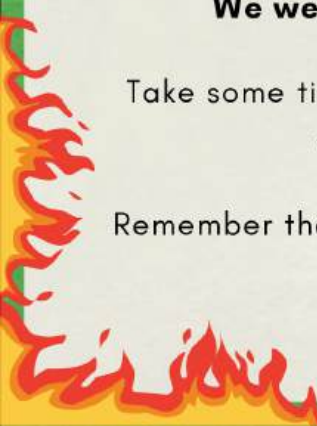
How we approach our struggles makes a world of difference for our heart, mind, and spirit.

This is why Scripture urges us to approach the Lord and bring our burdens before Him.

We were never meant to do this alone.

Take some time to consider the following verses and approach the Lord's throne.

Remember that He is for you and with you, and He will not forget or forsake you.



“

**WHY, MY SOUL, ARE YOU DOWNCAST?
WHY SO DISTURBED WITHIN ME?
PUT YOUR HOPE IN GOD.
FOR I WILL YET PRAISE HIM,
MY SAVIOR AND MY GOD.**

”

PSALM 42:11

“

**THE LORD IS CLOSE TO THE BROKENHEARTED
AND SAVES THOSE WHO ARE CRUSHED IN SPIRIT.**

”

PSALM 34:18

THINK ON IT!

Considering the verses above, what might we learn about pursuing God (and how He pursues us) in our sorrow?

Have you ever battled with depression personally, or known someone who has? How did it impact you?

Is there anywhere you may be feeling “crushed in spirit?” Take it to the Lord in prayer.





ANXIETY

**DONOVAN
MILLER**

“

**GIVE ALL YOUR WORRIES TO AND CARES TO
GOD. FOR HE CARES ABOUT YOU.**

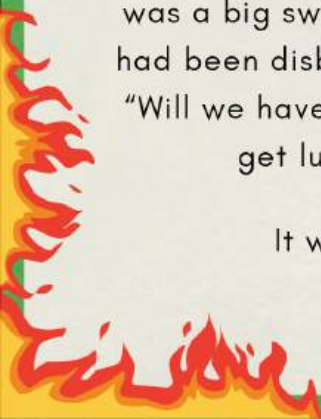
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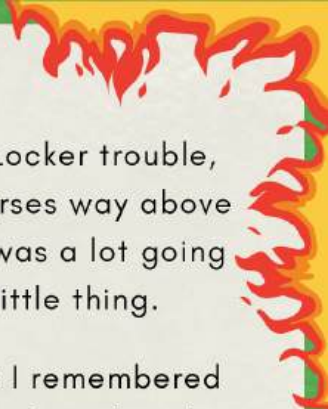
1 PETER 5:7

When in this season of transition from summer to the school year, there can be a lot of emotions that can cause us to develop anxiety. If you're moving from elementary to middle school, middle to high school, or even starting the next round of homeschooling, there is usually a feeling of unease. But even so, just remember you're never alone in anything.

When I switched from middle school to high school, it was a big switch, especially since all the covid rules had been disbanded. I had a bunch of questions like, “Will we have to wear masks? How do I know how to get lunch? What on earth is a *final*?!”

It was *completely overwhelming*.



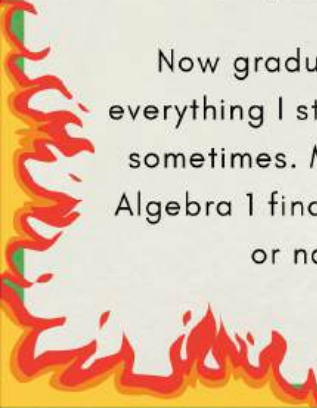


The first couple of weeks didn't help. Locker trouble, classes halfway around the school, courses way above my skill level with other grades. There was a lot going on and I was anxious about every little thing.

It was overwhelming at times. But then I remembered that no matter the situation, there is nothing that the Lord can't handle. So with that in mind, I cast all of my doubts and worries before the Lord (1 Peter 5:7).

I started to have a different perspective on the things that made high school overwhelming. I got used to my locker, found different routes to classes, and even made friends with some of the upperclassmen that helped me. It helped me realize that every worried thought was already under God's control.

Some other hurdles came up like panic attacks over math, loss of friendship, and lectures about final grades while I was on vacation at Disney World. But through all of it, the *feeling* of anxiety was always more stressful than the *thing* I was stressing over. And when I got through things, God was always there saying, "See, that wasn't bad!" And He was right every time.



Now graduated, stepping back and thinking about everything I stressed over in high school makes me laugh sometimes. My life didn't fall apart after I bombed my Algebra 1 final, nor when I couldn't remember any dates or names through Brit Lit 2 or History.

All of those things are a great reminder that even things that seem like the end of the world are only tiny bumps in the road of God's plan for you.

A great example is Job. His faithfulness to God was challenged by Satan, and he went from having everything to having almost nothing. Satan challenged Job because he thought Job only served God because of his prosperity.

Throughout the challenge, Job lost his children, wealth, and health, but Job stayed strong in his faith. Throughout his suffering, Job questioned the justice of God but ultimately sought wisdom and understanding. And in the end, God restored Job's fortunes and gave him greater prosperity than he had before.

Job's story teaches us that even through the hardest times, God is always there to bring you safely through to the other side. And what a comforting reminder to know that no matter what, **you are never alone.**

THINK ON IT!

Take a moment to read and reflect on 1 Peter 5:7.

Consider Job's story and his challenge from Satan. How might you have reacted? Have you ever been through something that felt similar to Job's experience?

Where in your life may you be struggling with anxiety? Take time to bring it to the Lord in prayer.





MORE THAN THE STRUGGLE

KAIDEN COLE

Consider the following verse.

“

**ANYONE WHO BELONGS TO CHRIST HAS BECOME A
NEW PERSON. THE OLD LIFE IS GONE; A NEW LIFE
HAS BEGUN!**

”

2 COR. 5:17

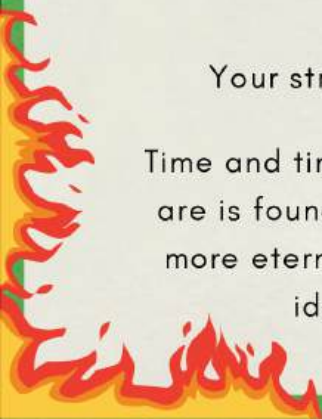
Okay, let's have some Real Talk™:

Life can feel a lot sometimes. Maybe you're feeling pressure to fit in, battling anxiety, or dealing with sadness that's hard to explain. When those emotions get heavy, it's easy to start thinking your struggles define you.

But here's the truth:

Your struggle is not your identity. **Jesus is.**

Time and time again, Scripture tells us that who we are is found in something far more worthy and far more eternal than earthly struggles or pains. Our identity is found in Christ alone.



Take a second to think about what God says about you.

When you follow Jesus, He gives you a new identity that is rooted in him and all that he has done. Like it says in 2 Corinthians 5:17, our old self has been taken away and a new version has come in its place.

This doesn't mean life gets easy overnight, but it *does* mean your emotions and battles don't get the final say.

Our struggles and hurts no longer define us--instead, we are identified by the unshakeable words of God.

In Christ, you are:

**NEVER
ALONE**

LOVED

**STRONG
IN HIM**

CHOSEN

You are not "just the anxious one." You're not "too broken." God fully sees you, fully knows you, and still fully loves and chooses you time and time again.

You're God's child, and nothing can change that.

No power on heaven, earth, or anything in-between. In Christ, your identity is established and unchanging.

Take a moment to speak this truth over yourself now.

Say this:

"I am not my struggle. I am who God says I am."

It may be difficult for you to say this, and even harder for you to believe it, but the beauty of speaking Scripture and its truths over yourself is that it carries true, life-changing power when we do.

Because the words of the Bible were first the words and heart of the Lord, there is spiritual power that comes with reading and speaking it.

So although you may not feel it, although you may not believe it, *keep speaking this truth over yourself.*

Because when you do, you are breaking off spiritual chains and lies.

No longer are you defined by the world and its pains. You are more than the struggle--**a child of God.**

THINK ON IT!

This week, spend time each morning reading through 2 Corinthians 5:17 and reminding yourself, "In Jesus, I am made new."

What lie have you been believing about yourself? Take it to the Lord in prayer and ask Him to speak truth in its place. What is He speaking over you?



REACH
OUT!



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northwoods
COMMUNITY CHURCH

Hope lives here.