

9 Simple Prayers to Reset Your Stressed Heart

Kelly O'Dell Stanley



As I composed an email to my editor asking for an extension because I don't have time to write this article right now, I felt a little hitch in my spirit: "Now is the perfect time to write it." And it is, but it's also hard. It's hard because the topic of this article has become particularly relevant to me in the here and now.

My youngest child, Bobby, has been in the hospital for the past four days and was really sick before that—a spinal abscess/bad infection resulting from a medical procedure he had nearly two weeks ago. Also, a friend of mine recently lost her 22-year-old son in a tragic incident.

As I sit here watching my 18-year-old son in pain and try to translate the medical terminology and draw conclusions from what the doctors tell me, I am exhausted. I'm afraid, because I just witnessed the unthinkable happen to someone I know, and I realize none of us is immune from tragedy. I'm relieved that the doctors determined what was making my son so sick and have been able to get a handle on the pain. I'm grateful that I'm able to be here with him. There are plenty of blessings in the midst of it all—but it is, to put it simply, difficult.

And though I don't know what each of you are facing—it may be something huge and tragic or relatively small but still thought-consuming and important to you—I know that we all have stress in our lives. And we need a way to reset our hearts when life is rough.

These simple prayers that have brought me peace in the past, so I hope you will pray along with me as I ask the Lord to bring me peace in the present.

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1. Thank You.

Psalm 100:4 (NIV) says, *“Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.”*

When we start by giving thanks, it is a way to step into the presence of the Almighty. We remember all that He has done and all the times He has intervened in situations in the past. We are reminded that He is the giver of all good gifts and that He works all things for the good of those who love Him. We see that, even when things are difficult, there are still bountiful gifts all around, if we will just look for them. And when we recount those gifts and share our gratitude, it deepens our faith and brings us closer to the Lord.

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2. Let me see You.

God is always with us. I know that, and yet I often find myself praying for Him to be with me. What I am really asking is for God to be visible, for His presence to somehow be tangible—through the words others speak to me, the words of the Bible, a song, or a blog post, or the arms of a friend who holds me when I’m sad.

Because even though my head knows that God is there, my heart sometimes needs to be convinced. Praying this way reminds me that He is right here with me, whether I see Him or not.

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3. You are God; nothing is too hard for You.

Sometimes the best way to put things into the proper perspective is to remember who God is and to remind ourselves who we are not. Our God is capable and all-knowing. He is above all, through all, and in all. He is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. All things are in His hands, which means they are not in mine. I have some responsibility—to pray and do whatever the Holy Spirit directs me to do—but there is much I cannot change.

As a control freak, that's a difficult concept for me, but the truth is that nothing surprises, shocks, or devastates God. He's got this. And if I believe He is all the things He says He is—well, then, the best thing I can do is cease my bumbling attempts to control the outcome and, instead, place the situation into His supremely capable hands. It takes the pressure off of me and puts it onto Him, the only One who can truly effect the outcome.

This is probably why one of my favorite verses is, *“Be still, and know that I am God”* ([Psalm 46:10](#), NIV).

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4. I believe; help my unbelief.

Part of the reason we feel such stress is that we hold conflicting views. We have faith *and* we struggle with doubts. Or we want to believe God will change things for us, but we're not seeing it yet. This conflict goes way back. In [Mark 9:24](#) (NKJV), a man cries, *"Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"* What this verse tells us is that faith and doubt can exist together and that God is the One who can reconcile those things. It's normal to have questions or doubts, and it doesn't mean that our faith is weak. All it means is that it's time to turn to God and trust Him to strengthen our faith.

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5. I'm sorry, Lord.

You may be a much nicer, less temperamental soul than I am, but when I'm stressed, I get crabby. Think Oscar the Grouch. In trying situations, I don't always respond with grace and kindness. When this is the case, the best thing we can do is ask God to forgive us—and know that He will.

Because He forgives us, we can forgive others. Hurt feelings and fractured relationships compound our stress, but a simple prayer asking God to forgive us frees us to move forward and try again.

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6. When I am weak, You are strong.

Rather than lamenting the fact that I am weak, when I whisper these words to the Lord I am rejoicing because this is another opportunity for God to shine. It's another chance for people in my life to see the Lord at work and another time during which God is glorified. I may not be able to fix things—that's in God's hands. But when I lean on Him, seek shelter in His arms, and acknowledge my relative strengths and abilities, other people will see the power of faith and the blessings of living a life rooted in Him, even if I don't say a word.

Perhaps they will see what it means to have a relationship with the Lord and want to find that comfort for themselves. I don't need to be ashamed of my weakness, but since our God is a loving Father, His help is one of many gifts He longs to give to us.

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7. Be my Comforter.

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God"([2 Corinthians 1:3-4](#), NIV).

That's a mouthful and takes some mental deciphering—but it boils down to this: we can be assured that God will comfort us and through that, we will in turn be able to comfort others. Asking God to be your comfort is a simple prayer, but one with great power.

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8. Teach me, God.

Jesus promised, *“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you”* ([John 14:26](#), NIV). The Holy Spirit longs to teach us, and oftentimes the most stressful situations are the ones in which we have the opportunity to learn the most profound lessons. Ask the Lord to use this opportunity to help you grow closer to Him and stronger in your faith—as long as you’re willing to let Him teach you.

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9. Thank You, Lord.

Thankfulness is a great way to begin a conversation God—but it’s also a great way to end it. You’ve already told God some of the reasons you’re thankful; now simply praise Him for what He is about to do. He’s offered us so much; the least we can do is offer our faith and our praise right back to Him. Because:

- He is good.
- He is faithful.
- He is with us.
- He is able.
- He is in control of all things, and nothing is too hard for Him.
- He is God, and He loves us.

- He is worthy to be praised.

Amen.

Kelly O'Dell Stanley is the author of *Praying Upside Down* and *Designed to Pray*.