



# Lord, I Can't Handle This!

By Jane Fryar

<sup>6</sup>Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, <sup>7</sup>casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. <sup>8</sup>Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. <sup>9</sup>Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. <sup>10</sup>And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. <sup>11</sup>To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 5:6–11 ESV)

**Opening Prayer:** Lord Jesus, we can't handle this — whatever "this" is! We are not wise enough, strong enough, skillful enough, knowledgeable enough, or capable in any way. But You are all-wise, all-powerful, all-mighty, all-knowing. You are capable in every way! Use Your Word to encourage our hearts as we think and pray together now in Your name. Amen.

## Getting Started

When people talk about stress in everyday life, they usually are describing "bad" stress, distress. Commonly, "stress" refers to problems like sick kids, overwhelming credit card debt, or arguments with co-workers.

Experts, though, remind us that not all stress is distress. Good stress, or "eustress," gets us out of bed in the morning. It keeps us motivated and moving forward. That rapid heartbeat you experience at the surprise birthday party your friends planned for you is eustress. So is the rush that floods your being when your team wins. So is the feeling when that golden oldie starts to play and happy memories flood your heart, sending a smile across your face.

Write down five to ten positive stressors that have come into your life in the last month or two. How is each a blessing from our Lord? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Into the Word

As God's people, we welcome eustress and thank God for the joys it brings. But while we live here on earth, we also struggle with negative stressors, with distress. Listen while a volunteer reads **1 Peter 5:6–11**. Then comment on any insights you gain, particularly about stress. \_\_\_\_\_

The opening words of this passage zero in on issues of pride and humility. What's the difference between godly pride and sinful pride? \_\_\_\_\_

How does godly pride create eustress? \_\_\_\_\_

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How can sinful pride lead to anxiety and negative stress?

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What examples of each can you cite? \_\_\_\_\_

**Philippians 2:5–8** outlines the humility of our Savior. In utter self-forgetfulness, He died for our sins — even the sins we, in sinful pride, commit. Through faith in Jesus, forgiveness is ours — fully, completely. How does relying on His forgiveness and His love help us in times of anxiety and distress? \_\_\_\_\_

Many Christians have memorized **1 Peter 5:7**, counting it among their favorite Bible verses. What makes this invitation so comforting? \_\_\_\_\_

What does the little word “all” add to the invitation? \_\_\_\_\_

In what ways has God demonstrated His care for you in the past? \_\_\_\_\_

How does this encourage you to trust Him in the present? \_\_\_\_\_

How can simple, humble trust that “God’s got this” (whatever “this” is) help turn distress into eustress? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever experienced that? If so, talk about it briefly.

When we’re honest with ourselves, we must admit that oftentimes we create our own distress. Our sinful pride, our neglect of prayer, and our failure to trust our Savior’s promises keep us from experiencing the peace the Lord wants us to enjoy. Praise God for sending Jesus to earn forgiveness for us! Praise God that Jesus died for our sins and was raised again for our justification, as **Romans 4:24–25** recounts.

But there’s another source of distress, too. Read **1 Peter 5:8–9**. What word picture in these verses underscores the dangers Satan poses for us as God’s children? \_\_\_\_\_

Satan uses three main tactics: deception (lies), temptation, and persecution. Give an example of each. \_\_\_\_\_

Tell about a time Satan used one or more of these to create negative stress in your mind and heart.

What defensive measures does our Lord recommend in verses 8 and 9? \_\_\_\_\_

How might these things help? (Remember, as you wield the weapons the Holy Spirit provides, He works in you and fights for you!) \_\_\_\_\_

The closing verses of this passage contain a beautiful promise. Read **1 Peter 5:10–11**. Which words or phrases stand out as particularly and personally meaningful? Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

How does remembering that we are “called to [God’s] eternal glory in Christ” help put all earthly stressors — both eustress and distress — into perspective? \_\_\_\_\_

The phrase, “to Him be the dominion,” echoes the expression, common among Christians today: “God is in control.” Think about that for a moment. If we did not know God as our wise, kind, good heavenly Father . . . If we could not trust in Jesus as the sacrifice for our every sin . . . Then the thought that “God is in control” would be — not comforting — but quite frightening! Why? \_\_\_\_\_

But we DO know our Father’s kindness, wisdom, and love! We DO trust Jesus as our Savior. And so we pray in confidence, “To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen!”

### Taking It Home

Think about a stressor that is causing distress for you. With that stressor in mind, what one verse, thought, tool, or practice will you take with you as you leave today? When and how will you use it? \_\_\_\_\_

**Closing Prayer:** Lord Jesus, we can’t handle this — whatever “this” is! We are not wise enough, strong enough, skillful enough, knowledgeable enough, or capable in any way. But You are all-wise, all-powerful, all-mighty, all-knowing. In the hours and days ahead, remind us of Your ever-present help and teach us to trust Your promises more and more fully. We pray in Your name, Lord Jesus. Amen.

**Closing Hymn:** Sing or say together one or more verses of “Entrust Your Days and Burdens” (LSB #754; LW #427) or “O Thou from Whom All Goodness Flows” (TLH #515).

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