

RESOURCES FOR STRESS IN 2 CORINTHIANS

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Paul's second letter to the Corinthian church provides many insights into how to endure in difficult circumstances. He talked about at least 45 kinds of stress that he had experienced. He also shared many of the spiritual resources he found effective in enabling him to cope with those very difficult situations. Study these powerful resources in context and consider how you can apply them in your own life as you experience stress.

Objective Resources

1. God the Father

- a. His identity: He is the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort to us (1:3), the Lord Almighty (6:18), and the God of love and peace (13:11).
- b. His attributes: His grace (1:12), faithfulness (1:18), glory (3:18; 4:6), all-surpassing power (4:7; 6:7; 13:4), mercy (4:1), surpassing grace (9:14), and love (13:14).
- c. His acts on our behalf:

Past: He anointed us (1:21), set His seal of ownership on us (1:22), put His Spirit in our hearts, (1:22; 5:5), made His light shine in our hearts (4:6), and reconciled us to Himself (5:18).

Present: He comforts us (1:4; 7:6-7), makes us stand firm (1:21), always leads us in triumphal procession (2:14), makes us competent (3:5-6), renews us inwardly daily (4:16), lives and walks among us (6:16).

Future: He will deliver us (1:10), will raise us and present us in His presence (4:14), and will give us an eternal body (5:1).

2. God the Son

- a. His identity: He is Lord (1:2; 4:5), the Son of God (1:19).
- b. His attributes: His glory (4:4), love (5:14), grace (8:9; 12:9; 13:14), meekness and gentleness (10:1), truth (11:10), and power (12:9).
- c. His acts on our behalf: He died for us and was raised again (5:15), became poor for our sakes (8:9), He lives in us (13:5), The promises of God are YES in Him (1:19-20), His power rests on us as we look to Him in weakness (12:9).

3. God the Holy Spirit

- a. His identity: He is our guarantee (1:22; 5:5).
- b. His acts on our behalf: He lives in our hearts (1:22), He gives life (3:6), He gives us freedom (3:17), He changes us into Christ's likeness (3:18), He fellowships with us (13:14).

4. God's Word

It is written, "I believed; therefore I have spoken." With that same spirit of faith we also believe... (4:13-14).

Subjective Resources

1. Faith

We rely on (trust in) God, not on ourselves (1:9). We have confidence before God through Christ (3:4). We believe (4:13). We live by faith (5:7).

2. Spiritual Vision

We reflect the Lord's glory (3:18). We fix our eyes on what is unseen (4:18) (with our spiritual eyes of faith).

3. Prayer

Thanksgiving is a prayer resource (2:14; 4:15; 9:15). Prayer is a two-way communication with God (12:8-9).

4. Knowledge

We have the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ (4:6). We know (are convinced of, fully confident) that He will raise us with Jesus... (4:14). Now we know that if the earthly tent we have is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven... (5:1)

5. The Body of Christ

The comfort of others (1:4; 2:7; 7:4-7, 13). Prayers of others (1:11). Love of others (2:8). Joy we have through others (7:4, 13,16). Concern of others for us (8:16).

6. Other Subjective Resources

- a. Accept weaknesses and be content with them under stress (11:29-30; 12:5-10).
- b. Set our hope on Him (1:10).
- c. Refuse to lose heart or get discouraged (4:1,16).
- d. Choose to be confident in Him (5:6,8).
- e. Make it our goal (consuming ambition) to please Him (5:9).
- f. Our purity and patience (6:6).
- g. Choose to rejoice, even in affliction (6:10; 8:2; 12:10).
- h. Refuse to compare ourselves with others (10:12).

7. Affirmation of who we are in Christ. We know that we are...

- a. The temple of the living God (6:16).
- b. His people (6:16).
- c. Sent by God (2:17).
- d. His children (6:18).
- e. Christ's ambassadors (5:20).