



Finding peace in Christ and focusing on Him as the true reason for the season.

Scripture Focus: *Philippians 4:6-7*

Open With This Prayer: "Father God, we come before You with grateful hearts as we gather to reflect on Your goodness and the gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ. In this busy season, help us to set aside our worries and focus on the peace and joy that only You can give. Quiet our minds, open our hearts, and guide our thoughts as we seek to draw closer to You. May this time together remind us that Jesus is the true reason for this season. In His holy name, we pray. Amen."

Introduction:

The holiday season is supposed to be a time of joy, celebration, and togetherness. Yet for many, it can also bring stress, anxiety, and feelings of being overwhelmed. Whether it's the pressure to buy the perfect gifts, host the perfect gatherings, or the loneliness of missing loved ones, we can easily lose sight of the true meaning of Christmas. But today, I want to remind you that Christmas isn't about the perfect decorations, meals, or even traditions. It's about celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, who came to give us rest for our souls. Let's explore how we can overcome holiday stress and anxiety by focusing on Him.

- **Start the discussion:** Go around and let each family member share one thing they find stressful about the holidays and one thing they love.

Read the Key Scripture: *Philippians 4:6-7* – "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

The Source of Holiday Stress

a. External Pressures:

The world places a heavy burden on us during this season—spending money we may not have, attending every event, and keeping up appearances. These pressures steal our joy and distract us from what truly matters.

- *Matthew 6:19-21* – Jesus warns us about storing treasures on earth and reminds us that our hearts should be set on eternal things.

b. Internal Expectations:

Sometimes the biggest stress comes from within—our desire for perfection or feeling like we must please everyone.

- *Psalms 46:10* – "Be still, and know that I am God." God reminds us that stillness, not busyness, allows us to connect with Him.

The Biblical Response to Stress

a. Turn Your Worries into Prayers

Paul's words in *Philippians 4:6-7* show us the first step in overcoming stress: **take everything to God in prayer.**

- Instead of allowing your mind to spiral with worry, stop and bring your concerns to God. Pray specifically for peace, guidance, and strength.
- Thanksgiving is key! Gratitude shifts our focus from what we lack to what we already have in Christ.

b. Trust in God's Provision

Jesus reminds us in *Matthew 6:25-34* not to worry about our needs. Just as God provides for the birds and flowers, He will provide for us.

- Worrying does not change our circumstances, but trusting in God gives us peace amidst uncertainty.
- Challenge yourself to lay down your burdens and trust that God is in control.

Refocusing on Jesus, the Reason for the Season

a. The Gift of Peace

Jesus was born into a chaotic world, yet His arrival brought peace to all who trusted Him.

- *Isaiah 9:6* calls Him the "Prince of Peace." This peace is not the absence of trouble but the presence of Christ in our lives.

b. The Good News of Great Joy

The angel's proclamation in *Luke 2:10-11* reminds us that the true joy of Christmas comes from the good news that a Savior has been born.

Discuss: Why is the birth of Jesus good news for us today? How can remembering this help us when we feel stressed?

- This season let's celebrate not just the birth of a baby, but the arrival of our Savior who reconciles us to God.
- Joy is found not in what we do, but in who He is.

c. Ways to Keep Christ at the Center

1. **Create Christ-Centered Traditions:** Read the Christmas story as a family, pray together, or serve others in need.
2. **Set Boundaries:** Say no to things that distract from your focus on Jesus and your well-being.
3. **Practice Gratitude:** Take time each day to thank God for His blessings.

4. The Promise of Peace

The beauty of following Christ is that He offers us peace, not as the world gives, but as only He can.

- *John 14:27* – "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

This peace transcends our circumstances and guards our hearts and minds. Even in the busiest, most stressful times, we can rest in His presence.

Key Takeaway:

This Christmas season let's not let stress and anxiety overshadow the incredible gift of Jesus Christ. Instead, let's:

1. **Lay our burdens at His feet through prayer.**
2. **Trust in His provision and faithfulness.**
3. **Refocus our hearts on the true reason for the season—our Savior, Jesus Christ.**

When we do this, we will experience the peace that surpasses all understanding, and our hearts will be filled with joy that no holiday stress can take away.

Closing With this Prayer: "Lord, we come before You today with hearts that are often weighed down by the busyness and stress of the season. Help us to lay our anxieties at Your feet and to find peace in Your presence. Remind us that Jesus is the reason for this season, and help us to focus on His love, grace, and peace. Guide us to make this season one of joy, gratitude, and worship. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Consider Sowing Seed: May your seed be planted in good soil and bring forth a bountiful harvest in due season.