

Stress

And you who are troubled rest with us. . . .—II Thessalonians 1:7

In my class this semester I taught a lesson on stress and how it affects learning. I found that my students identified with this lecture because their lives are full of stress. Not only are my students under a great deal of pressure, but I imagine each one reading this can identify stress in their lives and the anxiety it produces.

It should be an encouragement to us as we read the instructions that Paul gave to the Thessalonians in the midst of their troubles. Non-believers had been attacking them physically and emotionally for an extended period of time. The believers were exhausted. They felt like giving up under the constant pressure of the situation. They did not think they could continue to stand.

The idea of being troubled in this verse indicates that they were suffering terribly. Paul knew that they needed to find rest from the stressful circumstances. I had an extremely stressful semester—nothing bad, just too many challenges for me to adequately meet. So as I prepare for spring break I appreciate the fact that Paul was offering the weary Christians a break from the continual stress they had been under.

Perhaps like these early Christians, you are experiencing relentless stress. Like them it is comforting to know God understands and wants you to come apart from the struggles and to rest with Him.

Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

—Matthew 11:28