

# No Stiff Upper Lip, Please



## **Psalm 119:28**

My soul melts away for sorrow;  
strengthen me according to your word!

One thing that instigates a *destructive* emotional breakdown is not allowing *constructive* emotional breakdowns beforehand. Developing a 'stiff upper lip' can be disastrous to our emotional health. It is hypocrisy before God to pretend that everything's alright when it isn't.

For the Christian, it's important to understand what *should* cause him depression. Things that are grievous to God should be grievous to us. A major part of our Christian maturity is coming in line with God emotionally.

But *any* sorrow we experience- even grieving in the flesh, contrary to the will of God- should still be brought before God:

Philippians 4:6 Be anxious about nothing, but in everything by prayer and by petition with thanksgivings,

let your requests be made known to God

*Any* anxiety is a cause in itself for prayer, whether we should be experiencing the anxiety or not. *Anything* that weighs our hearts down is a challenge to our joy in the Lord. Not that we should have no sorrow, but no sorrow should be a "distraction" (the literal Greek meaning of "anxious" in Philippians 4:6). If a sorrow keeps us from relating freely to God as our caring Father, it is a sorrow that is forbidden. And the very remedy is prayer. 'Turn the concern to a heavenly yearn.' By bringing our concern to God, we are automatically taking it out of the realm of a worry. It may still be a sorrow, but it will be a sorrow sanctified to our good.

And that is what the psalmist is doing in the box at the top. He is confessing a deep sorrow and seeking God's strength for it. Many Christians wouldn't know how to bring such a sorrow before God. They think God only wants to hear positive things. Ignorance is a great destroyer.

Rather than bringing his strength to God, the psalmist brings his *lack* of strength. O blessed lack of strength! But not many saints become so intimate with God that they are completely transparent before Him. Or else they don't know enough of Scriptures to hear how God answers when our pretenses are finally abandoned.

The Contrition Psalms (where sorrow is expressed) are a good place to train our minds and hearts to carry our sorrows to God. Here's a starter list: Psalms 51, 143, 32, 6, 39, 130, 40, 25, 77, 38.

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