

# Where Stress Lives In The Body

A FAITH-CENTERED GUIDE TO  
AWARENESS, SAFETY, AND  
RELEASE



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# You Are Not Weak

YOUR BODY IS COMMUNICATING

If you've prayed, stayed strong, and kept going, but your body still feels tense, tired, or overwhelmed-this guide is for you.

Stress does not only live in the mind. It settles into muscles, breath patterns, posture, and the nervous system. This is not a failure of faith, rather a part of being human.

God designed the body with wisdom.

When something feels unsafe, overwhelming, or unresolved, the body remembers. Oftentimes this happens quietly, until it is listened to.

This guide is not about fixing yourself. It is about noticing, listening, and creating safety so release can begin.

*My frame was not hidden from You...*"

*~Psalm 139:15*

# How Stress Moves Through The Body

A GENTLE LOOK AT THE  
NERVOUS SYSTEM

Your nervous system's job is protection. When it senses danger or overload, it responds automatically.

There are 4 common stress responses.

- Fight ~ tension, jaw clenching, irritability, tight fists or shoulders
- Flight ~ restlessness, shallow breathing, constant busyness
- Freeze ~ heaviness, numbness, fatigue, disconnection
- Fawn ~ people-pleasing, holding breath, tension in chest or throat

These responses are not choices. They are survival patterns your body learned to protect you. Healing begins when the body no longer feels rushed to let go, but safe enough to soften.

# Body Awareness Map

## JAW + FACE



- HOLDING WORDS BACK
- STAYING AGREEABLE
- EMOTIONAL RESTRAINT

## NECK + SHOULDERS



- RESPONSIBILITY OVERLOAD
- CARRYING OTHERS' NEEDS
- "I HAVE TO HOLD THIS TOGETHER"

## CHEST + BREATH



- ANXIETY OR GRIEF
- FEELING GUARDED
- DIFFICULTY RECEIVING REST OR CARE

## STOMACH + DIGESTIVE AREA



- WORRY
- FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN
- LOSS OF CONTROL

## HIPS + LOWER BACK



- SAFETY AND TRUST
- LONG-TERM STRESS
- EMOTIONAL BURDEN CARRIED SILENTLY

# Rest, Safety, + Scripture

GOD MEETS US IN THE BODY

God does not rush healing. He does not demand release before safety is present. Scripture reminds us that peace begins with refuge.

*“The Lord is my refuge and fortress.”*

*~ Psalm 91:2*

*“In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength.”*

*~ Isaiah 30:15*

*“Be still and know that I am God.”*

*~ Psalm 46:10*

Stillness is not inactivity. It is a posture of trust. A trust that the body must learn as much as the spirit

# A Guided Body Awareness Prayer

3-5 MINUTES OF GENTLE  
PRESENCE

Find a comfortable seat or lie down.

Place one hand over your chest and one over your belly.



Slow your breath:

- Inhale through the nose for 4 seconds
- Hold for 7 seconds
- Exhale through the mouth for 8 seconds.

Now quietly pray:

*God, help my body feel safe in Your presence.*

*Help me notice without needing to change anything.*

Scan your body slowly from head to feet.

When you notice tension, discomfort, or numbness, pause.

You do not need to release it right now.

Simply acknowledge it exists.

# When The Body Needs Support

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO IT  
ALONE

Sometimes awareness is enough.

Sometimes the body needs additional care to feel safe releasing what it has held.

Massage therapy can support healing by:

- Calming the nervous system
- Restoring a sense of safety through gentle touch
- Helping the body release without force

Faith-centered emotional wellness, like Renewed + Restored, can help integrate what the body reveals through Scripture, reflection, and guided awareness.

Healing is not a moment.

It is a relationship with your body, supported by God's presence.

KEEP THIS IN MIND

“True healing begins when the nervous system is at rest. From that place, the body can finally respond instead of resist.”



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