

# How To Cope With Daily Frustrations

I read an article on the two greatest fears of coal miners, what worries them most in their day-to-day life:

- a) A “*cave in*” or explosion in the pit;
- b) Far greater fear “*black lung*”, the result of the collection of minute particles of coal dust gathered slowly day by day as they work. They say “*what kills us is the small stuff.*”

**Most of us will agree that it is the little things in life that get us down.**

This last week have you had “*one of those days*” when fifteen minor problems equalled one bad attitude?

All the little things that went wrong added up to one big frustration.

**The fact is that the “*acid test*” of character [and peace of mind] is how we deal with the little things in life, the insignificant irritating incidents in life.**

**The difference between a Christian and any other person is a Christian has a peace of mind that this society cannot give you.**

**John 14:27** [Living Bible] Jesus Christ speaking to His disciples: “*I am leaving you with a gift, peace of mind and heart! And the peace I give you isn’t fragile like the peace the world gives. So don’t be troubled or afraid.*”

**This peace of mind is the result of an attitude to life.**

That comes **only** from knowing and accepting Jesus Christ’s mind into our lives.

**Philippians 2:5-8** [Living Bible] “*Your attitude should be the kind that was shown us by Jesus Christ, who though He was God, did not demand and cling to His rights as God, but laid aside His mighty power and glory, taking on the disguise of a slave and becoming like men, and He humbled Himself even further, going so far as actually to die a criminal’s death on the cross.*”

**Philippians 2:14** [Living Bible] “*In everything you do, stay away from complaining and arguing, so that no-one can speak a word of blame against you. You are to live clean, innocent lives as Children of God in a dark world full of people who are crooked and stubborn. Shine out among them like beacon lights.*”

If we accept the day-to-day frustrations without complaining, we will stand out among people like a beacon on a hill on a dark night.

**Pride brings frustration; humility brings peace of mind.**

**Life is largely made up of little things, and if we don’t apply the humble, serving mind of Christ to the little things of life we won’t to the major events in our lives.**

**How then do we deal with the small frustrations in life?**

These frustrations mainly come in three common types:-

- a) **Interruptions** – these are generally people who ask for something when you have “*a million things to do*”!!

Or when you finally sit down to dinner and guess what, the telephone rings!!  
Or you get ready to take a shower and a salesman knocks at the door!!

- b) **Irritations** – these can be things or people.  
Everyone trying to get into the bathroom at the same time or the baby is crying, or you have a rock group next door.  
Physical pain can be an irritation, back ache, headache, dandruff, pimples.
- c) **Inconveniences** – these are usually things.  
A power failure just as you are cooking the dinner or it is getting dark.  
Inconveniences often involve waiting: the part you want for your car is out of stock and has to be put on back order; the queue you joined at the “*checkout*” turns out to be the slowest moving; you get a flat tyre on the way to a wedding or funeral.

**Most of these things in life are uncontrollable or unavoidable.**

How do you deal with such things in life?

**Four typical reactions to these small frustrations in life:**

- a) **Some people resist them.**  
**Fight the frustration, lose their cool, get mad.**  
You can tell a lot about a person by what it takes to irritate them.  
It is amazing how little it takes to irritate drivers on a motorway.  
Having to slow down slightly will cause them to flash their headlights, honk their horn and make rude hand gestures when they do overtake you.
- b) **Some people resent them.**  
**Hold it in, clam up.**  
Internalise their anger and then blame everybody else for their unhappiness.  
Rehearse the frustrating events of the day and end up telling God that life is unfair.
- c) **Some people resign to it.**  
**Give in, grin and bare it.**  
“*Just my luck*”, “*what will be will be*”, stoic approach of “*take it like a man*”.  
Ask how they are and they reply; “*so far so good under the circumstances*”.  
What are you doing under circumstances if you get on top you rest easy, but under them you suffocate.  
They have a “*self pity party*”.  
**Resignation robs you of joy in life, it is no way to live.**
- Don't resist them, don't resent them, don't resign to them.**
- d) **Reduce them.**  
**Treat them for what they are, minor irritations.**  
They are no big deal, not worth getting mad about or generating ulcers for.  
Bring the frustration into perspective; treat it for what it is, insignificant.  
See it for what it is, it is not the end of the world, only a temporary set-back; **reduce the frustration down to size.**

**How do we do this?**

Article in Time magazine on stress rated it as the greatest growing disease in the western world today and the number one killer in heart failure deaths.

Quoting a top ranking cardiologist, when asked about his suggestion for stress management, he gave three very practical suggestions:

- a) don't sweat the **small stuff**;
- b) treat everything as **small stuff**;
- c) if you can't fight it, or you can't flee from it, **just flow with it**.

There are few things in life worth having a heart attack over.

**The trouble is that so many people get so over-concerned about things that won't matter at all in a week's time.**

We over-react because we treat everything as "*big stuff*".

**These suggestions by the cardiologist are all Biblically based but miss out the key to being able to apply them, to see all things as "*small stuff*".**

**d) see everything from God's viewpoint.**

When I look at this frustration from my viewpoint, it looks like a crisis.

If I look at it from God's perspective, it comes into focus for what it really is.

**Wisdom is seeing life from God's point of view.**

**The book of Proverbs shows us how we can see life from God's point of view.**

When we get irritable about frustrations in life it is a warning signal that tells us we are **not** in tune with our Creator God.

When we are in tune with God we remember that God is sovereign and God has everything that is important under His control.

Realise we are in His loving and protecting hands.

**Philippians 1:6** [Living Bible] *"And I am sure that God who began a good work within you will keep right on helping you to grow in His Grace until His task within you is finally finished on that day when Jesus Christ returns."*

**Romans 8:28** [Living Bible] *"And we know that all that happens to us is working for our good if we love God and are fitting into His Plans."*

**Looking at all stressful frustrations in life from God's viewpoint of eternity will reduce them to the size they really are.**

**Isaiah 26:3** [Living Bible] *"He [God] will keep in perfect peace all those who trust in Him, whose thoughts turn often to the Lord!"*

Peace in our lifestyle, peace in our relationships, peace in our fellowship with God, peace in every area of life.

**The fruit of having Holy Spirit [God] dwelling in our lives is peace.**

**Galatians 5:22** [Living Bible] *"But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives He will produce this kind of fruit in us, love, joy, **peace**, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control..."*

**Five practical steps to handle the frustrations of life.**

## **1: Ask ourselves ‘*did I cause it?*’**

**Galatians 6:7** [Living Bible] *“Don’t be misled, remember that you can’t ignore God and get away with it, a man will always reap just the kind of crop he sows!”*

Many things we bring on ourselves.

For example, I’m pressured by an interruption because I have a “*deadline*” to keep.

Nine out of ten times it is the result of procrastination, leaving things until the last moment.

We run out of petrol on a journey far from the nearest service station, but who is to blame?

Very often our frustrations are a reflection of our own attitude.

**Proverbs 27:19** [Amplified] *“As in water face answers to face, so the heart of man to man.”*

**Proverbs 27:17** [Amplified] *“Iron sharpens iron; so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend [to show rage or worthy purpose].”*

**Matthew 7:12** [Amplified] *“So whatever you desire that others would do to and for you, even so do you also to and for them.”*

What we don’t like in other people is often what we don’t like in our own lives, we just mirror that attitude.

Those who give grumpiness will receive grumpiness.

## **2: Ask ourselves ‘*what can I learn from it?*’**

**Use the irritation as an opportunity to grow in character, to be more like Christ.**

**Use it – don’t just endure it.**

**An irritation in an oyster from a grain of sand turns into a pearl.**

**How does God produce the fruit of the spirit in us? He allows us to live in the opposite situation.**

**To produce love He allows us to live among unloving people.**

To produce joy God will allow us to have sorrow that can produce inner joy which is different to outward happiness.

To produce the fruit of patience God will put us in a situation like a traffic jam on a “*freeway*” [most times a misnomer] or a long checkout queue with a deadline to keep.

**There is not one situation in life that we cannot learn from if we are willing to have our attitude changed by the Holy Spirit.**

## **3: Thank God in the situation that is a frustration.**

The two hardest verses in the Bible to obey are:

**Philippians 4:6** [Living Bible] *“Don’t worry about anything; instead pray about everything; tell God your needs and don’t forget to thank Him for His Answers.”* [Which may sometimes be ‘no’]

**1 Thessalonians 5:18** [Living Bible] *“No matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God’s Will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.”*

Be thankful **in** any situation **not for** the situation.

It may be a bad situation **not** of God’s will for you, but be thankful that God will turn it into good in the end.

**Opportunities to grow may come to us disguised as irritations.**

#### **4: Turn the frustration into a funny.**

Look at irritation from a humorous viewpoint.

**Proverbs 17:22** [Living Bible] *“A cheerful heart does good like medicine...”*

**Philippians 4:4** [Living Bible] *“Always be full of joy in the Lord; I say it again, rejoice.”*

**Laughter is the shock absorber of life.**

It lightens the load, it makes things more palatable.

A sense of humour is God’s antidote to anger.

You cannot laugh at a situation and *“blow up”* at the same time.

**Look at life as a gift and humour as a tool to be used to soften the blows that life will bring.**

**Nehemiah 8:10** [NIV] *“... do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”*

**“Don’t sweat the small stuff”** for it is all *“small stuff”* from God’s viewpoint.

#### **5: Ask God to fill you with His Love.**

Why that!!

**1 Corinthians 13:5** [Living Bible] *“... love is **not** irritable or touchy.”*

**Love is self-giving not self serving.**

**The number one reason we get frustrated and up tight is because we think everything and everyone has to revolve around our needs, and when they don’t we get irritated.**

**Frustration is an ego problem**, so that when our life is interrupted, irritated or inconvenienced, we get uptight and offended.

*“How dare you interrupt my life.”*

**Love concentrates on the other person.**

Love says, *“I make your needs my needs.”*

Love says, *“I will try to walk in your shoes to see the situation from your viewpoint.”*

**The reason we get “uptight” in stressful situations is we want to be the centre, with everything revolving around us.**

**When we are filled with God's Love nothing can irritate us, but when we are filled with anger everything will irritate us.**

**The difference is what is inside of us, not the situation.**

**The difference is how we choose to respond.**

When we squeeze a tube, whatever is inside the tube will come out.

When we are squeezed by stressful frustrating situations, whatever is inside us will come out.

Love or anger, humility or pride, the natural rebellious human mind or the mind of Christ.

**Love is the substance that diffuses potential problems.**

**How do we know if we are filled with love?**

**If we put people first!!**

**Christ throughout His Ministry was constantly interrupted and inconvenienced but He always found time for people who needed him.**

People were always a priority in His life.

Christ illustrated this principle in the parable of the Good Samaritan [**Luke 10:30-37**].

**Only the Samaritan put other people first.**

The priest and the Levite, religious people, put their own schedule before the person who was in need, they saw that person on the roadside as an interruption, inconvenience or irritation.

**The Samaritan was willing to give the time and pay the cost because people in his life had a priority.**

How many parents don't have time for their children?

How many children don't have time for their elderly parents?

How many husbands don't have time for their wives?

How many wives don't have time for their husbands?

**People are a priority.**

**What did we do this last week with the irritations and interruptions in our lives?**

Did we **resist** them and blow up?

Did we **resent** them and blame others?

Did we **resign** ourselves to them and have a self pity party?

Or did we **reduce** them to the size they really are by:-

Seeing them from God's viewpoint then:-

Asking ourselves: a) did I cause it?

- b) what can I learn from it?
- c) thank God in the frustration?
- d) turn the frustration into a funny?
- e) ask God to fill us with His Love to ensure we diffuse the potential problem by giving priority to people.

**This coming week God will again, through interruptions, irritations and inconveniences, give us the chance to choose how we deal with them.**

**This is where Christianity becomes real in our day-to-day life and our attitude to it.**