

## Stress Out Part 1: Constant Suspense

*"When a gentle south wind began to blow, they saw their opportunity; so they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete. Before very long, a wind of **hurricane force**, called the Northeaster, swept down from the island. The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we **gave way to it** and **were driven along**. As we passed to the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were hardly able to make the lifeboat secure, so the men hoisted it aboard. Then they passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it together. Because they were afraid they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along. We took such a **violent battering** from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, **we finally gave up all hope of being saved**. After they had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: "Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island." On the fourteenth night we were **still being driven** across the Adriatic Sea, when about midnight the sailors sensed they were approaching land. They took soundings and found that the water was a hundred and twenty feet deep. A short time later they took soundings again and found it was ninety feet deep. Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and **prayed for daylight**. In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from the bow. Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved." So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it drift away. Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. "For the last fourteen days," he said, "you have been in **constant suspense** and have gone without food—you haven't eaten anything. Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head." After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves."*

Acts 27:13-36 NIV

**Suspense** – a state or condition of mental uncertainty awaiting a decision or outcome, usually accompanied by a degree of apprehension or anxiety.

**Constant** – something that doesn't go away. It denotes mental direction.

*"These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have **peace**. In the world you have **tribulation**, but take **courage**; I have **overcome** the world."* John 16:33 NASB1995

✓ Storms

✓ Social media

✓ Isolation

### 1. Strengthen your ship with truth.

*"**Fix these words** of mine in your hearts and minds; **tie them** as symbols on your hands and **bind them** on your foreheads." Deuteronomy 11:18 NIV*

### 2. Stay anchored to hope.

*"We have this **hope as an anchor** for the soul, firm and secure." Hebrews 6:19 NIV*

### 3. Stop the non-essentials.

*"**Better one handful** with tranquillity than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind." Ecclesiastes 4:6 NIV*

*"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit **he prunes** so that it will be even more fruitful." John 15:1-2 NIV*

### 4. Seek God's voice.

*"Whether you turn to the right or to the left, **your ears will hear a voice** behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it." Isaiah 30:21 NIV*

### 5. Serve and save others.

*"To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might **save some**." 1 Corinthians 9:22 NIV*

### 6. Slow down for sustenance.

*"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and **I will give you rest**. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will **find rest for your souls**. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30 NIV*