



January 12, 2021

Dear Friends,

When life is in turmoil, as it is today, and upsetting emotions (anxiety, anger, fear, sadness...) are capturing too many hours of your day, what do you do? Pick up a good book? Listen to music? Pour yourself a cup of tea? Go for a walk/run? Talk to a friend?

Each of these can be a good coping mechanism for calming yourself and regaining a sense of serenity. Of course, as people of faith, we know that prayer and spiritual reflection are top recommended elixirs for peace.

One of the first steps in prayer and spiritual reflection is to calm yourself. That is easier said than done, but I recommend utilizing LSD. No, not the *drug*! Rather Long, Slow, Deep breaths.

Here is what I suggest. Close your eyes and slowly inhale, filling your lungs beyond normal capacity. Then, once you have taken in as much oxygen as you can, slowly exhale, emitting every ounce of air you just inhaled. Do this at least five times and DO NOT RUSH. Again, your focus is Lonnnngggg, Sloooowwww, Deeeppppp breaths.

Many find it helpful to repeat a mantra in their minds as they calmly and gently inhale and exhale. Here are three that I occasionally use as I am preparing to pray or to reflect on Scripture or simply to quiet my mind. I inhale with my focus on my expanding lungs. Then, as I exhale, I say in my mind the first line: *Be still and know that God is here*. I do this three times. After repeating line one three times, I move to the second line and repeat it three times. I do the same for lines three, four, and five. Why not give it a try right now? Try LSD!

Be still and know that God is here  
Be still and know that God is  
Be still and know  
Be still  
Be

Here is another mantra I use:

The Lord is gracious and abounding in steadfast love  
The Lord is gracious and abounding  
The Lord is gracious  
The Lord is  
The Lord

*continued* →



And another:

Come into God's presence with joy and thanksgiving  
Come into God's presence with joy  
Come into God's presence  
Come into God  
Come

Exaggerated inhales and exhales not only help to clear your mind, they also help to relax the tension in your body. That's why another perfect occasion to breathe deeply and repeat these words is when you turn off the lights, set your head on your pillow and prepare to sleep. Mentally, set your worries on the nightstand next to your bed. You can pick them up again in the morning, but they do not need to prevent you from sleeping.

Finding peace of mind is extremely difficult during unusually stressful days. However, our faith can be a lifeline to prevent us from going under.

May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.\*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg".

Gregory Knox Jones  
*Senior Pastor/Head of Staff*

P. S. If you wish to join us for in-person worship in the sanctuary this Sunday, January 17, please [click here](#) to make a reservation.

\* Philippians 4:7