

HOLDING UP UNDER PRESSURE

The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

—1 John 4:4

INTRODUCTION

Kids are under a lot of pressure these days—to do well in school, to do well in sports, to be popular with their peers. There are other pressures as well. If a child's family doesn't have enough money to pay the bills, it puts pressure on the child. If a bully is always harassing a kid on the playground, that creates pressure too. Illness and injury create their own kind of pressure. Moving to a new neighborhood and a new school puts pressure on a child as well. That's a lot of pressure! The good news is that despite whatever kinds of pressure you face every day, you don't have to go through life feeling stressed out. There's a very effective way to handle the pressure you're under. I'll bet you can't wait to find out what it is!

Today's devotion is based on 1 John 4:4, which says, "The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." The devotion is called "Holding Up under Pressure."

DEVOTION

As snow swirled, Leo and his dad pulled their golf clubs out of the SUV. "This isn't the kind of weather I was hoping for during spring break," Leo said.

His dad grinned. "I know. But we're making the best of it!" Closing the hatchback, he said, "Let's go hit a bucket of balls."

Leo followed his dad inside the big, white dome of the indoor golf center. It was made of a soft, tent-like material.

Gazing overhead, Leo asked, "How does this thing stay up?"

His dad replied, "It's inflated with air. See those blowers? The dome stays up because the air pressure inside is greater than the air pressure outside."

Satan puts pressure on you to sin or to be afraid. But you have the Holy Spirit inside you! That gives you the strength to hold up under this pressure. God's Spirit enables you to stand up under other pressures too, for example, the pressure of worrying you'll do poorly on tests or in sports. God's Spirit in you is mightier than any pressure you feel from the outside.

PEOPLE IN BIBLE TIMES

The Jewish leaders ordered Peter and John to stop preaching about Jesus. But Peter and John were filled with God's Spirit. That gave them the courage to declare that they wouldn't stop.

QUESTIONS

1. Everyone write down, or just think about, which of life's pressures are bothering you most right now. Then make a commitment to pray tonight and ask God's Spirit to help you hold up under them. Does anyone want to share what their biggest pressures are today?
2. How has God's Spirit helped you to hold up under pressure in the past? Does that give you confidence that he will help you now and in the future?
3. If you have the Holy Spirit inside you, does that mean you don't have to do anything at all to be able to handle life's pressures?

Answer: You need to *ask* for the Holy Spirit's help when pressures threaten you; you need to *rely on* his help to withstand them; and then you need to *obey* when he shows you the things you can do to deal with them. In other words, you have to exercise your faith!

4. If a person is a Christian, they have the Holy Spirit living inside them. But what if they *still* feel crushed by life's pressures?

Answer: It's true that the Holy Spirit lives inside everyone who has invited him in through faith in Christ. But if you're just letting him occupy a small space inside you, you're only as strong as a partially filled balloon. You need to be filled up by God's Spirit, so make room for the Holy Spirit by getting rid of anything inside you that would get in his way, and ask God to fill you completely. Then you'll be better able to withstand life's pressures.

5. If a person is filled with the Holy Spirit, is that *all* they need to stand up under pressure?

Answer: In some cases, it is! But God doesn't usually expect Christians to handle life's pressures alone. He's put them together into a community called the church, and that community makes them strong. So go to other believers—especially older, more mature ones—and ask them for prayer, advice, and help when life's pressures start to get to you.