

QUALITY
OF
LIFE
BIBLE
STUDY



Juggling Life[©]

COMPILED BY
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JUGGLING LIFE

Quality of Life Series

LEADER: Are you juggling life?

- Are all your balls sometimes in the air at once and you don't know when or where they're gonna land?
- Is your life one of balance or is it always crazy and you find yourself wondering where on earth you're gonna get the time to get it all done?
- Does it ever feel like you're losing your marbles?
- Are there areas of your life that are neglected?

Are you anxious...stressed...tired run down....is this starting to sound like a commercial?

Today we're going to look at some prescriptions.

READER: "America's #1 Health Problem"

Source ~ <http://www.stress.org/problem.htm>

Time magazine's June 6, 1983 cover story called stress "The Epidemic of the Eighties" and referred to it as our leading health problem; there can be little doubt that the situation has progressively worsened since then. Numerous surveys confirm that adult Americans perceive they are under much more stress than a decade or two ago. A 1996 Prevention magazine survey found that almost 75% feel they have "great stress" one day a week with one out of three indicating they feel this way more than twice a week. In the same 1983 survey only 55% said they felt under great stress on a weekly basis. It has been estimated that 75 - 90 percent of all visits to primary care physicians are for stress related problems. Job stress is far and away the leading source of stress for adults but stress levels have also escalated in children, teenagers, college students and the elderly for other reasons, including: increased crime, violence and other threats to personal safety; pernicious peer pressures that lead to substance abuse and other unhealthy life style habits; social isolation and loneliness; the erosion of family and religious values and ties; the loss of other strong sources of social support that are powerful stress busters.

READER: "Antidote to Undue Stress" By Rubel Shelley

Source ~ http://www.heartlight.org/articles/200110/20011019_stress.html (Excerpt)

Life on Planet Earth makes certain demands that must be met. In order to have family and friends, you have to invest yourself in their lives. You have to work in order to carry your part of the load and to provide for yourself and your family. There will be crisis times involving sickness or career setbacks. And there are interruptions that range from untimely phone calls to errands to rude clerks. Since life under these customary conditions is already stressful enough, each of us needs what one writer calls "margin." A margin is the cushion one builds in beyond what will be necessary to face life's routine. It's breathing space between tasks. It's ten minutes between clients to relax and shift gears. It's extra income (or less debt) that prevents an unexpected bill from derailing your life. Whether your solution is Keillor's nap, paying off your credit-card debt, spending more time with your family, or just learning to say no occasionally, you need to find positive ways to guard your life and replenish your reserves. If stress is burning you out, only you (through the Lord) can administer its antidote.

READER: "What Stress Can Do To You" By Paul Faulkner

Source ~ http://www.heartlight.org/family/family_v425.html

There are a lot of things that stress can do for you, and almost all of them are bad! Did you know that stress can cause a wound to take an average of nine days longer to heal?

That is just one of the things medical researchers have found out in testing the effects of stress. Researchers also found, according to new information recently published in the latest medical journal, that psychological stress leaves us more vulnerable to infection by stopping the immune system from operating at peak efficiency.

Jesus said, "*Don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own.*" Now that doesn't mean we ought not plan responsibly for tomorrow, but it does mean that we don't need to worry and fret.

Christians don't worry because we know who holds today together. Thank God, and God bless.

READER: QUOTE #1 Health, CanadaSource ~ <http://www.christianglobe.com/Illustrations/theDetails.asp?whichOne=a&whichFile=anxiety>

Q. What lies at the bottom of the ocean and twitches?

A. A nervous wreck.

READER: 2 Corinthians 4:8-18

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death works in us, but life in you. But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I BELIEVED, THEREFORE I SPOKE," we also believe, therefore we also speak, knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God. Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

READER: "The Ultimate Airplane" Our Daily BreadSource ~ <http://www.gospelcom.net/rbc/odb/odb-03-28-95.shtml>

"Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day." -- 2 Corinthians 4:16

Tremendous heat is generated on the exterior of the Concorde airplane when it flies at supersonic speeds. The temperature on the outer surface of the plane can get to 261 degrees even though the outside air temperature is 69.

The expansion caused by this heat makes the plane 9 inches longer at cruise speed than at rest. The cabin floor of the aircraft is built on rollers and doesn't expand, and four air-conditioning systems keep the inside comfortable. While the outside of the plane is undergoing tremendous stress, the inside climate remains constant.

In today's Scripture, Paul described our "outward man" as perishing under the heat of great pressure, while our "inward man" is renewed day by day. Note the contrast:

On The Outside	On The Inside
Pressed on every side	Not crushed (v.8)
Perplexed	Not in despair (v.8)
Persecuted	Not forsaken (v.9)
Struck down	Not destroyed (v.9)

When faced with trials, we too can have an inner strength through Christ (v.11). Our part is to look beyond the temporal to the eternal (v.18) and to renew our minds daily (Eph. 4:23) through the Word of God and prayer. --DJD

Upon your own strength you cannot rely;
There's a fount of strength and grace on high;
Go to that fount, your strength renew,
And the life of Christ will shine through you. --Hopkins
God's Word refreshes our minds;
God's Spirit renews our strength.

READER: "Room in the Bank" From JOY ALONG THE WAY by Steve GoodierSource ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon3b/room_in_the_bank.htm

Is your life full and busy? Perhaps, too busy? Sometimes we fill our lives so full we don't have time for the important things. At such times I remember a story about a young girl and her bank.

The little girl's father had just given her a silver dollar to put into her bank. She excitedly ran off to her room to

"deposit" the coin. However, in a few minutes she returned and handed the silver coin back to her father.

"Daddy," she said sadly, "here's your dollar back. I can't get it into my bank."

"Why not?" her concerned father asked.

"It's too full," she said, obviously disappointed.

Her father accompanied her back to her room and, sure enough, her bank was too full to accept even one more coin. It was filled with pennies!

Sometimes our lives are like that bank. So full of errands, obligations and activities that neither nurture us nor help anyone else, that there simply is no room left for what is truly important -- the silver dollars.

Grenville Kleiser has said, "To live at this time is an inestimable privilege, and a sacred obligation devolves upon you to make right use of your opportunities. Today is the day in which to attempt and achieve something worthwhile."

Have you made room for any large coins in your bank; for those things you believe to be worthwhile? If not, you may have to remove a few pennies, but I suspect you will never know they are gone!

LEADER READ: "HOW MUCH OF YOUR LIFE IS SPENT WORKING?"

Source ~ <http://www.gospelcom.net/rbc/ds/q0708/point3.html>

- If you figure an average of 8 hours a day, that's one third of your day. (Most folks work more.)
- If you sleep 8 hours, then work takes up half the hours you're awake.
- How about your preparation time and the "unwinding" afterward?
- It's even more when you include the time away from work that you spend thinking about it.
- If you're a homemaker or a single parent, it may seem as if your entire day is spent on the job.
- When it's all added up, for many of us our work is our life—judging by the time and attention we devote to it.

IS THAT GOOD OR BAD?

- The answer to that depends on our needs and our attitude.
- The real issue is not the hours we put in but the reasons for our actions and the kind of people we are on the job.
- AND how responsible we are in other areas of our life.
- AND are we busy being busy or are we accomplishing much with our time.

READER: "Psalm 23 Antithesis" Source unknown

Source ~ <http://www.bible.org/illus/s/s-189.htm#TopOfPage>

The clock is my dictator, I shall not rest.
It makes me lie down only when exhausted.
It leads me into deep depression.
It hounds my soul.
It leads me in circles of frenzy, for activities sake.
Even though I run frantically from task to task, I will never get it all done,
For my ideal is with me.
Deadlines and my need for approval, they drive me.
They demand performance from me, beyond the limits of my schedule.
They anoint my head with migraines,
My in-basket overflows.
Surely fatigue and time pressures shall follow me
All the days of my life.
And I will dwell in the bonds of frustration
Forever

READER: Traits Characteristic of the Stress-Prone

Source ~ <http://www.bible.org/illus/s/s-189.htm#TopOfPage> Source unknown

1. Plans day unrealistically
2. First to arrive, last to leave
3. Always in a hurry

4. Makes no plan for relaxation
5. Feels guilty about doing anything other than work
6. Sees unforeseen problem as a setback or disaster
7. Is always thinking about several other things when working
8. Feels need to be recognized and overextends because of this

READER: QUOTE #2

Source ~ <http://www.bible.org/illus/b/b-86.htm#TopOfPage>

“YOU WILL BREAK THE BOW IF YOU KEEP IT ALWAYS BENT” - Old Greek Motto, Chuck Swindoll The Tale of the Tardy Ox Cart

READER: “Delightful Difficulties” By Rubel Shelly

Source ~ http://www.heartlight.org/articles/200003/20000318_difficulties.html

Deadlines are necessary, and pressure is a good thing. In spite of all the appropriate warnings we hear about stress, the ideal state is not an environment totally without it. At first blush, you may disagree with me. But let me tell you a story.

In an old black-and-white episode of Rod Serling’s “The Twilight Zone,” a mobster dies and finds himself in a gorgeous penthouse in a high-rise casino. Things were perfect! Every time he placed a bet, he won. Every joke he told elicited belly laughs. Every beautiful woman he met gushed affection for him. He had everything he had ever dreamed of having. And it was effortless.

Eventually, however, he began to feel restless and bored. Always winning and always getting just what he wanted had somehow numbed his ability to find joy in anything. In his undemanding environment, he began to crave a challenge.

So the stress-free, always-victorious tough guy went to the gray-haired fellow who appeared to be the curator of the place. He asked if maybe God hadn’t made a mistake by sending him to heaven. The cordial host said that God hadn’t sent him to heaven. In that exchange, the mobster realized he had been consigned to hell.

Although we sometimes fault God for creating Planet Earth as a place that tests our mettle, challenge is wholesome. Just as lifting weights builds muscle, facing the routine trials and occasional catastrophes of life builds character. Against the common view that the Garden of Eden was a paradise environment because there was no adversity there, I beg to differ. Adam and Eve were assigned the task of working to tend the garden. Their sin made the task far more difficult — and downright unpleasant under some conditions. But duty, work, and challenge are necessary elements of a life that would experience the joy of accomplishment and triumph.

We tend to grumble when we think we’re getting a raw deal or that life is being unfair. But it is not unfair for any one of us to have to pull her load, earn his keep, or otherwise justify the space he or she occupies.

“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.” - James 1:2-3

READER: “Are You Exhausted?” Our Daily Bread

Source ~ <http://www.gospelcom.net/rbc/odb/odb-01-03-02.shtml>

“[God] rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.” - Genesis 2:2

In today’s fast-paced world, many people with day planners, pagers, and cell phones are pushing themselves to the limit. Parents, sometimes with furrowed brows and clenched fists, race from soccer fields to school meetings to piano lessons—grabbing meals on the run and collapsing into bed at night exhausted.

Is it possible that we as followers of Jesus Christ also approach life far too intensely? It seems that we often put ourselves under enormous pressure to succeed and to experience everything we possibly can. When we don’t, we can’t forgive ourselves for failing to measure up to our own expectations.

But is this the way God wants us to live? When we examine His creation activity in Genesis 1, we see a simple pattern. First was the work of making the universe—everything from atoms to radishes to cats to man. Then came enjoyment—He saw that “it was very good”. Then came rest . God rested, not because He was weary but because He was satisfied with the completion of a job well done.

Maybe your hectic schedule and intense lifestyle have robbed you of your sense of humor, peace, joy, and satisfaction in life. If so, follow God's pattern of work, enjoyment, and rest. You'll be amazed at how satisfying life can be. —DCE

When we take time for fun and play,
For rest along life's busy way,
And when we pause to kneel and pray —
We are renewed from day to day. — D. De Haan

Beware the barrenness of a busy day. — Redpath

READER: "Proven Stress Reducers"

Source ~ <http://www.bible.org/illus/s/s-189.htm#TopOfPage>

1. Don't rely on your memory. Write down appointments, when to pick up the laundry, when library books are due, etc.
2. Get up 15 minutes earlier in the morning so you don't start the day feeling frazzled.
3. Keep a duplicate car key in your wallet.
4. An instant cure for most stress: 30 minutes of brisk walking or other aerobic exercise.
5. Resolve to be tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant with the weak and erring, for sometime in life you will have been all of these.
6. Say "No, thank you" to extra projects unrealistic on your time or energy.
7. Set up contingency plans—just in case, "If either of us is delayed," "If we get separated in the Mall, here's what we'll do..."
8. Put brain in gear before opening mouth. Before saying anything, ask yourself if what you are about to say is 1)True, 2) Kind, and 3) Necessary.
9. Stop worrying, If something concerns you, do something about it. If you can't do anything about it, let it go.
10. For every one thing that goes wrong, there are 50 to 100 blessings. Count them.
11. Learn to live one day at a time.
12. Every day, do at least one thing you really enjoy.
13. Don't sweat the small stuff.
14. Laugh!
15. Remember that the best things in life aren't things.
16. Add an ounce of love to everything you do.
17. If an unpleasant task faces you, do it early in the day and get it over with.
18. Do one thing at a time.

READER: QUOTE #3

Source ~ <http://www.bible.org/illus/b/b-86.htm#TopOfPage>

"It is more important to know where you are going than to get there quickly. Do not mistake activity for achievement." - Mabel Newcomber

READER: QUOTE #4

Source ~ http://www.wisdomquotes.com/cat_busyness.html

"To fill the hour -- that is happiness." - Ralph Waldo Emerson, Author

LEADER: But the important thing is with what do we fill the hour!

What areas of your life do you feel needs more of your time? (GIVE THEM OPPORUNITY TO RESPOND)

IE: personal, relationships, spiritual, community

READER: Ecclesiastes 3:9-13

What profit has the worker from that in which he labors? I have seen the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied. He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end. I know that nothing is better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives, and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor--it is the gift of God.

LEADER: We need to see the value that God places on our work, and we also need to keep life in balance. We must see work as only one of many important parts of our lives. Don't overdo it nor ignore it. Work is necessary to survival and essential to living out the way God designed us. Work gives us an avenue to fulfill our life's purpose of loving God and loving others as ourselves (Matt. 22:37-40).

READER: Colossians 3:23

Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,

READER: Proverbs 10:4-5

Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, But the hand of the diligent makes rich. He who gathers in summer is a son who acts wisely, But he who sleeps in harvest is a son who acts shamefully.

LEADER: If we are getting too wrapped up in our work, we may be forgetting that ultimately it is the Lord who supplies our needs, not our own efforts.

READER: Psalm 127:1

Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain.

READER: Matthew 6:33

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

READER: Proverbs 16:3

Commit your works to the LORD, And your plans will be established.

LEADER READ: Today in the Word (Excerpt)

Source ~ <http://www.moody.edu/st/tiw/tdw/devotional.cfm?dy=17&mn=08&yr=2000>

What is the most satisfying part of your work? Have you ever thought of making it the focus of your praise for a day?

Try this experiment. The next time you're at work, offer God a brief prayer of thanksgiving when you come to that part of your job that gives you satisfaction and that you particularly enjoy. If it's something you do repeatedly during the day, try thanking God one time for your ability to do the work, the next time for the opportunity, then for the results of the work, and so on.

READER: "Psalm 23 for Busy People"

Source ~ <http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon1a/psalm23.htm>

The Lord is my pace setter, I shall not rush.
He makes me to stop and rest for quiet intervals.
He provides me with images of stillness, which restores my serenity.
He leads me in ways of efficiency, through calmness of mind.

And His guidance is my peace.
Even though I have a great many things to accomplish each day
I will not fret, for His presence is here.
His timelessness, His all-importance will keep me in balance.

He prepares refreshment and renewal in the midst of my activity
By anointing my mind with His oils of tranquility.
My cup of joyous energy overflows.
Surely harmony and effectiveness shall be the fruits of my hour,
For I shall walk in the pace of the Lord and dwell in His house forever.

READER: "Most of Our Time" Our Daily Bread (Excerpt)

We can make the most of our time, yet ignore eternity. We can let the passing dominate the permanent. And we can do it all on a very tight schedule. --HWR

WITHOUT A VIEW OF ETERNITY, WE CANNOT KNOW THE REAL VALUE OF TIME.

READER: QUOTE #5

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon5/chasing_after_the_wind.htm

"No one should ever be too busy or pressured or tired to make a time and place for God in their lives. After all, he has to manage the whole world, and he's never too busy for us." – Sadie and Bessie Delany (The sisters who lived to be 104 and 109...from slave families...one became the first black home economics teacher in NY ..the other the 2nd black woman dentist in NY)

READER: "God's Constant Care" Our Daily Bread

Source ~ <http://www.gospelcom.net/rbc/odb/odb-05-14-97.shtml>

"Thus says the Lord: . . . "I will not forget you." - Isaiah 49:8,15

Some days we find ourselves intensely absorbed in busyness. Our attention must be riveted on the details of our work if we are to do it well.

Sometimes the hours can slip by without even a momentary thought of God. When that happens, it's comforting to know that our heavenly Father has not been too busy to think about us.

We can probably identify with the prayer offered by Sir Jacob Astley before the battle of Edgehill on October 23, 1642: "O Lord, Thou knowest how busy I must be this day. If I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me."

Without using those words as an excuse for spiritual indifference, we can sincerely say what Astley said. And as we lie down at night to rest our weary bodies, we can rest our souls in the assurance that God, who neither slumbers nor sleeps, lovingly watches over us in ceaseless vigilance.

At the same time, though, let's consciously include God in all we do and say--seeking His wisdom, relying on His strength, and praising His goodness. We should not take Him for granted, but we can be grateful that He will not forget us (Isaiah 49:15; Hebrew 13:5). --VCG

Never a heartache and never a groan,
Never a teardrop and never a moan;
Never a danger, but there on the throne,
Moment by moment, He thinks of His own. --Whittle

In God's garden of love, you are His forget-me-not.

READER: Matthew 6:25-34

"For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? "And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life? "And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. "But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith! "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' "For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

READER: "Of Stones and Anxiety" By Jim O'Connell

Source ~ <http://netministries.org/see/devotion.exe/dd00285>

One of the signs that I'm getting too busy and overwhelms by life is when I go into a room and find I can't remember why I walked in there. I think we've all experienced forgetting what it was that we were searching for at some time in our life. Sadly, there are many people who are searching for meaning in their lives, trying to find comfort and hope for both today and tomorrow, yet they have forgotten that God is part of the search. The Spirit of God is nudging them forward while the anxieties of the past and today are clouding their vision of who they seek. When are we focused on what we fear losing we lose the ability to seek the kingdom where there is no fear. We need to stay God centered, lest the world's concerns will crush us. Seek the peace of Christ, Soar into the day on the wings of the Holy Spirit, find your home in the heavenly Father.

Prayer: Lord of creation, you brought order out of chaos, and called it good; you caused the flood waters to recede and gave creation a second chance; you gave Ruth hope even after her husband and father in-law had died; you kept Esther calm while the second in command planned to kill off her people. Help me to hear your voice of assurance today. Strengthen my faith, hope, and courage, casting out the fears and the anxieties of doubt. Let me carry on the work you began in Peter, the rock. Amen.

READER: Galatians 5:22

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

READER: Colossians 3:12-15

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in (one body); and be thankful.

READER: 2 Peter 1:4-8

For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

READER: “The Mason Jar” From: WIT & WISDOM

Source ~ <http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon1a/mason.htm>

A while back I was reading about an expert on subject of time management. One day this expert was speaking to a group of business students and, to drive home a point, used an illustration.

As this man stood in front of the group of high-powered over achievers he said, “Okay, time for a quiz.” Then he pulled out a one-gallon, wide-mouthed mason jar and set it on a table in front of him. Then he produced about a dozen fist-sized rocks and carefully placed them, one at a time, into the jar. When the jar was filled to the top and no more rocks would fit inside, he asked, “Is this jar full?” Everyone in the class said, “Yes.”

Then he said, “Really?” He reached under the table and pulled out a bucket of gravel. Then he dumped some gravel in and shook the jar causing pieces of gravel to work themselves down into the spaces between the big rocks. Then he smiled and asked the group once more, “Is the jar full?” By this time the class was onto him. “Probably not,” one of them answered. “Good!” he replied. And he reached under the table and brought out a bucket of sand. He started dumping the sand in and it went into all the spaces left between the rocks and the gravel. Once more he asked the question, “Is this jar full?” “No!” the class shouted.

Once again he said, “Good!” Then he grabbed a pitcher of water and began to pour it in until the jar was filled to the brim. Then he looked up at the class and asked, “What is the point of this illustration?”

One eager beaver raised his hand and said, “The point is, no matter how full your schedule is, if you try really hard, you can always fit some more things into it!”

“No,” the speaker replied, “that’s not the point. The truth this illustration teaches us is: If you don’t put the big rocks in first, you’ll never get them in at all.”

What are the ‘big rocks’ in your life? A project that YOU want to accomplish? Time with your loved ones? Your faith, your education, your finances? A cause? Teaching or mentoring others? Remember to put these BIG ROCKS in first or you’ll never get them in at all.

READER: Philippians 4:23

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

READER: QUOTE #6

Source ~ http://www.wisdomquotes.com/cat_busyness.html

"Most middle-class Americans tend to worship their work, to work at their play, to play at their worship. As a result, their meanings and values are distorted. Their relationships disintegrate faster than they can keep them in repair, and their lifestyles resemble a cast of characters in search of a plot." - Gordon Dahl quoted in Leadership Magazine

LEADER: WHAT DOES YOUR SCHEDULE LOOK LIKE?

Does it need some prescriptions?

Let's try changing the habits that have turned our lives into a routine.

"How ...when we still have the same responsibilities and the same work schedule....same needs and the same alarm clock."

Here are a few ideas...you can think of others.

- Take a different route to work.
- Listen to a different radio station or a new CD on the way to work or the grocery store.
- Try a different restaurant.
- Join a different group or person during breaks or lunch.
- Place a favorite scripture or saying over your work space.
- Try a new devotional book
- Think... it's not how many hours you put into your work...it's how much work you put into your hours.
- Get an extra hour of rest every so often.
- Surprise your mate or date or friend or a shut-in with a poem or flowers or picnic or a dinner out.
- Take a joy break....you fill in the blank.
- Make new friends--maybe even with someone you can introduce to the Lord Jesus.
- Above all, recognize the challenges that come in getting to know the unfathomable riches and depth of the mind and character of God.
- Count your blessings
- THEN... Take a look back at the past 3 months. You may discover that you've done a lot more cool stuff, and had a lot more excitement and fun than you'd been having, while accomplishing the same amount of work. Your life may really have become quite dynamic...AND BALANCED!

COMMENTS IF TIME:**ALLOW TIME BEFORE CLOSING FOR
PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES:****COPY AND DISTRIBUTE THE FOLLOWING PAGES FOR YOUR READERS**

READERS

“America’s #1 Health Problem”

Time magazine’s June 6, 1983 cover story called stress “The Epidemic of the Eighties” and referred to it as our leading health problem; there can be little doubt that the situation has progressively worsened since then. Numerous surveys confirm that adult Americans perceive they are under much more stress than a decade or two ago. A 1996 Prevention magazine survey found that almost 75% feel they have “great stress” one day a week with one out of three indicating they feel this way more than twice a week. In the same 1983 survey only 55% said they felt under great stress on a weekly basis. It has been estimated that 75 - 90 percent of all visits to primary care physicians are for stress related problems. Job stress is far and away the leading source of stress for adults but stress levels have also escalated in children, teenagers, college students and the elderly for other reasons, including: increased crime, violence and other threats to personal safety; pernicious peer pressures that lead to substance abuse and other unhealthy life style habits; social isolation and loneliness; the erosion of family and religious values and ties; the loss of other strong sources of social support that are powerful stress busters.

“Antidote to Undue Stress” By Rubel Shelley

Life on Planet Earth makes certain demands that must be met. In order to have family and friends, you have to invest yourself in their lives. You have to work in order to carry your part of the load and to provide for yourself and your family. There will be crisis times involving sickness or career setbacks. And there are interruptions that range from untimely phone calls to errands to rude clerks. Since life under these customary conditions is already stressful enough, each of us needs what one writer calls “margin.” A margin is the cushion one builds in beyond what will be necessary to face life’s routine. It’s breathing space between tasks. It’s ten minutes between clients to relax and shift gears. It’s extra income (or less debt) that prevents an unexpected bill from derailing your life. Whether your solution is Keillor’s nap, paying off your credit-card debt, spending more time with your family, or just learning to say no occasionally, you need to find positive ways to guard your life and replenish your reserves. If stress is burning you out, only you (through the Lord) can administer its antidote.

“What Stress Can Do To You” By Paul Faulkner

There are a lot of things that stress can do for you, and almost all of them are bad! Did you know that stress can cause a wound to take an average of nine days longer to heal?

That is just one of the things medical researchers have found out in testing the effects of stress. Researchers also found, according to new information recently published in the latest medical journal, that psychological stress leaves us more vulnerable to infection by stopping the immune system from operating at peak efficiency.

Jesus said, *“Don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own.”* Now that doesn’t mean we ought not plan responsibly for tomorrow, but it does mean that we don’t need to worry and fret.

Christians don’t worry because we know who holds today together. Thank God, and God bless.

QUOTE #1

- Q. What lies at the bottom of the ocean and twitches?
A. A nervous wreck.
-

2 Corinthians 4:8-18

“The Ultimate Airplane”

“Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.” -- 2 Corinthians 4:16

Tremendous heat is generated on the exterior of the Concorde airplane when it flies at supersonic speeds. The temperature on the outer surface of the plane can get to 261 degrees even though the outside air temperature is 69.

The expansion caused by this heat makes the plane 9 inches longer at cruise speed than at rest. The cabin floor of the aircraft is built on rollers and doesn't expand, and four air-conditioning systems keep the inside comfortable. While the outside of the plane is undergoing tremendous stress, the inside climate remains constant.

In today's Scripture, Paul described our “outward man” as perishing under the heat of great pressure, while our “inward man” is renewed day by day. Note the contrast:

On The Outside On The Inside
Pressed on every side Not crushed (v.8)
Perplexed Not in despair (v.8)
Persecuted Not forsaken (v.9)
Struck down Not destroyed (v.9)

When faced with trials, we too can have an inner strength through Christ (v.11). Our part is to look beyond the temporal to the eternal (v.18) and to renew our minds daily (Eph. 4:23) through the Word of God and prayer. --DJD

Upon your own strength you cannot rely;
There's a fount of strength and grace on high;
Go to that fount, your strength renew,
And the life of Christ will shine through you. --Hopkins
God's Word refreshes our minds;
God's Spirit renews our strength.

“Room in the Bank”

Is your life full and busy? Perhaps, too busy? Sometimes we fill our lives so full we don't have time for the important things. At such times I remember a story about a young girl and her bank.

The little girl's father had just given her a silver dollar to put into her bank. She excitedly ran off to her room to “deposit” the coin. However, in a few minutes she returned and handed the silver coin back to her father.

“Daddy,” she said sadly, “here's your dollar back. I can't get it into my bank.”

“Why not?” her concerned father asked.

“It's too full,” she said, obviously disappointed.

Her father accompanied her back to her room and, sure enough, her bank was too full to accept even one more coin. It was filled with pennies!

Sometimes our lives are like that bank. So full of errands, obligations and activities that neither nurture us nor help anyone else, that there simply is no room left for what is truly important -- the silver dollars.

Grenville Kleiser has said, “To live at this time is an inestimable privilege, and a sacred obligation devolves upon you to make right use of your opportunities. Today is the day in which to attempt and achieve something worthwhile.”

Have you made room for any large coins in your bank; for those things you believe to be worthwhile? If not, you may have to remove a few pennies, but I suspect you will never know they are gone!

Traits Characteristic of the Stress-Prone

1. Plans day unrealistically
 2. First to arrive, last to leave
 3. Always in a hurry
 4. Makes no plan for relaxation
 5. Feels guilty about doing anything other than work
 6. Sees unforeseen problem as a setback or disaster
 7. Is always thinking about several other things when working
 8. Feels need to be recognized and overextends because of this
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QUOTE #2

“YOU WILL BREAK THE BOW IF YOU KEEP IT ALWAYS BENT” - Old Greek Motto

“Delightful Difficulties” By Rubel Shelly

Deadlines are necessary, and pressure is a good thing. In spite of all the appropriate warnings we hear about stress, the ideal state is not an environment totally without it. At first blush, you may disagree with me. But let me tell you a story.

In an old black-and-white episode of Rod Serling’s “The Twilight Zone,” a mobster dies and finds himself in a gorgeous penthouse in a high-rise casino. Things were perfect! Every time he placed a bet, he won. Every joke he told elicited belly laughs. Every beautiful woman he met gushed affection for him. He had everything he had ever dreamed of having. And it was effortless.

Eventually, however, he began to feel restless and bored. Always winning and always getting just what he wanted had somehow numbed his ability to find joy in anything. In his undemanding environment, he began to crave a challenge.

So the stress-free, always-victorious tough guy went to the gray-haired fellow who appeared to be the curator of the place. He asked if maybe God hadn’t made a mistake by sending him to heaven. The cordial host said that God hadn’t sent him to heaven. In that exchange, the mobster realized he had been consigned to hell.

Although we sometimes fault God for creating Planet Earth as a place that tests our mettle, challenge is wholesome. Just as lifting weights builds muscle, facing the routine trials and occasional catastrophes of life builds character. Against the common view that the Garden of Eden was a paradise environment because there was no adversity there, I beg to differ. Adam and Eve were assigned the task of working to tend the garden. Their sin made the task far more difficult — and downright unpleasant under some conditions. But duty, work, and challenge are necessary elements of a life that would experience the joy of accomplishment and triumph.

We tend to grumble when we think we’re getting a raw deal or that life is being unfair. But it is not unfair for any one of us to have to pull her load, earn his keep, or otherwise justify the space he or she occupies.

“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.” - James 1:2-3

“Are You Exhausted?”

“[God] rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.” - Genesis 2:2

In today’s fast-paced world, many people with day planners, pagers, and cell phones are pushing themselves to the limit. Parents, sometimes with furrowed brows and clenched fists, race from soccer fields to school meetings to piano lessons—grabbing meals on the run and collapsing into bed at night exhausted.

Is it possible that we as followers of Jesus Christ also approach life far too intensely? It seems that we often put ourselves under enormous pressure to succeed and to experience everything we possibly can. When we don’t, we can’t forgive ourselves for failing to measure up to our own expectations.

But is this the way God wants us to live? When we examine His creation activity in Genesis 1, we see a simple pattern. First was the work of making the universe—everything from atoms to radishes to cats to man. Then came enjoyment—He saw that “it was very good”. Then came rest . God rested, not because He was weary but because He was satisfied with the completion of a job well done.

Maybe your hectic schedule and intense lifestyle have robbed you of your sense of humor, peace, joy, and satisfaction in life. If so, follow God’s pattern of work, enjoyment, and rest. You’ll be amazed at how satisfying life can be. —DCE

When we take time for fun and play,
For rest along life’s busy way,
And when we pause to kneel and pray —
We are renewed from day to day. — D. De Haan

Beware the barrenness of a busy day. — Redpath

“Proven Stress Reducers”

1. Don’t rely on your memory. Write down appointments, when to pick up the laundry, when library books are due, etc.
2. Get up 15 minutes earlier in the morning so you don’t start the day feeling frazzled.
3. Keep a duplicate car key in your wallet.
4. An instant cure for most stress: 30 minutes of brisk walking or other aerobic exercise.
5. Resolve to be tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant with the weak and erring, for sometime in life you will have been all of these.
6. Say “No, thank you” to extra projects unrealistic on your time or energy.
7. Set up contingency plans—just in case, “If either of us is delayed,” “If we get separated in the Mall, here’s what we’ll do...”
8. Put brain in gear before opening mouth. Before saying anything, ask yourself if what you are about to say is 1)True, 2) Kind, and 3) Necessary.
9. Stop worrying, If something concerns you, do something about it. If you can’t do anything about it, let it go.
10. For every one thing that goes wrong, there are 50 to 100 blessings. Count them.
11. Learn to live one day at a time.
12. Every day, do at least one thing you really enjoy.
13. Don’t sweat the small stuff.
14. Laugh!
15. Remember that the best things in life aren’t things.
16. Add an ounce of love to everything you do.
17. If an unpleasant task faces you, do it early in the day and get it over with.
18. Do one thing at a time.

QUOTE #3

“It is more important to know where you are going than to get there quickly. Do not mistake activity for achievement.” - Mabel Newcomber

QUOTE #4

"To fill the hour -- that is happiness." - Ralph Waldo Emerson, Author

Ecclesiastes 3:9-13

Colossians 3:23

Proverbs 10:4-5

Psalm 127:1

Matthew 6:33

Proverbs 16:3

"Psalm 23 for Busy People"

The Lord is my pace setter, I shall not rush.
He makes me to stop and rest for quiet intervals.
He provides me with images of stillness, which restores my serenity.
He leads me in ways of efficiency, through calmness of mind.

And His guidance is my peace.
Even though I have a great many things to accomplish each day
I will not fret, for His presence is here.
His timelessness, His all-importance will keep me in balance.

He prepares refreshment and renewal in the midst of my activity
By anointing my mind with His oils of tranquility.
My cup of joyous energy overflows.
Surely harmony and effectiveness shall be the fruits of my hour,

For I shall walk in the pace of the Lord and dwell in His house forever.

"Most of Our Time"

We can make the most of our time, yet ignore eternity. We can let the passing dominate the permanent. And we can do it all on a very tight schedule. --HWR

WITHOUT A VIEW OF ETERNITY, WE CANNOT KNOW THE REAL VALUE OF TIME.

QUOTE #5

"No one should ever be too busy or pressured or tired to make a time and place for God in their lives. After all, he has to manage the whole world, and he's never too busy for us." – Sadie and Bessie Delany (The sisters who lived to be 104 and 109...from slave families...one became the first black home economics teacher in NY ..the other the 2nd black woman dentist in NY)

“God’s Constant Care”

“Thus says the Lord: . . . “I will not forget you.” - Isaiah 49:8,15

Some days we find ourselves intensely absorbed in busyness. Our attention must be riveted on the details of our work if we are to do it well.

Sometimes the hours can slip by without even a momentary thought of God. When that happens, it's comforting to know that our heavenly Father has not been too busy to think about us.

We can probably identify with the prayer offered by Sir Jacob Astley before the battle of Edgehill on October 23, 1642: “O Lord, Thou knowest how busy I must be this day. If I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me.”

Without using those words as an excuse for spiritual indifference, we can sincerely say what Astley said. And as we lie down at night to rest our weary bodies, we can rest our souls in the assurance that God, who neither slumbers nor sleeps, lovingly watches over us in ceaseless vigilance.

At the same time, though, let's consciously include God in all we do and say--seeking His wisdom, relying on His strength, and praising His goodness. We should not take Him for granted, but we can be grateful that He will not forget us (Isaiah 49:15; Hebrew 13:5). --VCG

Never a heartache and never a groan,
Never a teardrop and never a moan;
Never a danger, but there on the throne,
Moment by moment, He thinks of His own. --Whittle

In God's garden of love, you are His forget-me-not.

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Matthew 6:25-34

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“Of Stones and Anxiety” By Jim O’Connell

One of the signs that I’m getting too busy and overwhelms by life is when I go into a room and find I can’t remember why I walked in there. I think we’ve all experienced forgetting what it was that we were searching for at some time in our life. Sadly, there are many people who are searching for meaning in their lives, trying to find comfort and hope for both today and tomorrow, yet they have forgotten that God is part of the search. The Spirit of God is nudging them forward while the anxieties of the past and today are clouding their vision of who they seek. When are we focused on what we fear losing we lose the ability to seek the kingdom where there is no fear. We need to stay God centered, lest the world’s concerns will crush us. Seek the peace of Christ, Soar into the day on the wings of the Holy Spirit, find your home in the heavenly Father.

Prayer: Lord of creation, you brought order out of chaos, and called it good; you caused the flood waters to recede and gave creation a second chance; you gave Ruth hope even after her husband and father-in-law had died; you kept Esther calm while the second in command planned to kill off her people. Help me to hear your voice of assurance today. Strengthen my faith, hope, and courage, casting out the fears and the anxieties of doubt. Let me carry on the work you began in Peter, the rock. Amen.

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Galatians 5:22

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Colossians 3:12-15

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2 Peter 1:4-8

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“The Mason Jar”

A while back I was reading about an expert on subject of time management. One day this expert was speaking to a group of business students and, to drive home a point, used an illustration.

As this man stood in front of the group of high-powered over achievers he said, “Okay, time for a quiz.” Then he pulled out a one-gallon, wide-mouthed mason jar and set it on a table in front of him. Then he produced about a dozen fist-sized rocks and carefully placed them, one at a time, into the jar. When the jar was filled to the top and no more rocks would fit inside, he asked, “Is this jar full?” Everyone in the class said, “Yes.”

Then he said, “Really?” He reached under the table and pulled out a bucket of gravel. Then he dumped some gravel in and shook the jar causing pieces of gravel to work themselves down into the spaces between the big rocks. Then he smiled and asked the group once more, “Is the jar full?” By this time the class was onto him. “Probably not,” one of them answered. “Good!” he replied. And he reached under the table and brought out a bucket of sand. He started dumping the sand in and it went into all the spaces left between the rocks and the gravel. Once more he asked the question, “Is this jar full?” “No!” the class shouted.

Once again he said, “Good!” Then he grabbed a pitcher of water and began to pour it in until the jar was filled to the brim. Then he looked up at the class and asked, “What is the point of this illustration?”

One eager beaver raised his hand and said, “The point is, no matter how full your schedule is, if you try really hard, you can always fit some more things into it!”

“No,” the speaker replied, “that’s not the point. The truth this illustration teaches us is: If you don’t put the big rocks in first, you’ll never get them in at all.”

What are the ‘big rocks’ in your life? A project that YOU want to accomplish? Time with your loved ones? Your faith, your education, your finances? A cause? Teaching or mentoring others? Remember to put these BIG ROCKS in first or you’ll never get them in at all.

Philippians 4:23

QUOTE #6

“Most middle-class Americans tend to worship their work, to work at their play, to play at their worship. As a result, their meanings and values are distorted. Their relationships disintegrate faster than they can keep them in repair, and their lifestyles resemble a cast of characters in search of a plot.” - Gordon Dahl quoted in Leadership Magazine
