

QUALITY
OF
LIFE
BIBLE
STUDY



Stress[©]

COMPILED BY
S.MCRAE

“STRESS ARREST” **Quality of Life Series**

LEADER: We live in:

Source ~ <http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermon.asp?SermonID=47309>

We live in:
The age of the half-read page
And the quick hash and the mad dash.
The bright night and the nerves tight,
The plan hop, the brief stop,
The brain strain and the heart pain.
The cat naps till the spring snaps,
And the fun's done.

LEADER: 43% of all adults suffer adverse health effects from stress. In fact, 75% to 90% of doctor's visits are for stress-related ailments and complaints.

Source ~ <http://www.stressrelieftechnologies.com/contact.html>

LEADER: Today we're gonna look at some natural tranquilizers.

READER: “The Stress Doctor”

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

Stress is an unavoidable consequence of life. As Hans Selye (who coined the term as it is currently used) noted, “Without stress, there would be no life”. However, just as distress can cause disease, it seems plausible that there are good stresses that promote wellness. Stress is not always necessarily harmful. Winning a race or election can be just stressful as losing, or more so, but may trigger very different biological responses. Increased stress results in increased productivity -- up to a point. However, this level differs for each of us. It's very much like the stress on a violin string. Not enough produces a dull, raspy sound. Too much tension makes a shrill, annoying noise or snaps the string. However, just the right degree can create a magnificent tone. Similarly, we all need to find the proper level of stress that allows us to perform optimally and make melodious music as we go through life.

The body may contain its own best pharmacy. The American Institute of Stress is committed to developing a better understanding of how to tap into the vast innate potential that resides in each of us for preventing disease and promoting health. Good health is more than just the absence of illness. Rather, it is a very robust state of physical and emotional well-being, that acknowledges the importance and inseparability of mind/body relationships. We welcome your joining us in the pursuit of learning how to harness stress, so that it can work for you, and make you more productive, rather than self-destructive.

.Always fight for your highest attainable aim but never put up resistance in vain... Hans Selye

READER: QUOTE # 1

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Stress>

“You don't get ulcers from what you eat. You get them from what's eating you.” - Vicki Baum 1888-1960, American Writer

READER: QUOTE # 2

Source ~ <http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Stress>

“For fast-acting relief try slowing down.” - Lily Tomlin 1939-, American Comedienne

READER: “America's Number One 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: “Stress or Distress” By Sheldon Friesen (Excerpt)

Source ~ <http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermon.asp?SermonID=47309>

Not All Stress Is Bad

Scientists tell us there are two kinds of stress.

Eustress is the positive side of stress. When the body encounters manageable stress such as exercise, muscles grow and lung capacity increases. Weight lifters know that after stressing the muscles, they need to rest in order to repair; without it, muscles become damaged and injury results. Likewise, when we encounter a difficult leadership challenge, our character and skills can grow. When we go through periods where there is no opportunity to rest and repair, distress is the result.

1 Peter 1:6-7 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Distress is the negative side of stress. When stress causes strain we begin to suffer. Some experience headaches, others chest pains, some stomach problems, still others sleeplessness. All are the warning signs of too much distress in our lives. If we ignore them long enough, permanent damage results.

READER: “What Stress Can Do To You” by Dr. 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: II Corinthians 4:8-18

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you. It is written: “I believed; therefore I have spoken. “With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence. All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

READER: “The Ultimate Airplane” Our Daily Bread

Source ~ <http://www.gospelcom.net/rbc/odb/odb-01-03-02.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 127° C (261° F) even though the outside air temperature is -56° C (-69° F). 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: "Am I Too Tired?" Leadership Journal (Excerpt) By Archibald D. Hart, Ph.D., FPPR., author of Adrenaline and Stress

Source ~ <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/8l4/8l4042.html>

A self-test to determine whether your fatigue is normal or a sign you need help:

Feeling tired or lacking energy can be perfectly normal—for short periods. But if it's severe or longstanding, it can be a sign of a serious problem such as biological depression, or stress co-opting the biochemical routes used by your immune system. Complicating the problem, sluggishness can be either mental or physical. Chronic fatigue, combined with muscle weakness, can be a symptom of several developing disorders, including arthritis.

How serious is your fatigue?

- 1. Do you feel moody and have difficulty getting up in the morning?
- 2. Do you experience slight fevers, signs of the flu, sore throat, or tender lymph nodes?
- 3. Is the morning your worst time of the day, with the evenings being better?
- 4. Do you fall asleep easily but wake early without being able to fall asleep again?
- 5. Have you ever found yourself staring at a computer monitor, keyboard, or book, barely able to keep your head from dropping ("microsleeps")?
- 6. Do you feel mentally sluggish, confused, and unresponsive?
- 7. Has your short-term memory declined, and do you have trouble concentrating?
- 8. Has your daily activity dropped below 50 percent of what it was before?

You can reverse fatigue by lowering your stress level, taking a vacation, a sabbatical, or increasing your rest and sleep time. If these responses don't help, consult a professional.

But if fatigue is longstanding and serious. A break won't relieve it. Chronic stress is a depletion of adrenaline, immune system deficiency, or reduced brain neurotransmitters. You can only relieve this form of fatigue by making major lifestyle changes. And as always it is a good idea to consult your physician.

READER: "Psalm 23 Antithesis"

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>

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: “Test on Monkey’s”

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

Responsibility for others is one of the chief causes of tension in executives. To prove this idea, an experiment was conducted some time ago with two monkeys. Scientists devised a method of giving one of the monkeys “executive” training under carefully controlled laboratory conditions. The monkey chosen for executive training was strapped in a chair with his feet on a plate capable of giving him a minor electric shock. Then they put a light over the desk and turned the light on 20 seconds before each shock. A lever was placed by the monkey’s chair. If he pulled the lever after the light came on, the light would go out and there would be no shock. The executive monkey learned to avoid the shock very quickly. The scientists then placed another monkey across the room with the same setup, (Excerpt) that the second monkey’s lever didn’t work. However, the monkeys soon learned that the first monkey’s lever would work for both, turning off the second monkey’s light and protecting him from shock as well. This made the first monkey an executive, since he was now responsible for preventing shock for the second one. The first monkey was intelligent. He quickly took over, protecting both himself and his colleague from shock, responding to both lights or either light without difficulty. There was no outward change in either monkey as the experiment continued, but after awhile the executive monkey, responding to the stress of responsibility for another, developed stomach ulcers. The second monkey’s health remained unchanged. - Source unknown

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: “The Forgotten Virtue” by Phil Ware (Excerpt)

Source ~ http://www.heartlight.org/articles/200105/20010507_gentleness.html

By most accounts, life is extremely busy for most of us. Productivity is the bottom line. Stress, financial concerns, work output, and “making things happen” push us to “cut through the fat” and to “get the work out.” Being rude, untactful, “brutally honest,” and harsh become virtues that need no apology if they help to get done what needs to be done. Courtesy, affability, and tenderness are shoved aside for traits that get more immediate results. In this environment, gentleness has become the forgotten virtue. In fact, gently dealing with situations and people are often judged as being weak, or unwilling to confront difficult circumstances and people. One of the challenges of being the people of God in a rude and harsh world is to reflect the character of our God, who with strength confronts sin while dealing with us sinners with gentleness and grace. Yes, there is a time when God’s patience is exhausted and he deals harshly with sinners. Most of the time, however, God repeatedly and gently extends his grace to redeem and save. His goal is to transform us and make us holy, not shame, blame, and condemn us. His desire is to comfort us and to restore us, not to push us away or to shove us aside so he can spend time with more productive creatures. So as you dress in the morning, don’t forget to clothe yourself with gentleness. As you pray for the lost and the words you will use to share Christ with them, don’t forget to ask God to fill you with wisdom and gentleness as you deal with them. As you face harsh and unfair criticism and opposition, don’t forget to respond with a strong resolve to be holy and gentle before those who align themselves against you and the work of the Lord.

LEADER: Continuing from heartlight.org

Gently dealing with those who are broken is a trait of God himself, as he gently deals with his people who are most vulnerable gently and tenderly.

READER: Isaiah 40:11

*Like a shepherd He will tend His flock,
In His arm He will gather the lamb; And carry them in His bosom;
He will gently lead the nursing ewes*

LEADER: Gentleness is a mark of the Spirit’s work in our lives.

READER: Galatians 5:22-23

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

LEADER: And a trait we show in our dealings with all people because of the Lord’s presence in our lives

READER: Philippians 4:23

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

LEADER: As God’s chosen people, who have been loved by the Creator of the universe and graced with his mercy and kindness, we are to clothe ourselves with gentleness in our dealings with others

READER: Colossians 3:12

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

LEADER: As we flee from evil, we are to pursue gentleness as we seek to live godly lives

READER: 1 Timothy 6:11

But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.

LEADER: As we deal with brothers and sisters in Christ who have gone astray, gotten caught in sin, or oppose the truth, we are to reach out to them with gentleness instead of harsh judgment or self-righteous superiority

READER: Galatians 6:1

Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

LEADER: Gentleness is especially needed as we seek to share our hope in Christ with those who do not yet know him as Lord

READER: 1 Peter 3:15

But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

LEADER: While gentleness may not be in vogue in today's world, it is demanded of us as we seek to reflect the holiness of our eternal God. God calls us to reflect this holy character in our daily lives, regardless of the decadence or harshness of the culture around us

READER: 1 Peter 1:15-16

But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

LEADER: God wants us to be fruitful and productive in our holiness

READER: 2 Peter 1:6-8

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. 8 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.

LEADER: Part of that productivity and character, however, is dealing with each other with gentleness and respect

READER: 1 Peter 3:15

but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

LEADER: And show family kindness and love

LEADER: And remember this: "Some fights are lost even when you win. A bulldog can whip a skunk, but is it worth it!" Quote By Vance Havner "Strife, Not Worth It"

Source ~ <http://r.searchhippo.com/r3.php?i=7&q=sermon%2Billustrations&u=Source> ~ <http://www.gospelcom.net/rbc/odb/odb-01-03-02.shtml>

READER: "Are You Exhausted?" Our Daily Bread

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

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

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" (v.31). Then came rest (2:1-2). 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: “Antidote to Excess Stress” by Rubel Shelly

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

Garrison Keillor underwent heart surgery at the Mayo Clinic in July. Now he is extolling its benefits. And he isn't talking about better blood flow. According to him, the upside of his surgery is that it has given him permission to take naps. "God never intended for me to work hard. I can see that now," he wrote in a Time Magazine essay. "My true calling in life is to live unencumbered and follow the fleeting impulses of my heart and take a nap around 2 p.m." The Man of Lake Wobegon, whose fictional tales of events from Ralph's Pretty Good Grocery and the Chatterbox Cafe have charmed us for years, is onto something. All of us need to learn it — and, I could hope, before having to have cardiac surgery. We humans can't overextend ourselves forever without paying a horrible price in poor health, damaged relationships, and diminished spirituality. 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: “The Stress Dot”

It was a deep royal purple. As I stared at this little stress dot—clinically called a “Bio-dot”—I marveled. This tiny invention actually changes colors with fluctuations of tension levels. It is black when you are stress, and then it changes to gradations of brown, mustard, green, and blue, until the dot reaches purple, the most “relaxed” color. I had been given such a dot one other time, years ago, and I vividly recall how horrified I was to learn that I functioned at “black”—stressed—all the time! The dot was black when I drove, when I lectured, when I ate, when I exercised, when I flitted around the house trying to get everything done that needed to be done. It only changed to green when I was asleep. But yesterday, when I had received the little dot on my hand, it had immediately turned green. I was surprised, but I figured it would change as soon as I started lecturing. Imagine my astonishment at the end of the workday when my dot was still green! Then I got in the car and drove home. Green. It stayed green when I was assaulted at the door by the dog, my husband, and the two wild men who live there—my sons. It even stayed that deep emerald color while they all told me about all their problems of the day, while I made lunches for the next day, while I put the boys to bed, did my email, and even while I exercised. But the next day, as I was having my morning quiet time with the Lord, the color changed—into a deep purple, the most relaxed of the colors. But my quiet time was cut short this morning by the fact that I had to send a difficult email. As I pressed the “send” button, I checked the dot, fully expecting it to no longer be purple. Sure enough, it had changed, but to my surprise, it wasn’t “black” as I had anticipated; it was green! And when my oldest son came downstairs for his morning prayer, the dot returned to its deep purple color!

Curious!

Why did I function at black all those years ago, when I now function at green? The stressors haven't decreased. On the contrary, these are some of the most stressful times of my life. There is only one difference that I can pinpoint—only one thing that has happened in my life between when I used that first stress dot and now. I came to know God as a personal friend and Savior. And over the past six years, God has been helping me to rely more and more on Him, to cast all of my worries upon Him and to let HIM handle my problems. Is this what made the difference? Is this what has caused my core body tension to reduce

significantly, despite the presence of excessive outside stressors that I can't remove? Is this the reason why the dot is a rich purple, the most relaxed of the colors, during Bible study and prayer? You figure it out!

"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

READER: "Christian Ways To Reduce Stress" #1

Taken from an e-mail from Sister McRae

An Angel says, "Never borrow from the future. If you worry about what may happen tomorrow and it doesn't happen, you have worried in vain. Even if it does happen, you have to worry twice."

1. Pray
2. Go to bed on time.
3. Get up on time so you can start the day unrushed.
4. Say No to projects that won't fit into your time schedule, or that will compromise your mental health.
5. Delegate tasks to capable others.
6. Simplify and unclutter your life.
7. Less is more. (Although one is often not enough, two are often too many.)
8. Allow extra time to do things and to get to places.
9. Pace yourself. Spread out big changes and difficult projects over time; don't lump the hard things all together.
10. Take one day at a time.
11. Separate worries from concerns. If a situation is a concern, find out what God would have you do and let go of the anxiety. If you can't do anything about a situation, forget it.
12. Live within your budget; don't use credit cards for ordinary purchases.
13. Have backups; an extra car key in your wallet, an extra house key buried in the garden, extra stamps, etc.
14. K.M.S. (Keep Mouth Shut). This single piece of advice can prevent an enormous amount of trouble.
15. Do something for the Kid in You everyday.
16. Carry a Bible with you to read while waiting in line.
17. Get enough rest.
18. Eat right.

READER: "Christian Ways To Reduce Stress" #2

Taken from an e-mail from Sister McRae

19. Get organized so everything has its place.
 20. Listen to a tape while driving that can help improve your quality of life.
 21. Write down thoughts and inspirations.
 22. Every day, find time to be alone.
 23. Having problems? Talk to God on the spot. Try to nip small problems in the bud. Don't wait until it's time to go to bed to try and pray.
 24. Make friends with Godly people.
 25. Keep a folder of favorite scriptures on hand.
 26. Remember that the shortest bridge between despair and hope is often a good "Thank you Jesus."
 27. Laugh.
 28. Laugh some more!
 29. Take your work seriously, but not yourself at all.
 30. Develop a forgiving attitude (most people are doing the best they can).
 31. Be kind to unkind people (they probably need it the most).
 32. Sit on your ego.
 33. Talk less; listen more.
 34. Slow down.
 35. Remind yourself that you are not the general manager of the universe.
 36. Every night before bed, think of one thing you're grateful for that you've never been grateful for before.
- GOD HAS A WAY OF TURNING THINGS AROUND FOR YOU.

"If God is for us, who can be against us?" - Romans 8:31

READER: "Stress Busters" By Steve Shepherd

Source ~ <http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermon.asp?SermonID=34402&page=2>

LAUGH OFTEN:

"A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones." - Proverbs 17:22

A cheerful heart, a cheerful face, and a laughing mouth is good medicine. It's good for the person who is laughing and for the person who is hearing the laughter. In *The Anatomy of an Illness: As Perceived by the Patient*, Norman Cousins tells of being hospitalized with a rare, crippling disease. When he was diagnosed as incurable, Cousins checked out of the hospital. Aware of the harmful effects that negative emotions can have on the body, Cousins reasoned the reverse was true. So he borrowed a movie projector and prescribed his own treatment, consisting of Marx Brothers films and old "Candid Camera" reruns. It didn't take long for him to discover that 10 minutes of laughter provided two hours of pain-free sleep. Amazingly, his debilitating disease was eventually reversed. Laughter is good medicine. It can bring about a certain amount of healing in the body and the soul. Apparently, good clean humor can bless us and help us to be relieved of some stress. Perhaps we all should do what Norman Cousins did: go see a good funny movie or perhaps rent one. I've seen some good ones over the years and they were worth their weight in gold. **WHAT'S THE FUNNIEST, CLEAN MOVIE YOU'VE EVER SEEN?** I'll tell you mine, if you tell me yours. If it's on video, rent it and watch it again. We all need a good laugh now and then.

READER: "Stress Busters" #2 Steve Shepherd

Source ~ <http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermon.asp?SermonID=34402&page=3>

ENJOY LIFE:

"So, I commend the enjoyment of life, because nothing is better for a man under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. Then joy will accompany him in his work all the days of the life God has given him under the sun." - Ecclesiastes 8:15

Howard Hendricks tells about a good friend of his. He said, "Not long ago I lost one of my best friends, a woman 86-years-old, the most exciting teacher I've ever been exposed to. The last time I saw her on planet earth was at a Christian party. We were sitting there on eggshells, looking pious (sounds like MCC people), when she walked in and said, 'Well, Hendricks, I haven't seen you for a long time. What are the five best books you've read in the past year?' She had a way of changing a group's dynamics. Her philosophy was, 'Let's not bore each other with each other. Let's get into a discussion, and if we can't find anything to discuss, let's get into an argument.' She was 83-years-old on her last trip to the Holy Land. She went there with a group of NFL football players. (Wow! What a woman!) One of my most vivid memories of her is seeing her out front yelling back to them, 'COME ON MEN, GET WITH IT!' She died in her sleep at her daughter's home in Dallas. Her daughter told me that just before she died, she had written out her goals for the next ten years." Brethren, there was a woman who obviously enjoyed life! No doubt, she was absolutely convinced that God wanted her to enjoy life as long as there was breath left in her body. **AND WE SHOULD TOO!** God is not some kind of "spoil sport." God is not dull! God is not a bore! He is not against us laughing, having a good time, and enjoying life. **HE IS FOR US!** He wants us to be able to enjoy what He has created. Why do you think He made it in the first place? To share in it. To rejoice in it. To praise Him in it and for it!

"For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving." - 1 Timothy 4:4

Paul was writing these words in regard to food. Nothing is to be rejected! Not even bad beef! (That's a private joke) Ha! Ha!

Brothers and sisters, what is it that you enjoy in life? Hunting and fishing? Gardening? Planting flowers? Playing in the dirt? Playing golf? Lifting weights? Snowmobiling? Washing clothes? Washing dishes? Running the vacuum? (Ha!) Running? Walking? Biking? Jogging? Jazzercising? (Go girls!) Going? Going shopping? Whatever it is, do it, give thanks for it, and rejoice in it, because it is from God to be enjoyed! **AND IT CAN BE A GREAT STRESS RELIEVER!** Erma Bombeck once said, "Seize the moment. Remember all those women on the Titanic who waved off the dessert cart."

ENJOY LIFE. Enjoy the things that God has given you. Be thankful for them. Don't ever forget to say, "Thank you, Lord." And allow these things to relieve some of the pressures and stress of this life. You need them. And I need them.

READER: “Stress Busters” #3 Steve Shepherd

Source ~ <http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermon.asp?SermonID=34402&page=3>

The popular news commentator, Paul Harvey, tells about the time when he was baptized in a small country church while on vacation. He described his baptism as “the experience which made his life complete.” He said, “The preacher had said there was nothing magic in the water. Yet as I descended into its depth and rose again, I knew something life-changing had happened. A cleansing inside out. No longer did there seem to be two uncertain contradictory Paul Harvey’s - just one immensely happy one. “Afterward, I cried like a baby, a kind of release, I suppose. The evolving joy has been escalating. The change this simple act has made in my life is so immense as to be indescribable. Since totally yielding to Christ through baptism, my heart can’t stop singing. I’ve shaken off a lifelong habit of fretting over small things...” It sounds to me like Paul Harvey found a “stress buster” in fearing the Lord and honoring Him in Christian baptism. Could that be what we all need in order to overcome stress in our lives? Do we need to fear Him more? Honor Him more? Yes. Love for the Lord is the greatest stress reliever there is!

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 a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors” James 1:2-3, The Message.

LEADER: “Delightful Difficulties” (Continued)

Your greatest fear today is actually your greatest opportunity. With God as your partner, you can face the challenge and grow from it. The ultimate vexation is neither struggle nor failure but a life so monotonous that it offers no victories over hardship.

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

READERS

“The Stress Doctor”

Stress is an unavoidable consequence of life. As Hans Selye (who coined the term as it is currently used) noted, “Without stress, there would be no life”. However, just as distress can cause disease, it seems plausible that there are good stresses that promote wellness. Stress is not always necessarily harmful. Winning a race or election can be just stressful as losing, or more so, but may trigger very different biological responses. Increased stress results in increased productivity -- up to a point. However, this level differs for each of us. It's very much like the stress on a violin string. Not enough produces a dull, raspy sound. Too much tension makes a shrill, annoying noise or snaps the string. However, just the right degree can create a magnificent tone. Similarly, we all need to find the proper level of stress that allows us to perform optimally and make melodious music as we go through life. The body may contain its own best pharmacy. The American Institute of Stress is committed to developing a better understanding of how to tap into the vast innate potential that resides in each of us for preventing disease and promoting health. Good health is more than just the absence of illness. Rather, it is a very robust state of physical and emotional well-being, that acknowledges the importance and inseparability of mind/body relationships. We welcome your joining us in the pursuit of learning how to harness stress, so that it can work for you, and make you more productive, rather than self-destructive.

...Always fight for your highest attainable aim but never put up resistance in vain... Hans Selye

QUOTE # 1

“You don’t get ulcers from what you eat. You get them from what’s eating you.” - Vicki Baum 1888-1960, American Writer

QUOTE # 2

“For fast-acting relief try slowing down.” - Lily Tomlin 1939-, American Comedienne

“America’s Number One 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.

“Stress or Distress”

Not All Stress Is Bad. Scientists tell us there are two kinds of stress.

Eustress is the positive side of stress. When the body encounters manageable stress such as exercise, muscles grow and lung capacity increases. Weight lifters know that after stressing the muscles, they need to rest in order to repair; without it, muscles become damaged and injury results. Likewise, when we encounter a difficult leadership challenge, our character and skills can grow. When we go through periods where there is no opportunity to rest and repair, distress is the result.

1 Peter 1:6-7 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Distress is the negative side of stress. When stress causes strain we begin to suffer. Some experience headaches, others chest pains, some stomach problems, still others sleeplessness. All are the warning signs of too much distress in our lives. If we ignore them long enough, permanent damage results.

“What Stress Can Do To You”

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.

II 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 127° C (261° F) even though the outside air temperature is -56° C (-69° F). 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

“Am I Too Tired?”

A self-test to determine whether your fatigue is normal or a sign you need help:

Feeling tired or lacking energy can be perfectly normal—for short periods. But if it's severe or longstanding, it can be a sign of a serious problem such as biological depression, or stress co-opting the biochemical routes used by your immune system. Complicating the problem, sluggishness can be either mental or physical. Chronic fatigue, combined with muscle weakness, can be a symptom of several developing disorders, including arthritis.

How serious is your fatigue?

- 1. Do you feel moody and have difficulty getting up in the morning?
- 2. Do you experience slight fevers, signs of the flu, sore throat, or tender lymph nodes?
- 3. Is the morning your worst time of the day, with the evenings being better?
- 4. Do you fall asleep easily but wake early without being able to fall asleep again?
- 5. Have you ever found yourself staring at a computer monitor, keyboard, or book, barely able to keep your head from dropping (“microsleeps”)?
- 6. Do you feel mentally sluggish, confused, and unresponsive?
- 7. Has your short-term memory declined, and do you have trouble concentrating?
- 8. Has your daily activity dropped below 50 percent of what it was before?

You can reverse fatigue by lowering your stress level, taking a vacation, a sabbatical, or increasing your rest and sleep time. If these responses don't help, consult a professional. But if fatigue is longstanding and serious. A break won't relieve it. Chronic stress is a depletion of adrenaline, immune system deficiency, or reduced brain neurotransmitters. You can only relieve this form of fatigue by making major lifestyle changes. And as always it is a good idea to consult your physician.

“Psalm 23 Antithesis”

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

“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
-

“Test on Monkey’s”

Responsibility for others is one of the chief causes of tension in executives. To prove this idea, an experiment was conducted some time ago with two monkeys. Scientists devised a method of giving one of the monkeys “executive” training under carefully controlled laboratory conditions. The monkey chosen for executive training was strapped in a chair with his feet on a plate capable of giving him a minor electric shock. Then they put a light over the desk and turned the light on 20 seconds before each shock. A lever was placed by the monkey’s chair. If he pulled the lever after the light came on, the light would go out and there would be no shock. The executive monkey learned to avoid the shock very quickly. The scientists then placed another monkey across the room with the same setup, (Excerpt) that the second monkey’s lever didn’t work. However, the monkeys soon learned that the first monkey’s lever would work for both, turning off the second monkey’s light and protecting him from shock as well. This made the first monkey an executive, since he was now responsible for preventing shock for the second one. The first monkey was intelligent. He quickly took over, protecting both himself and his colleague from shock, responding to both lights or either light without difficulty. There was no outward change in either monkey as the experiment continued, but after awhile the executive monkey, responding to the stress of responsibility for another, developed stomach ulcers. The second monkey’s health remained unchanged.

“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.
-

“The Forgotten Virtue”

By most accounts, life is extremely busy for most of us. Productivity is the bottom line. Stress, financial concerns, work output, and “making things happen” push us to “cut through the fat” and to “get the work out.” Being rude, untactful, “brutally honest,” and harsh become virtues that need no apology if they help to get done what needs to be done. Courtesy, affability, and tenderness are shoved aside for traits that get more immediate results. In this environment, gentleness has become the forgotten virtue. In fact, gently dealing with situations and people are often judged as being weak, or unwilling to confront difficult circumstances and people. One of the challenges of being the people of God in a rude and harsh world is to reflect the character of our God, who with strength confronts sin while dealing with us sinners with gentleness and grace. Yes, there is a time when God’s patience is exhausted and he deals harshly with sinners. Most of the time, however, God repeatedly and gently extends his grace to redeem and save. His goal is to transform us and make us holy, not shame, blame, and condemn us. His desire is to comfort us and to restore us, not to push us away or to shove us aside so he can spend time with more productive creatures. So as you dress in the morning, don’t forget to clothe yourself with gentleness. As you pray for the lost and the words you will use to share Christ with them, don’t forget to ask God to fill you with wisdom and gentleness as you deal with them. As you face harsh and unfair criticism and opposition, don’t forget to respond with a strong resolve to be holy and gentle before those who align themselves against you and the work of the Lord.

Isaiah 40:11

Galatians 5:22-23

Philippians 4:23

Colossians 3:12

1 Timothy 6:11

Galatians 6:1

1 Peter 3:15

1 Peter 1:15-16

2 Peter 1:6-8

1 Peter 3:15

“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” (v.31). Then came rest (2:1-2). 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. —

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

“Antidote to Excess Stress”

Garrison Keillor underwent heart surgery at the Mayo Clinic in July. Now he is extolling its benefits. And he isn't talking about better blood flow. According to him, the upside of his surgery is that it has given him permission to take naps. “God never intended for me to work hard. I can see that now,” he wrote in a Time Magazine essay. “My true calling in life is to live unencumbered and follow the fleeting impulses of my heart and take a nap around 2 p.m.” The Man of Lake Wobegon, whose fictional tales of events from Ralph’s Pretty Good Grocery and the Chatterbox Cafe have charmed us for years, is onto something. All of us need to learn it — and, I could hope, before having to have cardiac surgery. We humans can't overextend ourselves forever without paying a horrible price in poor health, damaged relationships, and diminished spirituality. 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.

“The Stress Dot”

It was a deep royal purple. As I stared at this little stress dot—clinically called a “Bio-dot”—I marveled. This tiny invention actually changes colors with fluctuations of tension levels. It is black when you are stress, and then it changes to gradations of brown, mustard, green, and blue, until the dot reaches purple, the most “relaxed” color. I had been given such a dot one other time, years ago, and I vividly recall how horrified I was to learn that I functioned at “black”—stressed—all the time! The dot was black when I drove, when I lectured, when I ate, when I exercised, when I flitted around the house trying to get everything done that needed to be done. It only changed to green when I was asleep. But yesterday, when I had received the little dot on my hand, it had immediately turned green. I was surprised, but I figured it would change as soon as I started lecturing. Imagine my astonishment at the end of the workday when my dot was still green! Then I got in the car and drove home. Green. It stayed green when I was assaulted at the door by the dog, my husband, and the two wild men who live there—my sons. It even stayed that deep emerald color while they all told me about all their problems of the day, while I made lunches for the next day, while I put the boys to bed, did my email, and even while I exercised. But the next day, as I was having my morning quiet time with the Lord, the color changed—into a deep purple, the most relaxed of the colors. But my quiet time was cut short this morning by the fact that I had to send a difficult email. As I pressed the “send” button, I checked the dot, fully expecting it to no longer be purple. Sure enough, it had changed, but to my surprise, it wasn't “black” as I had anticipated; it was green! And when my oldest son came downstairs for his morning prayer, the dot returned to its deep purple color!

Curious!

Why did I function at black all those years ago, when I now function at green? The stressors haven't decreased. On the contrary, these are some of the most stressful times of my life. There is only one difference that I can pinpoint—only one thing that has happened in my life between when I used that first stress dot and now. I came to know God as a personal friend and Savior. And over the past six years, God has been helping me to rely more and more on Him, to cast all of my worries upon Him and to let HIM handle my problems. Is this what made the difference? Is this what has caused my core body tension to reduce significantly, despite the presence of excessive outside stressors that I can't remove? Is this the reason why the dot is a rich purple, the most relaxed of the colors, during Bible study and prayer? You figure it out!

“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

“Christian Ways To Reduce Stress” #1

An Angel says, “Never borrow from the future. If you worry about what may happen tomorrow and it doesn’t happen, you have worried in vain. Even if it does happen, you have to worry twice.”

1. Pray
 2. Go to bed on time.
 3. Get up on time so you can start the day unrushed.
 4. Say No to projects that won’t fit into your time schedule, or that will compromise your mental health.
 5. Delegate tasks to capable others.
 6. Simplify and unclutter your life.
 7. Less is more. (Although one is often not enough, two are often too many.)
 8. Allow extra time to do things and to get to places.
 9. Pace yourself. Spread out big changes and difficult projects over time; don’t lump the hard things all together.
 10. Take one day at a time.
 11. Separate worries from concerns. If a situation is a concern, find out what God would have you do and let go of the anxiety. If you can’t do anything about a situation, forget it.
 12. Live within your budget; don’t use credit cards for ordinary purchases.
 13. Have backups; an extra car key in your wallet, an extra house key buried in the garden, extra stamps, etc.
 14. K.M.S. (Keep Mouth Shut). This single piece of advice can prevent an enormous amount of trouble.
 15. Do something for the Kid in You everyday.
 16. Carry a Bible with you to read while waiting in line.
 17. Get enough rest.
 18. Eat right.
-

“Christian Ways To Reduce Stress” #2

19. Get organized so everything has its place.
20. Listen to a tape while driving that can help improve your quality of life.
21. Write down thoughts and inspirations.
22. Every day, find time to be alone.
23. Having problems? Talk to God on the spot. Try to nip small problems in the bud. Don’t wait until it’s time to go to bed to try and pray.
24. Make friends with Godly people.
25. Keep a folder of favorite scriptures on hand.
26. Remember that the shortest bridge between despair and hope is often a good “Thank you Jesus.”
27. Laugh.
28. Laugh some more!
29. Take your work seriously, but not yourself at all.
30. Develop a forgiving attitude (most people are doing the best they can).
31. Be kind to unkind people (they probably need it the most).
32. Sit on your ego.
33. Talk less; listen more.
34. Slow down.
35. Remind yourself that you are not the general manager of the universe.
- 36 . Every night before bed, think of one thing you’re grateful for that you’ve never been grateful for before.
GOD HAS A WAY OF TURNING THINGS AROUND FOR YOU.

“If God is for us, who can be against us?”-- Romans 8:31

“Stress Busters”

LAUGH OFTEN:

“A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.”-- Proverbs 17:22

A cheerful heart, a cheerful face, and a laughing mouth is good medicine. It's good for the person who is laughing and for the person who is hearing the laughter. In *The Anatomy of an Illness: As Perceived by the Patient*, Norman Cousins tells of being hospitalized with a rare, crippling disease. When he was diagnosed as incurable, Cousins checked out of the hospital. Aware of the harmful effects that negative emotions can have on the body, Cousins reasoned the reverse was true. So he borrowed a movie projector and prescribed his own treatment, consisting of Marx Brothers films and old “Candid Camera” reruns. It didn't take long for him to discover that 10 minutes of laughter provided two hours of pain-free sleep. Amazingly, his debilitating disease was eventually reversed. Laughter is good medicine. It can bring about a certain amount of healing in the body and the soul. Apparently, good clean humor can bless us and help us to be relieved of some stress. Perhaps we all should do what Norman Cousins did: go see a good funny movie or perhaps rent one. I've seen some good ones over the years and they were worth their weight in gold. **WHAT'S THE FUNNIEST, CLEAN MOVIE YOU'VE EVER SEEN?** I'll tell you mine, if you tell me yours. If it's on video, rent it and watch it again. We all need a good laugh now and then.

“Stress Busters” #2

ENJOY LIFE:

“So, I commend the enjoyment of life, because nothing is better for a man under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. Then joy will accompany him in his work all the days of the life God has given him under the sun.”-- Ecclesiastes 8:15

Howard Hendricks tells about a good friend of his. He said, “Not long ago I lost one of my best friends, a woman 86-years-old, the most exciting teacher I've ever been exposed to. The last time I saw her on planet earth was at a Christian party. We were sitting there on eggshells, looking pious (sounds like MCC people), when she walked in and said, ‘Well, Hendricks, I haven't seen you for a long time. What are the five best books you've read in the past year?’ “She had a way of changing a group's dynamics. Her philosophy was, ‘Let's not bore each other with each other. Let's get into a discussion, and if we can't find anything to discuss, let's get into an argument.’ “She was 83-years-old on her last trip to the Holy Land. She went there with a group of NFL football players. (Wow! What a woman!) One of my most vivid memories of her is seeing her out front yelling back to them, ‘COME ON MEN, GET WITH IT!’ “She died in her sleep at her daughter's home in Dallas. Her daughter told me that just before she died, she had written out her goals for the next ten years.” Brethren, there was a woman who obviously enjoyed life! No doubt, she was absolutely convinced that God wanted her to enjoy life as long as there was breath left in her body. **AND WE SHOULD TOO!** God is not some kind of “spoil sport.” God is not dull! God is not a bore! He is not against us laughing, having a good time, and enjoying life. **HE IS FOR US!** He wants us to be able to enjoy what He has created. Why do you think He made it in the first place? To share in it. To rejoice in it. To praise Him in it and for it!

“For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving.”-- I Timothy 4:4

Paul was writing these words in regard to food. Nothing is to be rejected! Not even bad beef! (That's a private joke) Ha! Ha!

Brothers and sisters, what is it that you enjoy in life? Hunting and fishing? Gardening? Planting flowers? Playing in the dirt? Playing golf? Lifting weights? Snowmobiling? Washing clothes? Washing dishes? Running the vacuum? (Ha!) Running? Walking? Biking? Jogging? Jazzercising? (Go girls!) Going? Going shopping? Whatever it is, do it, give thanks for it, and rejoice in it, because it is from God to be enjoyed! **AND IT CAN BE A GREAT STRESS RELIEVER!** Erma Bombeck once said, “Seize the moment. Remember all those women on the Titanic who waved off the dessert cart.”

ENJOY LIFE.

Enjoy the things that God has given you. Be thankful for them. Don't ever forget to say, “Thank you, Lord.” And allow these things to relieve some of the pressures and stress of this life. You need them. And I need them.

“Stress Busters” #3

The popular news commentator, Paul Harvey, tells about the time when he was baptized in a small country church while on vacation. He described his baptism as “the experience which made his life complete.” He said, “The preacher had said there was nothing magic in the water. Yet as I descended into its depth and rose again, I knew something life-changing had happened. A cleansing inside out. No longer did there seem to be two uncertain contradictory Paul Harvey’s - just one immensely happy one. “Afterward, I cried like a baby, a kind of release, I suppose. The evolving joy has been escalating. The change this simple act has made in my life is so immense as to be indescribable. Since totally yielding to Christ through baptism, my heart can’t stop singing. I’ve shaken off a lifelong habit of fretting over small things...” It sounds to me like Paul Harvey found a “stress buster” in fearing the Lord and honoring Him in Christian baptism. Could that be what we all need in order to overcome stress in our lives? Do we need to fear Him more? Honor Him more? Yes. Love for the Lord is the greatest stress reliever there is!

“Delightful Difficulties”

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 a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors”* James 1:2-3, The Message.
