

Stress tends to visit us when we're tired, when we're sick, when we're driving through heavy traffic, when we're late for an important meeting, or if we've taken on too many responsibilities. When circumstances are out of our control, we feel stress. When our basic needs are not being met or our safety is threatened, we tend to get anxious (stressed).

Stress and anxiety for a Christian can take on many different shapes and forms, yet in general, for most Christians, stress boils down to one idea - lack of trust in God. Now don't misunderstand. Most Christians do believe that God is in charge. They believe He is the author of eternal salvation. And they believe that God gives all that we need for life.

The problem comes when, like Peter walking on the water, we take our eyes/focus off Jesus, and begin to be troubled by too many things going on around us. Life is very complicated, and we are much too vulnerable in our human condition to ever escape the inevitable battles with stress.

But for Christians, stress does have a positive side. It can be a reminder that our lives have drifted away from God. It might be an indicator that we have stopped depending upon him daily for strength. Perhaps we have forgotten the many promises in his Word?

Next week we will consider some Biblical ways that Christians can cope with stress. But for today, I wanted to share with you a cute but thought provoking list of stress reducers that Faye showed to me.

WAYS TO HELP REDUCE YOUR STRESS

- Accept the fact that some days you are the pigeon, and some days you are the statue.
- Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them.
- Simplify and unclutter your life.
- Go to bed on time and get up on time so you can start the day fresh and unrushed.
- Allow extra time to get to places.
- Say "no" to projects that won't fit into your time schedule.
- Delegate tasks to capable others.
- Remind yourself that you are not the general manager of the universe.
- Slow down. Read a book. Play a game with a child.
- Tell your spouse/parents/children you love them...every day...and at different times.
- Be kind to unkind people—they probably need it most.
- Develop a forgiving attitude—most people are doing the best they can.
- Laugh. Laugh some more. A whole lot more.
- Take one day at a time. If you worry about what may happen tomorrow, you are going to miss something wonderful today.
- Every night, before you go to bed, think of one thing you are grateful for that you can't remember being grateful for...before.

Dealing With Stress

(Part 2)

Back on September 20th, I wrote about dealing with stress. While stress can have a negative effect on the Christian's faithfulness and trust in God, it also has some positive qualities. Stress can serve as a reminder that we do depend upon God for everything...even though we sometimes seem to forget that fact. (Refer back to the original article for some tips on reducing stress).

Now, please don't misunderstand. Some stress is needed in life. Blood pressure is essential for the body to function. That is bringing stress to the arteries and veins of the circulatory system. A certain amount of stress helps keep one awake and alert while driving. Deadlines and responsibilities cause some stress, that result in getting done those things that are expected of us. But excessive stress is the enemy of healthy life: physically & spiritually speaking.

Today, I want to share some Biblical ways we can cope with the stresses of life. Certainly there are several practical things one can do to reduce excessive stress: getting sufficient rest, proper diet, regular exercise, and balancing the use of one's time with ministry, work and family. However, from a spiritual standpoint, stress management begins and ends with three basic disciplines.

1. PRAYER

Instead of worrying over our problems, thus making things worse by adding stress and anxiety, the Bible tells us to take them to God in prayer. Philippians 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (NKJV).

2. MEDITATION on the WORD of GOD

Throughout the Scriptures one will find the amazing promises of God. Contemplating these promises will help us deal with worry, fear and stress. 2 Peter 1:3-4 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (NKJV).

3. PRAISE

Praise & worship will help take our minds off of self and our struggles and redirect the focus upon God. If I start singing praises to God, my entire outlook improves. The problems and struggles are still there, but we can put them in better perspective whenever we bring God into the picture. Hebrews 13:15 Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name (NKJV).

The next time you're feeling overly stressed, remember to turn to God, who is our strength and our shield. While stress cannot be avoided, it can be managed by applying these principles and activities whenever you are feeling "Stressed Out".

Dealing With Stress (PART 3)

This is the third installment of our examination of stress in the life of a Christian. While there are many causes of excessive stress in our lives, there is really only one solution—Stronger Faith In God. The Bible says in 2 Peter 1:3 that as we grow in our knowledge of God, through his divine power He gives us **everything we need for life and godliness**. God's Word is alive and powerful (Hebrews 4:12); useful for correcting us when we are wrong and teaching us what is right (2 Timothy 3:16). So, it makes sense for us to look to God's Word as we face every problem or trial that will tend to add stress to our lives. So in this article we will examine some faith building verses to remember when facing life's challenges.

Faith Building Bible Verses

When feeling Anxiety *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* (Philippians 4:6-7 NIV)

Are you Brokenhearted The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. (Psalm 34:18 NASB)

In times of Confusion For God is not the author of confusion but of peace (1 Corinthians 14:33 NKJV)

Defeat We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair (2 Corinthians 4:8 NIV)

Disappointment And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28 NKJV)

Doubt I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you. (Matthew 17:20 NIV)

In moments of Failure For a righteous man falleth seven times, and riseth up again; But the wicked are overthrown by calamity. Proverbs 24:16 ASV

Fear For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV)

Grief Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. (Psalm 23:4 NKJV)

Impatience Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord!

(Psalm 27:14 NKJV)

Impossibilities "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." (Luke 18:27 NKJV)

Inability And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:8 NKJV)

Inadequacy I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13 NKJV)

Lacking Direction Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6 NKJV)

Lacking Understanding If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. (James 1:5 NIV)

Next time, we will conclude this study on dealing with stress. Until then, continue working on building up your most holy faith. (Jude vs. 20), and let God's Word help you to keep on breathing and be at peace.

Dealing With Stress (PART 4 of 4)

This is the final part of the consideration of excessive stress in the life of a Christian. Ultimately we must have a strong faith in God in order to properly deal with life's stresses. So, we conclude this study by completing our list of **FAITH-BUILDING VERSES** from God's Word.

If Lacking Wisdom – But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — and righteousness and sanctification and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30 NKJV).

Loneliness – Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you." (Deuteronomy 31:6 NKJV).

Mourning – Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted (Matthew 5:4 NKJV).

Poverty – And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19 NKJV).

Rejection – For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39 NKJV).

Sorrow – I will turn their mourning into joy and will comfort them and give them joy for their sorrow (Jeremiah 31:13 NASB).

Temptation – Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. 13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it (1 Corinthians 10:12-13 NKJV).

Tiredness – But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:31 NKJV).

Unforgiveness – There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit (Romans 8:1-2 NKJV).

Unloved – Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! (1 John 3:1 NKJV).

Weakness – "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9 NKJV).

Weariness – Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30 NKJV).

Worry – Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you (1 Peter 5:6-7 NKJV).

Lower your stress level by praying, praising & pondering god's Word. Your faith will grow, and your excessive stress will go.