

## Overcoming Stress

### By Pastor Don Nicely

One of the bywords for the modern life is stress. We live in such a fast paced, pressure cooker world that stress has reached epidemic proportion. Nobody is immune from stress. Christians and Non-Christians alike both suffer from stress. I pray this teaching will give you some constructive steps to combating this common dilemma.

Stress is best defined as; any factor that creates a physical, emotional, or mental strain on someone. It is quite simply an unresolved tension that arises from life's pressures, irritations, and demands. Even through we may have problems defining stress, we can see its effects all around us. Paul put it this way in speaking about his own life.

*2 Corinthians 1:8 (NKJV)<sup>8</sup> For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.*

Stress can be identified by some very destructive symptoms. Things like being dependent on drugs and alcohol just to cope with life are a couple common ones. Other things like loss of appetite, high blood pressure, physical weariness, frequent headaches, mental and emotional fatigue, stomach problems, heart problems, hypertension, migraines, ulcers, and insomnia, or just having a constant frustration with life in general. A person may also experience a common sense of anxiety and irritability that can undermine a person's sense of purpose, direction, and meaning of life.

Let's now look at what some common sources of stress can be. For most of us it's living a contemporary life with constant deadlines, and ever-changing challenges to face. Just the strain of modern demands and responsibilities can cause us to have a poor diet and to overextend ourselves by not getting adequate rest and relaxation. This combined with lack of exercise and having a wrong set of priorities, and suffering from fear of an uncertain future can all lead to a significant amount of stress. But regardless of the source- we must not allow it to accumulate or we will be struck with a condition known as the "*Burnout Syndrome*." This syndrome puts us in a state of disillusionment that can lead to spiritual exhaustion.

God in his gracious providence has given us some guidelines or steps that we can follow that will lead us successfully in combating the power of stress in our life.

### Steps to overcoming stress

**1—Look at things from God's perspective...**Even through life can be filled with a wide variety of circumstances we must learn to view them from the positive and not the negative. This one thing alone

will alleviate a lot of stress from our life. When we look at situations we face in life from God's perspective we minimize stresses effect on us. Learn to embrace this truth now;

**Romans 8:28 (NKJV)**<sup>28</sup>*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.*

This one verse alone can free you from suffering from self-imposed stress.

**2—Learn to pace yourself...***Hebrews 12:1 (NKJV)*<sup>1</sup>*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.*

Anyone who is conditioning for an event will train properly so that they can finish the race. Too many Christians have not learned to regulate their pace of life. We must quit sprinting through life, racing from deadline to appointment and learn to slow down and rest. Resist the *get-it-done* yesterday mentality like the plague or you will suffer the consequences of stress.

**3—Learn to redeem the time...***Ephesians 5:15-16 (NKJV)*<sup>15</sup>*See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, <sup>16</sup>redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*

Using our time wisely is a great way to relieve potential stress before it takes a hold in our life. Clean up your daily schedule and remove all the clutter and congested things that are causing stress. Many people manage their time so poorly that the only result they can have is stress. Periodically examine your life and prioritize your budgeting of your saying “*no to unimportant things that can restrict your time.*”

**4—Rest and relaxation...***Exodus 31:17 (NKJV)*<sup>17</sup>*It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day, He rested and was refreshed.*

One of the big problems some people face is that they never learn to enjoy their life and rest properly. If you burn the candle at both ends you will eventually “*burn out for Jesus.*” So before that happens please learn to rest.

**5—Don't just rest physically, but also in God...**Not only do our bodies require periods of time and relaxation, but our spirits need to regularly be refreshed by the presence of God. We can't function well without regular times of communion with God. If we spend regular times in worship and devotion and times of intimate prayer these times will spiritually refresh us and renew us in the power of God.

**6—Go to church regularly...***Hebrews 10:24-25 (NKJV)*<sup>24</sup>*And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, <sup>25</sup>not forsaking the assembly of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

Scientific studies have shown that when people have interaction with loved ones and friends regularly the pressures of stress are relieved. God calls these times of comfort “*fellowship*.” When we get together and share each others lives by having fun together and rejoicing over each others accomplishments a sense of peace and relaxation upon us.

**7—Watch your health...**Sometimes physical factors play a big role in the stress factor of our life. If we neglect or unconsciously abuse our body unnecessarily stress can be the result. We can avoid a lot of stress by just following a few basic rules.

- First get the proper amount of sleep. Each of us must find out what it is for each of us.
- Maintain a balanced diet (*minimize salt and sugar intake*) and all the so called junk foods as much as possible.
- A great deal of stress can be prevented from just a few minor adjustments to our everyday life.

If stress persists in your life and you are already partaking of these seven steps. Check your life for hidden sins. If we ignore sin and leave it unchecked an inner conflict will result and create an incredible amount of stress.

If we seek genuine reconciliation and forgiveness an inner healing from stress is sure to follow.