



Overcoming Stress

Stress is any event or situation that makes heightened demands on a person's mental or emotional resources. Stress can be caused by being overworked, anxiety about exams, money, job, financial insecurity, unemployment, bereavement, broken relationships, marriage breakdown, sexual difficulties, poor living or working conditions, constant exposure to loud noise, and many others.

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Many changes that are apparently 'for the better', such as being promoted at work, going to a new school, moving to a new house, and getting married, are also a source of stress. Stress can cause, or aggravate, physical illnesses, among them psoriasis, eczema, asthma, and stomach and mouth ulcers. Apart from removing the source of stress, acquiring some control over it and learning to relax whenever possible are the best responses.

Occupational stress is a major cause of absenteeism at work and of poor working performance. Mental stress sometimes leads to the lack of interest in studying (Eccl. 12:12b). Psychological stress may lead to nervous breakdown. Stress is a normal response of the human body to a stress factor and is not always a bad thing. Stress factor is the agent or situation that produces the response. The human body has a limited number of ways in which it can respond to a stressful situation, whatever the cause.

The response results to the increased flow of adrenaline in the blood, the mobilization of muscle energy source, increase in blood pressure and heart rate, and so on, regardless of whether the stress factor is a physical attack, drug overdose, bacterial infection, overload of work, or outside pressure.

In the final stage, if the stress factor has not been overcome, the body's reserves are depleted, leaving the person exposed to psychological or physical illness. Mental health or mental illness generally represents the way in which an individual adapts to stress. The degree of one's ability to adapt affects one's chances of surviving the constantly changing conflicts of life.

Stress is part of human life in a chaotic cosmic system. The real issue is not the presence of a stress factor around us but how we handle it. We cannot remove the factors that build stress but we can prevent our souls from becoming victims of stress. Even before psychology discovered the danger of stress, God has already provided the only effective solution for stress.

Every person born into this world will encounter every kind of stress in one way or another. Nobody is immune and nobody is naturally capable of handling it. Those who have failed are either mentally ill or are suffering from nervous breakdown, while some commit suicide. Over-fatigue, confused and worried people resolve to several temporary remedies:

- Ignoring the stressful situation by pretense
- Finding alternative undertakings
- Resolving to maximum toleration
- Turning to drugs or alcohol
- Getting involved in religion
- Therapeutic relaxation
- Vacation and adventures
- Getting into more stressful works and others

Stress is a mental attitude pressurized by the immediate events or situation. Stress is not from God and not included in the plan of God for the imperfect man. The world initiates the stressful circumstances to trap the believers in anxiety and fear (John 16:33).

An individual chooses to live under stress or to be free from stress. Anything around us can become a stress factor or contribute to the building up of stress. The real culprit is the soul that pays attention to pressure of unnecessary demands (Phil. 4:6-7).

Suicide is cowardice to face the conflicts of life. Escapism is running from reality of our existence and diverting our attention brings only temporary results. Every regenerate child of God is bestowed with divine resources and spiritual problem-solving devices that include the most powerful and effective solutions for overcoming stress.

Every individual builds his own stress. The people and things around us can only contribute little to the stress that you manufacture for yourself. You may remove everyone and everything around you but the stress will still be there. You may decide to become a hermit but you cannot escape from your stress. Stress is anything that is allowed to share control of your soul and dictate your priority in life. Stress comes from the old sinful nature in man. It is associated with fear and anxiety. Stress is the showroom or the manifestation of accumulated fear and anxieties.

Believers living outside the plan, purpose and will of God are not exempted from the stressful existence. We create our own stress and we suffer for our stress. Satan did not create our stress; the demons can not bring stress into our lives. We manufacture our own stress (Gal. 6:7). Satan is taking advantage of people under stress because they are incapable of thinking properly and making a right decision from position of strength.

For example, financial insecurity can lead to destructive stress if the believer decided to work double time beyond his physical capacity. The believer who compromises his biblical perspective in order to earn additional income will only experience the futility of material prosperity. The believer who ignores the divine principles and accepts the human viewpoint will only become unhappy and futile.

Fearful people are more susceptible to stress. Fear is always irrational and unreasonable; it pushes a person around demanding the most awkward course of action. Fear paralyzes the brain to think correctly and logically, it controls your soul and makes decision for you, for which

you will be sorry for the rest of your life. Stressful people are fearful people incapable of making good decision from position of strength; they are slaves of fear under the arena of stress.

Stress is brought by lack of Bible doctrine in the soul. A maturing believer has the capacity to overcome any kind of stress through the resident Bible doctrine in his soul. He thinks from divine viewpoint and perspective. He exercises the privacy of his volition. He never allows anybody or anything to make decision for him. He resists anyone who pushes him to do things that are not his responsibility. He sets realistic and reachable goals, living one day at a time, removing every barrier while totally depending on the grace of God. The lack of confidence toward God brings more stress than you can imagine. The lack of confidence toward God means the lack of courage toward men and the ability to face daily life situations.

Any individual who is easily pressurized or threatened by other people or by circumstances is living under stressful situation. He cannot say no to the demands and requests of others. He cannot refuse people who pushes him to do the things he hates doing. Courage toward man is the virtue to do the will, the plan and purpose of God whatever men may say. Confidence toward God and courage toward men is the byproduct of Bible doctrine stored and resident in the souls.

Stress is also the result of lack of discipline. For example, mental stress can be avoided if the students will study everyday instead of cramming before an examination. Occupational stress can be eliminated if the employee will work diligently without waiting for his table to be filled with papers. Organizing yourself, your working area, your routine, your schedule can avoid the build up of invited stress factor. Disorganized people are open prey to stress.

Other factors such as unhealthy diet, lack of physical exercise, bad study or working habit, should also be considered in bringing stressful situation. Generally stress is a mind occupied with the non-essential things of the world and a focus on the non-important things.

There are many practical things that can bring temporary result against stress but only the solution from God gives permanent results. Bible doctrine can set anybody from stress and fear in life (Rom. 8:2, John 8:32). Only the Word of God can change the thinking pattern of a stressful person, only the Word of God can remove the fear and insecurity that have been rooted in the soul of man. Do not allow stress to rule your soul which rightfully belongs to God.

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Take a break - this may be easier said than done, but it can be really helpful to get away and out of your normal routine for a few days. Even a few hours of new task, hobby, recreation, sport, or just walking leisurely can be helpful in natural process of overcoming stress.

Take Stress Under Control

- Take a stand against over scheduling. If you're feeling stretched, consider cutting out some non-essential activities.
- Be realistic. Don't try to be perfect - no one is. And expecting others to be perfect can add to your stress level too.

- Get a good night's sleep. Getting enough sleep helps keep your body and mind in top shape, making you better equipped to deal with any negative stressors.
- Learn to relax. The body's natural antidote to stress is called the relaxation response. It's your body's opposite of stress, and it creates a sense of well-being and calm.
- Treat your body well. Experts agree that getting regular exercise helps people manage stress. (Excessive or compulsive exercise can contribute to stress, though, so as in all things, use moderation.)
- Eat well to help your body get the right fuel to function at its best. It's easy when you're stressed out to eat on the run or eat junk food or fast food. But under stressful conditions, the body needs its vitamins and minerals more than ever. Watch what you're thinking. Your outlook, attitude, and thoughts influence the way you see things. The Word of God in your soul is the best ground for cultivation of your mental attitude.
- Solve the little problems. Learning to solve everyday problems can give you a sense of control. But avoiding them can leave you feeling like you have little control and that just adds to stress. Develop skills to calmly look at a problem, figure out options, and take some action toward a solution. Feeling capable of solving little problems builds the inner confidence to move on to life's bigger ones and it can serve you well in times of stress.