

December 11, 2022

How TO Stress Less (#1)

by Ken Weliever

Yesterday I preached a lesson addressing the issue of "Holiday Stress." The message was not only well received, but several who saw the title advertised asked for the outline.

So, breaking with my normal weekly columns, this is the first of a five part series dealing with stress based on that lesson.

When I googled "holiday stress, I received 345,000,000 results in 0.46 seconds. Among the headlines were these articles.

- 6 Ways To Deal With Holiday Stress
- The US Surgeon General's Next Fo Is Holiday Chaos
- The Most Difficult Time of The Year: Mental Health During the Holidays
- Feeling the holiday blues? Here 6 ways to fend them off
- 10 Stress-Free Holiday Tips - 10 Christmas Tips & Tricks
- We all have holiday stress, and here's how to handle it

While many of these article offer some helpful, practical advice, the Bible which contains "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3), provides the best counsel for Christians.

Our text for the week is Philippians 4:4-9. Actually, the entire book, when viewed from how to manage stress would serve as a helpful guide. But, these verses condense 5 major points which will greatly help you manage stress in your life.

REJOICE CONTINUALLY

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4:4-5).

Stay with me. I know at first glance, this

might sound like an unreasonable, Pollyanna approach to life. "How can I rejoice, when my mind is anxious, my nerves are frazzled, and my relationships are strained?" you ask. When life's problems are crashing in on us, rejoicing is probably the farthest thing from our minds.

However, consider the circumstances of the Philippian writer. Paul was in a Roman prison. His life hung in the balance. He was innocent of any wrong-doing. Yet, while he was suffering for the cause of Christ, he experienced joy, peace and inner contentment.

Suppose, Paul may have felt a bit of stress in prison? Maybe some anxiety wondering about his fate? Concern about the ultimate outcome? Yet, 18 times in the letter he speaks of "joy" or "rejoicing."

To help with this thought, we need to make a distinction between "joy" and "happiness." Happiness is based on circumstances. Joy is based on substance. Happiness is external. Joy is internal. Happiness is temporary. Joy is eternal. Happiness is often based on chance. But joy is a choice.

While Paul's imprisonment would not make him or anyone happy, he could experience "the joy of faith" (1:25). The joy found in the privilege of prayer (1:4). And the joy of his fellowship with the brethren (4:1). Thus, he could "rejoice in the Lord" (3:1). Note the key to this attitude is "in the Lord." It's an expression found 113 times in the Bible that speaks to our relationship with, our trust in, and our confidence "in the Lord."

James 1:2-3 addresses the issue of finding joy even in trying situations. "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter

Welcome!

When you visit our assemblies, you will be received friendly, kindly and courteously. We believe this to be the natural attitude of those who truly love God and mankind. Though you may at first be among strangers, we hope that you will come to know us well and count us as your friends.

We offer Bible studies as well as correspondence courses for those interested in learning more about what God expects of us.

Important Dates

If you know of upcoming events, please inform Darrell so they can be included here.

various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.”

Furthermore, according to a Mayo Clinic staff report you can reduce stress and improve your health by “eliminating negative self talk” and maintaining a positive attitude. “Researchers continue to explore the effects of positive thinking and optimism on health. Health benefits that positive thinking may provide include:

- Increased life span
- Lower rates of depression
- Lower levels of distress and pain
- Greater resistance to illnesses
- Better psychological and physical well-being
- Better cardiovascular health and reduced risk of death from cardiovascular disease and stroke
- Reduced risk of death from cancer
- Reduced risk of death from respiratory conditions
- Reduced risk of death from infections
- Better coping skills during hardships and times of stress

Regardless of the outward circumstances of life, the problems we face, the trials we endure, and the potential of being stressed-out, we can find encouragement, feel confidence, and experience peace of mind, when we steadfastly and calmly rely on the Lord.

Honestly, some the issues that stress us are “first world” problems, that are relatively trivial or minor compared to some of the serious, pressing problems that many people face.

Through the years I have known many Christians who dealt with financial hardship, loss of love, physical handicaps and debilitating health issues with a spirit of serenity, exhibiting a peace that surpassed understanding and a steadiest joy of faith.

Even someone facing the dreaded disease of cancer, can do so with a serene spirit. One unknown writer expressed their feelings in these powerful words

Cancer is so limited...

- It cannot cripple love.
- It cannot shatter hope.
- It cannot corrode faith.
- It cannot eat away peace.
- It cannot destroy confidence.
- It cannot kill friendship.

It cannot shut out memories.

It cannot silence courage.

It cannot reduce eternal life.

It cannot quench the Spirit..

When we “rejoice in the Lord” we are declaring the sorrow will not overwhelm us. Problems will not destroy us. Trials will not cripple us. Stress will not consume us,. And the Devil will not defeat us,

In the words of the ancient Roman philosopher and Emperor Marcus Aurelius, “If you are distressed by anything external, the pain is not due to the thing itself but to your own estimate of it; and this you have the power to revoke at any moment.”

God’s strategy for managing stress? “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say Rejoice.”

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Prayer Requests

Jack Wilson is still struggling with pain and limited mobility.

Jerry Richardson is still undergoing treatments to strengthen his immune system. He is having some tests run for his lungs.

Karen Hallmark has improved but continues to struggle and could use our prayers.

Dinah Williams continues to have mobility issues.

Don Simmons is home and still struggling with his breathing; he is on oxygen at all times. **Alene** is having hip issues.

Elaine Kersch is undegoing treatments for with her lungs.

Randall Vanaman is having difficulties with his feet.

Jim Trammel has been released from the hospital with antibiotics for bronchitis/ pneumonia.

Baby Valor went home but will require more care.

If you know of someone that needs to be on this list, please tell Darrell (email preferred) and provide updates so names stay on the list as long as needed.

*“praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints;”
(Ephesians 6:18 ESV)*

The Oaks West church of Christ is a group of individual Christians who have been added to the Lord’s body through baptism (Acts 2:38, 47; Gal 3:26, 27), and have joined themselves together (Acts 2:42ff) in an effort to do the Lord’s will.

We are not a part of any larger organization - we do not follow any man-made creeds and we do not answer to anyone other than the Lord.

Our standard of faith and practice is the Word of God. We believe in the God of revelation (Eph 3:1-7; 2 Tim 3:16-17) and follow his instructions in an effort to have an ongoing relationship with him (1 John 4:7-11; 5:3).

Our times of study and worship are open to all, and our members are happy to meet with interested individuals or families for study.

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