

December 25, 2022

How To Stress Less (#3)

by Ken Weliever

“Even though my mom passed away seven years ago, it still feels like yesterday,” recalls Daniel H. Gibson Jr. “I was actually in the room when it happened. I was playing her a song when, suddenly, she suffered from a heart attack she wouldn’t recover from.”

“Christmas was my mom’s favorite time of the year; she loved spending time with family and watching her grandchildren open their presents,” Gibson reminisces. “Ever since her passing, the holidays have never quite felt the same. So for me, the holiday season is always accompanied by a tinge of sadness.”

Gibson, the chief executive officer of NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), shares his personal experience in a post on the NAMI web page. I can relate to Gibson’s experience. My Mom was admitted to Hospice just before Christmas in 2009. She died on the 29th.

Gibson writes that the stark reality is this “most wonderful time of the year” is very difficult for 64% of people dealing with mental illness, according to a NAMI study. Also “a 2021 survey showed that 3 in 5 Americans feel their mental health is negatively impacted by the holidays.”

In this series “How To Stress Less” we are examining “God’s Strategy for Managing Stress” based on Philippians 4:4-9.

In the first post, we discussed Paul’s exhortation to “rejoice continually.” Even though he was suffering imprisonment, Paul could find peace and contentment in “the joy of faith.”

In the second post, we offered the antidote to anxiety is “trust in the Lord.” We documented that people with a vibrant, active faith are able to deal with stress better

than those who are not religious.

Here’s third step that will help you manage stress:

PRAY CEASELESSLY

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God” (Phil. 4:6).

The NLT renders this opening exhortation, “Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything.”

Often we only pray about “big” issues in our lives. But Paul admonishes us to “pray about everything,”

Howard Hendricks, the late Bible professor and author, tells a story about having a dinner guest and his 4 yr old son prayed, “God, make this food easy to eat and protect the fence in the back yard. In Jesus name . Amen!

His guest questioned, “I understand the food part, but protect the fence?”

Yes,” Hendricks replied, “we have the meanest, baddest dog in the whole neighborhood on the other side of the fence. So everyday my son prays for God to protect the fence.”

Yes. Pray. About. Everything.

One writer opined that whenever God has you get rid of something that is negative, He gives you something positive to replace it. Eliminate the negative habit of worry by replacing it with the positive practice of prayer.

In Luke 18 Jesus told a parable about a widow woman who persistently sought justice from an unjust judge regarding her adversary. Finally, the woman’s persistence

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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.

wore the judge down. Jesus concludes that a just and righteous God will grant the requests of “his chosen ones” who “cry out to Him.”

Luke’s observation from that parable was that we “always ought to pray and not lose heart.” In a similar vein Paul commanded, “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17). Additionally, Peter penned, “Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” (1 Pet. 5:6-7).

God cares about our cares. Even the fences protecting us in the backyard.

Studies by those in various fields of medicine have shown a direct correlation between reduced levels of stress and a healthy prayer life.

From the Wall Street Journal is an article, “The Science of Prayer,” posted on the web page of “The Association of Psychological Science.” Dr. David H. Rosmarin, assistant professor of psychology at Harvard Medical School and director of the Spirituality and Mental Health Program at McLean Hospital, in Belmont, Mass admits there is no way to measure scientifically the “existence of a higher power.” However, Dr. Rosmarin incorporates prayer as a prescription into his practice.

“I would never advise a patient who doesn’t want to pray to pray,” says Dr. Rosmarin, who incorporates prayer into the treatment programs for some patients with anxiety, depression or other mental-health conditions. He tells people who are curious about prayer to imagine a heart-to-heart conversation with someone they haven’t talked to in a while. “If you think, ‘Yeah, I should probably pick up the phone but am not sure what to say,’ then it might help.”

“Dr. Rosmarin says that the research that has been done on prayer shows it may have similar benefits to meditation: It can calm your nervous system, shutting down your fight or flight response. It can make you less reactive to negative emotions and less angry.”

In a study published in the Journal of Behavioral Medicine found that spiritual meditation was more calming, and “showed greater decreases in anxiety and stress” than secular, non-spiritual methods.

Obviously, to the Christian prayer

is not a scientific exercise to improve health and reduce stress. It is a means of communication with our Creator. An opportunity to talk to our Heavenly Father. And a blessed privilege to come into God’s presence and know that we have His ear.

Spurgeon was right when he wrote, “Anxiety does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows, but only empties today of its strength.” Instead, he advised, “Turn everything that is a care into a prayer.”

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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.

Randall Vanaman is having difficulties with his feet.

Baby Valor went home but will require more care.

Mike and Debbie McMurray are travelling.

Dorothy Steadman is staying with Hank in Seguin.

Elaine Kersch is recovering from a fall.

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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