

Jesus' Strategy for Stress

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, Dec. 1

Stress is an “inevitable” part of our society. In fact the CDC estimates that 90% of all US illnesses are stress related. The Holiday season is particularly stressful due to Unresolved family issues, Insecurities Financial pressures, and heightened Expectations. Jesus spoke clearly about how the “*Cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches*” would tend to choke us. (Mk 4:19) In Mt. 11:28,29 he said: “*Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me... and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*” Mt 11:28-30 This was graphically illustrated in Mt. 14 where Peter learned that it’s safer in the storm with Jesus, than in the boat without him.

We tend to blame our stress on people or problems that pressure us, but Stress is actually a bi-product of how we respond to these pressures. Jesus was under almost constant “demands”, yet he never seemed stressed or overwhelmed. In Mt. 11 he shared his secret to a “Stress-Less” life: “*Come unto me, all ye that labor (Kopia’o: weary) and are heavy laden, (phortiz’o: over loaded) and I will give you rest. (anapau’ō: To stop and refresh) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me... and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, (chrēstos’: fitted; usefully employed) and my burden is light.*” vs 28-30

Jesus modeled several principles that will help us in dealing with the “stressors” in our lives.

1. IDENTIFICATION: I Must Know Who I Am.

A. Jesus Knew Who He Was. (Mt. 17:5; Jn. 8:18) “*I am the Bread of Life, the Way, Truth, Life ... the Light of the world ... the Son of God ... the Messiah ... the door, the good shepherd, the vine ... the resurrection and the life...*” (Jn. 8:12, Mk. 14:62, Jn. 6:35, Jn. 11:25 14:6, 15:1, etc),

1) Jesus’ clarity (security) sometimes offended others. John 8:12-14

B. We Need to Understand Who We Are!

1) If you don’t settle this issue of identity, others will determine it for you. (Ro. 12: 2)

2) God wants us to know & be ourselves. (Ro. 12:3)

“Who am I” by Casting Crowns <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBcqria2wmg>

Who am I, that the lord of all the earth, Would care to know my name, Would care to feel my hurt?

Who am I, that the bright and morning star Would choose to light the way For my ever wandering heart?

Not because of who I am, But because of what you've done. Not because of what I've done, But because of who you are!

I am a flower quickly fading, Here today and gone tomorrow; A wave tossed in the ocean, A vapor in the wind.

Still you hear me when I'm calling, Lord, you catch me when I'm falling; And you've told me who I am.

I am yours!

Who am I, that the eyes that see my sin, Would look on me with love, And watch me rise again?

Who am I, that the voice that calmed the sea, Would call out through the rain, And calm the storm in me?

Not because of who I am, But because of what you've done. Not because of what I've done, But because of who you are!

I am a flower quickly fading, Here today and gone tomorrow; A wave tossed in the ocean, A vapor in the wind.

Still you hear me when I'm calling, Lord, you catch me when I'm falling; And you've told me who I am.

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2. DEDICATION: I must Know Who I’m Trying To Please. Jn 5:28-29

“*I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: for I do always those things that please him.*” Arestos’: agreeable

A. Once you know who you are, you must realize whose you are! Ro 6:17-18

“*ye were the servants of sin, ... Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*”

(2 Cor. 5:20) “*Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*” Katallos’so: changed mutually (2 Cor. 3:18; Ro. 12:1,2)

B. Pleasing everyone is impossible and therefore stressful!

- 1) Even God Can't Please Everybody!
- 2) One Of Satan's Most Effective lies Is That I Must Be Liked (or approved) By Everyone.
Pr 29:25 *'The fear of man bringeth a snare: '*

C. HOW DID JESUS HANDLE THIS?

He sought to please only one..., His Father. John 5:30 *"I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."*

- 1) You'll do the right thing by pleasing God.
- 2) It will simplify your life if you only have to focus on pleasing one.
- 3) It will spare you the consequences of the wrong choices.

3. PRIORITIZATION: I must know what I want to accomplish!

The Main thing is to keep the main thing, THE MAIN THING!

A. No One Has Time To Do Everything! Eph. 5:16,17 *"redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."*

Phil. 3:13 *"This one thing I do... 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ"*

B. In life You will either be

- 1) Guided by PRIORITIES (Proactive)
- 2) Or goaded by PRESSURES. (Reactive)

Either toward God's *"Expected end"* (Jer. 29:11-14) or Satan's *"Eternal Waste"* (Mt. 7:13; Pr. 14:12)

C. Jesus Modeled this Principle Of Priorities. Jn 9:4-5 *"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work, "* (See also Jn 12:27)

Conclusion: Jesus' Strategy for Stress involves:

- 1) Identification: Who (and whose) are you?
- 2) Dedication: What will you seek to accomplish?
- 3) Prioritization: How & When will you do it?

Application: What (or who) is driving you? Where are they driving you?

Will you be Guided by God's Principles and Priorities (Ps. 16:11)...

Or Goaded by Satan's Pressures and Problems? (Eph. 2:1-3)



Remember Martha and Mary from Luke 10:38-42

41,42 *"Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:
But one thing is needful: Mary hath chosen that good part,
which shall not be taken away from her."*

Careful: mer'-im-nah: Distracted!

Troubled: toor-bad'-zo: Crowded!

Needful: Chreia: required, necessary

Good: agathos: beneficial

Will you choose the good part?