

STRESS MANAGEMENT GOD’S WAY
Dr. Wayne Mack, outline
Part 1

A. Gorilla story

B. Now when that man in that fictitious story fell into the lion’s den he was experiencing a very stressful situation – thought his life was in danger – didn’t know what to do.

C. You and I may never face the identical situation that this man experienced although perhaps we will.

D. God knows this and so in his all sufficient Word He has included everything we need to handle those stressful situations before they mishandle us.

I IN THE BIBLE WE HAVE NUMEROUS EXAMPLES OF STRESSFUL SITUATIONS THAT PEOPLE FACED – MENTION A FEW OF THEM.

1. Genesis 3 – Adam and Eve
2. Gen. 4 – case of Cain
3. Gen. 12 – Abraham
4. Same chapter – Abraham
5. Same chapter – in Egypt
6. Same chapter – Sarah
7. Same chapter – Abraham
8. Genesis 13 – Abraham



7. 9. Chapter 14 – Lot
8. Chapter 16 – Sarah disdain
9. Chapter 19 –
10. Gen. 19 – Lot
11. Gen. 19 – Lot]
12. Genesis 20
13. Gen. 21 – Sarah
14. Gen. 21 – Sarah and Abraham
15. Genesis 22 – Abraham and Sarah
16. Genesis 26:34 – 35 – Isaac and Rebecca
17. Gen. 27 – Isaac
18. Genesis 29 – Jacob
19. Genesis 32 – Jacob
20. Genesis 37 – Joseph with brothers...
21. Genesis 39 – Joseph
22. On and on throughout the book of Genesis we could go noting
stressful situations that Isaac and Jacob and Joseph experienced.
23. Same when turn to Exodus - Exodus 3 –

**B. ON AND ON WE COULD GO THROUGHOUT THE REST OF OLD
TESTAMENT AND ON THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT
DESCRIBING STRESSFUL SITUATIONS. OH THE BIBLE IS FILLED
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS OF PEOPLE WHO FACED VERY STRESSFUL
SITUATIONS.**



AS YOU EXAMINE THESE BIBLICAL ACCOUNTS AND YOUR OWN
EXPERIENCE YOU FIND THAT:

1. Some of the stressors may come from **our environment or circumstances in our lives.**
2. Some come from **the unpleasant events we experience.**
3. **Some of the stressors in our lives come from come from our own limitations and inadequacies.**
4. **Some come from seeing all the work you have to do and wondering how in the world you're going to be able to get it done**
5. **Some come from the aging process... Ecc. 12 talks about these...**
6. **Some come as a result of our own sinful thoughts and actions and reactions.**

D. Oh the sources from which our stress comes may be varied, but as we examine the situations which cause stress in Scripture and in life experience we find that most of the stressful situations we experience have something to do with other people.

1. When, for example, you examine the stressful situations that Abraham experienced you find that many of them had something to



Overcoming Stress before It Overcomes You – Dr Wayne Mack

do with getting long with people – Gen. 12, 13 – same with Sarah – same with Jacob, etc.

2. Psalm 133 – declares that it is a blessed thing to ...
3. Gal. 5:15
4. Prov. 10:1a
5. Prov. 14:1
6. Prov. 12:4
7. Prov. 23:24 –
8. Oh how blessed it is to have a friend like the one described in Proverbs 17:17; but oh how distressing it is to have a friend like the one who is described in Psalm 41:9.

E. An examination of Scripture and life experience makes it very clear that the sources of stress are many; Scripture and life experience make it clear that potentially stressful situations in this sin cursed world cannot be avoided.



1. Jesus put it this way – John 16:33; also said – Matt. 18:7
2. Job put it this way in Job 5:7;
3. Psalmist – this way in Psalm 90:10.

F. Understanding this and accepting it as true is part of what is necessary if we are going to overcome stress before it overcomes us.

1. I Peter 4:12 –
2. James 1:2 –
3. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians he reminded them of this in 10:13
4. When he wrote to the Thessalonians – I Thess. 3:1 – 4

G. Why is this important for overcoming stress before it overcomes you?

1. **Some people are disappointed in marriage because they come into marriage with unrealistic, unbiblical expectations about what marriage should be and how their partners will treat them.**



2 Some people are disappointed with their children because they have unrealistic expectation of how children should behave.

Forget Psalm 51:5; 58:3; Proverbs 22:15.

3. Some disappointed with their church because have unrealistic expectations of what church should and will be.

4. Some people are overcome by the stressors of life because they have unrealistic expectations concerning other people.

5. Some people are overcome by the stressors of life because they have unrealistic expectations concerning themselves

6. Some disappointed with what God is doing in their lives – in the world ... have their own ideas about what God should do for them.

7. So to overcome stress before it overcomes you must make sure that your expectations about what will happen to you in this sin cursed world are really biblically based.

G. As we go through life we face two dangers in reference to expectations –

- 1. One is that we can be unrealistic in terms of expecting too little; this is the danger of having no expectations or having expectations that are too low.**

- 2. Other = danger - of having expectations that are unrealistically high – danger of having expectations that are not based on Scripture, but our own opinions or wants or desires or based on a misinterpretation of Scripture .**



STRESS MANAGEMENT GOD’S WAY
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Part 2

A. Reserve Officer’s Training Corp (ROTC) illustration.

B. God doesn’t behave that way in reference to the Christian life.

Bible is the most realistic, most balanced book in the world.

1. In Matthew 10:16 – 18, 21 – 22; Luke 14:25 – 33.

2. John 16:33a

3. Romans 8:35; 2 Cor. 2:17; 4:2

4. But in His Word God also:

a. Romans 8:37;

b. I Cor. 10:13 ...

c. I Cor. 2:17 ...

C. You’ve probably heard the statement that to be forewarned is to be forearmed.

1. I believe there’s a lot of wisdom in that statement. Being forewarned about what will happen often is an important part of actually responding properly to what does happen.



2. That's what Jesus did again and again with his disciples – did it in Matt. 10; Luke 14; John 14 – 17.

3. And that's what I'm trying to do today in these first two studies on Stress Management God's Way. Next week, we'll move on to lay out for you a more positive biblical procedure for actually handling the stressors of life in a successful way.

4. We began the forewarning process in the last session; now continue the forewarning in this session by first of all discussing some responses to stress that we must put off. And then 2nd continue the forewarning process by discussing some of the disastrous consequences of not handling stress biblically.

I. FIRST THEN LET'S TURN TO GOD'S WORD AND NOTICE SOME OF THE SINFUL WAYS THAT PEOPLE RESPOND TO THE STRESSES THEY EXPERIENCE. AS WE DO I SUGGEST THAT EACH OF US SHOULD EXAMINE OURSELVES TO SEE IF WE ARE PRONE TO RESPOND TO THE STRESSORS OF LIFE IN SIMILAR WAYS.

A. KEEP IN MIND THAT I CORINTHIANS 10:11; ROM. 15:4 – FOR OUR LEARNING DO THIS SO THAT WE WOULD I'M GOING TO FOCUS ON WRONG RESPONSES – BY SO DOING I'M NOT IMPLYING THAT PEOPLE IN GOD'S WORD DIDN'T SOMETIMES RESPOND PROPERLY – THAT'S NOT SO – BUT RIGHT NOW LET'S



SEE WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM ONE OF THEIR WRONG RESPONSES.

1. Turn to Genesis 4:1-11 – case of Cain –
2. Turn to Genesis 12:10 – 13 – notice how Abraham responded
3. Move on to 12:14 – 16 – note how Sarai responded –
4. Turn to Genesis 15:1 – 6 - Abraham
5. Genesis 16:1- 6 – Abraham and Sarai
6. Genesis 27: 30 – 45 – Jacob and Esau
7. Genesis 31:1- 7; 20 – 21 – Jacob response
8. Genesis 32: 1- 7 – Jacob’s response
9. Genesis 37: 1 – 4; 18 – the brother’s response to Joseph
10. Exodus 3:9 - 11 – response of Moses to God
11. I Kings 19 – response of Elijah
12. Psalm 73: 12, 13 the response of Asaph...
13. 2 Cor. 4: 8 – 11 – Paul describes the response of many when they are faced with stressful situations –

B. Now putting all of that together we learn that there are certain responses that must be identified and put off if we want to overcome rather than be overcome by the stresses of life. In summary, the responses that must be put off are the responses of:

1. **Leaning to our own understanding to figure out how to deal with the stressors we face rather than trusting in God not**



stand; v. 12 – not to say – It is a conspiracy – someone who is standing for the Lord – opposing your ideas is conspiring against you – not to fear what they fear; V. 13 – are to fear the Lord and trust Him – are to make God your sanctuary...Are to Ps, 17:14...

2. Doing something that is unbiblical to relieve the pressure of the stressful situation –

3. Allowing our emotions to take control of us –

4. Allowing the stresses we face to cause us to turn from God rather than to God – that's what initially happened in the case of the Psalm 73



II. TURN FROM A DISCUSSION OF THE WRONG RESPONSES TO STRESS TO A CONSIDERATION OF SOME OF THE CONSEQUENCES THAT WRONG RESPONSES TO STRESS BRING.

***In His Word God has included many statements about the consequences of certain actions and by including many examples of people who made bad choices and suffered serious, unpleasant consequences, I believe God is trying to do at least two things. 1).** He is trying to **prevent us** from making the same mistakes and 2) is trying **to motivate** us to make wise choices. My hope is that a discussion of the serious consequences of our wrong responses to stress will function in these two ways for us.

***Here then are a few of the serious consequences of the wrong responses to stress.**

A. AN EXAMINATION OF SCRIPTURE LEADS US TO THE CONCLUSION THAT UNGODLY RESPONSES TO STRESS WILL OFTEN HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER PERSONS.

1. See this clearly displayed in Genesis 4 –



2. See this illustrated in Gen. 12 –

3. See this illustrated in Genesis 27

4. See this illustrated in case of Saul as have it described in I Samuel 18 – 22.

5. When some people are confronted with stressful situations they respond in the way described in Ephesians 4:31...

6. Truth is, you show me a person who responds to stress with the qualities and practices mentioned in Eph. 4:31 and I'll show you a person who has problems in his relationships with people.

B. BRINGS US TO A SECOND CONSEQUENCE OF UNGODLY RESPONSES TO STRESSFUL SITUATION, NAMELY, OUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH WILL BE STUNTED

1. Mark 4:19.

2. I Peter 3:7



3. James 1:20-25
4. James 4:1 -3.
5. Psalm 66:18
6. Isa. 59:1, 2
7. Jeremiah 5: 23 – 25
8. Proverbs 28:13

**C. NOW THAT BRINGS US TO A THIRD SERIOUS CONSEQUENCE
OF OUR UNGODLY RESPONSES TO STRESSFUL SITUATIONS,
NAMELY, THAT UNGODLY RESPONSES TO THE STRESSORS OF
LIFE WILL DIMINISH OUR SPIRITUAL USEFULNESS**

2. 2 Timothy 2:21

2. Luke 8:14



3. People who typically and frequently respond to the stressors of life in any of the ungodly ways described in the previous message are like the fig tree described in Matthew 21.

4. The fit the description of people described in Jude 12

5. I Timothy 4:12

6. Sometimes it will weaken or even destroy a person's desire and confidence in even attempting to serve.

D. A FOURTH SERIOUS CONSEQUENCE OF OUR UNGODLY RESPONSES TO STRESSFUL SITUATIONS, NAMELY, THAT UNGODLY RESPONSES TO THE STRESSORS OF LIFE WILL SOMETIMES AFFECT OUR PHYSICAL WELL BEING.

1. Scripture and modern science both agree on the serious consequences that the wrong responses to stress can have on the human body.

2.

2. Prov. 12:25



3. Proverbs 14:30

4. Proverbs 17:22

5. Proverbs 3:7, 8

6. As might be expected, modern medical studies illustrate the validity of these biblical statements.

a. None of These Diseases, Dr. S. I. McMillen

b. The head of the gastro intestinal surgery department at a major hospital in Philadelphia.

c. Christian physician friend

d. Several Christian physicians who attended a counseling course.

7. In his book, *The Christian Counselors' Medical Desk Reference*, physician Robert Smith writes that “responses to various circumstances in life may themselves produce symptoms of sickness. God created various internal controls to maintain balance in the body. One of the controls is the hormone system, This system functions on the basis of supply and demand. If there is too little hormone in the body, the gland responsible for it produces more. If there is too much hormone ...the gland decreases the amount produced. All this happens automatically.



Another control system is the nervous system (NS) which is made up of the brain, spinal cord, and nerves. Reflexes provide many NS controls. A certain stimulus produces specific results. When you accidentally touch something hot, automatic reflexes make the muscles pull the hand away from the hot object. These controls are essential to balance within the body. A very significant fact is that these controls may be influenced by circumstances in life. Those responses may produce physical symptoms.

A person's evaluation of and responses to various circumstances in life will produce symptoms in the body. Pastors may remember their ordination council as an awesome and fearful time. There is a desire to do a good job, along with considerable apprehension about the kind of questions that may be asked. This response to the anticipation of the council may produce symptoms in the body. His mouth may become dry as he prepares to answer a question. His heart and breathing rate may speed up to deliver more fuel to the cells of the body and remove more waste products. There may be a fine tremor of the muscles. The effect on the intestinal tract may be varied. The stomach may be undecided about whether it is going to empty up or down....The lower bowel may even become very irritable and spastic. The result may be cramping or diarrhea. All these symptoms are the result of one's response to the pressure of the ordination examination.

The intestinal tract is a tube with muscles in two directions: around the circumference of the tube and down the length of the tube. ...These muscles can cramp like a 'charley horse', which in turn produces pain. This is one of the ways in which an ulcer in the first part of the small intestine (the duodenum) produces pain. Extra acid produced in the stomach as a result of a person's response to problems will also irritate the exposed ulcerated tissue. (The same cramping happens in irritable bowel disease without the increased acid production.)

Unbiblical responses to life and difficult situations can produce the same cramping as that of an ulcer. ...The counselor should be aware that such physical symptoms may be caused by the person's response to life and problems.

The person's response to problems has produced symptoms and may produce disease.

...in sixty to eighty percent of patients, responses to problems of life produced physical symptoms...these symptoms are not imaginary. They are physical. They are real, but they are not triggered by something wrong in the body.



The real problem then is not your counselee's problems, but his response to those problems. A person often cannot change the pressures or tough circumstances, but he can change his responses to them. "

8. Dr. Smith describes how a person's what happens when a person responds wrongly to stress in this way:

a. We encounter various stressors in our Life's Experience (which include):

Problems we experience
Pressures we face
Difficulties we encounter
Trials that come our way

b. We evaluate and interpret these experiences negatively & then our reaction to these stressful life experiences produces effects on the body in the:

Mouth – dry mouth
Heart – rate increases
Lungs – breath more deeply, even hyper ventilate. difficulty breathing
Muscles – tense, tighten, cramp
Intestinal tract – cramps, diarrhea, constipation, colitis

(The Christian Counselor's Medical Desk Reference, Dr. Robert Smith, Timeless Texts, Stanley, 2000, pages 41-46)

8. From all we've noted thus far, it's easy to see why I say that responding wrongly to the stressors of life is a rather serious matter.

