

got stress ?

Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you. ~1 Peter 5:7

<i>Causes</i>	<i>Physical Effects</i>	<i>Mental Effects</i>	<i>Behavioral Effects</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bereavement • Family problems • Financial matters • Illness • Job issues • Lack of time • Relationships • Traffic • Feeling inadequate • Fear • Conflict • Miscarriage • Crowds • Pregnancy • Retirement • Too much noise • Uncertainty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blood pressure rises • Rapid Breathing • Digestive problems • Heart rate rises • Tense Muscles • Lack of sleep • A tendency to sweat • Back pain • Chest pain • Cramps or spasms • Fainting spells • Headaches • Lower immunity • Nail biting • Nervous twitches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anger • Anxiety • Burnout • Depression • Feeling of insecurity • Forgetfulness • Irritability • Problem concentrating • Restlessness • Sadness • Fatigue • Thoughts of suicide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eating too much • Eating too little • Food cravings • Sudden angry outbursts • Drug abuse • Alcohol abuse • Higher tobacco consumption • Social withdrawal • Frequent crying • Relationship problems

Being A Christian In A Stressful World (Philippians 4:4-9)

- There are many causes of stress; but for the Christian, it is simply a lack of trust in God. That statement may sound harsh, and simply saying we should put more trust in God may sound simple; but the Bible has a clear teaching on dealing with stress.
- As believers, we should seek God's truth on this matter, and allow Him to develop us into the mature Christian He desires us to be; and along the way, we will **learn** how to handle the stressful events of life.
- Christians confess that Jesus Christ is Lord; therefore claiming Him to be the sovereign ruler over all creation; but we often find ourselves worrying over things that we are powerless to change. The only control we have, is over our own actions; and because God's Holy Spirit has been transforming us into the image of His Son, we are seeing our own selves better able to handle stressful situations.

It's All About Change

The Apostle Paul told us that he has learned the "**secret of contentment**", no matter his situation or condition; and that learned response, led him to write Philippians 4:13. The reason that his joy could remain full in the middle of life's storms, was that he had an understanding this life was only temporary, that God was in complete control, and that the Holy Spirit was there to comfort and guide him every step of the way.

- We must learn to change our focus
- We must learn to change our trust
- We must learn to change our response

Changing Focus

Concentrating on the negative aspects of life "**will**" cause discouragement. Discouragement "**will**" bring doubt that there is little or no hope left that this bad situation will turn out good. A lack of hope "**will**" cause depression; and all this "**will**" be manifested as stress.

Stress cannot be avoided unless we decide to change our focus. Being consumed with the troubles of life takes our mind off of Christ; and that is just exactly what the devil desires. Jesus told us in Matthew 6:33 to focus on God's purpose and on His holiness; and when our mind gets in line with His thinking, our desires will in line with His (Matthew 6:1-34).

- **Assurance - Psalm 24:1-2**
- **Confidence - Psalm 18:31-33**
- **Praise - Psalm 100:1-3**
- **Example - Acts 8:1-3, 9:1-20**

Changing Trust

Worry often occurs when we place an expectation on our self to "**fix**" the problem. Stress takes place, because the problem is not being "**fixed**". We have decided to trust ourselves to be the one who solves the situation, instead of entrusting God with our problems.

Stress cannot be avoided unless we decide to trust the Lord with our circumstance. Caring our burdens to God in prayer is a great privilege; but picking them back up when we are done praying says that we do not trust Him to handle the situation. Learning to trust God is an ongoing process as we mature as believers; and learning often requires us to go through some challenges (James 1:2-4); but as we build that trust, we will experience the glory of God's majesty in a greater way (Hebrews 11:1-40).

- **Assurance - Numbers 23:19**
- **Confidence - Job 13:15**
- **Praise - Psalm 46:1-3**
- **Example - 1 Samuel 23:1-24:22**

Changing Response

Jesus said in, John 16:33 "that in this life you will have trouble". The ability to cope with problems just doesn't begin when the problem starts, it begins by "**allowing**" God to transform every aspect of our daily life. Jesus went on to say that we should "be of good cheer". Why? The reason He gives is that He has already overcome all the obstacles of this mortal life such as death, the grave, sickness, conflict, sin, and hell; and since you and I as Christians belong to Christ, we too "**are**" over comers already!

Stress cannot be avoided unless we decide to respond differently to the challenges that life presents. The Bible says that we do not war against flesh and blood, but against spiritual forces of evil (Ephesians 6:12).

Often times our frustration is aimed at people or situations, but the fact is that we live in a sinful world and we are in a spiritual battle. Unless we learn to approach difficulty with this knowledge, we will never lower our stress levels (1 Timothy 6:12).

- **Assurance - Psalm 59:16-17**
- **Confidence - Romans 8:37-39**
- **Praise - Psalm 27:1-14**
- **Example - 1 Kings 18:1 - 19:21**