

Managing the Stress in our Lives

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STRESS! Is there anyone who isn't dealing with it? In addition to life's daily challenges, we are all affected by some type of stress: it could be job loss, financial woes, problems in your marriage, a parenting issue. Whatever the cause, the effect is the same.

Stress can leave you feeling tired, down, sad, or angry. You might find yourself cranky, pre-occupied or scared. It is known to weaken the immune system causing health problems or making existing health problems worse.

Rather than finding places to "hide" from the symptoms of stress such as using unhealthy substances, numbing out watching endless hours of television, shopping, unhealthy eating, overusing the computer, find ways to face the stress in order to beat it. At the very least, you might help yourself not only get through it, but also learn from the experience and be more prepared to cope with stress in the future.

Here are some tips to manage your stress:



- Recognize when you're stressed. Early warning signs could include: tension in your shoulders, back, neck or jaw, clenching your hands, anxiety, headaches, problems sleeping or changes in your eating patterns, upset stomach or high blood pressure.
- Find time to be alone for reflection and reminding yourself of God's care and presence in your life. You may find prayer, reading your Bible or inspiration writings or just reflecting on the ways God has blessed you to be a calming influence. Give things to God that you cannot control. A good verse to focus on is Matt.11:28, Jesus says, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."
- Try not to worry about things you can not control. Concentrate on areas you can do something about. Solve little problems. This may even alleviate bigger problems and give you confidence in knowing that your life is not out of control.
- Strive to be optimistic. It is easy to lean toward the negative. Give yourself constructive affirmation; and stop the negative self-talk.
- Prepare to face things that are difficult; accepting that even your best may not be what you want, but you can have satisfaction in knowing you did your best.
- Resolve conflict with others, admitting that you can't transform anyone; but you can live with being the best you, you can be.
- Set realistic goals. Learn to say "no" and feel justified in doing so.
- Take care of your health by eating foods that are good for you, exercising, and getting enough sleep. Make time to enjoy life even when it seems there is no time or money to do so. Sometimes you have to push yourself before you realize what you're doing is helping!

If you feel stuck and don't think you can overcome the stress by yourself, seek advice from a professional.



For more information, call
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Originally published in "Turning a New Leaf," Winter 2011.