

How Your Faith Can Help Lower Your Bad Cholesterol Level

An article in the Health Section of the *Wall Street Journal* titled “Stress Raises Cholesterol More Than You Think” is very informative. I’ve long understood this and have tried to educate others on this topic so that they might be able to better control their high cholesterol levels.

As the physicians in the article mention, if you have high cholesterol levels, it may not be your diet or lack of physical activity that is the culprit to your high cholesterol—it may likely be the unmanaged chronic stress in your life.

Here’s a link to a different website—How Does Stress Contribute to Cholesterol—that offers a handful of medical explanations on how stress impacts the body and contributes to high cholesterol levels. And this quote that follows is taken from that site:

“Stress will increase your cortisol levels. (Cortisol is a hormone produced by your adrenal glands when you are stressed.) Under stress, cortisol delivers glucose to the body to help the fight-or-flight mechanism function properly. If cortisol is consistently doing this, blood-sugar levels remain constantly high, which can lead to not only hypo/hyperglycemia and diabetes but also elevated cholesterol levels.”—Inna Topiler, MS, CNS

Yes, a nutritionally sound eating plan and regular physical activity are important aspects of a lifestyle that is conducive to manage stress and cholesterol levels. But the practice of biblical principles, spiritual exercises, found in Scripture—God’s guidelines for living—are also hugely important.

Prayer, meditating on Scripture, attending church and being in community with other believers can be effective ways to cope with the stressors of life that you might be experiencing.

Dr. Harold Koenig, in his research on the link between spirituality and health, writes the following: “There is rapidly growing evidence that stress and negative emotions (depression, anxiety) have (1) adverse effects on physiological systems vital for maintenance of physical health and healing, (2) increase susceptibility to or worse outcomes from a wide range of physical illnesses, and (3) may shorten the lifespan prematurely. Social support, in turn, has long been known to protect against disease and increase longevity.

“By reducing stress and negative emotions, increasing social support and positively affecting health behaviors, R/S (Religious/Spirituality) involvement should have a favorable impact on a host of physical diseases and the response of those diseases to treatment.”

If you’re struggling to manage your cholesterol levels by diet and exercise alone, and that’s not working, consider reflecting on your recent stress levels. And address this important aspect of cholesterol management.

And look into the Bible to find relevant “spirit exercises” that might also help!

“But refuse profane and foolish myths. Instead, exercise in the ways of godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable in all things, holding promise for the present life and also for the life to come. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance” (1 Tim. 4:7-9, MEV). {eoa}

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