

Manage Stress, or It Will Manage You

Today it seems as if everyone is under stress. It's become a normal part of our everyday lives. As long as we keep our stress at a reasonable limit, there's no problem. But when we allow it to exceed that boundary, trouble begins.

For example, a chair is built to sit on. It's designed and constructed to bear a specific amount of weight. If used properly, it should last many year. But if it's overloaded beyond its capacity, it begins to wear out prematurely and eventually break down completely under the strain.

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In the same way, we were designed and created to bear a certain amount of physical, mental and emotional strain every day. However, problems arise when we allow ourselves to be weighed down by more stress than we're capable of supporting.

A word we don't hear very often today is "prudence." The Merriam-Webster definition says prudence means: "skill and good judgment in the use of resources." In the Bible, being prudent means to be a good steward or managers of the gifts God has given us to use. Those gifts include time, energy, strength and health—even material possessions. They include our bodies, our minds and our spirits.

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Proverbs 14:8 (NIV) tells us, "The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to their ways, but the folly of fools is deception." We all need to "give thought to [our] ways" and

know our limits—we need to know how much we can handle. We must be able to recognize when we're reaching full capacity or overload.

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Instead of pushing ourselves into overload to please others or satisfy our own desires of reaching personal goals, we must listen to and obey what God's telling us to do. We must follow His wisdom if we truly want to enjoy the peaceful, joyful life He has planned for us.

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