

This Could Be Why You Can't Stop Gaining Weight

I asked Take Back Your Temple program group members recently: "What is the No. 1 emotion that drives or has driven you to eat emotionally?"

By a wide margin, their answer was "stress." In fact, stress received almost three times the votes as the second highest vote-getter.

We live in a stressful world, no doubt about it. But the Bible has timeless wisdom that helps you manage your life wisely—including stressful situations.

Here are my top seven Bible verses when you feel stress (in no particular order):

1. Psalm 18:29: "For by You I can run through a troop, By my God I can leap a wall."

Stress can overwhelm you when you believe that you are all alone. However, as a believer in Jesus, you are never alone. The Lord is with you.

Reminding yourself of this first Bible verse when you feel stress is a game-changer.

David wrote this Scripture after God delivered him from King Saul, who tried to kill him for years. Talk about stress! David was in a fight or flight situation—literally.

And yet, David went to the rock who was higher than He was.

When your heart is overwhelmed, do the same thing. Take a prayer walk outside, looking high to the sky, the sun, the trees, the birds, all of God's wonderful creation.

Your situation will shrink when you compare it to the awesomeness of God.

2. Ephesians 5:19-20: "Speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. 20 Give thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Wow! While these Scriptures are jam-packed with much wisdom, I want to focus on the principle of "singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

Doesn't humming make you happy? I know when I am peaceful and content, I hum naturally.

Turns out that science confirms that humming brings real benefits to your body. A 2002 study in the *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine* found that humming causes a 15-fold increase in the production of nasal nitric oxide.

Nitric oxide causes blood vessels to relax and can even lower your blood pressure naturally.

Hum some hymns to the Lord several times each day, and you'll calm yourself down naturally.

3. Proverbs 17:22: "A merry heart does good like a medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones."

In his landmark book, *Anatomy of an Illness*, author Norman Cousins wrote that laughter was a medicine that help him recover from a life-threatening illness.

Cousins said, "I made the joyous discovery that 10 minutes of genuine belly laughter had an anesthetic effect and would give me at least two hours of pain-free sleep,"

To implement this biblical prescription, go to YouTube and find some Christian comedy videos to give yourself a good

laugh daily.

I like Christian comedians Chonda Pierce, Anita Renfro, Tim Hawkins, John Gray and the Skit Guys.

Cultivate a merry heart, and you'll create an atmosphere of healing.

4. Ephesians 4:12: "for the equipping of the saints, for the work of service, and for the building up of the body of Christ."

The old saying, "There is strength in numbers" has a biblical basis. One of the worst things you can do during stressful times is to isolate yourself.

However, you want to choose your company wisely.

Scripture affirms godly counsel's value: "A wise man will hear and will increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel (Prov. 1:4-6).

At the same time, it warns of corrupt counsel's peril: "Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals" (1 Cor. 15:33).

Assess your company. If the people with whom you spend the most time are the source of your stress, then consider changing those associations for your health's sake—if you are able.

In some cases, your associates may be family members. In this case, you need much prayer and God's counsel on how best to handle them in a way that honors Him.

5. Psalm 103:5: "Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's."

Ah, another Bible verse from King David. The man knew how to seek after God's heart.

In this Scripture, David is praising the Lord for satisfying His mouth with good things to renew His youth. I believe the good things David is referring to are good foods and good words.

Both have an impact on how well we manage stress.

Regarding good foods, I believe God's instruction to mankind about what to eat in Genesis 1:29 is His first and best.

When we eat a diet rich in plant-based foods, we give our bodies the nutrients they need for metabolism, boost the immune system to fight disease, strengthen our nervous system and provide the raw materials for healthy tissue repair.

Some of the best foods to soothe the body in stressful times include:

- Oatmeal
- Broccoli
- Cabbage
- Avocado
- Garlic
- Berries (Blueberry, Strawberry, Raspberries, Cherries, and so on)
- Bananas
- Oranges
- Dark chocolate (recommend 70 percent cacao or higher)
- Nuts such as walnuts, almonds and cashews (watch serving sizes as these are high in calories)
- Chamomile tea or decaffeinated green or black tea

Not only do you want to satisfy your mouth with foods that heal your body during stressful times, but you want to fill your mouth with good words.

Consider these two questions in your relationships:

- Is wisdom and kindness on your tongue when you speak

(see Prov. 31:6)?

- Do your words bring grace to the hearers (see Eph. 4:29)?

The Bible says you can eat well from the fruit of your mouth. Make sure that the words you feed yourself and others are good ones.

The best word to feed upon is God's Word.

6. James 1:19: "Therefore, my beloved brothers, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger."

This is one of the most practical Scriptures for healthy human relationships in the Bible.

And yet, it can be the most difficult. How often do we turn this wisdom around?

We are slow to hear, quick to speak and quick to get angry. Failure to practice this advice causes a lot of stress.

I'm smiling as I'm writing this because I recall the many times I've had to struggle to keep my mouth closed when someone else is talking, all the while silently praying this Scripture for the Lord's help.

After all, He tells us that it is foolish to answer a matter before we hear it.

So whenever you are in conflict with someone else, take time to discern what they are saying to you. When in doubt, ask.

Say to them: "I heard you say_____. Is that what you meant?"

Sometimes just the act of clarifying what the person said can ease tensions.

As the late author Stephen Covey once said, "Seek to understand, then to be understood."

7. Psalm 46:10: "Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

I think "busyness" is the enemy's most subtle trick. He wants us busy, distracted with noise and so wrapped up in our circumstances that we forget about God.

He wants us to fear stillness and silence. So we pack our schedules full in order to avoid them.

However, Romans 1:18-32 gives a horrifying picture of people who try to live apart from God. Verse 28 gets to the danger of the matter: "And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not proper."

For your spiritual and physical health, you must retain the knowledge of God in your daily thoughts. Keep Him close and do not let Him go, even though you may be tempted to do so in your flesh.

Be still. Listen for His still, small voice.

Some people are so busy working for the Lord that they forget to walk with the Lord!

- Stop hurrying through your life.
- Be thoughtful and deliberate in your daily activities.
- Take time to thank the Lord in every situation.
- Communicate with Him in prayer.
- Meditate upon His goodness, His wonderful works, and reflect upon His priority in your life.

Retain His knowledge and be thankful that Jesus is Lord and not you.

Your world is in His hands. He loves you and is a very present Help in times of trouble.

I hope these Scriptures have shown you some of the Bible's

practical wisdom for managing stress.

Put them into practice daily and watch your stress levels drop. {eoa}

Once 240 pounds and a size 22, Kimberly Taylor can testify of God's healing power to end binge eating. She is an author and the creator of the Christian weight-loss website . Visit today for inspirational health and weight-loss tips.

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