

How to Combat the 'Disease of the Century'

It seems that stress is the disease of the century. Products and programs to manage stress are a multi billion-dollar business, whether the "cure" is medicine, counseling, books, seminars or classes. But I've discovered that God's way of managing stress is the most effective way to live.

Jesus says in John 14:27 (AMP): "Peace I leave with you; My [perfect] peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. [Let My perfect peace calm you in every circumstance and give you courage and strength for every challenge.]"

I know what it's like to live under the burden and pressure of stress, and I know what it's like to have God's peace. I can honestly say that I will do whatever I have to do to have God's peace in my life, because it is not God's will for us to live with stress all the time.

It's easy for us to feel like we can't avoid being stressed out because it's just the way the world is today. But the truth is just because stress is a disease of our culture doesn't mean we have to adopt the ways of our culture and live the same way.

We have two options: We can continue to be stressed-out until we fall apart, or we can learn how to receive the peace Christ gives in every circumstance, rather than letting stress get into us.

The Cure for Stress

For many years, I lived with constant stress. I was sexually abused by my father throughout my childhood. Then when I left home at the age of 18, I married the first man who came along

because I was afraid no one else would want me, and that led to five years of misery. He ended up abandoning me. By the time I was 23 and met Dave Meyer, I was a mess! I was worried, full of fear, insecure and had a poor self-image. So I tried to find value in what I did and became a workaholic.

Over time, I developed physical problems, like frequent headaches and backaches, and I created problems in many of my relationships because I was unhappy and hard to get along with. I finally came to the place where I decided that I would not live that way any longer. Whatever it took, I was going to have God's peace and live a peaceful life!

James 1:21 (AMPC) says, "In a humble (gentle, modest) spirit receive and welcome the Word which implanted and rooted [in your hearts] contains the power to save your souls." Although I was a Christian during this time of my life, I needed to "get saved" in my soul—my mind, will and emotions. I needed to renew my mind with the Word of God so I could know the Truth and be set free from the root issues of my stress.

This is how it works: When we study God's Word—reading it, meditating on it, getting it deep down in our hearts—it changes the way we think. This causes us to change the way we talk, which changes our attitudes, and then our behavior changes. At this point, the things around us—our circumstances—can't control us anymore.

Get to the Root of Your Stress

Being set free from the pressure of stress begins with God's Word, but we also have to understand that if things are going to change in our lives, we will have to take responsibility to change them with God's help. So the first thing we need to do is pray and be willing to hear what He has to say about the real root of our problem.

If you're already doing your part, then be determined to trust God to fix things. But if you're not walking in wisdom or

you're doing things a certain way just because that's the way everybody else is doing it, then follow the direction He is speaking to your heart to make a change.

We must pray and obey! This means we make a commitment not to live based on the culture around us but by the leading of the Holy Spirit, who lives in us as born-again believers in Christ. Our mindset should be: With God's help, I'm ready to make a change. Then as we do what He shows us to do (or what He shows us *not* to do), we'll be able to live in peace.

Pursue the peace Jesus is offering you today. It's not the kind the world gives—the kind you have as long as your circumstances are the way you want them to be. The peace Jesus gives makes you calm and undisturbed on the inside, in your soul, no matter what's going on around you. Study other scriptures about peace, like Philippians 4:6-7, Colossians 3:15 and 1 Peter 3:11.

Put your trust in God completely and enjoy the life Jesus died to give you. Through Christ, you can learn how to manage the stress of this world, instead of letting stress manage you!

*For more on this topic, order Joyce's four-CD series **Unplug, Unwind and De-stress!** You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, *Enjoying Everyday Life*, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting . {eoa}*

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