

Joyce Meyer: Here's How to Manage Stress So It Doesn't 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 that stress at a reasonable limit, there's no problem. But when we allow it to exceed that limit, trouble begins.

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

In the same way, you and I were designed and created to bear a certain amount of physical, mental and emotional strain day after 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 much about today is *prudence*. It means "careful management; economy." In the Bible, *prudence* or *prudent* means "being good stewards 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, as well as our minds and spirits.

Just as each one of us has been given a different set of gifts, each of us has been given different levels of ability to manage those gifts. And some of us are better at managing our gifts than others.

Proverbs 14:8 (NIV) says, "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 need to be able to recognize when we’re reaching “full capacity” or “overload.” Instead of pushing ourselves into overload to please others or satisfy our own desires of reaching personal goals, we need to listen to and obey what God’s telling us to do. We must follow His wisdom if we really want to enjoy the peaceful, joyful life He has planned for us.

Stress can be caused by just about anything. Stressors can be big or little things. In addition, what causes *you* stress may not bother someone else. And what bothers you today may not bother you tomorrow.

For example, let’s say you’re at the grocery store and the high prices create a stressor for you. Then the process of paying for your groceries (especially if money is tight) stresses you out. On top of that, the checker in your lane runs out of change and has to shut down temporarily. So you switch to a new lane and learn that five of your items don’t have a price on them. The checker has to call for a price check on each one while you wait, and the line behind you grows. These small, seemingly innocent circumstances pile up until you feel like you’re going to explode from the pressure.

Nobody can remove all the big and little things that cause stress in our lives. That’s why we must be prudent in identifying the stressors that affect us most and learn how to respond to them correctly. We must recognize our limits and learn to say no to ourselves and others.

Stressors, not managed properly, can mount up one by one, bringing us to our breaking point. We may not be able to eliminate or reduce many of the stressors in our lives, but with God’s help, we can learn how to manage or reduce their effects on us. We can’t control all of our circumstances, but

we can adjust our attitudes and not let them pressure us.

It seems the very atmosphere of the world today is charged with stress and pressure. But the good news is we don't have to operate in the world's system—reacting like people in the world who have no hope or peace in their lives. The world responds to difficulties by becoming upset and stressed, but our attitudes and approaches should be entirely different.

You know, you can completely turn a situation around just by choosing the right attitude and approach when you're in a challenging situation. Instead of stressing out and tensing up, take a moment to pray for God to help you, calm down, take a deep breath and focus on getting His perspective on the situation.

In the midst of your daily life, you'll have many opportunities to be stressed. But you can refuse to allow your circumstances to dictate how you're going to feel if you will remember to ask God to help you. The truth is you may not be able to control the situation, but you *can control* how you respond to it.

When you know you're going to face a stressful situation, take an offensive approach and decide beforehand what your attitude will be. Then the door will be opened for God to supernaturally help you to calm down and cheer up! {eoa}

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 135 books, including *Battlefield of the Mind* and *The Power of Thank You (FaithWords)*. She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit .

Please note: The views and opinions expressed throughout this publication and/or website are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Joyce Meyer Ministries.

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.