

The Simple Strategy for Better Health and Less Stress

Our thoughts are connected to every single area of our lives. They affect our words, moods, attitudes, the choices we make and even our relationship with God and others. They also affect our emotional and physical health.

In fact, research shows that 75 to 98 percent of mental, physical and behavioral illness comes from one's thought life. The mind and body are definitely connected!

For instance, did you know you can stress yourself by the way you think? So often, we believe our circumstances are to blame for our unhappiness; however it's the way we *think* about our circumstances that usually causes worry and stress.

It's a Modern-Day Epidemic

Stress has been proven to cause issues like muscle tension, headaches, breathing irregularities, increased heart rate, artery inflammation, gastro-intestinal problems, constipation and diarrhea. And that's only a few of the side effects!

The good news is God has given us the answer for worry and stress—*trust*. Proverbs 3:5 (AMPC) says, "Lean on, trust in and be confident in the Lord with all your heart and mind and do not rely on your own insight or understanding."

Trusting God is the greatest stress reliever in the world, and our minds play an important role in the process. We have a choice. We can "rely on our own insight and understanding"—endlessly thinking about our problems, trying to figure everything out ourselves. Or we can choose to adopt a trusting attitude that says, "God, I don't know what to do about this situation, but I can't fix it on my own. If You want me to do something, I ask You to show me. Meanwhile, I'm

going to trust You and enjoy my life while You work on my problems.”

I used to be a professional worrier—I *was good at it*. Years ago, when my children were young, I would sit at our kitchen table and spend hours looking at our bills, worrying about how we would pay them. Dave, on the other hand, would be sitting on the floor in the TV room, playing with the kids, letting them put curlers in his hair.

I would say, “Dave how can you have fun at a time like this?” And he would answer, “Joyce, we’ve prayed about it, and we’re doing everything we know to do. I refuse to worry and be miserable with you.”

It made me so mad! But Dave was right. I was allowing myself to get upset and waste time I could have been spending with my children.

How to Give Up Stress and Gain Peace

In John 14:27 (NIV) Jesus says, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” I love this! God is saying, “I am giving you My peace, and you can choose to be at peace.”

Through His death and resurrection, Jesus offers us a new way of living; however, a new way of *thinking* will always precede this new way of living. Romans 12:2 (NIV) says, “...Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.”

This scripture is so important! God has a good, pleasing, and perfect plan for you and me, and the way we can experience it is not to think like the world thinks, but by learning to renew our mind and think the way *God* thinks. That’s how we’re changed to be more like Christ.

So, when life throws you a curve and you're tempted to get stressed-out, I encourage you to choose positive, faith-filled thoughts from God's Word. You can think, "I know God loves me and He is going to take care of this. It doesn't matter what it looks like—I believe God is working!"

The truth is God knew about your problem before you ever got it, and He already has a plan for your solution. In the meantime, you can choose to enjoy your life while you wait. He has equipped you with the "mind of Christ" (see 1 Cor. 2:16) and with His help, you can trust Him more and overcome stress.

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