

# Midweek Study

Dr. Josh Franklin • Senior Pastor

HOW TO DEAL  
WITH  
HOW YOU FEEL



## From Stressed to Rest

*Matthew 11:28-30, "Come unto Me, all you who are heavy-laden and I will give you rest. Take My yoke and learn from Me, for I am meek and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*

### Consider this:

- 52% of Americans say they are lying awake at night.
- 26% of workers report that they are often or very often burned out or stressed by their work.<sup>1</sup>
- Of all doctor's office visits, 75-90% are for stress-related ailments and complaints.<sup>2</sup>
- A company, concerned about the morale of its top executives, called in a management consultant organization. The report of the results of this organization stunned them. 21 out of the 22 executive committee were suffering from such illnesses as ulcers, high blood pressure, or depression, and their report pointed to one culprit – stress."
- Leslie Vernick states, "Stress not only dampens our spirits and frazzles our nerves, but the constant rush of adrenaline overstimulates the heart and can weaken the immune system, leaving us prone to more illnesses and stress related problems."<sup>3</sup>

*Hudson Taylor once said, "It matters not how great the pressure is, only where the pressure lies. As long as the pressure does not come between me and my Savior, but presses me to Him, then the greater the pressure, the greater my dependence upon Him."*

## What Is Stress?

Stress is defined as the "normal, internal, physiological mechanism that adapts us to change."<sup>4</sup>

Dr. Hans Selye, the father of stress research (and originator of the terms eustress ["good stress"] and distress ["bad stress"]), defined stress as "the nonspecific response of the body to any demand."<sup>5</sup>

Adrian Rogers has defined stress this way: "**Stress is the gap between the demands placed on us and the strength we have in meeting those demands.**" Over here are the responsibilities, necessities, deadlines, demands and opportunities – all those things we want to do, have to do, ought to do and must do. Over here, is my inability and weakness. I think to myself, "I ought to, but I can't!" The chasm between all of the ought to's and the seeming can't do's overwhelms me, causing an increasing feeling of frustration and upset. The old expression is "My can do can't keep up with my want to."

<sup>1</sup> Tim Clinton, *The Quick-Reference Guide to Biblical Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2009), 242.

<sup>2</sup> "Stress at Work," *Department of Health and Human Services: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*; retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/stresswk.html>. As quoted in Clinton, 245.

<sup>3</sup> As quoted in Clinton, 244.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Dennis Rainey, *Lonely Husbands, Lonely Wives: Rekindling Intimacy in Every Marriage* (Dallas: Word, 1989), 96.

<sup>5</sup> Tim Clinton, *The Quick-Reference Guide to Biblical Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2009), 241.

<sup>5</sup> As quoted in Archibald Hart, *Adrenaline and Stress* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1995), 15.

# Causes of Stress <sup>6</sup>

(see 2 Corinthians 11:22-31)

- 1) **CONFLICT (11:23-24)** Paul experienced extreme opposition from others. Examples today: opposing values of family and friends; unresolved anger in relationships; unrealistic expectations of another person; lack of open communication in relationships.
- 2) **CRISIS (11:25-26)** Paul was shipwrecked and often in extreme danger. Examples today: death of a friend or family member; separation or divorce; severe illness or handicaps; unexpected trauma of any kind.
- 3) **CHANGE (11:26-27)** Paul was constantly on the move, often going without sleep. Examples today: change of environment, financial state, employment and/or sleeping and health habits.
- 4) **CONDEMNATION (11:26)** Paul was rejected and betrayed by the Gentiles and by his own people. Examples today: rejection by significant people in your life; lack of support from your coworkers; unfaithfulness of a friend; false accusations about your character.
- 5) **CONCERNS (11:28)** Paul carried the daily pressure of concern for the churches. Examples today: concern for loved ones; anxiety about the future; fear of failure; perfectionism and excessive concern with detail.
- 6) **COMPETITION (11:29-30)** Paul chose to boast only in his weaknesses. Examples today: base your acceptance on who you are in Christ; see your weaknesses as God's opportunities; give up the need to be in control; rejoice in the success of others.
- 7) **CONSCIENCE (11:31)** Paul was secure in his integrity before the Lord. Examples today: put God first in all your activities; allow God to meet your needs; respond to the needs of others; repent of sin in your life.

## How To Reduce Your Stress <sup>7</sup>

- 1) **TURN TO JESUS** (Matt. 11:28 – “Come to Me...”)
  - a. Isaiah 40:29-31<sup>8</sup> – “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.” “Renew” is from the Hebrew word chalet, which literally means “they shall exchange their strength.”
  - b. The key to dealing with stress is to “wait upon the Lord” Waiting is active and involves:
    - **Longing** for the Lord (Psalm 62:1; Psalm 42:1)
    - **Listening** to the Lord (Proverbs 8:34)
    - **Looking** to the Lord (Psalm 104:27; Matt. 6:26)
    - **Living** for the Lord (Proverbs 27:18)
  - c. The answer to stress is a quiet time with God. (see Matthew 6:6 and Isaiah 26:3)
    - A quiet time is a time where you get alone by yourself, you quiet yourself (no distractions), you read the Bible or a devotional book that includes Scripture, and you pray to God. Your perspective changes. Your priorities change. You begin to realize that God is God and you are not. Stress begins to slowly leave.
- 2) **GIVE UP CONTROL** (Matt. 11:29 – “Take My yoke”)
  - a. The yoke is a symbol of **partnership**. He shares your load. See Psalm 55:22 and 1 Peter 5:7.
  - b. The yoke is a symbol of **submission or surrender**. A yoke is used to guide, to control, to direct. When I’m yoked with Christ we move together in the same direction at the same pace. **You and I need a pacesetter!** See Galatians 5:25 NIV says “keep in step with the Spirit...”
  - c. “My yoke is easy” The word “easy” means “completely perfectly fitted” or “custom made”.
  - d. All of the major things in your life have been and are beyond your control: Your race, talents, when you were born, where you were born, to whom you were born, when you are going to die. Luke 12:26 NAB says, “If even the smallest things are beyond your control, why are you anxious about the rest?” Every time you give up control, God gives you peace.
- 3) **FOLLOW JESUS’ MODEL** (Matt. 11:29b – “...learn from Me... you will find rest for your souls.”)
  - a. Jesus wants us to replace our **aggressiveness for His gentleness**. We are gentle with people.
  - b. Jesus wants us to replace our **arrogance for His humility**.
  - c. A lot of stress comes from our pride – we think we can do more than we actually can. We think we can control more than we can. (Phil. 4:10-13 and Hebrews 13:5)
  - d. Jesus only did what the Father told Him to do and said only what the Father told Him to say.

<sup>6</sup> June Hunt, *Biblical Counseling Keys on Stress Management* (Dallas, TX: Hope For The Heart, 2008), 8-10..

<sup>7</sup> Material in this section is from Rick Warren, *Reducing The Pressure* (transcript from April 24-25, 2004), www.pastors.com.

<sup>8</sup> Outline on Isaiah 40:29-31 taken from Adrian Rogers, *Mastering Your Emotions* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1988), 50-53.