

## **A Biblical Response to Dealing with Stress and Difficult Times**

### **Introduction to Stress**

#### **What is stress?**

Dr. Hans Selye (1906-1982), a famous researcher in the area of the human response to stress described stress as the “non-specific response of the body to any demands made upon it.” In 1956 he wrote an article called “The Stress of Life” which detailed some of his earlier research.

What are some stressful situations that place demands on the body?

- If your spouse has a bad day at the work and comes home and blasts you
- If you are a school teacher and are blamed for not keeping discipline when there is no means of enforcing it
- If you are fired without reason or warning
- If you are in middle management, and senior management does not back you up
- If, after down-sizing, you are loaded with more and more work and expected to do it in the same time frame
- If you constantly put yourself down
- If you are allowing others constantly to put you down, intimidate you or abuse you
- Stress, by others or yourself, triggers the stress response to produce such diverse disorders as migraine, anxiety attacks, depression, nervous stomach and diarrhea, asthma, eczema and a host of other maladies

List from Stress Doctor website: [www.stressdoctor.com](http://www.stressdoctor.com)

For the purposes of this study, we’ll describe stress as mental or physical wear and tear caused by our continually changing experiences and environment.

Excessive mental or physical stress will result in mental or physical failure unless we have an effective approach to dealing with it. People attempt to handle excessive mental or physical stress by trying to get stronger mentally or physically. They try to do this by changing their mental or physical shape.

#### **How do people change their mental shape?**

People change their mental shape by modifying how they approach life and they do this through a variety of means. We purchase self-help books, watch television programs and videos, audiotapes and CDs, read magazine articles, talk with friends, go to doctors, etc. We also purchase gadgets (stress toys) to help us relieve stress. Employers offer training programs to their employees to help them handle job stress. Employers understand that employees who handle job stress more effectively will benefit them financially.

#### **How do people change their physical shape?**

People change their physical shape through diet and exercise. Advertisers promise a “new and better” you and improved self-esteem if you buy their products. But, if we don’t make changes correctly and wisely, we will not experience any benefit. In fact, we will most likely experience more harm than good. Like Pastor Dale once said, we will probably just “grease the shoot.” In other words, we will just get to where we don’t want to go faster. Doing things unwisely will just cost us in time, money, relationships, physical health and spiritual health. So, we need to be careful about how we make changes in our lives.

#### **Is stress a good thing or a bad thing in your life?**

God considers it a good thing. God says to encounter trials with joy.

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James 1:2-4 – “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

God also says to rejoice in your tribulations and reap the spiritual benefits that tribulations bring.

Romans 5:3-4 – “And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character, and proven character, hope.”

### **Why do people view stress as a bad thing and something that we should eliminate?**

Because we are short sighted. We don't look beyond the pain and suffering of the moment to see the good that God can create in our lives. All we have to do is choose to handle the stressful situation His way. When we don't look beyond the pain and suffering of the moment, then we handle stress poorly. We not only suffer physically and emotionally as a result of the stress, but we also suffer spiritually. In addition, our poor response to stress can bring suffering into the lives of people around us. We are not islands; the people around us will be positively or negatively affected by how we deal with stress. If we can just choose to handle the situation God's way, then we will eliminate the “unnecessary” suffering. We will open ourselves up to the blessings that God will bestow upon us.

What are these blessings? His love, hope, grace, mercy, forgiveness, having a purpose for living, Christian fellowship, receiving love from other believers, having an escape from the worries of the world, genuine peace, etc.

### **Can we escape stress?**

The world thinks that if we can just manage stress, or escape from it, or eliminate it from our lives, we will be okay. The reality is that we can't completely manage, escape from, or eliminate it. Stress is like the wind in the Antelope Valley. At some point every day it comes up and you can't do anything about it. You can try to stay out of it but, at some point, you have to face it.

If you think about it, there is almost nothing in life that doesn't go through stress. In fact, I can't think of anything that is made that doesn't go through stress to become what it is designed to be. I believe that this is also true for Christians. God allows and uses stressful and difficult times in our lives (trials) to conform us into the men and women that He wants us to be. Becoming Christ-like is not a stress free operation, as some might expect or teach. So, the best thing for us to do is to figure out how God wants us to deal with stress, then follow Him.

### **The World's Solution vs. God's Solution**

It is important for us to recognize that there is the world's way and there is God's way of getting “stronger.” We need to do this so that we can become more effective at dealing with stress.

Solomon understood and surfaced this very issue in the book of Ecclesiastes.

Ecclesiastes 12:11-12 – “*The words of wise men are like goads, and masters of these collections are like well driven nails; they are given by one Shepherd. But beyond this, my son, be warned: the writing of many books is endless, and excessive devotion to books is wearying to the body.*”

We need to be able to delineate between God's way and the world's way so that we will “*be careful how we walk, not as unwise men, but as wise*” (Ephesians 5:15). We also want to make sure that we are walking “*in a manner worthy of the Lord*” and that we are “*pleasing Him in all respects*” (Colossians 1:10).

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### **What's the world's solution to dealing with stress?**

The world spends a lot of time and money trying to figure out how to deal with stress. According to a Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism study, approximately \$9.4 Billion were spent in 1996 to help us deal with the stress in our lives. In 2002 we spent \$17.4 Billion on anti-depressant and anti-anxiety drugs alone (CNN/Money report, March 21, 2003).

The world tells you to buy a stress chair, go on vacation, change your environment, change your job, divorce your wife, buy some exercise equipment, buy a luxury car with leather seats, get more exercise, eat differently, have a beer, go to a psychiatrist, take a pill, etc. I'm not condemning any of the solutions that the world has to offer (except where they obviously contradict Biblical commands and principles), but what I am saying is this, "As Christians, why not give God the first opportunity to help you deal with stress?" We too quickly run to the world's solutions without first seeking out and using God's solution.

For some people it is particularly hard for them to deal with stress. They are especially susceptible to succumbing to the world's solutions to their problems. I believe that there are certain physiological factors (that people are born with) and that there are certain negative environmental factors (caused mainly while growing up) that make it particularly challenging for some people to properly deal with stress. These are our weaknesses. For the most part, we have no control over these factors. But even though each of us has unique weaknesses, **God's standard remains the same for all of us.** The fact is that for some of us it is more challenging to follow God's standard. Fortunately for us, we can rely on the following truths:

God understands our weaknesses and knows exactly what we are going through.

Hebrews 4:15 – *"we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are."*

God gives us the grace we need to overcome our weaknesses. His power is perfected in our lives when we recognize our weaknesses and rely upon his grace.

2 Corinthians 12:9 – *"My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness."*

God understands that we need help and He uses other believers to assist us

Galatians 6:1-2 – *"Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. . . Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ."*

God is going to use us for good works in spite of our weaknesses.

Ephesians 2:10 – *"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."*

Finally, God gives us the real escape not the world's escape. God's escape plan is different from the world's plan and it always works. We just need to choose God's plan over the world's plan.

1 Corinthians 10:13 – *"No temptation has overtaken us but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it."*

Even though it is easy and natural for us to follow the world's solution to dealing with stress, in the end it will just cost in time, money, relationships, and even our physical, emotional and spiritual health. We need to exercise wisdom and caution with how we change the mental and physical shapes of our lives.

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### **The Natural vs. Unnatural Response to Stress**

Being stressed is analogous to being on fire. When on fire, a person has a natural tendency to run. Why? Because we panic and we want to get away from the fire. It's natural for us to want to get away from something that causes us pain.

It's unnatural for a person on fire to stop. But, if we would stop in the first few seconds of catching fire, we would not only potentially save our lives but we would also save ourselves from getting more seriously injured. The key is to stop right away. Seconds matter.

#### **What does running actually do?**

Running just fuels the fire and causes you to get more burned. You're not running away from anything. You're actually making the situation worse for you.

Similarly, a stressed out person has a natural tendency to "run" when on fire with stress. When we're on "fire" with stress what do we "naturally" do? We naturally want to give in to our flesh. In Colossians 3:5-9 Paul describes the fleshly things that we have a natural tendency to do.

Colossians 3:5-9 – *"Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come, and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices."* (Also see Galatians 5:16-21)

These are the things that we naturally want to do: immorality (have affairs), impurity (engage in sexually explicit activities), passion (lust for things), evil desires, greed (acquire material things you don't need), anger, wrath, malice, slander, abusive speech, lying. You don't have to force people to do these things. We just naturally go there.

It is unnatural for a person on "fire" with stress to not run. So, what should a person on "fire" with stress do in contrast to Colossians 3:5-9? Paul answers this question in Colossians 3:12-17. Here he describes what, I believe, should be our spiritual response to stress.

Colossians 3:12-17 – *"And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teach and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."* (Also See Galatians 5:22-23)

These are the things that are unnatural for us to do when we're stressed out; put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, bear with one another, forgive each other, put on love, promote unity, let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, let the word of Christ richly dwell within us, be thankful. It takes effort to do these things, because our flesh wants to be satisfied in fleshly ways, not spiritual ways.

Additionally, we need to take our focus off earthly things and look towards heaven.

Colossians 3:1-2 – *"If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth."*

#### **What are some typical situations that can catch us on fire, and where we have the opportunity to apply our fleshy versus our spiritual response?**

Paul describes some stressful situations in Colossians 3:18-22.

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Colossians 3:18-22 – “Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be embittered against them. Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart. Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.”

- The husband and wife relationship
- The child and parent relationship
- The worker and employer relationship

**Illustration:** The stress in the husband/wife, child/parent, or the worker/employer relationship is like a rubberband being stretched between two people. If the tension gets too great for one person, they will let go (bad response to stress) and the other person will experience the pain of getting snapped by the rubberband. If neither of them let go and the tension continues to build to the breaking point (not managing stress properly), then they both will experience the pain of getting snapped by the rubberband. The Word of God is the tension controller. It keeps the rubberband in a tension free state. A proper response to God’s Word will keep us from experiencing the pain of getting “snapped.”

When presented with the stressful situations like the ones described above we quickly discover the strengths or weaknesses of our walks and what our tendencies are. We either allow our natural tendencies (Colossians 3:5-9) to display themselves or we exercise self-control and apply unnatural Biblical responses (Colossians 3:12-17) to the situations. Knowing what situations tempt you to handle stress poorly and what your tendencies are in those situations will go a long way in helping you righteously handle stressful situations. Most of us know what those situations are and how we naturally want to respond while in them.

**Illustration:** The reasons why coaches and players study films in sports is to find out the answer to at least three things:

1. What does the other team do in certain situations? (find out their tendencies)
2. How did we handle that situation? (find out our tendencies)
3. What things do we need to do to handle the situation correctly the next time? (correct our wrong tendencies)

### **What does running actually create when you are on “fire” with stress?**

Like a person who is actually on fire, it creates more stress and causes you (and others) to get more “burned.” You become so focused on yourself and the pain and suffering that you are going through that you completely disregard anything and everyone around you. Your problems get bigger and bigger in your mind (or in reality because of your running), because you are increasingly moving away from God’s solution. As your problems get bigger in your mind or in reality, the impact your sin has on you and others becomes increasingly more significant.

### **So what’s the Biblical solution to dealing with stress?**

Hopefully, this study will aid you in discovering the Biblical solution to responding to stress in a spiritually positive way. This lesson discusses three principles to Biblically responding to stress. These principles are analogous to our response to being on fire. In both cases we must STOP, DROP, and ROLL.

### **A Biblical Response to Stress**

#### **First Principle: STOP (Stop the Stress Fire from Spreading)**

When we’re on fire, the first thing we need to do is STOP. This will stop the fire from spreading and causing more harm to ourselves and others. Similarly, a person on fire with stress also needs to stop.

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### **How do we stop?**

I believe that the attempt to stop when confronted with stress is the most difficult thing to do. Early recognition is vitally important in order to stop before succumbing to stress. When we succumb to stress we are probably not in a prayerful state or in a mood to get into God's word and rely upon His strength. Hopefully, our mature Christian brothers and sisters will help us see that we are going down the wrong path (Galatians 6:1-2). This is why it is imperative that we surround ourselves with spiritually mature Christians who aren't afraid to confront us when they see us not dealing well with stress. It is equally important for us listen to them when they confront us.

Proverbs 27:5-6 – *“Better is open rebuke than love that is concealed. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.”*

### **So, what do we need to do when we stop?**

#### **We need to STOP and BE STILL**

- Mentally stop and recognize that God is at work and in control.

Psalms 46:10 – *“Cease striving and know that I am God.”*

- Wait silently for the Lord (relax). God will rescue you because He is your hope, your rock, your salvation, your strength, and your refuge.

Psalms 62:1-2, 5-8 – *“My soul waits in silence for God only; from Him is my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be greatly shaken. ... My soul, wait in silence for God only, for my hope is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall be shaken. On God my salvation and my glory rest; the rock of my strength, my refuge is in God.”*

- When we stop we allow ourselves to become sensitive the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. If we continue to run around we will elude the work of the Spirit in our lives.

1. The Holy Spirit causes us to remember God's truth (John 14:6)
2. The Holy Spirit teaches us (John 14:26)
3. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin (John 16:8)
4. The Holy Spirit will guide us (John 16:13)

#### **We need to STOP and CONFESS our sin**

- A right relationship with God starts with confession of sin.

1 John 1:9-10 – *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.”*

- Ask God to reveal your sin to you.

Psalms 139:23-24 – *“Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.”*

- Hiding sin does not help you.

Proverbs 28:13 – *“He who conceals his transgression will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.”*

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- Get right with God and regain your spiritual strength.

Psalms 32:3-7 – *“When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. I acknowledged my sin to Thee, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord’; and Thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin. Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found; surely in a flood of great waters they shall not reach him. Thou art my hiding place; Thou dost preserve me from trouble; Thou dost surround me with songs of deliverance.”*

### **Second Principle: DROP (Get into Position to Put Out the Stress Fire)**

When we’re on fire the second thing we need to do is DROP. This action gets us into the correct position to put out the fire, which is on the ground. Similarly, a person on fire with stress needs to get into the right position, which is “on the ground” before the Lord.

**How does a person on fire with stress practically “get on the ground?” We need to DROP before God by yielding ourselves to the Lord in humility.**

### **DROP and be YIELDED**

- Yield to God and not to the world.

Romans 12:1-2 – *“I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

Our tendency when we get stressed is to solve our problems by ourselves, in our own way and through our own strength.

### **How do we often try to solve our problems?**

We choose to do what the world does. We give in to temptation, i.e., yield to our flesh. What does the world do when there is stress in the family, work, finance, etc.? They respond in ways that appeal to their flesh (Col. 3:5-9). I read a bumper sticker that said, “Support catch and release, get a divorce.” The point being that when things get difficult in your marriage you can solve your problems by getting rid of your spouse.

What does Philippians 4:13 teach? *“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”*

It teaches that we can do all things through God and His strength. It does not teach that we can do all things by ourselves and on our own strength. Another way of saying the verse is, *“I can do nothing on my own strength.”* If we don’t learn to have this type of attitude, we will fail in our fleshly attempts to solve our problems.

### **DROP and be HUMBLE**

- Remember that God has things under control and that He can free you from the anxieties of your life.

1 Peter 5:6-7 – *“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.”*

- Recognize that you are weak and that you need God’s grace.

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2 Corinthians 12:7-9 – “*And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger from Satan to buffet me – to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.*”

- Recognize your need for God’s mercy and grace and humbly draw near to Him.

Hebrews 4:16 – “*Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.*”

- Humble and submit yourself before God as a sinner who understands his sin and be exalted by God and not by yourself or others.

James 4:6-10 – “*But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, ‘God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’ Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands you sinners; and purify your hearts, you doubled-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.*”

**Is it typically your first response to humble yourself before God when you get stressed or do you get into your fighting stance?**

### **Third Principle: ROLL (Smother Out the Stress Fire)**

When we’re on fire the third thing we need to do is ROLL. This action will smother out the fire by eliminating the fuel the fire needs to keep going. Similarly, we must eliminate the fuel that the stress fire needs, but not in the way that the world eliminates it. To put out the stress fire we must get on the ground and ROLL around to smother it.

**How do we practically get on the ground and roll around and smother out stress?**

### **Smother stress with TRUTH**

- Jesus battled a stressful situation with the Truth.

Matthew 4:1-11 – “*Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.’ But He answered and said, ‘It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’ Then the devil took Him into the holy city; and he had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, ‘If You are the Son of God throw Yourself down; for it is written, “He will give His angels charge concerning you”; and “On their hands they will bear You up, lest You strike Your foot against a stone.”’ Jesus said to him, ‘On the other hand, it is written, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.”’ Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; and he said to Him, “All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me.” Then Jesus said to him, “Begone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.’” Then the devil left Him; and behold angels came and began to minister to Him.*”

- Developing a love for God’s truth brings peace and spiritual stability.

Psalms 119:165 – “*Those who love Thy law have great peace, and nothing causes them to stumble.*”

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### **Smother stress with FAITH**

- Believe that God is your helper.

Hebrews 13:6 – *“The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?”*

- Know that Jesus loves you in your stressful situation.

Romans 8:35 – *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword?”*

- Don’t let your heart be troubled, but rather believe in God.

John 14:1 – *“Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.”*

### **Smother stress with HOPE**

- Set your hope on God believe He will deliver you.

2 Corinthians 1:8-11 – *“For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves in order that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us, you also joining in helping us through your prayers, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed upon us through the prayers of many.”*

- Hope in God because he is faithful.

1 Corinthians 10:13 – *“No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.”*

- Don’t despair but have hope in God.

Psalms 42:5-11 – *“Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him for the help of His presence. O my God, my soul is in despair within me; therefore I remember Thee from the land of the Jordan, and the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar. Deep calls to deep at the sound of Thy waterfalls; all Thy breakers and Thy waves have rolled over me. The Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime; and His song will be with me in the night, a prayer to the God of my life.”*

- We have the hope of receiving the blessings of our salvation.

1 Peter 1:3-9 – *“Blessed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.”*

- We have a sure hope that is an anchor for our soul.

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Hebrews 6:19 – *“This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”*

### **Smother stress with PERSEVERANCE**

- Through perseverance we develop spiritual maturity.

James 1:2-3 – *“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.”*

- Through perseverance we develop our Christian character and solidify our hope.

Romans 5:3-5 – *“And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”*

- Eternal blessing awaits the one who perseveres.

James 1:12 – *“Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”*

### **Smother stress with PRAYER**

- Earnestly pray to God and believe that He hears and understands you.

Psalms 5:1-3 – *“Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my groaning. Heed the sound of my cry for help, my King and my God, for to Thee do I pray. In the morning, O Lord, Thou wilt hear my voice; in the morning I will order my prayer to Thee and eagerly watch.*

- Pray when you're anxious and receive His peace.

Philippians 4:6-7 – *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

### **Smother stress with a PROPER ATTITUDE**

- God is in the business of completing a good work in your life. Believe that God has your best interest in mind.

Philippians 1:6 – *“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”*

- Look at your trials with joy because God will use them for good in your life.

James 1:2-4 – *“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”*

- Know that God causes all things to work together for good in the life of a believer.

Romans 8:28 – *“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”*

## Valley Bible Church Study on Stress

- Have a humble attitude and give up what you think you deserve.

Philippians 2:5-8 – *“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”*

- Let the world see you having a positive spiritual attitude during stressful times.

Philippians 2:14-15 – *“Do all things without grumbling or disputing; that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world.”*

- Dwell on profitable things.

Philippians 4:8 – *“Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.”*

### **Biblical Examples of How to Handle Stressful Situations**

The Way Paul Dealt with Stress from the Bible.

2 Corinthians 1:8-11 – *“For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves in order that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us, you also joining in helping us through your prayers, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed upon us through the prayers of many.”*

2 Corinthians 11:28-29 – *“Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure upon me of concern for all the churches. Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?”*

Philippians 4:11-13 – *“Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”*

How did the Apostle Paul handle stressful situations according to these passages?

- He placed his trust in God rather than himself
- He placed his hope in God
- He persevered when things seemed hopeless
- He focused on the needs of others
- He learned how to deal with stressful situations
- He didn't attach his attitude to his circumstances
- He placed his confidence in God
- He relied on God's strength not his own
- He believed in the power of prayer

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## **Summary**

As Christians, we must learn how to STOP, DROP and ROLL when confronted by stress and difficult times. We can't allow ourselves to succumb to the world's motto of SHOP, FLOP & STROLL. We must continually resist the temptations to respond to the challenges of life in a worldly way.

## **List of Verses and Passages**

- Psalms 5:1-3; 32:3-7; 42:5-11; 46:10; 62:1-2; 62:5-8; 119:165; 139:23-24
- Proverbs 27:5-6; 28:13
- Ecclesiastes 12:11-12
- Matthew 4:1-11
- John 14:1, 6, 26; 16:8, 13
- Romans 5:3-5; 8:28, 35; 12:1-2
- Galatians 5:16-21; 22-23; 6:1-2
- Ephesians 2:10; 5:15
- Philippians 1:6; 2:5-8; 2:14-15; 4:6-8; 4:13
- Colossians 1:10; 3:1-2; 3:5-9; 3:12-22
- 1 Corinthians 10:13
- 2 Corinthians 1:8-11; 11:28-29; 12:7-9
- Hebrews 4:15-16; 6:19; 13:6
- James 1:2-10; 1:12; 4:6-10
- 1 Peter 1:3-9; 5:6-7
- 1 John 1:9-10