

## Victory Over Stress

*"I have a terrible baptism of suffering ahead of me, and I am under a heavy burden until it is accomplished." —Luke 12:50*

Stress is the body's natural response to the **resistance** in the soul concerning demanding situations. We resist the threat of adding more to our already too much to do lists, even when we know certain opportunities could be good for us. We resist situations in our life when they're not going according to plan. **Stress is resistance**—When the boss makes you work the weekend you were going on vacation; When your car breaks down or your house needs repairs two weeks before payday; When your small kids misbehave in public; When your teenage kids are hooked on drugs; When you're already late for a meeting and get stopped for speeding; When your wife wants to go on vacation with your in-laws; When your employees seem incompetent to follow your instructions...



Christians are like plums—You know they're ripe when you squeeze and it yields. Are you under any pressure? Pressures with family, finances, work, ministry, health...??? All pressure does is registers your resistance to God in the circumstance He put you in. God brings a circumstance to move you and work something in your life, not for you to fix it. So your trouble is

never really in your trouble but in your heart's attitude toward your trouble. Nothing ever really goes wrong, but you just go wrong with it. Your stress is the point where you fight against the circumstance God brought to make you expand in what you believe He can do. The word "Amen" means "So be it" or "Let it be." When you get up in the morning and find out you don't have any money, just say "Amen." You find out someone is slandering you, "Well amen." You go to bed at night and all your relationships are not sorted out... "Well amen." You're yielding to God.

If anybody had tremendous responsibilities in life, it was Jesus. *Then Jesus went with them to a garden called Gethsemane* ["oil press"—where olives were crushed under foot for oil] *and told his disciples, "Stay here while I go over there and pray."* *Taking along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he plunged into an agonizing sorrow. Then he said, "This sorrow is crushing my life out. Stay here and keep vigil with me."* *Going a little ahead, he fell on his face, praying, "My Father, if there is any way, get me out of this. But please, not what I want. You, what do you want?"* —Matthew 26:36-39

What moved Jesus from, "Father get me out of this" [resistance] to "Let's get going" [submission]? Stress is the measure of your resistance to God in the unique situation where He has placed you. You see, God fixes a fix to fix you, but if you try to fix the fix God fixed to fix you, He'll fix another fix to fix you that you can't fix, and then you'll be fixed. Jesus was between a rock and a hard place, not wanting to be crucified for our sins. But when He surrendered His will to the Father's will and accepted His fix, He was able to deliver us from suffering by being delivered through it.

We all have expectations of our family, friends, God, strangers, pastors, bosses and even ourselves. We imagine them being willing and available to meet certain needs for us. To some degree, we all feel others "owe us" a measure of respect or obligation to fulfill their roles in connection to us.

We also all see our lives going a certain way, but when things don't work out, we stress out. That's why it's really important to understand that...



**STRESS** is the measure of the distance between your expectation and your reality. It is the measure of your "unrealistic expectations."

When people or situations don't meet your expectation, you get "stressed out." No one gets everything they want in life; at least not when and in the way they want it. God is not interested in narcissistic kids, but in humble children who accept disappointment with teachability and an open mind. This is how you grow. So when you can't change the stark realities of life, you better change your expectations.

You will likely never completely escape the pressures of pleasing and performing, but you can still have peace. There will always be a parent, boss, or authority figure to require certain behaviors and attitudes from you. But they are not the primary problem; your resistance to them is. The key is not in removing stress but in how we handle stress. Acceptance is the answer to all our problems. When we're stressed, it's because we find some person, place or situation—some fact of life—unacceptable. And we will find no serenity until we accept that situation as being exactly how it's supposed to be at this moment. Your serenity is inversely proportional to your expectations. The higher your expectations, the lower your serenity. Your serenity is directly proportional to your level of acceptance.