

Stress Management

How to Reduce, Prevent, and Cope with Stress



Psalm 121 «A Song of degrees.»

*1 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,
from whence cometh my help.*

*2 My help cometh from the LORD,
which made heaven and earth.*

*3 He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:
he that keepeth thee will not slumber.*

*4 Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall
neither slumber nor sleep.*

*5 The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand.5
The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand.*

6 The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.

7 The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.

*8 The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time
forth, and even for evermore.*



Six Strategies

From a 2015 Innovative Educators Seminar
A psychologist's input, but with Biblical adaptations for Christians

- Strategy #1: Avoid unnecessary stress
- Strategy #2: Alter the situation
- Strategy #3: Adapt to the stressor
- Strategy #4: Accept the things you can't change
- Strategy #5: Make time for fun and relaxation
- Strategy #6: Adopt a healthy lifestyle



From Innovative Educators Seminar, Authors: Melinda Smith, M.A. and Robert Segal, M.A.
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You can only attain a stress free relationship with God your Creator by accepting his Only Begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He moves into your soul and then you have... a counselor on-board. Once reconciled to God, it is amazing what praising will do.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (John 3:16)

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. (3:36).

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. (5:24)
Romans Road to Heaven

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:...For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (Romans 3:10,23)

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.... Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:... Therefore as by the offence of one [judgment came] upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. (5:8, 12, 18)

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (6:23)...

A Formal Acceptance of God's Offer Is Required

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (Romans 10:9-10)

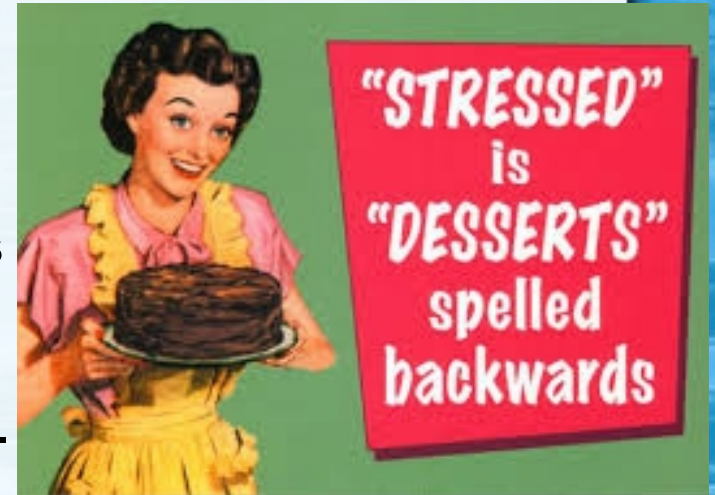
Whosoever includes you. Shall be saved means not maybe, nor can be, but shall be saved. Surely, you realize you are a sinner. Right now, wherever you are, repenting, lift your heart to God in prayer.

In Luke 18:13, the sinner prayed: "God be merciful to me a sinner." You can just pray: "Oh God, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus was my substitute when He died on the Cross. I believe His shed blood, death, burial, and resurrection were for me. I now receive Him as my Savior. I thank You for the forgiveness of my sins, the gift of salvation and everlasting life, because of Your merciful grace. Amen."

Just take God at His word and claim His salvation by faith. Believe, and you will be saved. No church, no lodge, no good works can save you. Remember, God does the saving. All of it!

It may seem that there's nothing you can do about stress. The bills won't stop coming, there will never be more hours in the day, and your career and family responsibilities will always be demanding.

But you have more control than you might think. In fact, the simple realization that you're in control of your life is the foundation of stress management. Managing stress is all about taking charge: of your thoughts, emotions, schedule, and the way you deal with problems.



1Peter 5:1,5-7 The elders which are among you I exhort... Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.



Identify the sources of stress in your life

Stress management starts with identifying the sources of stress in your life. This isn't as easy as it sounds. Your true sources of stress aren't always obvious, and it's all too easy to overlook your own stress-inducing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

Sure, you may know that you're constantly worried about work deadlines. But maybe it's your procrastination, rather than the actual job demands, that leads to deadline stress.



Start a Stress Journal

A stress journal can help you identify the regular stressors in your life and the way you deal with them. Each time you feel stressed, keep track of it in your journal. As you keep a daily log, you will begin to see patterns and common themes. Write down:

- What caused your stress (make a guess if you're unsure).
- How you felt, both physically and emotionally.
- How you acted in response.
- What you did to make yourself feel better.
- *A Scripture Verse that deals with the stress.*

*Psalm 37:7-8 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself...
Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.*



Look at how you currently cope with stress

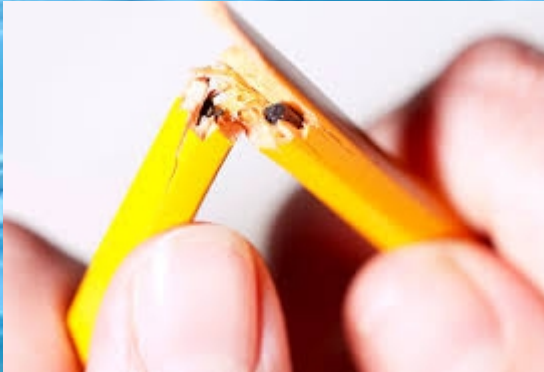
Think about the ways you currently manage and cope with stress in your life.

Your stress journal can help you identify them. Are your coping strategies healthy or unhealthy, helpful or unproductive?

Unfortunately, many people cope with stress in ways that compound the problem.

There are unhealthy ways of coping with stress





Unhealthy ways of coping with stress

- Smoking
- Drinking ~~too much~~
- Overeating or under eating
- Zoning out for hours in front of the TV or computer
- Withdrawing from friends, family, and activities
- Using pills or drugs to relax
- Sleeping too much
- Procrastinating
- Filling up every minute of the day to avoid facing problems
- Taking out your stress on others (lashing out, angry outbursts, physical violence)



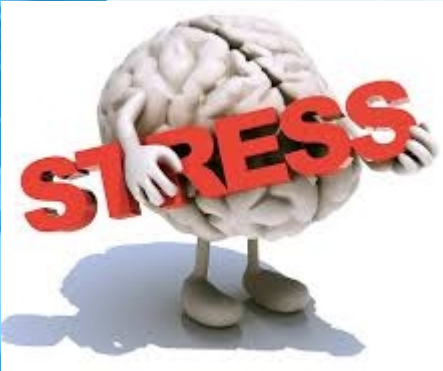
Proverbs 20:1 Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

Proverbs 23:29-30 Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.

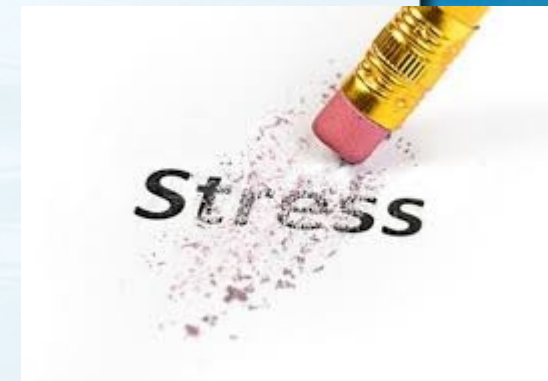


Learning healthier ways to manage stress

If your methods of coping with stress aren't contributing to your greater emotional and physical health, it's time to find healthier ones. There are many healthy ways to manage and cope with stress, but they all require change. You can either change the situation or change your reaction. When deciding which option to choose, it's helpful to think of the four As: **avoid, alter, adapt, or accept.**



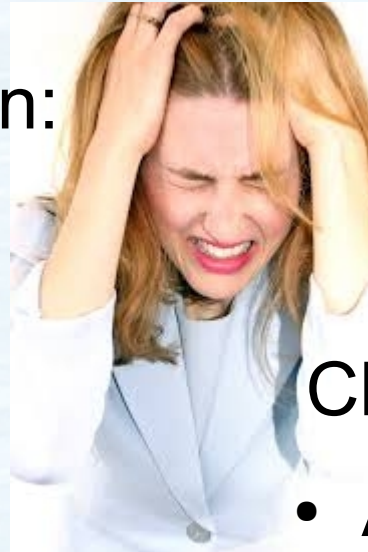
Since everyone has a unique response to stress, there is no “one size fits all” solution to managing it. No single method works for everyone or in every situation, so experiment with different techniques and strategies. Focus on what makes you feel calm and in control.



Dealing with Stressful Situations: The Four A's

Change the situation:

- Avoid the stressor
- Alter the stressor



Change your reaction:

- Adapt to the stressor
- Accept the stressor

Job 13:15-16 Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him. He also shall be my salvation: for an hypocrite shall not come before him.



Stress management strategy #1:

Avoid unnecessary stress

Not all stress can be avoided, and it's not healthy to avoid a situation that needs to be addressed. You may be surprised, however, by the number of stressors in your life that you can eliminate.

Learn how to say “no” – Know your limits and stick to them. Whether in your personal or professional life, taking on more than you can handle is a surefire recipe for stress.

Avoid people who stress you out – If someone consistently causes stress in your life and you can't turn the relationship around, limit the amount of time you spend with that person or end the relationship entirely.



Stress management strategy #1: Avoid unnecessary stress Cont

Take control of your environment – If the evening news makes you anxious, turn the TV off. If traffic's got you tense, take a longer but less-traveled route. If going to the market is an unpleasant chore, do your grocery shopping online.



Avoid hot-button topics – If you get upset over religion or politics, cross them off your conversation list. If you repeatedly argue about the same subject with the same people, stop bringing it up or excuse yourself when it's the topic of discussion.

Pare down your to-do list – Analyze your schedule, responsibilities, and daily tasks. If you've got too much on your plate, distinguish between the "shoulds" and the "musts." Drop tasks that aren't truly necessary to the bottom of the list or eliminate them entirely.



Stress management strategy #2:

Alter the situation

If you can't avoid a stressful situation, try to alter it. Figure out what you can do to change things so the problem doesn't present itself in the future. Often, this involves changing the way you communicate and operate in your daily life.



Express your feelings instead of bottling them up. If something or someone is bothering you, communicate your concerns in an open and respectful way. If you don't voice your feelings, resentment will build and the situation will likely remain the same.

Be willing to compromise. When you ask someone to change their behavior, be willing to do the same. If you both are willing to bend at least a little, you'll have a good chance of finding a happy middle ground.



Stress management strategy #2: Alter the situation Cont

Be more assertive. Don't take a backseat in your own life. Deal with problems head on, doing your best to anticipate and prevent them. If you've got an exam to study for and your chatty roommate just got home, say up front that you only have five minutes to talk.

Manage your time better. Poor time management can cause a lot of stress. When you're stretched too thin and running behind, it's hard to stay calm and focused. But if you plan ahead and make sure you don't overextend yourself, you can alter the amount of stress you're under.

Jesus gave 9 blessed "R"s:

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit:
 2. Blessed are they that mourn:
 3. Blessed are the meek:
 4. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness:
 5. Blessed are the merciful:
 6. Blessed are the pure in heart:
 7. Blessed are the peacemakers:
- See Matthew 5 for all nine in context.



Stress management strategy #3: Adapt to the stressor

If you can't change the stressor, change yourself. You can adapt to stressful situations and regain your sense of control by changing your expectations and attitude.

Reframe problems. Try to view stressful situations from a more positive perspective. Rather than fuming about a traffic jam, look at it as an opportunity to pause and regroup, listen to your favorite radio station, or enjoy some alone time.



Look at the big picture. Take perspective of the stressful situation. Ask yourself how important it will be in the long run. Will it matter in a month? A year? Is it really worth getting upset over? If the answer is no, focus your time and energy elsewhere.

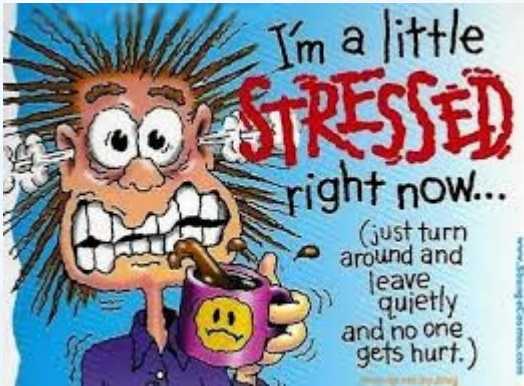
Stress management strategy #3: Adapt to the stressor Cont.



Adjust your standards. Perfectionism is a major source of avoidable stress. Stop setting yourself up for failure by demanding perfection. Set reasonable standards for yourself and others, and learn to be okay with “good enough.”

Focus on the positive. When stress is getting you down, take a moment to reflect on all the things you appreciate in your life, including your own positive qualities and gifts. This simple strategy can help you keep things in perspective.





Adjusting Your Attitude

How you think can have a profound effect on your emotional and physical well-being. See "It's Amazing What Praising Will Do"

www.gsbaptistchurch.com/messages/amazing_praising/amazing_praising.pdf

Each time you think a negative thought about yourself, your body reacts as if it were in the throes of a tension-filled situation. If you see good things about yourself, you are more likely to feel good; the reverse is also true.

Eliminate words such as "always," "never," "should," and "must." These are telltale marks of self-defeating thoughts.

Stress management strategy #4: Accept the things you can't change

Some sources of stress are unavoidable. You can't prevent or change stressors such as the death of a loved one, a serious illness, or a national recession. In such cases, the best way to cope with stress is to accept things as they are. Acceptance may be difficult, but in the long run, it's easier than railing against a situation you can't change.

Don't try to control the uncontrollable. Many things in life are beyond our control— particularly the behavior of other people. Rather than stressing out over them, focus on the things you can control such as the way you choose to react to problems.



Look for the upside. As the saying goes, “What doesn't kill us makes us stronger.” When facing major challenges, try to look at them as opportunities for personal growth. If your own poor choices contributed to a stressful situation, reflect on them and learn from your mistakes.

Stress management strategy #4: Accept the things you can't change Cont.

Share your feelings. Talk to a trusted friend face to face or make an appointment with ~~a therapist~~ *your pastor or your "counselor on-board", the Lord Jesus Christ*. The simple act of expressing what you're going through can be very cathartic (*emotionally purging*), even if there's nothing you can do to alter the stressful situation. Opening up is not a sign of weakness and it won't make you a burden to others. In fact, most friends will be flattered that you trust them enough to confide in them, and it will only strengthen your bond.

Learn to forgive. Accept the fact that we live in an imperfect world and that people make mistakes. Let go of anger and resentments. Free yourself from negative energy by forgiving and moving on.



Stress management strategy #5: Make time for fun and relaxation

Beyond a take-charge approach and a positive attitude, you can reduce stress in your life by nurturing yourself. If you regularly make time for fun and relaxation, you'll be in a better place to handle life's stressors.

- Go for a walk.
- Spend time in nature.
- Call a good friend.
- Sweat out tension with a good workout.
- Write in your journal.
- Take a long bath.
- Light scented candles.
- *Read the Scriptures, Particularly the Psalms of David*



- Savor a warm cup of coffee or tea.
- Play with a pet.
- Work in your garden.
- Get a massage.
- Curl up with a good book.
- Listen to music.
- Watch a comedy.
- *Psalms Hymns and Spiritual Songs*



Stress management strategy #5: Make time for fun and relaxation Cont.



Don't get so caught up in the hustle and bustle of life that you forget to take care of your own needs. Nurturing yourself is a necessity, not a luxury.

Set aside relaxation time. Include rest and relaxation in your daily schedule. Don't allow other obligations to encroach. This is your time to take a break from all responsibilities and recharge your batteries.

Connect with others. Spend time with positive people who enhance your life. A strong support system will buffer you from the negative effects of stress.

Do something you enjoy every day. Make time for leisure activities that bring you joy, whether it be stargazing, playing the piano, or working on your bike.

Keep your sense of humor. This includes the ability to laugh at yourself. The act of laughing helps your body fight stress in a number of ways.



Stress management strategy #6: Adopt a healthy lifestyle

You can increase your resistance to stress by strengthening your physical health.

Exercise regularly. Physical activity plays a key role in reducing and preventing the effects of stress. Make time for at least 30 minutes of exercise, three times per week. Nothing beats aerobic exercise for releasing pent-up stress and tension.

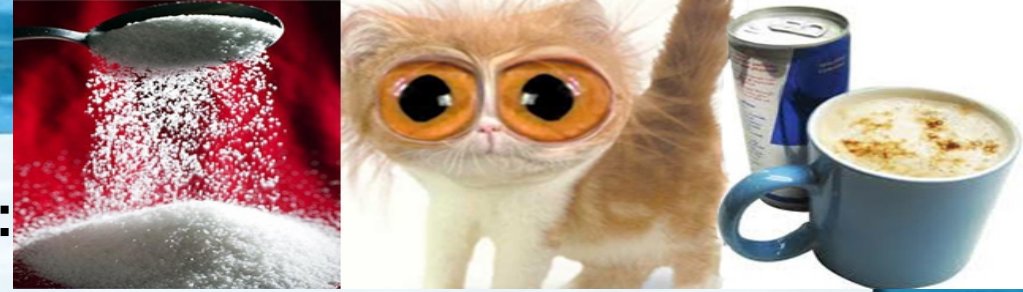
Eat a healthy diet. Well-nourished bodies are better prepared to cope with stress, so be mindful of what you eat. Start your day right with breakfast, and keep your energy up and your mind clear with balanced, nutritious meals throughout the day.

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. 1Cor 6:19-20



Stress management strategy #6: Adopt a healthy lifestyle Cont.

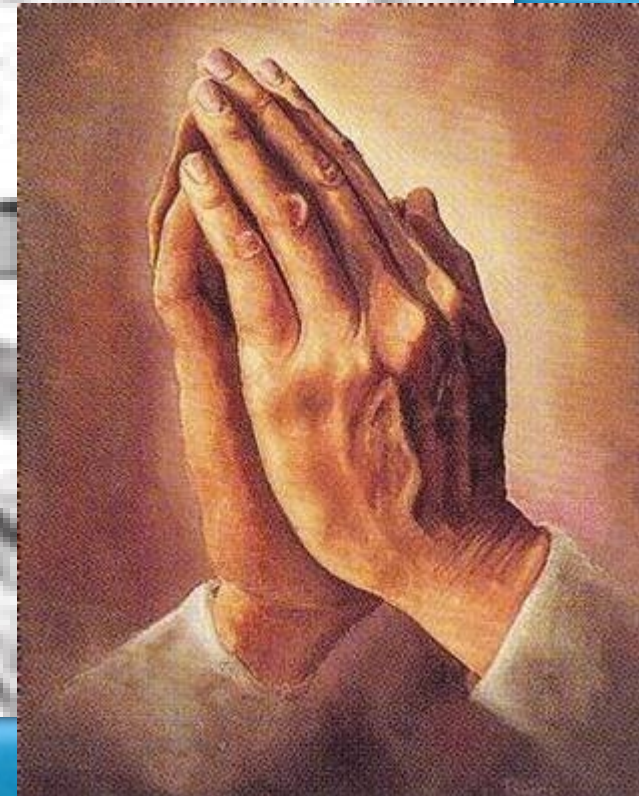
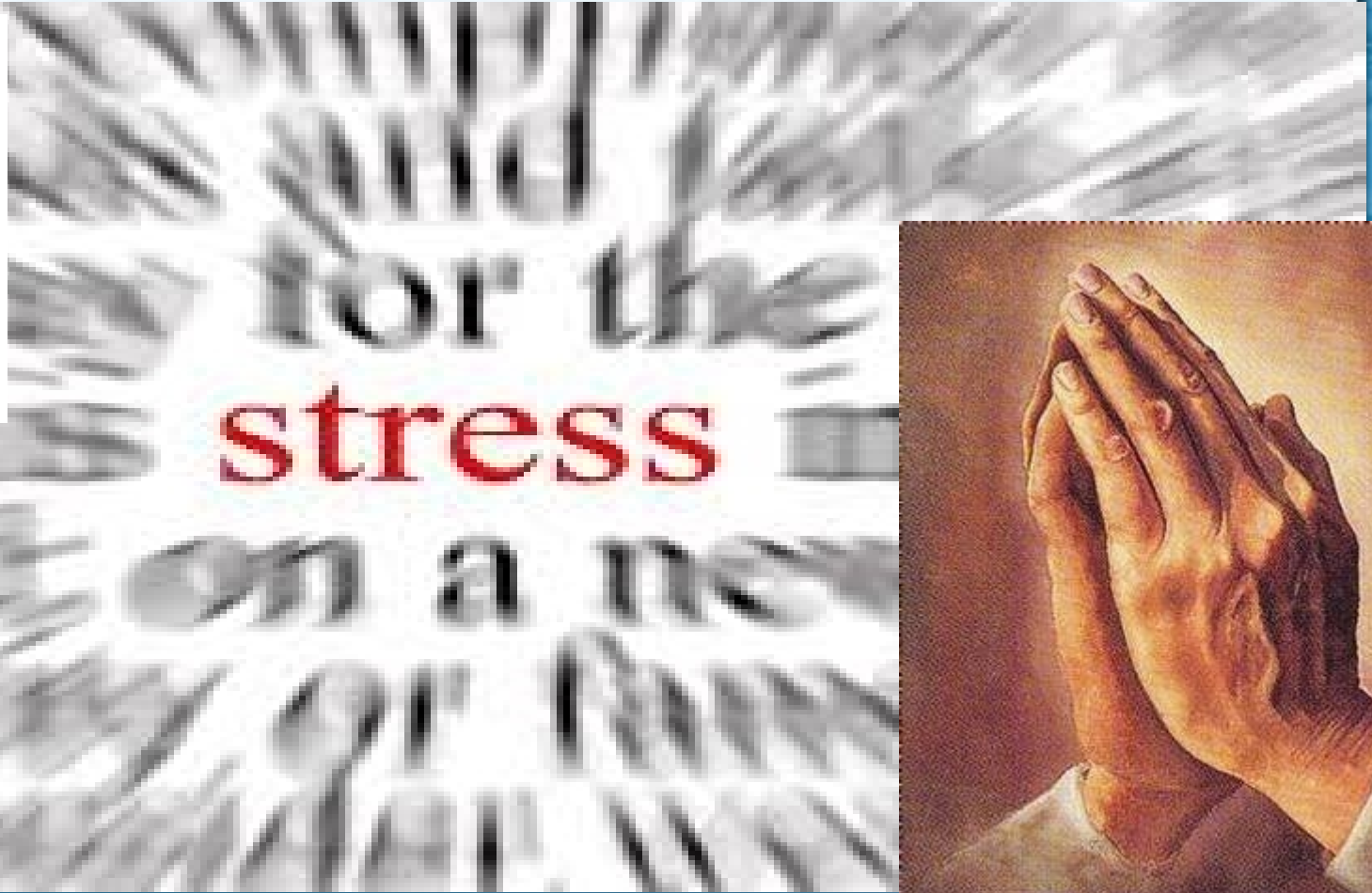
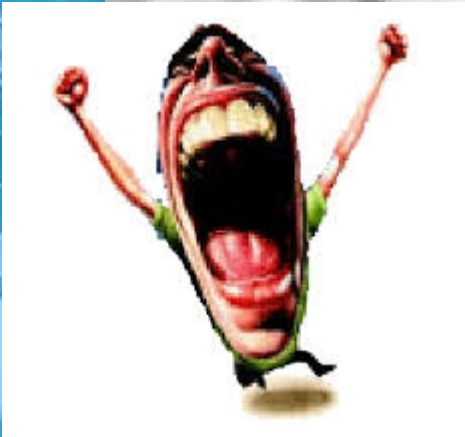
Reduce caffeine and sugar. The temporary "highs" caffeine and sugar provide often end in with a crash in mood and energy. By reducing the amount of coffee, soft drinks, chocolate, and sugar snacks in your diet, you'll feel more relaxed and you'll sleep better.



Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs. Self-medicating with alcohol or drugs may provide an easy escape from stress, but the relief is only temporary. Don't avoid or mask the issue at hand; deal with problems head on and with a clear mind. Get enough sleep. Adequate sleep fuels your mind, as well as your body. Feeling tired will increase your stress because it may cause you to think irrationally.



Psalm 37:7-8 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself... Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.



Stress Reducing Memory Verses

Psalm 37:7-8 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself... Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

1Peter 5:6-7 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Ps 37:1,7,8 Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.... Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.... Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

Pr 24:19 Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked;

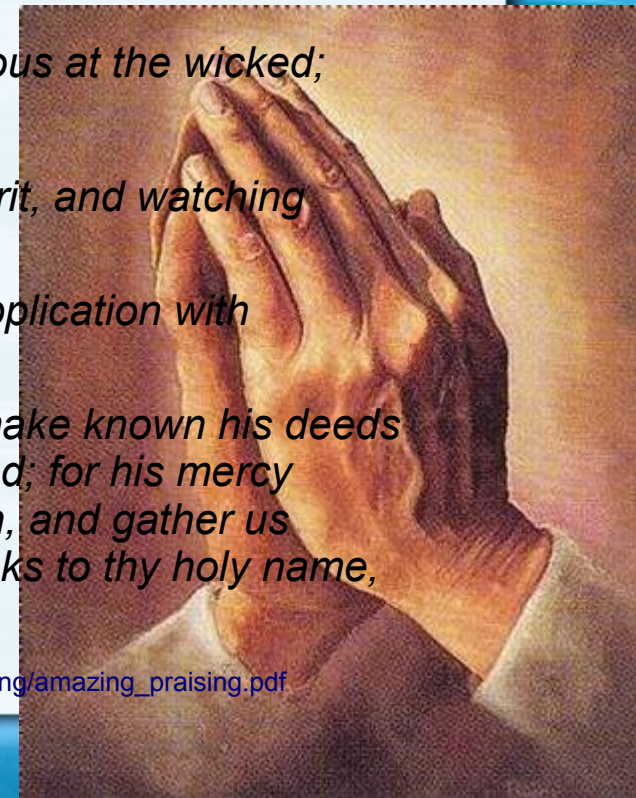
1Th 5:17-18 Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: ...

Eph 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Php 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

1Ch 16:8,34,35 Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people.... O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.... And say ye, Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks to thy holy name, and glory in thy praise.

See "It's Amazing What Praising Will Do" www.gsbaptistchurch.com/msgs/amazing_praising/amazing_praising.pdf



Above All Else HAVE FAITH IN GOD

Call upon him as Saviour of your Soul:

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ... For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (Romans 10:9-10,13)

Call upon him as Saviour of your Life:

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.... Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. ... If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

(John 8:31-32,34,36)

Rest in your Saviour.

Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of ...

Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. (Psalm 37:7, 1Peter 5:7)