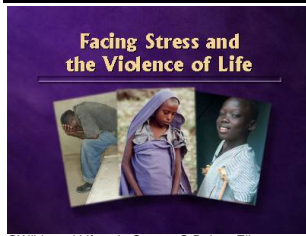


Facing Stress and the Violence of Life



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Today we are going to talk about facing stress and the violence of life.



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Everyone faces difficult times in their life. For some, life is more difficult than for others. Still, all of us must find ways to deal with stress and even violent behaviours, often from the very ones we love.



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Those who have little food or have poor shelter, are overworked or face family problems—are going to feel stressed.



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In addition, some face violence in the form of arguing, fighting, stealing, rape, and even war. This stress may come from abusive family members, neighbours or tribal conflicts.



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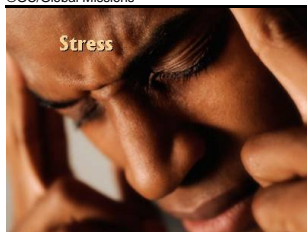
Even the rich experience stress and are often overwhelmed by problems. In this world of sin there have always been problems, but now after six thousand years under Satan's cruel influence, troubles affect every aspect of our lives.

Is there any end to this? Is there any hope that things may get better? The good news is, yes, there is help.



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We can learn ways to change ourselves so we do not easily become victims to the world's problems.



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Like it or not, each day brings some challenges to us physically, mentally, and spiritually. Sometimes we refer to all of these problems and troubles of life as **stress**.

Stress is a force working against us. Any force.

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It may come from outside of ourselves, over which we have no control.



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Or it may come from within, in the form of destructive feelings, like fear, confusion, guilt, or revenge arising from our thoughts and emotions.

Perhaps someone has hurt us, maybe even without meaning to. In your mind you have lots of reasons to be upset and to let bad feelings run free.

All of these forces are referred to as **stress**.



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Stress is **not** all bad. The right kind of stress can help us to accomplish many good things. Planting a garden on time can be a good kind of stress. If you don't get your soil ready and the seeds in the ground before the rainy season, you won't have a harvest. This is just one example of a normal stress that is actually helpful to us.



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The effect of stress upon us depends upon the strength we have to bear it.

So a certain stress may affect one person in one way, and another person in a different way.



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A big man may be able to carry a heavy load without any difficulty, but a little boy would likely be overwhelmed by its weight.



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Stress, when it is too much, may overwhelm us and destroy us if our strength is weak.



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On the other hand, stress can strengthen us and prepare us for greater things.

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Sometimes we **invite** stress by the choices we make in life. Unhealthy ways of living can rob us of strength. Poor choices of friends can lead us into trouble. The god we choose to serve may be a false god with no real power to help.



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Sometimes stress just comes. It comes un-invited like a raging fire and we don't know why.

We may be nothing more than innocent victims caught and imprisoned in a terrible situation.

Whatever the stress or violence that is filling your life, **you decide** how you will handle it.

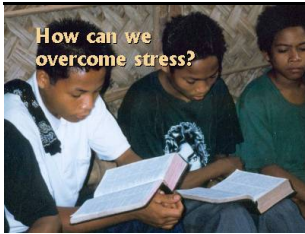


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You may let it get you down and destroy you,



...or you may accept the problems and trials as forces against which to **resist** and grow strong.



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How can we overcome the problems and stresses of life?

One of the most successful ways to manage all kinds of stress is to know God. God will strengthen you against the stresses around you. By studying your Bible daily, you can learn more about how God will help you. Memorize some of its promises and repeat them often.



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Talk to God in prayer; let Him know your stresses and concerns, and He will help you face them.



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Another way we can improve our ability to handle stress is by correcting destructive lifestyle practices. We cannot grow strong physically, mentally or spiritually unless our bodies are kept healthy.

Here are the basic laws of life that can keep us strong.

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- Eat a good diet with a variety of natural, unrefined plant foods. Avoid "junk foods", soft drinks, sweets, rich foods and "fast foods."
- Avoid all harmful substances. Like tobacco, caffeine, alcohol, drugs and other chemicals.
- Exercise outside where there is fresh, clean air, and sunlight. Regular exercise is one of the best stress reducers.
- Take time to get your needed rest. You will work more efficiently and handle stress better if you are rested.
- Use lots of water. Drink 8-10 glasses each day. Use water treatments for headaches and other symptoms of stress. Bathe daily whenever possible.



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While improving our physical health will help to reduce stress, we can also ask God to transform our lives by His love. If we have **true love** for others we will find it easier to deal with stress and violence.



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This will happen when we give our lives over to God. We can ask Him to replace our selfishness with His unselfish love.



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He wants to give forgiveness, patience, hope, and courage—the very things that so many people lack today. These qualities make us strong to deal with the stresses of life.

This is not natural for us. True love comes **only** from God. But He is willing and ready to change us if we will ask and allow Him to do it.



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Love is not all soft and cuddly. It does not overlook evil and wrong. It seeks justice and correction. But it does this in a spirit of love and care, not in revenge and condemnation.

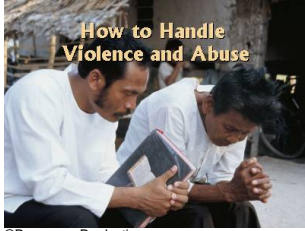
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When people wrong you, remember, God died for them too. They too are children of God

Do not be afraid to seek truth and honest justice. Always ask God to show how to do this with love.



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How to Handle
Violence and Abuse

If you are a victim of violence and abuse, you have a number of options. Why not ask God to guide you to the right and loving thing to do.



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Sometimes it is best to **escape or leave** the situation. Do not be intimidated by threats or attempts to make you feel guilty for doing what is right for the safety of yourself and the family.



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Sometimes you must insist upon getting help for the abusive person, by encouragement, or even by force. Try to impress them with the seriousness of the situation and their need to get help.



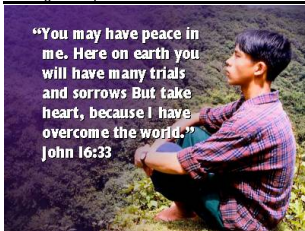
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Sometimes love asks us to stay in an abusive relationship, trusting God to protect and sustain us. Abusive family members may be won to the Saviour in this way. But it is generally not wrong to leave abusive partners.



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Sometimes there is no choice and you may be forced to live in an abusive situation. Here too, God will strengthen and sustain you when you place your trust in Him.



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"You may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows But take heart, because I have overcome the world." John 16:33

In the Bible, Jesus says, "You may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world." John 16:33 NLT

Yes, in this world we will have stress and difficulties. But thank God that there is an eternity of peace and happiness prepared for all who will place their trust in Him.
