

Dear friends:

It is my privilege to lead our class this Sunday in Bible study. Below is a copy of the lesson for your review. I look forward to studying God's Word together!

Blessings,

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"Living under Stress" 1 Peter 2:18-25

Discussion:

What is stress?

According to the American Institute of Stress (Ft. Worth, TX), "if you were to ask a dozen people to define stress, or explain what causes stress for them, or how stress affects them, you would likely get 12 different answers to each of these requests. The reason for this is that there is no definition of stress that everyone agrees on, what is stressful for one person may be pleasurable or have little effect on others. We all react to stress differently."

"What happens in the mind of man is always reflected in the diseases of his body" –  
Rene Dubos (famous American Microbiologist)

How do you deal with stress?

John 16:33 states "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation but take courage; I have overcome the world."

Phil. 4:6-7 states "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 understanding shall guard your hearts and your minds through Christ Jesus."

In today's lesson, our writer asks the question: "how can I cope with all the stress I'm under? He later states that the Bible truth he is citing in this lesson is: "When Christians use appropriate strategies, they can cope with stressful situations."

Passage Background: Refresher of the time of 1 Peter

According to Dr. Henry Haley:

- Nero's persecution of Christians, AD 64-67 was very severe in and around Rome, and it was starting to spread throughout the Roman Empire.
- The Church was about 35 years old and had suffered persecutions at a local level, but now there was a concerted effort by the Roman Empire to use Christians as a

means to deflect from the failures of the government (sound familiar). Christians were blamed for the burning of Rome.

- The Church was undergoing a world trial (5:9). It seemed as if the end had come. It was literally a “fiery trial” (4:12). Christians were being burned nightly in Nero’s gardens. It did look as if the Devil, as a “roaring lion” (5:8), was about to devour the Church.

“Showing Respect” 1 Peter 2:18-20:

- At the time of 1 Peter, it was estimated that there was as many as 60 million people who lived in some form of servitude in the Roman Empire.

- Our lesson writer states that “not all of them lived under harsh treatment or performed only menial tasks. Some slaves held professional positions and responsible roles. Yet in Roman law slaves were regarded as possessions, objects or things with no legal rights.”

- He also states that there were 3 basic levels of slaves:

- o Bond slaves performed hard labor
- o Domestic slaves performed household tasks.
- o Day laborers, the lowest tier, hired one day at a time

- Did Paul or Peter ever attack the institution of slavery?

- What was Peter’s admonition to the readers of this letter?

- What would be the result of his teaching?

- What does Peter mean in v. 19? How does this relate to James teaching in James 1:2-4? “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of you faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

- In today’s context, how do you deal with a difficult boss?

“Following Jesus’ example” 1 Peter 2:21-23

- According to Peter, we should “follow His steps...” What does he mean?

- In verse 23, what example did Jesus model for us?

- Do you believe that Jesus encountered stress? How did he handle it?

- From Jesus example, what can we use to cope with stress? (look at the passages we have already read in John, Philippians, and James)

Accepting God’s provision 1 Peter 2:24-25

- What does Peter mean by the phrase “bore our sins”?

“Our lesson writer states: “Peter’s use of the phrase “bore our sins” emphasizes that Christ’s death was redemptive in power and purpose. It removed the sin barrier between people and God and provided grace for people’s forgiveness.”

- How should Christ’s sacrificial death impact how we live?

- In considering His sacrifice, should this help us to cope with our trials and stress? (remember what James 1:2 states)

- Finally, Peter states that “we can be returned to our Shepherd and Overseer of our souls”. What does Peter mean?

Truths:

- Stress is real and it’s painful; sometimes it is healthy and often it is unhealthy. If left unchecked, it can cause physical issues to develop in our bodies that can cause real harm.

- Jesus can handle our stress, but we have to give it over to Him, and leave it there. We must pray and trust God; we must learn His word and treasure it in our heart.

- God word will heal your heart! Psalms 103:1-5

“Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with loving-kindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies you mouth with good things, so that you youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”