

Trusting God in a Stress-Filled World

Introduction: *Stress has become a way of life; it has become the rule rather than the exception.*

Greek Saying: *"You will break the bow if you always keep it bent."*

What is Stress?

- Luke 10:38-42

"As Jesus and His disciples were on their way, He came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to Him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what He said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to Him and asked, 'Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!'"

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things..."

When Martha was under stress, she —

1. Tried to do it all herself.
2. Felt sorry for herself and complained.
3. Got agitated and blamed others.

Jesus quickly analyzed her stress in two words:

1. "Worry" — *to be pulled in different directions*
2. "Upset" — *to be in turmoil*

What is the Solution?

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight." - Proverbs 3:5,6

Observations:

1. There are four verbs — words of action — in these verses.

First three verbs — *commands* —> *my responsibility.*

Last verb — *promise* —> *God's responsibility.*

Simple Diagram

My Responsibility

Trust in the Lord

Don't lean on myself

Acknowledge God everywhere

God's Responsibility

Make my paths straight

2. The term "your" is used four times.

- I make a choice to either give it to God or keep it myself.

3. The first phrase is linked to the last phrase, giving us the main idea.

Word Study

"Trust" — *to throw myself upon God*

"Heart" — *the inner self (intellect, emotions, will)*

"Understanding" — *my own reason, viewpoint*

"Lean" — *to support yourself*

"Acknowledge" — *recognizing God's control*

"Make straight" — *removing obstacles*

Application of Proverbs 3:5-6:

1. I must do my part first.
2. God wants my total trust.
3. There is no area God can't handle.

What Have I Learned?

1. Stress is no respecter of persons.
2. Stress affects others as well as ourselves.
3. There are answers if we observe, listen and change.

Application:

Proverbs 3 can be personally applied right now. Fill in the blank with your current stress at this moment. Instead of reading: *"in all your ways recognize Him and He will smooth out your path, removing obstacles"* ... fill in the space yourself

"...in _____ I will recognize God and He will smooth out my path, removing obstacles."

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101 Ways to Cope with Stress

Courtesy of the Tripler Army Medical Center, Honolulu, Hawaii

1. Get up 15 minutes earlier
2. Prepare for the morning the night before
3. Avoid tight fitting clothes
4. Avoid relying on chemical aids
5. Set appointments ahead
6. Don't rely on your memory ... write it down
7. Practice preventive maintenance
8. Make duplicate keys
9. Say "no" more often
10. Set priorities in your life
11. Avoid negative people
12. Use time wisely
13. Simplify mealtimes
14. Always make copies of important papers
15. Anticipate your needs
16. Repair anything that doesn't work properly
17. Ask for help with the jobs you dislike
18. Break large tasks into bite size portions
19. Look at problems as challenges
20. Look at challenges differently
21. Unclutter your life
22. Smile
23. Be prepared for rain
24. Tickle a baby
25. Pet a friendly dog/cat
26. Don't know all the answers
27. Look for a silver lining
28. Say something nice to someone
29. Teach a kid to fly a kite
30. Walk in the rain
31. Schedule play time into every day
32. Take a bubble bath
33. Be aware of the decisions you make
34. Believe in yourself
35. Stop saying negative things to yourself
36. Visualize yourself winning
37. Develop your sense of humor
38. Stop thinking tomorrow will be a better today
39. Have goals for yourself
40. Dance a jig
41. Say "hello" to a stranger
42. Ask a friend for a hug
43. Look up at the stars
44. Practice breathing slowly
45. Learn to whistle a tune
46. Read a poem
47. Listen to a symphony
48. Watch a ballet
49. Read a story curled up in bed
50. Do a brand-new thing
51. Stop a bad habit
52. Buy yourself a flower
53. Take time to smell the flowers
54. Find support from others
55. Ask someone to be your "vent-partner"
56. Do it today
57. Work at being cheerful and optimistic
58. Put safety first
59. Do everything in moderation
60. Pay attention to your appearance
61. Strive for Excellence NOT perfection
62. Stretch your limits a little each day
63. Look at a work of art
64. Hum a jingle
65. Maintain your weight
66. Plant a tree
67. Feed the birds
68. Practice grace under pressure
69. Stand up and stretch
70. Always have a plan "B"
71. Learn a new doodle
72. Memorize a joke
73. Be responsible for your feelings
74. Learn to meet your own needs
75. Become a better listener
76. Know your limitations and let others know them, too
77. Tell someone to have a good day in pig Latin
78. Throw a paper airplane
79. Exercise every day
80. Learn the words to a new song
81. Get to work early
82. Clean out one closet
83. Play patty cake with a toddler
84. Go on a picnic
85. Take a different route to work
86. Leave work early (with permission)
87. Put air freshener in your car
88. Watch a movie and eat popcorn
89. Write a note to a faraway friend
90. Go to a ball game and scream
91. Cook a meal and eat it by candlelight
92. Recognize the importance of unconditional love
93. Remember that stress is an attitude
94. Keep a journal
95. Practice a monster smile
96. Remember you always have options
97. Have a support network of people, places, and things
98. Quit trying to fix other people
99. Get enough sleep
100. Talk less and listen more
101. Freely praise other people

BONUS: Relax, take each day at a time...you have the rest of your life to live!