

“Stress or Rest?”

Text: Philippians 4:5-7 Date: 12/12/2021

INTRODUCTION

Do you want to live a joy-filled, joy-full life in the Lord?”

Paul says... *Spit out the joy-suckers.* They will suck the joy out of your life. Today we’re going to STRESS.

So... ***Stress or rest? You decide.***

Joy Sucker #1: STRESS (vs. 5)

⁵ *Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.*

EXPLAIN

This word in the Greek for “gentleness” is an interesting one to me. It means “gentle, mild, forbearing, fair, reasonable, moderate, not forceful”. We might use the term “laid-back”. By application, I think it means “not stressed out, angry, panicked, controlling, freaking out because you’re so... freaked out”.

There’s an external *gentleness* because of an internal *peacefulness*.

A stressed-out person is usually an unhappy person. Am I right?

In her article on stress, Connie Corder said this: “The American Medical Association credits stress as being the root of over 75% of all of the human diseases and illness. It is estimated that over 95 million people take medication each week for stress. And, studies have shown that stress is more likely to cause heart disease or cancer than even smoking cigarettes or eating a diet high in cholesterol!”

- Stress lowers your bodies natural defenses against illness and disease
- The natural chemicals that are released during times of stress cause both blood pressure and cholesterol levels to rise. And, neither are good for your health when experienced for long periods of time.
- The top six causes of death are cancer, lung ailments, heart disease, cirrhosis of the liver, accidents and suicide and stress can be linked to all of them.
- Stress causes ulcers, insomnia, headaches, anxiety, depression and low self-esteem.

Church, *a stressed-out person is usually an unhappy person.* Right? There’s no joy in that.

Paul says “You gotta spit this one out.”

Ok, but again... HOW?

Remember the Lord is Near (vs. 5)

⁵ *Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.*

Bring Everything to Him in Believing Prayer (vs. 6-7)

⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

CONCLUSION

I love this quote from John Piper:

...what the world needs from the church is our indomitable joy in Jesus in the midst of suffering and sorrow. I turn with dismay from church services that are treated like radio talk shows where everything sounds like chipper, frisky, high-spirited chatter designed to make people feel lighthearted and playful and bouncy. I look at those services and say to myself: Don't you know that people are sitting out there who are dying of cancer, whose marriage is a living hell, whose children have broken their hearts, who are barely making it financially, who have just lost their job, who are lonely and frightened and misunderstood and depressed? And you are going to try to create an atmosphere of bouncy, chipper, frisky, light-hearted, playful worship? And, of course, there will be those who hear me say that and say: Oh, so you think what those people need is a morose, gloomy, sullen, dark, heavy atmosphere of solemnity?

No. What they need is to see and feel indomitable joy in Jesus in the midst of suffering and sorrow. "Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." They need to taste that these church people are not playing games here. They are not using religion as a platform for the same-old, hyped-up self-help that the world offers every day. They need the greatness and the grandeur of God over their heads like galaxies of hope. They need the unfathomable crucified and risen Christ embracing them in love with blood all over his face and hands. And they need the thousand-mile-deep rock of God's word under their feet.

Church, when we really think about it stress is ridiculous at best. It will kill you at worst. And it will always steal your joy. Stress will suck the joy right out of your life. It is a Joy-Sucker. And Paul listen, *You gotta spit this one out.*

Stress or rest? You decide.

Personal Reflection/Group Discussion Questions

1. What do you think Paul meant by "gentleness" in verse 5? What does this look like in practical day-to-day interactions with others?
2. Why does Paul connect the idea of walking in gentleness with the phrase "the Lord is near"?
3. How does praying "with thanksgiving" change the way you pray?
4. In what sense is choosing rest over stress a daily decision?