

Stress Management

QUICK REFERENCE COUNSELING KEYS Excerpt

A Monster or a Motivator . . .

Are you at the breaking point right now? Do you feel that if you have one more pressure added to your life, you will break? Stress can be a monster, but stress can also be a motivator.

“It matters not how great the pressure is, only where the pressure lies. As long as the pressure does not come between me and my Savior, but presses me to Him, then the greater the pressure, the greater my dependence upon Him.”¹

—Hudson Taylor

Q: “In Gethsemane how did Jesus mentally process the situation He was facing?”

Although Jesus knew He was about to be arrested and would face death, He acknowledged His Father’s sovereignty and put His trust in God’s ultimate control over the situation.

*“He said, ‘Abba, Father, all things are possible for you.’”
(Mark 14:36)*

Q: “How did Jesus outwardly express His emotions?”

Although Jesus was frequently open with His emotions (John 11:35), he responded to His crucifixion by releasing his anxiety to the Father in prayer. He admitted His great desire to avoid death by asking His Father to remove the cross from His life. Yet, His heart remained submissive to His heavenly Father’s will.

*“He withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, ‘Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.’”
(Luke 22:41–42)*

Q: “Did Jesus have a physical reaction to the trauma He experienced?”

Suffering physical torment as a result of His agony, Jesus perspired profusely!²

*“Being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”
(Luke 22:44)*

Checklist for Burnout³

- I have difficulty relaxing.
- I have tightness in my neck and shoulders.
- I have lower back pain.
- I feel tired and lifeless most of the time.
- I have frequent, severe headaches.
- I get indigestion often.
- I often have diarrhea or constipation.
- I could be getting an ulcer.
- I have trouble sleeping at night.
- I grind my teeth at night.
- I am susceptible to every cold and virus.
- I have allergies or asthma.
- I eat and snack excessively.
- I have lost a lot of weight.
- I often have cold hands and sweating palms.
- I have shortness of breath.
- I have a rapid pulse.
- I generally feel nervous and unsettled.

How Stress Affects Life

Stage 1: No Light

When there is insufficient stress to move responsibly, you will find that the person . . .

- is not productive
- experiences depression

Stage 2: Green Light

When there is positive stress, you will see that the person . . .

- faces responsibility
- has a positive perspective

Stage 3: Yellow Light

The physical warning signs of stress can be . . .

- tension headaches
- lack of concentration

Stage 4: Red Light

Burnout is certainly not God's will for us. Instead of living at Stage 2, we become . . .

- overwhelmed by responsibility
- minimally productive
- depressed (lack of enthusiasm)

Key Verses to Memorize

*“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”
(Matthew 11:28–30)*

Key Passage to Read and Reread

1 Kings chapter 19

Tune-up in Truth

Since stress begins in your mind, much of your misery is the result of incorrect thinking. Fortunately, what you choose to think is in your control.

- **Lie:** “If I don’t do everything that I’m asked to do at church, I’m letting God down.”

Truth: God is far more interested in having an intimate love relationship with you, than in what you do. (Matthew 22:37–39)

- **Lie:** “I must appear to have it together and not show my mistakes.”

Truth: A spirit of humility is more impressive than having a prideful attitude. (Matthew 23:12)

- **Lie:** “When I’m at death’s door, I’ll be sorry I didn’t accomplish more.”

Truth: When you’re at death’s door, your primary regret may be that you didn’t show your love more. (Romans 13:8)

“Be transformed by the renewal of your mind.”
(Romans 12:2)

Getting Off the Road of Overload

Road signs give you notice of impending change or danger. God’s warning signs often relay the same messages as those obstacles you encounter on the highways.

Slow

- Slow down and make the necessary changes for good physical health. (Psalm 127:2)
- Slow down and nourish your spiritual life. (Psalm 119:71)

Stop

- Stop and look at the real reason you are experiencing stress. (Galatians 1:10)
- Stop, confess, and turn away from any known sin in your life. (Proverbs 28:13)

Yield

- Yield to God’s sovereign control over your circumstances. (Proverbs 21:1)
- Yield to God your rights and expectations. (Proverbs 3:5)

Resume Speed

- Resume speed, living in the presence of God. (Psalm 62:1)

Related Topics . . .

- Employment:
Be Extraordinary among the Ordinary
- Perfectionism:
The Push to Perform
- Success through Failure:
From Stumbling Stones to Stepping Stones
- Time Management:
Maximizing Your Minutes
- Workaholism:
The Beeline to Burnout

HOPE FOR THE HEART’s *Biblical Counseling Library Quick Reference* provides immediate, concise, biblical truths for today’s problems.

For more comprehensive help, refer to our *Biblical Counseling Keys . . .*

Stress Management:

Beating Burnout before It Beats You.

If you would like more information, call 1-800-488-HOPE (4673) or visit www.hopefortheheart.org.

For prayer encouragement and biblical counsel call 1-866-570-HOPE (4673).

1. Quoted in Dennis Rainey, *Lonely Husbands, Lonely Wives: Rekindling Intimacy in Every Marriage* (Dallas: Word, 1989), 96.
2. Don Warrick, *How to Handle Stress* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1989), 5.
3. See Kristine C. Brewer, *The Stress Management Handbook, Lifestyle Series* (Shawnee Mission, Kans.: National Press, 1989), 9–10; Peter Meadows, *Finding Peace under Pressure* (San Bernardino, Calif.: Here’s Life, 1990), 48.



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