

## From Cope To Hope: How to Effectively Handle Life's Problems & Challenges

### Part 1, "Too Blessed to be Stressed"

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Matthew 11:28 *Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 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. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*"

**What is stress?** It is a state of mental or emotional strain, pressure, or tension resulting from adverse or very demanding circumstances. Allowing high levels of stress will adversely affect you. It is known that stress and

worry cause harmful physical effects. All the more reason to accept Jesus' offer to lift the burden of negative stress from our lives.

[\[Click here to watch a brief video explaining the physical effects of stress\]](#)

Example: On March 3, 2010 when the engines on US Airways Flight 1549 under the control of Captain Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger, shut down after a flock of geese flew into the engines, it created a circumstance of extraordinary stress or pressure on his mind. The flight crews and passengers also experienced the worse kind of stress.

He coped with the situation and handled it in an effective manner. He turned and glided the unpowered airplane to a safe landing on the Hudson River between New York City and New Jersey.

How did Captain Sully deal with the stress? 1) The mercy of God 2) 40 years of flying experience. 3) Many hours of training in a flight simulator for the situation he faced. 4) Extreme focus on solutions, not problems 5) Confidence in his abilities and skill. He said, "I knew I could land the airplane on the river."

This is an extreme example of stress, but there are everyday lessons we can learn from this situation. Allowing the grace of God to lead us in better spiritual, mental, emotional, and lifestyle habits help prepare us to deal with unforeseen circumstances.

Example: Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King began his career as a pastor in 1954 at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. His ambition was to become a pastor, like his father, preaching and serving his congregation and community. Segregation experienced himself and people like Rosa Parks created a situation of stress, or pressure. He turned the stress/pressure of that situation into a God-inspired movement that positively changed our nation.

When something weighs on your mind, it is stress, but it is not necessarily something bad. God's will for your life requires your attention. Feeling conviction about something will weigh on your heart and mind. Before coming to Christ I experienced a lot of *negative* stress because of my bad choices and lifestyle. Becoming a believer in Jesus and answering the call of God presented a *positive* stress that focused me on seeking the Lord to learn how to fulfill His assignments on my life.

SCRIPTURE TEXT	INSIGHTS
<p>Matthew 6:24 <b>“No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money [lesser things].</b></p>	<p>Stress is sometimes caused by a conflict in “masters” or competing interests.</p>
<p>25 <b>“That is why I tell you not to worry</b> about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. <b>Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing?</b></p>	<p>Worry sometimes comes from imaginations about circumstances or trying to manage incompatible interests in our own strength.</p>
<p>26 Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And <b>aren’t you far more valuable</b> to him than they are?</p>	<p>What is your life about? This is a question that is not understood by many. Too many people are driven by a sense of need and not motivated by a sense of purpose.</p>
<p>27 Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?</p>	<p>We are blessed, and “cursed” in one sense, by having God-given choice, volition, and the freedom to act contrary to God. Creatures like birds don’t have a choice. They operate on God-given instincts.</p>
<p>28 “And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don’t work or make their clothing, 29 yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. <b>30 And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you.</b> Why do you have so little faith?</p>	<p>We have greater value because we are made in God’s image and likeness. We are God’s masterpiece. We have greater freedom, but we also have greater responsibility. We also have the greater danger of irresponsibility</p>
<p>31 “So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’</p>	<p>What is the outcome of negative stress or worrying? Nothing good.</p>
<p>32 These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs.</p>	<p>God takes care of His own and of what belongs to him. It’s like what people do with houses and cars. They either maintain them or make them worse.</p>
<p>33 <b>Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.</b></p>	<p>It is a test of faith and corresponding actions.</p>
	<p>Separate from your stress. You are not the stress you feel. Replace stress with focus and priorities.</p>
	<p>Prioritizing on the Kingdom of God eliminates negative stress by removing other “masters” and releasing divine provision into our lives</p>

### Seven Keys for Walking in Blessing Rather Than Stressing

1. **PROCESS the stress.** Why is it? What is the source of it? Is it constructive or destructive? 1 Peter 2:20, *But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.*

2. **PERCEIVE** what God is doing to build strength into your life: *1 Peter 5:10, But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.*  
To suffer is to transition of another way of thinking and living. It is then to stand against what you've been delivered from
  
3. **PRAY to God. Let peace fill your heart. Develop a sense of partnership with Christ:**  
*Philippians 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;*  
  
*1 Peter 4:12-13, Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.*  
  
*James 1:2-4, My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*
  
4. **PLAN a better path beginning with a new mindset.** Think differently: *Philippians 4:8, Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.*
  
5. **PURSUE new habits and lifestyle choice:** Morning devotions. Seek proper comfort (help). Not old habits like “comfort” food, complaining and such. *2 Corinthians 1:3-4, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation (stress), that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*  
The Holy Spirit is your Comforter, or Helper. The purpose for seeking comfort is to get some help, not to get trapped. Too much of what is presented as comfort does not provide much actual help. The biblical meaning of “helper” as it pertains the Holy Spirit is Help, ([Verb] sunantilambano) signifies *"to take hold with at the side for assistance"*  
(Illustration: Like asking someone to help who adds something else to the burden.)
  
6. **PUT Christ the throne of your life.** Get off the throne because Jesus cares for everything he rules. People entrust me with assignments because they have confidence that I'll get it done. Jesus can be trusted with your life!  
*Colossians 3:15. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.*
  
7. **PRAISE God and push back the darkness. Gain the light of “possible.”**  
*Psalm 8:2, Out of the mouth of babes and infants have you ordained strength because of your enemies, that you might still the enemy and the avenger.*  
*Mark 10:27, But Jesus looked at them and said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible."*

**You are too blessed to be stressed!**

## **Additional Notes on Coping Techniques**

*[From <http://www.freebiblestudyguides.org/bible-answers/coping-with-stress.htm>]*

There are many types of stressful situations, but this list can give you some practical guidelines to apply in your own personal situation. Some of these helpful suggestions are from *Helpguide.org*. Look through this list, pick three things you feel could help you and try them out.

1. Learn to say "no."
2. Shorten your "to do" list by removing the "shoulds" and keeping the "musts." Drop tasks that aren't truly necessary to the bottom of the list or eliminate them entirely.
3. Learn what is really important in life and set those things as your priority (see Luke 10:38-42).
4. Learn to delegate to others when you can. Read the story of the advice Moses received from his father-in-law, Jethro, in Exodus 18:13-24.
5. Do not say or do things that consistently irritate someone. Know when to be tactful and respectful about certain subjects (see Ephesians 4:31-32).
6. Express your feelings instead of bottling them up. If something or someone is bothering you, communicate your concerns in an open and respectful way.
7. Be willing to compromise your wishes (not your values) if compromise will help solve the problem.
8. Look at the big picture. Get things in perspective. How important will it be in the long run? Will it matter in a year? Is it really worth getting upset about? If not, focus elsewhere.
9. Connect with other people, especially positive people. A strong support system will help shield you from the effects of stress.
10. Set aside rest and relaxation time in your daily schedule. Don't allow other things to get in the way. This is your time to recharge your batteries. Meditate on godly things. Listen to peaceful music. It's amazing what 10 minutes of that can do for you.
11. Make time every day for leisure activities that you enjoy. Take a walk; smell the roses; laugh. The act of laughing helps your body fight stress in a number of ways (see Proverbs 17:22).
12. Exercise regularly and incorporate healthy practices into your lifestyle: eating well, getting adequate sleep and reducing caffeine or sugar intake.
13. Practice good time management. Setting your priorities right includes making absolutely sure you make time for family and for building a personal relationship with God.
14. Live by a budget. So many people struggle with financial problems. Develop a budget and live by it.

### **Here are common coping mechanisms that people practice:**

*[From <http://changingminds.org/explanations/behaviors/coping/coping.htm>]*

1. Acting Out: not coping - giving in to the pressure to misbehave.
2. Aim Inhibition: lowering sights to what seems more achievable.
3. Altruism: Helping others to help self.
4. Attack: trying to beat down that which is threatening you.
5. Avoidance: mentally or physically avoiding something that causes distress.
6. Compartmentalization: separating conflicting thoughts into separated compartments.
7. Compensation: making up for a weakness in one area by gain strength in another.
8. Conversion: subconscious conversion of stress into physical symptoms.
9. Crying: Tears of release and seeking comfort.
10. Denial: Refusing to acknowledge that an event has occurred.
11. Displacement: Shifting of intended action to a safer target.
12. Dissociation: Separating oneself from parts of your life.
13. Distancing: Moving away.
14. Emotionality: Outbursts and extreme emotion.
15. Fantasy: escaping reality into a world of possibility.

16. Help-Rejecting Complaining: Ask for help then reject it.
17. Idealization: Playing up the good points and ignoring limitations of things desired.
18. Identification: Copying others to take on their characteristics.
19. Intellectualization: Avoiding emotion by focusing on facts and logic.
20. Introjection: Bringing things from the outer world into the inner world.
21. Passive Aggression: Avoiding refusal by passive avoidance.
22. Performing Rituals: Patterns that delay.
23. Post-Traumatic Growth: Using the energy of trauma for good.
24. Projection: seeing your own unwanted feelings in other people.
25. Provocation: Get others to act so you can retaliate.
26. Rationalization: creating logical reasons for bad behavior.
27. Reaction Formation: avoiding something by taking a polar opposite position.
28. Regression: returning to a child state to avoid problems.
29. Repression: subconsciously hiding uncomfortable thoughts.
30. Self-Harming: physically damaging the body.
31. Substitution: Replacing one thing with another.
32. Suppression: consciously holding back unwanted urges.
33. Symbolization: turning unwanted thoughts into metaphoric symbols.
34. Trivializing: Making small what is really something big.