

Overcoming Stress

Lesson 01 of the series "Overcomer"

1. Many of us live stressed out lives.

Stress = a state of mental tension or emotional strain caused by adverse circumstances.

"My days are swifter than a runner; they fly away without a glimpse of joy." Job 9:25 (NIV)

"...all our busy rushing ends in nothing. We heap up wealth, not knowing who will spend it."

Psalm 39:6 (NLT)

"I have no peace! I have no quiet! I have no rest! And trouble keeps coming!" Job 3:26 (GW)

Note: God does not want us to live stressed out lives.

"It is useless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, anxiously working for food to eat; for God gives rest to his loved ones." Psalm 127:2 (NLT)

"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, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.'" Luke 10:38-42 (NIV)

2. We can overcome stress through a personal relationship with Jesus.

"I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world." John 16:33 (NLT)

"Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls." Matthew 11:28-29 (NLT)

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." Psalm 23:4 (NIV)

3. We can overcome stress by building margin in our lives.

Margin = the space between our load and our limit.

a. We can spend daily time with God.

- We can surrender. "Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today." Matthew 6:33-34 (NLT)
- We can listen.
- We can pray. "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus." Philipians 4:6-7 (NLT)
- We can obey.

b. We can get enough rest.

- We can go to bed on time.
- We can get up on time so we can start the day unrushed.
- We can enjoy a weekly Sabbath day. "Remember that you were once slaves in Egypt, but the LORD your God brought you out with his strong hand and powerful arm. That is why the LORD your God has commanded you to rest on the Sabbath day." Deuteronomy 5:15 (NLT)

- c. We can prune our schedules.
- We can say “NO!” “Everything is permissible for me”--but not everything is beneficial.” 1 Corinthians 6:12 (NIV)
 - We can delegate tasks to capable people.
 - We can allow extra time to get places.
 - We can set aside weekly time to plan the week ahead. “Careful planning puts you ahead in the long run; hurry and scurry puts you further behind.” Proverbs 21:5 (Message)
- d. We can live within our means.
- We can balance our accounts. “Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds; for riches do not endure forever...” Proverbs 27:23-24 (NIV)
 - We can establish a budget.
 - We can start saving for an emergency fund.
 - We can meet with a financial advisor.
 - We can give thanks for what we already have. “...true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth.” 1 Timothy 6:6 (NLT)
- e. We can mend relationships.
- We can forgive someone who has hurt us. “You must make allowance for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.” Colossians 3:13 (NLT)
 - We can apologize to someone whom we have hurt.
 - We can be kind to someone who has been unkind to us.
 - We can schedule the painful conversation we have been avoiding.

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Connect Group Discussion Questions:

1. Looking back at your notes from this week's lesson on "Overcoming Stress" was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?
2. What makes you stressed? In what areas of your life are you overloaded right now? How did your parents handle stress? How do you?
3. What scheduling changes need to be made in your family? ...at your job? ...with God?
4. How much margin do you have in your life? How do you determine when enough is enough (money, activities, work, social media, sports, etc.)?
5. Spend some time as a group discussing the following list of ways to build margin into our lives. Which do you find helpful? Which do you find difficult? Why? Spend some time praying for each other.
 - a. We can spend daily time with God.
 - We can surrender. (Matthew 6:33-34)
 - We can listen. (Psalm 119:135)
 - We can pray. (Philippians 4:6-7)
 - We can obey. (John 14:21)
 - b. We can get enough rest.
 - We can go to bed on time. (Psalm 127:2)
 - We can get up on time so we can start the day unrushed. (Proverbs 26:14)
 - We can enjoy a weekly Sabbath day. (Exodus 20:8-10, Deuteronomy 5:15)
 - c. We can prune our schedules.
 - We can say "NO!" (1 Corinthians 6:12, Nehemiah 6:3)
 - We can delegate tasks to capable people. (Exodus 18:13-23)
 - We can allow extra time to get places. (Proverbs 21:5)
 - We can set aside weekly time to plan the week ahead. (Proverbs 21:5)
 - d. We can live within our means.
 - We can balance our accounts. (Proverbs 27:23-24)
 - We can establish a budget. (Proverbs 21:5)
 - We can start saving for an emergency fund. (Proverbs 6:6-11, 22:3)
 - We can meet with a financial advisor. (Proverbs 16:16,19:20)
 - We can give thanks for what we already have. (1 Timothy 6:6, Deuteronomy 8:10-14)
 - e. We can mend relationships.
 - We can forgive someone who has hurt us. (Matthew 6:14-15, Colossians 3:13)
 - We can apologize to someone whom we have hurt. (Matthew 5:23-24)
 - We can be kind to someone who has been unkind to us. (Romans 12:17-21)
 - We can schedule the painful conversation we have been avoiding. (Proverbs 6:2-5)