The Woman of Christ Faces Daily Living

When Our Emotions Make Us Sick

Proverbs 17:22; Proverbs 14:30; Proverbs 12:25; Psalm 31:10; Psalm 38:3; Psalm 6:2 & 3

Lesson #5

While we understand there are those who are struggling with clinically diagnosed problems, which include stress and anxiety, our words are for areas which we are admonished to control, such as anxiety, Philippians 4:6 & 7 and bitterness, Ephesians 4:31.

In 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, the apostle Paul reminds each of us that our body is the very temple of God where the Holy Spirit lives. We have long used Paul's remarks about the Holy Spirit's residing in us as a reason to refrain from smoking and its harmful effects on our bodies. Perhaps each of us could point out additional practices which have been found to be harmful to our bodies. Stress, which can cause serious health problems for some individuals, might be cited.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 speaks of emotions that are appropriate for their time. The converse of each is mentioned in each verse. The opposite emotions provide balance to a person's emotional makeup. Our Creator knows our needs.

Stress can be manifested in numerous ways in what is known as psychophysiological disorders. Today's lesson will focus not only on emotions that make us sick but remedies, as well, for producing more contented lives.

Stress has long been suggested as a factor in many physical problems. High blood pressure, ulcers, asthma, and migraine headaches are often noted as psychophysiological disorders.

Observations that have been made in studies reveal changes in the body's reactions when confronted with emotion-arousing stimuli. Among those changes is the release of special fight-or-flight hormones.

God created those hormones for positive use. A person who wakes up to the smell of smoke experiences fright and a sudden rush of hormones. Weak people become extremely strong in moments of terror because of these special hormones.

Researchers are concerned with the prolonged changes that take place in humans when stressful lives overwork hormonal functions. Genetics, age and other factors weigh heavily in health conditions. But enough evidence has been accumulated to sound the alarm that stress can make us sick.

Type A Behavior and Your Heart by M. Friedman and Rosenman discusses a search for traits and attitudes that may predispose people to specific disorders. According to the writers, hypertension,

along with other cardiovascular disorders, tends to strike a specific kind of personality, which they call Type A. These people, they say, are aggressive achievers. They talk, walk and eat rapidly and are highly impatient. They fidget in frustration if kept waiting by an elevator or a traffic light. They finish others' sentences for them. They pride themselves on getting things done in less time than other people, and they measure their own performance by rigorous standards. In short, they keep themselves under unremitting pressure, pressure that eventually takes a toll on their cardiovascular systems. There is an association between heart disease together with depression and high levels of anger, hostility and aggression, qualities that are often seen in Type A people (Booth-Kewley and Friedman, 1987). Other research confirms the link between heart disease and hostility (Blakeslee, 1989. Matthews, 1988).

Studies cite the role that less dramatic life events play in the stress disease connection. Surprisingly, the daily hassles of life: being stuck in traffic jams; waiting in lines; and losing the car keys may be more stressful than major unpleasant events (R. Lazarus, 1980). In fact, continual mild stress may be a predictor of declines in physical health, the onset of depression and the development of anxiety, even more than our major life events (DeLongis, Coyne, Dakof, et al., 1982). Whether daily hassles have a cumulative effect of simply wearing people down or whether they make people more vulnerable when a big event comes along, is uncertain.

Researchers have formed a list of daily life hassles, which puts us at greater risk for illness: annoyances over misplacing or losing things, troublesome neighbors, social obligations, inconsiderate smokers, thoughts about death, health of a family member, insufficient money for clothing, and concerns about debts.

For a long time, studies have shown that cardiovascular-related health problems, especially hypertension, can be set off by angry tempers and cynicism. impatience, time, emergency, aggressiveness, hostility, and competitiveness. Type A personalities might be more likely to be predisposed to serious health problems. Studies at Johns Hopkins have revealed a higher risk for heart attack among those who are irritable and frequently complain. Read about deeds of the flesh, Galatians 5:20; fruits of the spirit, Galatians 5:22 & 23; and Godliness with self-control and perseverance, 2 Peter 1:6 while considering harsh traits which we are discussing here as well as kind reactions which might relieve such.

Worry is associated with sleep disturbance, anxiety, headache, heart rate, hypertension and gastrointestinal upsets. (Matthew 6:25; Luke 12:22 - 31, and Philippians 4:6 & 7).

Though not documented, the following narrative is an excellent parable regarding worry: Years ago, in the pioneer days of aviation, a pilot was making a flight around the world. After his departure from the last landing field, he heard a noise on the plane which he recognized as the gnawing of a rat. He realized that while his plane had been on the ground, a rat entered. For all he knew, the rat could be gnawing through a vital cable or control of the plane. It was a profoundly serious situation. He was both concerned and anxious. At first, he did not know what to do. It was two hours back to the landing field from which he had taken off, and more than two

hours to the next field ahead. Then he remembered that the rat is a rodent, and God made rats to live on the ground and under the ground. Therefore, the pilot began to climb. He went up one thousand feet; and then another thousand and another until he was more than 20,000 feet up. The gnawing ceased. The rat was dead. He could not survive in the atmosphere of those heights. More than two hours later, the pilot brought the plane safely to the next landing field and found the dead rat.

Worry is like a rat in your heart and in your mind. If left alone, it will gnaw at you until it destroys your life and until it steals away all your joy, power, and energy, but the rodent of worry cannot live in the secret place of the Most High. Worry cannot breathe in an individual who is praying and influenced by the Word of God. Worry dies when we ascend to the Lord through prayer and His word.

We often cope with cause and effect: anger; impatience; worry; anxiousness; and bad conscience that can lead to psychophysiological disorders, which can include diarrhea and stomach aches. We may have experienced those symptoms during moments of anxiety: a serious math problem in our checkbook; an unexpected call from our doctor's office about last week's lab work, etc.

Bitterness can cause us to be implacable individuals. It can cause us to become resentful, stubbornly resistant, obdurate, and so callous that our hearts become hard and refuse to be entreated to repent. (Ephesians 4:30-32; James 3:14–17; Philippians 4:7).

Bitterness comes about when evil thoughts, hatred, cruelty, revenge, self-pity, hypocrisy, jealousy, and confusion are in our hearts. Satan will use bitterness to cut us down and to destroy us, to cause us to mean nothing to others in terms of helping them to know Jesus, and it can cause the loss of our own souls.

Life is just not fair. We face battles with Satan every day, and he doesn't fight by anybody's rules! Satan doesn't fight by anybody's rules!! Why do we lash out at friends and family members who hurt us? We are to commit our problems to the Lord by casting our cares on Him. God cares for us (1 Peter 5:7).

When life's happenings infuriate us and we are left with heartaches and exasperation, we can choose whether to become embittered. We are responsible for what we think (Hebrews 12:15).

We can make the right choice, and we must make it each day to free ourselves of bitterness. This act may require our forgiveness of someone. Forgiveness tranquilizes our troubled hearts.

Extending the benefit of doubt to others who have offended us is a forerunner of forgiveness. We offer a kind pardon before allowing ourselves time to nurture bitterness.

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