

Survival in An Age of Stress

(Philippians 3:12-16)

DOES it sometimes seem to you that you are trying to walk a tightrope and someone is constantly shaking the rope? Life today is tough. We seem to be pulled in every direction. Often when at home, we feel strained because of pressures on the job. Work still needs to be done, but we have not had the time. When at work, we are being pulled by family responsibilities, feeling we just do not take the time we should with our families. Besides that, when we are at work or home, we often feel as if we are letting the Lord down because we are not involved in “church” work. The strain of frazzled nerves, a churning stomach, and a pounding headache shows in the eyes and walk of people all about us. The signs on bumpers and sometimes on the side of the road declare, “Christ Is the Answer.” Does He have an answer for these stress-filled times? Is there an answer that will settle our nerves and help us get a hold on life itself? Yes, but we must apply it.

I. REALIZE LIFE IS A GROWTH PROCESS, NOT AN ARRIVAL (Philippians 3:12, 13)

The very moment we begin to think we have already arrived we cut off the growth process. We never get beyond where we are. We can easily become so enamored with the destination that we lose interest in the trip. On a vacation trip, we can be so anxious to get there that we pay no attention to each other, to sunsets, etc. The same can be true of goals in life. Goals are important, but the destination must not overshadow the travel in that direction.

We will feel less stress as we accept our frailties and failures, and determine to keep growing. We should remember that Paul, a great man, continued to grow. Near the end of his life he still wanted his books and parchments (2 Timothy 4).

II. WE NEED SINGLENES OF PURPOSE (Philippians 3:13)

Stress is often present because we are pulled in so many directions. We tend to think everything is vital. Our values only become true as we put things into perspective (Philippians 3:1-8). When everything is moving in the “one” direction, when we are all set to please Christ—stress is eased. This is the solution to worry (Matthew 6:33). Note also that the “one thing” has action in it—“I do.”

III. FORGET THE PAST (Philippians 3:13)

Sins of the past become weights around our necks to hold us down. We are told how to meet God’s conditions of forgiveness (Acts 22:16; Galatians 3:26, 27). We must also forgive ourselves.

We must likewise forget our past successes. We cannot live on past good works. Life must be lived today (Matthew 6:34).

IV. KEEP REACHING

Do not give up. Much stress builds on the inside because we have nothing to reach for. This is the case in the mid-life crisis. We either have received all we ever wanted or decide we never will get what we wanted. This also can happen to

people of retirement age. Goals have already been reached and they often die. They just wait a few years to be buried.

V. NEVER FORGET THE PRIZE

(Philippians 3:14)

Our prize is the upward call of God. It is never down here on earth. The reward is re-

served in heaven. We may receive a few sub-prizes down here, but the real prize is in heaven.

CONCLUSION

You can solve much of the inward stress by an assurance of peace with God. Be reconciled to Him now.

—Leon Barnes

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