

# Biblical Answers to Stressors

## Time

I am feeling stressed out about this new series of sermons.

I am going to be preaching for a while about stress.

We are going to explore the things that contribute to stress in our lives.

We want to discover what the Bible says to us about those stressors.

Who among us here would say you are living a stress free life?

I was hoping someone would put up their hand.

That would be the person to preach this series.

Because I sure can't say, "If you want to live a stress free life watch me.

I need the biblical answers to stress as much or more than anyone else here.

I am preaching this series for myself.

I need to see God work in the areas of stress I face on a daily basis.

But so do you.

One statement I read this week went like this.

"Even if you moved to a secluded cabin in the woods all by yourself, stress will follow you."

We all face stress.

But do I really want to know the answers?

Do I really want to change?

The danger with stress is we adapt to it.

Our bodies compensate for stress so it doesn't kill us right away.

God knew we would encounter stress.

God installed safety mechanisms in our bodies to help us cope with stress.

But more importantly, He has given us counsel for stress.

What our bodies do is a short term solution.

God's word gives us the solutions to stress.

But His solutions require change on our part.

That is where we struggle.

We don't like or even want to change.

We don't want to sacrifice something to reduce stress.

What would need to change for you to manage stress?

I need help living in health and victory in this continuous cycle of deadlines.

There is a restaurant chain called TGIF.

There is only one TGIF in all of Canada and it is in Niagara Falls.

Does anyone know what the letters TGIF stand for?

Thank Goodness It's Friday's.

I don't have that appreciation for Friday.

Friday means that the Sunday I'm not prepared for is only two days away.

I find little or no gratitude in Friday.

It isn't the mark of a weekend of leisure.

Friday is a stress day for me.

Somehow I make it to Sunday and guess what happens?

It starts all over again.

I know I'm not alone in this type of time pressure stress.

Many of you know what I'm talking about from your own experiences.

Too much to do and too little time in which to do it.

Schedules jam packed with pressures that threaten and jade our priorities.

Maybe you can't identify with that kind of schedule.

If not, then you may have stress from the opposite end of the spectrum.

**Too much time and too little to do in it.**

That can be just as stressful and damaging.

That too can warp our priorities.

**God did not design us to be consumed by work.**

Nor did He create us to live a life consumed by leisure.

We know people who are workaholics and people who pursue leisure.

They exist from one trip to the next.

Before they are finished one vacation they are planning the next.

Work is just a way to get to the next vacation.

That too is stress.

**We were not created for leisure or isolation.**

Either extreme generates stress.

**Too much to do - not enough to do - both are stressful.**

And I can contribute to your stress and you to mine.

I can add to your stress by taking on too many responsibilities.

You can add stress to someone else by not "pulling your weight."

That is the issue Paul was addressing with the Ephesians.

What are you doing with your time?

I know some of you will accuse me of meddling.

You'll think that I'm sticking my nose in places it doesn't belong.

You might suggest that I should mind my own business.

That's not what I am here for.

I am here to mind God's business - and so are you.

And if you aren't then that makes it my business.

Like Paul, it becomes my responsibility to address our negligence.

**Don't let yourselves get taken in by religious smooth talk. God gets furious with people who are full of religious sales talk but want nothing to do with him. Don't even hang around people like that. You groped your way through that murk once, but no longer. You're out in the open now. The bright light of Christ makes your way plain. So no more stumbling around. Get on with it! The good, the right, the true—these are the actions appropriate for daylight hours. Figure out what will please Christ, and then do it. Don't waste your time on useless work, mere busywork, the barren pursuits of darkness. Expose these things for the sham they are. It's a scandal when people waste their lives on things they must do in the darkness where no one will see. Rip the cover off those frauds and see how attractive they look in the light of Christ. Wake up from your sleep, Climb out of your coffins; Christ will show you the light! So watch your step. Use your head. Make the most of every chance you get. These are desperate times! Don't live carelessly, unthinkingly. Make sure you understand what the Master wants. Don't drink too much wine. That cheapens your life. Drink the Spirit of God, huge draughts of him. Sing hymns instead of drinking songs! Sing songs from your heart to Christ. Sing praises over everything, any excuse for a song to God the Father in the name of our Master, Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 5:6-20 TM)**

In the body of Christ, some are facing responsibility overload.

In the body of Christ, some do little else than show up for services.

Some, even in the service contribute little or nothing.

They don't sing, they are distracted in prayer.

They don't bring a Bible or their tithe.

And that is just Sunday.

What about the other six days of the week?

Is there any investment in God's Kingdom?

Paul said, **"God gets furious with people who are full of religious sales talk but want nothing to do with him."**

How are you using your time?

The Revised Standard Version says verse 10 this way.

**"Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord."**

**"Figure out what will please Christ, then do it."**

When is the last time you asked Jesus how you can please Him?

Have you ever asked Jesus "What can I do with my time to please You?"

There are many ways we can use our time to please God.

But there is one way that is critical for us right now.

"Soon and Very Soon" video

You have just seen dozens of faces of real children.

These are faces of children who have walked through our doors.

Children who come to KidzTown, Kidsclub.naz, VBS.

Children God has entrusted to us.

We have asked for children, prayed for children.

God has graciously, faithfully answered those prayers.

He has given us what we asked.

So whose responsibility is it now to care for God's gifts?

It is mine - yes!

I am responsible!

And so are you!

One person saw those faces earlier this week.

They said it won't be long before they are up here, leading and praising.

My response, "Yes, but it won't happen automatically."

It won't just happen automatically.

I cry when I see those beautiful faces.

It breaks my heart to think they might miss seeing Jesus.

They won't if you and I just sit back and watch and wait.

These children should bring out a sense of urgency.

You and I have to make the most of the time God has given.

You and I have to learn what is pleasing to God.

You and I have to get out of our coffins of complacency.

I have prayed with, played with, and taught every one of those children.

If I don't invest my time and life in them, we lose them.

I have to make the most of the time for their sake, and so do you.

Soon and very soon we're going to see the King - Jesus.

But these children won't meet Him if you do nothing.

I'm not centering any one out.

I ask your forgiveness in advance if what I am about to say offends you.

But people have actually said to me in this very building, "I don't like kids."

I smile at them.

And I pretend that that is acceptable attitude and behaviour.

What if God said, "I don't like people who don't like kids?"

Oh but God would never say that, He loves everyone in this world.

Is it not your responsibility to love those who God loves?

Do you want to see those pictures of priceless souls again?

Those kids won't see Jesus without you and me making the most of the time.

Children won't see Jesus if we fail to figure out what is pleasing to God.

They won't see Jesus if we fail to scrutinize our walk in life.

They won't see Jesus if we fail to focus on God's will.

They won't see Jesus if we don't like them.

If you don't like kids don't tell me.

Go to a child and get down on their level, and look them in the eye.

And you say to them - "I don't like you."

If you can do that, may the Lord have mercy on your soul!

If you won't do that, then you better quit hiding behind a lie.

You wonder why you have stress in your schedule?

You have stress in your schedule because you haven't figured out what pleases God.

Or, you have forgotten or abandoned the things that please God.

It happened to Ephesus.

They are the church that lost its first love.

There were two letters written to the Church in Ephesus.

Paul wrote the first one.

Jesus had to write the second one found in the book of Revelation.

He said to them, "You have abandoned the love you had at first."

**You have stress because you aren't broken before God Almighty.**

You are not coming to Him with a broken and contrite heart.

**You are allowing everything else but the Spirit to fill your life.**

We are in danger of losing those children.

We don't have enough people volunteering for the nursery.

We don't have enough leaders for KidzTown.

We don't have enough workers for KidsClub.

I put out an urgent plea to our youth for their help this past Thursday.

The help wanted sign is still hanging in the foyer.

But why should we expect the youth to do what is truly our responsibility?

It is great to see youth investing in children.

I am so thankful for their willing spirit.

**But even youth face tremendous stresses in this generation.**

They want to do everything.

And no one stops to ask, "Are these decisions pleasing to God?"

Our young people miss what God wants because of no time.

Parents you need to take responsibility for your child's time.

If you don't, stress will escalate.

Regrettably God's work will be neglected.

The children of our generation will be hindered from seeing the King.

God spoke through Paul, **"Don't waste your time on useless work, mere busywork, the barren pursuits of darkness. Expose these things for the sham they are. ... These are desperate times! Don't live carelessly, unthinkingly. Make sure you understand what the Master wants."**

**Jesus promises when we seek God's Kingdom first, everything else will be ours.**

**If God's Kingdom gets second place, everything else we do will bring stress.**

God first, then everything else is added on in its proper place.

Paul writes in Ephesians 6:7-8, **"Rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that whatever good any one does, he will receive the same again from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free."**

That is how we discover what is pleasing to God.

**"Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:15-16)**

How can you invest your time in a way that is pleasing to God?

Ministering to kids is just one of many ways to invest in our great God's Kingdom.

To reduce the stress in your life I encourage you to make that investment.

**Closing Song    Our God**