

GOD'S SECOND STRESSBUSTER

Psalms 23:2

July 15, 2007 Sunday a.m.

INTRODUCTION

- A. In December of 2005, a team of Australian researchers scientifically confirmed a long-suspected link between emotional stress and illness. The group from Sydney's Garvan Institute discovered that a hormone called neuropeptide Y (NPY) is released into the body during times of emotional stress. This hormone undermines the body's immune system and literally makes you sick.

According to the Institute's Fabienne Mackay: "During periods of stress, nerves release a lot of NPY, and it gets into the bloodstream where it inhibits the cells in the immune system that look out for and destroy pathogens in the body." She added, "That stress makes you sick is no longer a myth; it is a reality and we need to take it seriously."

- B. Today we're continuing our series on "God's Stressbusters" found in Psalms 23.
1. Last week we looked at the first source of stress found in this psalm—worry. We saw that God's answer to our worry is to believe that he will take care of us like a shepherd takes care of his sheep.
 2. Today we will examine another source of stress—busyness.
 - a. Two ministerial students from Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama, were doing summer evangelistic work in a rural area near Montgomery. One hot day they stopped their car in front of a farmhouse and proceeded up the path through a gauntlet of screaming children and barking dogs. When they knocked on the screen door, the woman of the house stopped her scrubbing over a tub and washboard, brushed back her hair, wiped perspiration from her brow, and asked them what they wanted.

"We would like to tell you how to obtain eternal life," one student answered.

The tired homemaker hesitated for a moment and then replied, "Thank you, but I don't believe I could stand it."
 - b. A CNN pole recently learned that 59% of all Americans would like to slow down and relax more.
 - c. Here's a self test to see if you are too busy....
 - i. Are you always in a hurry?
 - ii. Is your 'To Do' list always unrealistically too long?
 - iii. Do you use days off to catch up with unfinished work?
 - iv. Has more than one person suggested you need to slow down?
 - v. Do you feel guilty when you relax?
 - vi. Do you have to get sick to take time off?
 - d. If you are too busy I have good news for you. God doesn't want you to be. This is the message of verse two (Psa.23:2). God desperately wants you to slow down, relax and enjoy the life he has given you.
 3. How do we do that? God's answer and antidote for busyness can be seen in the acrostic—R-E_L_A_X. How can we relax and stop being so busy?

I. FIRST, **REALIZE YOUR WORTH.**

- A. The reason most people overwork is because they confuse their work with their worth.
1. We think if we work a lot and achieve a lot, then we are worth a lot.
 2. In America we get our primary identity and self-worth from our work. For example after learning a new person's name, invariably, the next question is always, "What do you do?"
- B. The Bible, however, says our worth isn't tied to what we do.
1. James 1:18 tells us you are the most important thing God ever made.
 2. You can relax, you don't have to prove your worth to yourself or anyone else.

3. You don't need the approval of other people to be happy.
4. All you need is to realize how valuable you are to God—Matthew 6:26.

II. SECOND, **ENJOY WHAT YOU ALREADY HAVE.**

- A. Some people are controlled by their “desire to acquire”.
 1. For example many people live in beautiful homes they seldom get to enjoy because they're always staying late at the office.
 2. We need to discover that the greatest things in life aren't things.
- B. God's cure for this “desire to acquire” is to learn to enjoy what you already have—Ecc. 3:13.

III. THIRD, **LIMIT YOUR LABOR.**

- A. This is especially necessary for two groups.
 1. First, those who are self-employed. Since you're not on a 9 to 5 job you keep the work with you all the time.
 2. Second, those who are single parents. I don't see how you do it— work and manage a family with little or no help.
- B. God's answer is to put limits on your work—Ecc. 10:15. & Exo. 20:9-10. Rest was so important to God that he included it as one of the “Big Ten”.

IV. FOURTH, **ADJUST YOUR VALUES.**

- A. This means changing our minds about what's really important in life—Ecc.4:4.
- B. This also means dropping out of the “rat race”—Mark 8:36.

V. FIFTH, **EXCHANGE YOUR PRESSURE FOR GOD'S PEACE.**

- A. You may think that all you need is a vacation. But a vacation won't help you find peace. Only a relationship with God can do that.
- B. You may be so busy that you don't even know that peace is what you really need—not another day in the week to get all your work done.
 1. Resistance to rest isn't a sign of an overachiever. It's a sign of someone who is burning the candle at both ends and still isn't very bright.
 2. A child is resistant to rest and naps, so are sheep. Like children, sheep must be made to lie down—v.2.
 3. If we won't slow ourselves down, sometimes God does it for us.
 4. Consider the peace that God wants to give us in this paraphrase of Psalm 23....

The Lord is my pacesetter, I shall not rush. He makes me stop and rest at intervals. He provides me with images of stillness to restore my serenity. He leads me in the way of efficiency to calmness of mind, and this guidance is peace. Even though I have a great many things to accomplish this day, I will not fret, for His presence is here. His timeliness, His all importance will keep me in balance. He prepares refreshment and renewal in the midst of my activity, anointing my head with the oils of tranquility. My cup of joyous energy overflows. Surely harmony and effectiveness shall be the fruits of my hours, for I shall walk in the pace of my Lord and dwell in His heaven forever.

CONCLUSION

- A. A photographer was snapping pictures of first graders at an elementary school, making small talk to put his subjects at ease.

"What are you going to be when you grow up?" he asked one little girl.

"Tired," she said.
- B. If you are tired too, Jesus makes you and offer you shouldn't refuse— Matt. 11:28-29.