How Can the Bible Help Us with Stress and Depression?

EVENING DEVOTION: (portions of Psalm 130)

Leader: Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD; O Lord, hear my voice.

Group: Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.

Leader: If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

Group: But with you there is forgiveness, therefore you are feared.

Leader: I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope.

Group: He himself will redeem Israel from all their sin.

PRAYERS

(Requests for personal intercession)

Introduction
What causes stress in our society? If you wish, share a stressful situation in your life.

In the study of psychology, “stress” is a term used to refer to the pressures brought to bear upon an individual by the situations and circumstances of life.

A review of some stressful situations in the Bible

Job
Job 1:13-22 How did Job react to these overwhelming series of tragedies?
Job 2:7-10 What additional burdens was Job afflicted with?
Job 10:17 After the tragedy “sunk in”, what did Job feel God was doing to him to add stress to his life? Have you ever felt this way?
Job 36:15 This is Elihu speaking, giving Job some good advice. Of what does he remind Job that we need to be reminded of?
Job 38:1-7 Can you summarize what God’s answer was to Job?
Test Question: “Will you trust God’s wisdom no matter what?”

Jesus
Matthew 4:1-3 How would fasting add to Jesus’ temptations?
Mark 3:5 What do we notice in Jesus that indicates emotional stress?
Define “righteous wrath”.
Matthew 23:37 How does Jesus feel about impenitence and unbelief? How do we feel about it?
Luke 22:44 anguish = (Greek: agonia) gymnastic exercise, wrestling; severe mental struggles.
Isaiah 53:11 satisfied = sated, having desires satisfied; filled

Paul
2 Corinthians 4:8-12 Pick out the stressful verbs in this section.
2 Corinthians 11:23-29 Why did Paul mention all his stressful situations (see 11:5)?

A review of two cases of depression in the Bible

Depression: an act of depressing or a state of being depressed: as a : a pressing down:
LOWERING b (1) : a state of feeling sad: DEJECTION (2) : a psychoneurotic or psychotic
disorder marked esp. by sadness, inactivity, difficulty in thinking and concentration, a
significant increase or decrease in appetite and time spent sleeping, feelings of dejection and
hopelessness, and sometimes suicidal tendencies c (1) : a reduction in activity, amount,
quality, or force (2) : a lowering of vitality or functional activity (Merriam-Webster
Collegiate Dictionary (11th Edition))

King Saul
1 Samuel 16:14-16  What was the source of Saul’s depression?
1 Samuel 19:9,10  What did Saul’s jealousy possess him to do?

King David
Psalm 32:3,4  What parts of the definition of depression above was evident in
David?
Psalm 32:5,10,11  What relieved David’s depression?

Discussion Questions:
Is there a difference between stress and depression?
Is there a difference between depression and despair?
Is depression sinful? Does depression show a lack of faith?
Would you recommend antidepressant medication for a Christian?

Bible passages to use under stress
for strength, assurance: Psalm 34, Psalm 42, Isaiah 40:27-31, Romans 8:31-39, 2 Corinthians 4:8-18,
Philippians 4:4-7
when sin is involved: Psalm 32:1-5

LUTHER’S EVENING PRAYER
I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have graciously kept me this
day. Forgive me all my sins, and graciously keep me this night. Into your hands I commend my body and
soul and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me.
Amen.

Closing Prayer and Hymn: 588

| 1 | Abide with me; fast falls the eventide.  
|   | The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide.  
|   | When other helpers fail and comforts flee,  
|   | Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me!  |
| 2 | Swift to its close ebbs out life’s little day;  
|   | Earth’s joys grow dim; its glories pass away.  
|   | Change and decay in all around I see;  
|   | Oh thou who changest not, abide with me! |
| 3 | Come not in terrors, as the King of kings,  
|   | But kind and good with healing in thy wings,  |
| 4 | Thou on my head in early youth didst smile,  
|   | And though rebellious and perverse meanwhile,  
|   | Thou hast not left me oft as I left thee.  
|   | On to the close, O Lord, abide with me.  |
| 5 | I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless;  
|   | Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness.  
|   | Where is death’s sting? Where, grave, thy victory?  
|   | I triumph still if thou abide with me.  |
| 6 | Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;  
|   | Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies.  
|   | Heav’n’s morning breaks, and earth’s vain shadows flee;  |
| Tears for all woes, a heart for ev’ry plea; Come, Friend of sinners, thus abide with me. | In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me! Amen. |