

Stress Relief through Biblical Meditation & PraiseMoves

(“The Christian ALTERNATIVE to Yoga”)

Take out your notebook or journal.
Notes, questions, insights...revelations!

With Laurette Willis
Founder of PraiseMoves
www.PraiseMoves.com



What IS Stress?



There is a National Stress Awareness Month (April)

6 Common Myths about Stress

- **1. MYTH: Everyone Reacts To Stress In The Same Ways**
- **2. MYTH: Successful People Have Little Or No Stress**
- **3. MYTH: It Is Obvious When Someone Is Experiencing Stress**
- **4. MYTH: Some Stress Reduction Techniques Work For Everyone**
- **5. MYTH: Only People With Higher Responsibilities Have Stress**
- **6. MYTH: The More Hours You Work, The More Stress You Will Have**



50 Common Signs & Symptoms of Stress

- 1. Frequent headaches, jaw clenching or pain
- 2. Gritting, grinding teeth
- 3. Stuttering or stammering
- 4. Tremors, trembling of lips, hands
- 5. Neck ache, back pain, muscle spasms
- 6. Light headedness, faintness, dizziness
- 7. Ringing, buzzing or “popping sounds
- 8. Frequent blushing, sweating
- 9. Cold or sweaty hands, feet
- 10. Dry mouth, problems swallowing
- 11. Frequent colds, infections, herpes sores
- 12. Rashes, itching, hives, “goose bumps”
- 13. Unexplained or frequent “allergy” attacks
- 14. Heartburn, stomach pain, nausea
- 15. Excess belching, flatulence
- 16. Constipation, diarrhea, loss of control
- 17. Difficulty breathing, frequent sighing
- 18. Sudden attacks of life threatening panic
- 19. Chest pain, palpitations, rapid pulse
- 20. Frequent urination
- 21. Diminished sexual desire or performance
- 22. Excess anxiety, worry, guilt, nervousness
- 23. Increased anger, frustration, hostility
- 24. Depression, frequent or wild mood swings
- 25. Increased or decreased appetite
- 26. Insomnia, nightmares, disturbing dreams
- 27. Difficulty concentrating, racing thoughts
- 28. Trouble learning new information
- 29. Forgetfulness, disorganization, confusion
- 30. Difficulty in making decisions
- 31. Feeling overloaded or overwhelmed
- 32. Frequent crying spells or suicidal thoughts
- 33. Feelings of loneliness or worthlessness
- 34. Little interest in appearance, punctuality
- 35. Nervous habits, fidgeting, feet tapping
- 36. Increased frustration, irritability, edginess
- 37. Overreaction to petty annoyances
- 38. Increased number of minor accidents
- 39. Obsessive or compulsive behavior
- 40. Reduced work efficiency or productivity
- 41. Lies or excuses to cover up poor work
- 42. Rapid or mumbled speech
- 43. Excessive defensiveness or suspiciousness
- 44. Problems in communication, sharing
- 45. Social withdrawal and isolation
- 46. Constant tiredness, weakness, fatigue
- 47. Frequent use of over-the-counter drugs
- 48. Weight gain or loss without diet
- 49. Increased smoking, alcohol or drug use
- 50. Excessive gambling or impulse buying

Body Systems Affected by Stress:

1. Nervous System
2. Musculoskeletal System
3. Respiratory System
4. Cardiovascular System
5. Endocrine System
6. Gastrointestinal System
7. Reproductive System

Here are ways in which some key body systems react.

1 NERVOUS SYSTEM

When stressed — physically or psychologically — the body suddenly shifts its energy resources to fighting off the perceived threat. In what is known as the “fight or flight” response, the sympathetic nervous system signals the adrenal glands to release adrenaline and cortisol. These hormones make the heart beat faster, raise blood pressure, change the digestive process and boost glucose levels in the bloodstream. Once the crisis passes, body systems usually return to normal.

2 MUSCULOSKELETAL SYSTEM

Under stress, muscles tense up. The contraction of muscles for extended periods can trigger tension headaches, migraines and various musculoskeletal conditions.

3 RESPIRATORY SYSTEM

Stress can make you breathe harder and cause rapid breathing — or hyperventilation — which can bring on panic attacks in some people.

4 CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM

Acute stress — stress that is momentary, such as being stuck in traffic — causes an increase in heart rate and stronger contractions of the heart muscle. Blood vessels that direct blood to the large muscles and to the heart dilate, increasing the amount of blood pumped to these parts of the body. Repeated episodes of acute stress can cause inflammation in the coronary arteries, thought to lead to heart attack.

5 ENDOCRINE SYSTEM

Adrenal glands

When the body is stressed, the brain sends signals from the hypothalamus, causing the adrenal cortex to produce cortisol and the adrenal medulla to produce epinephrine — sometimes called the “stress hormones.”

Liver

When cortisol and epinephrine are released, the liver produces more glucose, a blood sugar that would give you the energy for “fight or flight” in an emergency.

6 GASTROINTESTINAL SYSTEM

Esophagus

Stress may prompt you to eat much more or much less than you usually do. If you eat more or different foods or increase your use of tobacco or alcohol, you may experience heartburn, or acid reflux.

Stomach

Your stomach can react with “butterflies” or even nausea or pain. You may vomit if the stress is severe enough.

Bowels

Stress can affect digestion and which nutrients your intestines absorb. It can also affect how quickly food moves through your body. You may find that you have either diarrhea or constipation.

7 REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM

In men, excess amounts of cortisol, produced under stress, can affect the normal functioning of the reproductive system. Chronic stress can impair testosterone and sperm production and cause impotence.

In women, stress can cause absent or irregular menstrual cycles or more-painful periods. It can also reduce sexual desire.



Do You Experience Any of These Symptoms?

Emotional Symptoms:

Do you think to yourself:

I am full of fears that I can't get out of my mind.

I feel like something terrible is going to happen.

I worry excessively.

I feel uneasy and alone a lot of the time.

I often feel isolated, lonely, down in the dumps, and depressed.

I feel I have no control over what happens to me.

I feel embarrassed, rejected, and criticized.

I often feel like screaming with anger.



Physiological Symptoms:

Do you feel:

Weak all over?

Rapid, pounding heartbeat or palpitations?

Tightness around your chest?

Hyperventilation (a feeling that you cannot get enough air)?

Periodic dizziness and sweating?

Muscle tension, aches, or tremors?

Chronic fatigue?



Cognitive Symptoms:

Do you think to yourself:

I can't carry on. I've got to get out of here.

What if I make a fool of myself?

People are looking at me all the time.

I'm having a heart attack.

I'm going to faint.

I'm going crazy.

I can't go on alone; no one will help me.

I can't go out; I will lose control.

I feel confused and can't remember things.



Biblical Answers

*“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer
and supplication, with thanksgiving,
let your requests be made known to God;
and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”
(Philippians 4:6-7).*



PHILIPPIANS 4:6

BE

ANXIOUS
FOR
NOTHING

There is Healing



Overcoming Stress

You can calm the waves of stress by:

1. **Reframing the situation**—changing your thoughts from end-of-the-word scenario to a more neutral perspective.

For example, changing your inner dialogue from “I’m not going to make it – I can’t take this anymore – I can’t stand it – Get me out of here!” to “This is not my preference, however the Word says...”

(I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me; With God, all things are possible; God has not given me a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind!)

2. **Building your resilience to stress** by maintaining positive health habits, such as good nutrition and regular cleansing.
 - We recommend www.3DayEasyDetox.com and www.DanielDiet.info with Beyond Organic foods by Jordan Rubin (author of “The Maker’s Diet” and Founder of Garden of Life).
3. **Learning coping skills**, such as the relaxation techniques of deep diaphragmatic breathing, muscular relaxation, Christian meditation, and quiet time—take a walk in nature, if you can.
4. **Having a strong support system** of friends and relatives. Don’t go it alone.
5. **Keeping creative time** and fun as a part of your life.
6. **Releasing accumulated stress** through stretching exercises and aerobic activities—PraiseMoves and MIRA! (www.PraiseMoves.com)
7. Improving your self-esteem→**Better yet, improving your esteem of the Lord and His Word** in your life. Be transformed by the renewal of your mind! (Romans 12:2).

Problems with Meditation and Yoga



What the Bible Calls Meditation



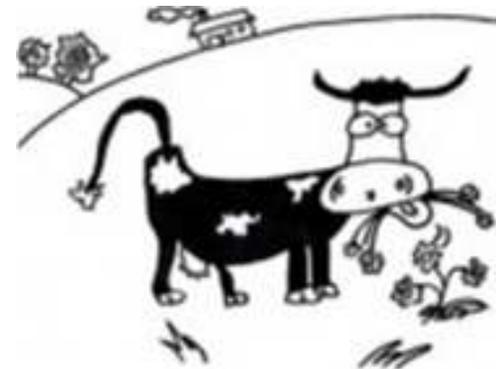
- *“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall **MEDITATE** in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success” (Joshua 1:8).*
- *“But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he **MEDITATES** day and night” (Psalm 1:2).*
- *“When I remember You on my bed, I **MEDITATE** on You in the night watches” (Psalm 63:6).*
- *“You will keep him in *perfect peace*, **Whose mind is stayed on You**, Because he trusts in You” (Isaiah 26:3).*

Christian/Biblical Meditation

- **Christian Meditation** – what is it? It's NOT guided imagery, visualizations, out-of-body experiences, subconscious suggestion, hypnosis or mental manipulation.
- **Christian Meditation** is very different from Eastern meditation. It requires a fully engaged mind, NOT an “empty mind.”
- **Christian Meditation** is NOT an altered state of consciousness, “contemplative prayer” (“Centering Prayer” or “spiritual formation”) — these are NOT Biblical meditation. We do NOT enter a trance-like state.
- **Meditation is different.** While prayer (talking and listening to God) is a vital part of our relationship with Jesus Christ, meditation is a bit different — although it does involve our relationship with the Holy Spirit, our Teacher and Guide.
- **In Hebrew, “*haghah*” is “to meditate” = “to murmur; to mutter; to sigh” – when done in the heart, this is considered “musing, or meditation.”**

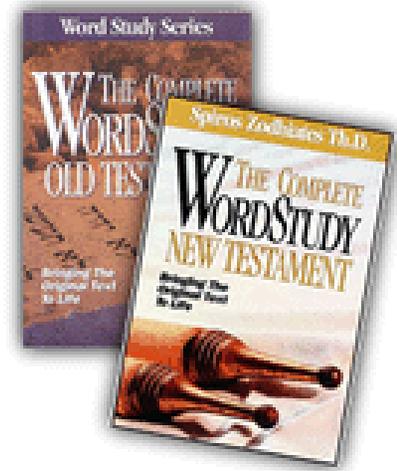
Chew on this for a while!

- In Hebrew, meditation carries with it the unappealing, but descriptive picture of “a cow chewing the cud” – the idea being that we “chew” the Word, “swallow it,” and then bring it back up to chew it some more throughout our day as new truths and revelations are revealed.
- Ruminant! Cows are ruminant animals.
- Meditating on the Word of God day and night means to speak to yourself the Word of God day and night and to speak to yourself about it.
- Ruminant (chew) on the Word!



Meditation in Bible Times

According to Zodhiates'
AMG Complete Word Study:



“It is possible that the Scriptures were read *audibly* during the process of meditation.”



Soaking in the Psalms





Differences between PraiseMoves and Yoga:

Yoga

Poses are offerings to 330 million “gods”

Stress Relief (physical)

Serenity (leads to “bliss”/spiritual numbness)

Empties the mind

Relaxing

Focus on self and universe

Focus on “perfecting my practice”

PraiseMoves

Exercise is not our foundation. The Word of God we meditate upon is our foundation. The postures are the “witty invention” to get you more *into* the Word of God and to get more of the Word of God into you!

Stress Relief (physical)

Brings True Peace through Christ and His Word

Renews the Mind, transforming us (Rom. 12:1-2)

Refreshing to spirit, soul and body

Focus on the Lord and who we are “In Christ”

Focus on Worshiping the Lord (John 4:23, 6:63, 17:17)



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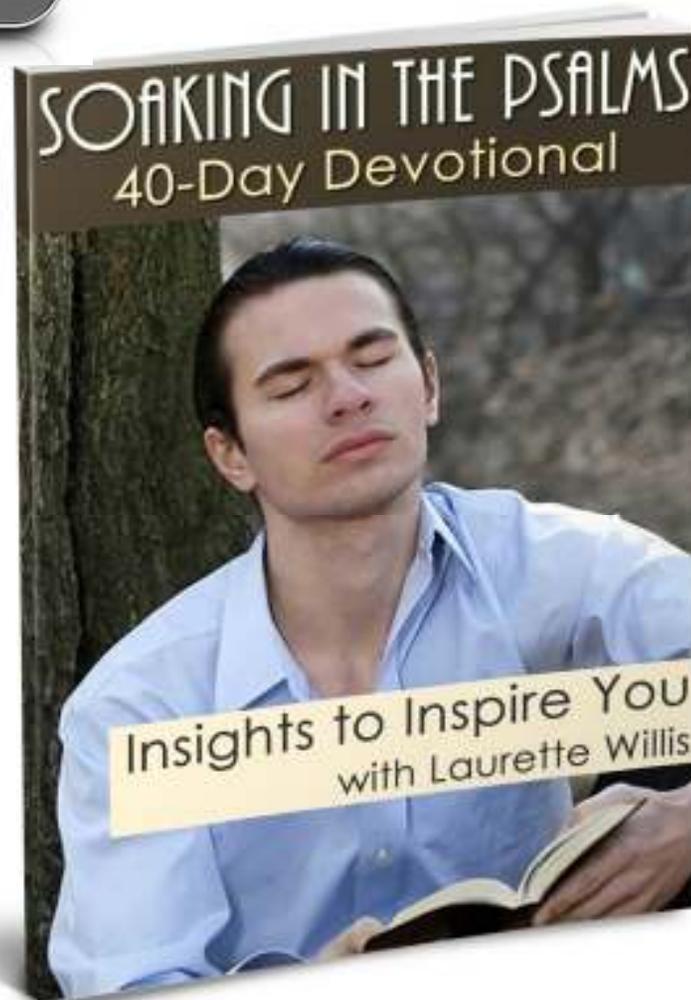
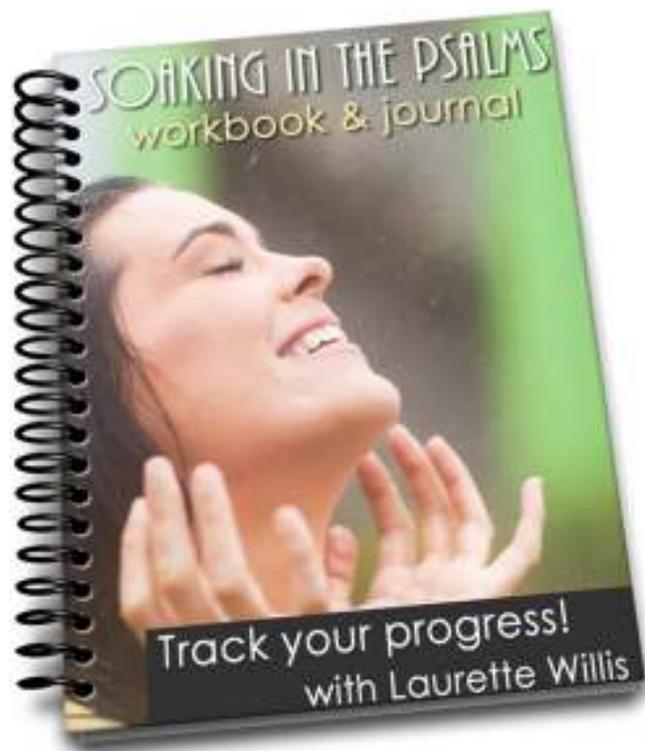
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