



Stress

Devotional featuring Rex Miller

What do you do when something you care about is at stake? Stress is a two-sided animal. In the book *The Upside of Stress*, Kelly McGonigal describes stress as releasing cortisol to energize and activate your body. The same chemical release can make you feel either energized or drained. On the upside, it can help you get up in the morning when you're excited about your day. This kind of energy is an essential positive side of stress.

Stress also accompanies worry, like when you rush a child to an emergency room and pace the hospital room like a caged lion as you wait for a doctor's response. In those scary moments, your heart rate races, your breath is short, and your mind can be in a fog of thoughts. It can take some time to gain control and calm down. This response is the other side of stress.

We have this two-sided relationship with stress, but most of us identify with the negative side. It is not difficult to sit in this negative side of stress. The apostle Paul tells us in his letter to the Romans chapter five, verses three and four, "But we glory in our sufferings because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance produces character, and character produces hope."

So, we have two sides to look at regarding stress. One is reducing the anxiety side, but the better long-term strategy is to build that upside, renew our minds and embrace the situation as a tool God uses to develop our character. If you want to experience more victory when you encounter stressful situations, remember these three things. First, breathe; slow your heart rate down to allow your thinking brain to re-engage. Two, begin to practice renewing your mind by embracing the situation as God's tool to help build your character. And three, get a good night's sleep. May God bless you and build you up!



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MEDITATE

"Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope." —ROMANS 5:3-4 NIV

REFLECT

What do we learn about God in Romans 5:3-4?

How has God used stress to produce perseverance, character and hope in your life?

How can we encourage one another when facing times of stress?