



Stress Busters: God's Strategy For Busting Stress
"Stressed Out Over Your Schedule"
(Part 2)

Intro: Video: OK, I don't believe any of you need a "Rebuke -O-Gram". BUT, we all probably need some adjustments when it comes to our schedules.

Who doesn't sometime feel stressed over our schedules? Life just moves at such a hectic frantic pace. The demands are endless and the stress mounts. What do we do?

- 3 truths to consider that will help relieve some stress over our schedules.

I. Consider How Culture Controls Your Schedule

A. Consider how culture influences our thinking

Col. 2:8 "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principals of the world rather than on Christ." (NIV) Don't buy into the lies!!!

- What do most Americans believe regarding their schedules / the use of time?
 1. Success and productivity is the greatest value. (materialism) We are a nation obsessed with prosperity and we use our time to pursue it. If you don't use your time to pursue prosperity, something's wrong with you.
 2. When I was a Sr. in H. S. and the guidance counselor: Share story
 3. When we watch TV, we are told we deserve prosperity (you deserve the new car / better job / bigger house / RV – ATV - HDTV
 4. We are a culture obsessed with debt. Because we're in such debt it makes us even more a prisoner to our schedules...we have to work more. Our self worth is connected to our possessions. WHY else would we live this way?

B. Consider how culture influences our behavior (thinking influences behavior)

Ps. 127:2 "It is useless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, anxiously working...for God gives rest to His loved ones." (NLT) Yet, this is exactly how we live! (Nothing wrong with hard work. That's not the point!)

- How do most Americans live? How do they actually spend their time??
 1. Americans work more hours and take less time off than any other industrialized nation in the world! AND, we're proud of it!

- We have longer work days and less vacation days
- 2. TIME magazine several months ago ran an article showing how the nations of the world deal with maternity leave (time off for mothers). America was one of the worst!
- 3. We willingly go into debt because we know we can “work it off” later. The average American with 1 credit card has \$9200 in credit card debt. Our debt just feeds our impulsiveness to work even more.
- 4. Culture has influenced how families spend their time together. Families don’t spend much time together on weekends, they spend it on a soccer field / basket ball court / baseball field / and it starts in Kindergarten!
- 5. I remember the haggard parents Lisa and I would see at these events. “Oh, this is really good for the kids.” REALLY? Who says? Culture!

C. Consider how culture produces specific results

Ecc. 2:22-23 “So what do people get for all their hard work? Their days of labor are filled with pain and grief; even at night they cannot rest. It is utterly meaningless.”

(NLT) We have a culture of stressed out people!

- What are the results that we see playing out in our culture / society?
- 1. Billions of dollars in medical costs because of stress. The medical profession has for years linked stress and health problems together. It’s just very apparent that God did not make us to handle long term stress.
- 2. \$300 Billion lost to companies because of employee stress.
- 3. 50% of all marriages end in divorce. I’m not blaming it all on stress, but I am saying that if couples do not spend enough time together, their marriages tend to fall apart from neglect. There’s no time for good marriages today.
- 4. We have a generation of kids that are being raised by technology rather than their parents. I’m not saying technology is bad, it’s just not a substitute for time spent with parents.
- 5. A few years ago my daughter had about 10 friends over to spend the night. It was about 11pm, when our daughter came into our room crying (explain story – Something is desperately wrong folks!)

Haggai 1:5 “This is what the Lord Almighty says; “Consider how things are going for you!”
(NLT) See, this is where I got this phrase. How’s that working for you?

- Americans live in an insane manner! We tend to live in a way that destroys our lives. That’s crazy! Do you want to change it? Here’s how.

II. Correct Your Schedule According To Your Values

A. Determine what your values are

- Over 3000 years ago Joshua told the nation of Israel to determine their values. (explain context)

Josh. 24:15 "...choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served...or will it be the gods...in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord." (NLT) We face the same choice. Whose values are you going to live? (parents / culture / God)

1. Now, because we American are always so busy, we never slow down long enough to ask ourselves important questions like this. "What are your top 5 values in your life?" (5 top priorities / 5 most important things)
2. This is your assignment this week. Some of you have done things like this before...some of you haven't.
3. Guidelines: You must do this alone in silence, with your mind clear and undistracted. Not while the TV is on / Computer / while the kids are tugging on you / This is not something you can multi-task.
4. If you had to boil your life down to just 5 things, what would you want to be known for. Maybe it would be helpful for some of you to think about your funeral. (Hope that's not morbid to some of you.) Sometimes, thinking about your end gives perspective on the present.
5. Please don't short change this process. Take the time to do it!
6. When you've finished this, if you're married, share it with your spouse. WHY? Because the next step is impossible without their cooperation.

B. Decide to alter your schedule according to your values

Phil. 1:10 "so that you may be able to discern what is best...(NIV)

1. The problem with most of us is that our schedules do not reflect what is best it merely reflects a lifestyle committed to busyness. Therefore, I have to do something to get off the treadmill.
2. Now that you have your values defined, you evaluate the way you're living life in light of your values. If your lifestyle does not facilitate your values, you need to make some changes. (Look at your weekly schedule)
3. Why do we do this? Time reflects our values. If you do not believe this, you are in a serious state of denial. (If you spend hardly any time with your child, try to explain to them when they are an adult they were valued!)
4. Your stress level will be tied to how well you live your values. WHY? Because any time we live inconsistent with our internal values it will create stress. You will live with constant internal tension! This tension will eventually wear you down (emotionally / relationally / spiritually / physically)
5. Therefore, those of you who are already saying it is impossible to change your schedule, you are choosing a life of misery. You're choosing a life of guilt and stress. (See, we do choose insanity!)
6. So, this is assignment #2 this week. Sorry for all the work. But change is hard work. Lay your values over your schedule and be willing to make some

hard decisions. Quit believing the lie that you are a victim to your schedule and that you have no choices.

7. I realize that changing your schedule may be a process and take time. BUT, start now! Get your calendar and begin planning activities that reflect your values.

C. Demonstrate your values by learning to say NO.

1. This has got to be one of the most important life skills I know of. The ability to say NO without guilt. The previous step will be unsuccessful without this skill.
2. Realize that to live your values you must say NO to many good things. BUT reality is, that you only have time for the best things. Just because something is good doesn't mean you have to do it.
3. When you say no to a good thing, it also means you are saying yes to a better thing. You are saying yes to your values. This equals less stress.
4. Saying NO helps you not feel like some helpless victim. It gives you a sense of control over how you're living your life. It makes you feel like you are no longer manipulated by other people and their expectations of you.
5. Saying NO reminds me that I am NOT responsible for other people's feelings. Many of you have a hard time saying NO because you worry about how they may feel.
6. For many of you, this is a liberating truth. I am NOT responsible for your feelings. If someone is upset with you because you said NO, that's their problem NOT yours. (Be released!!!)

Prov. 29:25 "The fear of man brings a snare..." (NASB)

7. God and I give all of you permission to say NO! Maybe you should even practice it today.

- Will you begin to correct your schedule according to your values?

III. Choose Christ As The Center Of Your Schedule

- **Illustrate:** Our lives are like a wheel. The spokes represent the various priorities in our life. Every wheel needs a hub / a center / in order to keep things in balance. What's yours? Yourself / Culture / Others expectations / your boss / ?
- Jesus wants to be the hub of our lives so we don't have to be so stressed out. He wants to bring balance. How does Christ at the hub of my life make a difference?

A. Jesus provides the rationale to determine the right values

*Matt. 11:28-29 "Come to Me all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest...**Let me teach you...**and you will find rest for your souls..." (NLT)*

1. Now I realize I already told you to determine your top 5 values, but we need to make sure these values are something Jesus would agree with. We need to

get our values from Him. We need to be willing to let Him teach us how to live.

2. We need an objective standard to live by not the changing standards of our culture. Getting our values from Jesus is a lot like knowing what the building codes are in construction.
3. When we moved into this building 5 years ago, it was just a shell. We learned more about building / construction codes than we ever wanted to know! (bathrooms / # of exits / fire alarms / fire walls – doors /
4. Why are these codes important? Because of safety. These codes work. Through Jesus, we get the building codes for life. His codes work / His codes keep your life safe.
5. If we build our lives on what He has said, when the storms come, our lives will still be standing. Some of your lives are falling apart because you have the wrong codes. Where are you getting your values? (building codes)

B. Jesus provides the resources to consistently live His values

Eph. 3:16 "I pray that from His glorious, unlimited resources He will give you mighty inner strength..." (NLT)

1. Jesus really does have resources for us to experience. He really does have additional power to give us; but it is only realized through relationship. I talked about this last week.
2. To live a counter cultural existence is just going to take some additional help. You can't consistently do this by yourself. We stress out because we're trying to keep all the plates spinning? We need help!
3. BUT, if you want to experience the inner strength He promises, you have to pursue the relationship NOT just the power. You have to want a relationship with Him. WHY?
4. Because the greatest thing He wants to give you is relationship. Unfortunately, many people treat Jesus like some Cosmic Bell-Hop. They are more interested in what Jesus can do for them rather than the relationship
5. As much as Jesus wants to help you with the stress of your life, He waits until you choose Him first. This is why choosing this relationship is the most important decision you could ever make. Jesus has to go from being one of the spokes in your wheel to the HUB!
6. He's already invited all of us into relationship. Luke 11 – "Come to Me..." The question is...have you? If you will...

C. Jesus provides the rewards to motivate us living His values

- Jesus tells us living His way matters. It makes a difference in this life. Simply put...His way works! Isn't that motivation enough?

John 10:10 “The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give you life in all its fullness (NLT) Jesus doesn’t say follow me and live my way and be miserable. Come and live a stressed out existence following Me!

1. This world is like a thief. I see it stealing / killing / and destroying people’s lives all the time. Because of hectic schedules, I see people’s relationships being destroyed / emotionally dead / and robbed of joy.
2. This may describe how many of you feel. Are you willing to believe that there really is another way you can live? Are you willing to embrace the fact that God just may have a better perspective on our lives than we do?
3. Are you willing to let Him speak into your life? If your schedule is stressing you out this morning...

- * Can you admit just how much culture is dictating your schedule? (gets us out of denial)
- * Are you willing to start correcting your schedule according to your values? (assignments)
- * Will you choose Christ as the center of your schedule? (Getting your values from Him – Letting Him speak into your life and schedule / Letting Him show you a new way to live?)