

## Pressure Points “The Stress of the JOB”

### Part 4

**Intro:** For me, work has probably been the greatest source of stress in my life. I have allowed it to damage me internally as well as damage some of my relationships. I haven't always been very good at handling job stress. Some of you are wondering; “You're a Pastor. How can that be stressful?” Without going into great detail to answer this legitimate question I want to quote from a very well-known Pastor (Rick Warren). “Behind every successful ministry that God is blessing in a great way there has been tremendous pain to get there.” It's true! It was pain and stress that started Foothills. We began with 30 people and have grown to what we are today. We are starting our 3<sup>rd</sup> building project. We have 29 employees / over 40 different ministries / activities 7 days a week. Plus there is the daily pressure to speak to you weekly and give you the best I have. I understand job stress more than you think. Today we are going to grow in this area. Job stress is never going away.

- As we discuss the stress that comes from our jobs I want to make it clear that all jobs do not happen at a company / business / or in a traditional sense. For some of you your job is a stay at home mom / home schooling your kids / your job is investing in your family. These responsibilities carry stress like any other job. Therefore, the principals of today will apply to everyone in whatever unique job / work situation we find yourself in.

### 3 principals for reducing job stress.

#### 1. Work is God's will for us

We must begin by how we think about work in general.

From the beginning, God gave mankind responsibility that he had to fulfill. Even in paradise, we were responsible to work. Having a job has been part of God's plan from the beginning. Work is not evil or some form of punishment.

*Gen. 2:15 “The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it.” (NLT)* See! From the beginning work has been part of God's plan for humanity. WHY is this so important?

- Knowing work is God's will helps us accept our jobs  
Working is part of God's plan for your life. When you are working, you are in God's will. Knowing this helps us accept the job we are in. It may not be the job for the rest of our lives, but it is for the season we currently find ourselves in.
  - We must reject this mentality that work is something bad. I see this in the attitude of parents as they talk about their kids working. “I don't want them to get a job. They are going to have to work for the rest of their lives.” This comes from a misunderstanding about work.
  - Work is not some form of punishment that God inflicted upon humanity because of sin. It was part of the creation before sin. Work is part of His will for humanity.

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- Why do we want to communicate to our kids that work is something that should be avoided...something that is evil...something you should put off as long as you can?
- I am so thankful that my parents did not delay the work issue for me growing up. I realize times are different now, but work was simply accepted. It wasn't viewed as an evil thing. I grew up working.
  - I remember I couldn't wait to leave the berry fields and go work in the chicken houses for \$3.00 an hr. – at 12 yrs. old(share)
- Work is one of God's many methods of maturing us as people and growing our faith. Through work, I have learned not only job skills, but life skills. Through work I have learned to depend on Jesus unlike any other experience. God has used work to make me a better person.
- Some of you are thinking, "Easy for you to say that, you're a Pastor." Of course your job has done those things for you. Can I just say to those who believe this, it is not what you think. Many people have a romanticized perspective of this role.
  - Let me put it in business terminology – I oversee a business with 29 employees plus 100's of volunteers. Even I at times need to remember that my job is God's will – and this cultivates acceptance.
- You may not like your job / the work environment may be unhealthy / you may be currently looking for another job / the stress level may be damaging / BUT today, this just may be God's will for you. Accept it so you can go to work Monday and do your job as an assignment from God.

- Knowing work is God's will helps us appreciate our jobs

*Ecc. 5:18 "Even so, I have noticed one thing, at least, that is good. It is good for people to eat, drink, and enjoy their **work** under the sun during the short life God has given them, and to accept their lot in life." (NLT)*

- I realize this is easier said than done, but it is possible. Once we believe that our job is God's will, I can now begin to not just work, but find some level of enjoyment in it. I know, some of you think this is impossible.
  - I learned this during the year before we started Foothills. (share story)
- Once I accepted where God had me and submitted myself to His purposes regardless what they were, He put joy in my heart. I was actually finding enjoyment cleaning windows and gutters.
- Joy is not simply a matter of favorable circumstances, it is submitting yourself to and cooperating with God's will for your life. He just may have you in a difficult job situation for a reason. God always has a bigger picture we cannot see. (Quite possibly He wants to accomplish something IN you.)
- Submitting yourself to God's will allows you to find appreciation for your work even when it is hard...even when it's not everything you want it to be.

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I know some of you are in some very tough job situations. I do not want to make light of anyone's job stress, but accepting this as God's will is the beginning of reducing job stress.

## 2. Work for God rather than man

*Col. 3:22-24 "Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything you do. Serve them sincerely because of your reverent fear of the Lord. <sup>24</sup> Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ." (NLT)* This perspective makes you a better employee and will help you deal with the stress of work.

Knowing who you really work for makes you a better employee and better equipped to handle job stress. As followers of Jesus we ultimately work for Jesus. We serve Him first and this includes the workplace.

3 truths from Col 3- Even though it is referring to slaves, the principals apply to employees. When we work for God rather than people, we...

- Give your best performance no matter who is watching

*Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you.*

- Do you work different when your boss / supervisor is around or it truly doesn't matter? If you work just as hard when they are not around this is a less stressful way to work. If you are always looking over your shoulder, you increase your job stress. (Hope the boss doesn't find out)
  - Many studies today on workplace time wasting. I admit, as a boss I should stay away from studies like these. 31% waste at least 1 hr. a day. 26% waste 2 or more hrs. a day. The biggest time wasters – social media / texting / internet
- Not giving your best job performance creates job stress. WHY? Because you know better / procrastination is stressful – jobs not done / and not giving your best negatively impact the rest of the team adding stress to the environment.
- BUT, when you decide that you work for God rather than man, it makes you a better employee. You give God your best everyday and this reduces job stress.

- Give your best attitude regardless of the situation

*Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people*

- One of the best testimonies we have in the workplace is our attitude. Often I hear from believers how they can be a witness for Jesus at work. Here it is. What type of attitude do you bring to work every day?
- Attitude is a choice. It is not dependent upon the circumstances. When your co-workers see a constant good attitude in you regardless of stressful work situations, they cannot help but notice.
- How is a good attitude possible? You have to learn how to be dependent on Jesus. This is how God uses our jobs to grow and mature our faith. Jesus wants to go to work with you. He wants you to experience that He is enough.

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- Too many people compartmentalize their faith. If you're not taking Jesus to work with you your faith is compartmentalized. Jesus wants you to be a great employee and this includes your attitude. Let Him help you. Depend on Him.

- Remember that rewards for obedience come from God

*Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ.*” Jesus sees your obedience even if your employer does not.

- This is just another way of saying that our obedience matters even on the job. Jesus sees our jobs as an opportunity to serve Him and He promises to reward it. Obedience does = blessing
- There are times we must remember this. You got passed up again for promotion / you didn't get a raise / they didn't give you the project / dishonest people got elevated and you got overlooked. Life is unfair and this creates job stress.
- What do you do? You remember who you really work for and that He sees everything. You trust your future in to His hands. You remind yourself that your future and your career is in the hands of God not men. This doesn't take away all the frustration, but it does reduce the stress.

When you can learn to get up every day and go to work for God rather than men, it is a choice and it is a stress reducer.

### **3. Work is a Kingdom assignment**

If all we do is look at our jobs as a means to make money and provide for our families we will multiply the job stress in our lives. This perspective just makes job stress worse. God wants us to see there is more than just making money when it comes to our jobs. As followers of Jesus, we must view our jobs with a Kingdom perspective. Like what? Col. 3 is a Kingdom perspective regarding work. It is the Kingdom perspective that makes us great employees. If we do not live the principals we just talked about we cannot fulfill our Kingdom assignment. HOW?

- Work is a Kingdom assignment to grow your faith

God will use the stress of our jobs to grow and mature our faith if we allow it.

*James 1:2-4 “Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. <sup>3</sup> For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. <sup>4</sup> So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.” (NLT)*

- Notice it says troubles of ANY kind. This includes our job stress. If you simply think about the enormous amount of our lives we will spend working why wouldn't God use this to grow our faith? This is prime opportunity.
- The stress of this job has grown my faith more than any other single thing. It has driven me deeper with God / made me more dependent upon God / taught me

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about my need for others / revealed to me how His Kingdom works / developed my ability to hear His voice / taught me how to handle stress.

- What about your job? Can you begin to see it as the way God wants to grow your faith? It's more than a paycheck...it is a process of faith development. Are you letting Him grow your faith. HOW?
- Involve Him in your job. Do you talk to Him about what's going on? Are you asking Him for wisdom / discernment / energy / stamina / insight / peace / courage / are you depending on Him for your job or do you believe it's all up to you? If it's all on you that is stressful. Are you willing to be obedient to Him at work?

- Work is a Kingdom assignment to use your faith

As God grows your faith He will now use you in the work setting to represent Him to others. God has you strategically located for Kingdom influence. You are not there simply to earn a paycheck. You are placed there by design with an assignment to be a witness of the reality of Jesus in your life.

*II Cor. 5:20 "So we are Christ's ambassadors..." (NLT)*

- You are Jesus' ambassador to your work setting. I believe this is a mindset every follower of Jesus must have when it comes to our jobs. God always has a Kingdom assignment attached to our work. It is not just about the money. That is a secular mindset not a Kingdom mindset. Our work just may be the greatest platform for influence we have.
- WHY? Because of the amount of time we spend there. Also, we develop relationships at work and influence happens through relationships. Our work is prime Kingdom territory.
- What if you started thinking of work as a Kingdom assignment instead of just a source of frustration? What if you experienced God using you at work for His Kingdom purposes?
- HOW? Love those around you. Value your co-workers. Elevate those you work with. Show them the love of Jesus. Pray for opportunities. Pray for your co-workers / supervisor. What will this do? Create an opportunity to share why you are so different.
- It will breathe new purpose in to your job setting you never thought possible.

Job stress is never going away, but we can learn to grow through it better. How is Jesus asking you to grow in this area? How is He asking you to trust Him...follow Him...look at your job differently? Monday morning is coming. How will you do Monday different?

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