

Stress Management 101

MESSAGES FOR THE NEW YEAR

Let him have all your worries
and cares, for he is always
thinking about you and
watching everything that
concerns you.
– 1 PETER 5:7,
Living Bible

And my God will meet all your
needs according to his glorious
riches in Christ.
– PHILIPPIANS 4:19

Fix your thoughts on what is
true and good and right. Think
about things that are pure and
lovely, and dwell on the fine,
good things in others. Think
about all you can praise God
for and be glad about.
– PHILIPPIANS 4:8,
Living Bible

The book of Philippians revolves around the theme of being happy in life. But is it possible to be continually joyful? Most people really don't enjoy life, they endure it. Their lives are filled with anxiety and stress, the greatest contributor is worry. Worry is a kill joy and source of stress. We tend to expect the worst in life. Worry is assuming responsibility that God never intended for you to have.

WELCOME

Complete the following: *"Two experiences that I'm thankful for this last year...."*

WORSHIP

Use 1 John 4:7-12 as a focus: "The Greatest Commands" (448), "Bind Us Together" (704), "A Common Love" (705), "Come, Let Us Worship & Bow Down" (153).

WORD

Read James 3:1-12

1. James uses some vivid imagery to describe the tongue's power (vss 3-6). What do each of these three illustrations teach about why we must watch what we say? [My tongue directs where I go (vss 3-4). My tongue can destroy what I have (vss 5-6. My tongue displays who I am (vs 9).]
2. Our speech can be so inconsistent—one moment we're speaking lovingly and the next moment we're lashing out at someone. How can that be? What's the real problem with tongue, according to James (vss 11-12, and notice Matt. 12:34)? [The real problem isn't our tongue, but rather our heart.] What kind of heart is revealed by a harsh tongue? Negative tongue? Filthy? Critical?

Read James 3:13-18

3. James draws a contrast between two types of wisdom (vss 13-16). How do these two kinds of wisdom differ as to their source? Their symptoms? Their results? What is James' point in drawing the contrast?
4. Reread the qualities of godly wisdom (vs 17). Consider each of these eight qualities—characteristics of those who know how to wisely relate to others. What does it mean to be "pure" or "authentic?" What's the difference between someone who is "peace-loving" or "gentle" and someone who is argumentative? How does one learn to be "considerate" or "mindful of the feelings of others?"
5. The word "submissive" (vs 17) actually refers to one who is "open to reason," describing someone who isn't defensive or resistant to listening. How open are you to the opinions, advice or criticism from others? Wisdom is also "full of mercy and good fruit." How have you seen these qualities reflected in someone's life? What does it mean to be "impartial" or "straightforward" and "sincere?"

WORKS

How is "earthly wisdom" hurting you? In which area do you need heaven's wisdom? How will you cultivate that wisdom? The only way to get control of your tongue is to let Christ have control of your heart. Break into men's/women's groups and pray for the wisdom that God so generously gives (James 1:5)!