



STRESSED OUT

Robert Morris

Focus Stress has an unexpected purpose in our lives, but how do we deal with it biblically and without breaking?

Fun Gather some toothpicks and recreate Pastor Robert's illustration. Break one. Soak another. Observe how easy it is to break the dry one and how easy it is to bend the soaked one.

Review Key Scriptures: 1 Peter 5:7; John 4:23, 16:33; Romans 5:3–4; Exodus 31:17

1. Check your weights.

Are there pressures, activities, or events that we can remove to lessen stress in our lives? Don't add more weights to your life than necessary. In some seasons, we need to lessen the load we normally bear. "Once-in-a-lifetime opportunities" are not true for God's people. Something is either God's will or it isn't.

2. Strengthen your board.

Tribulation is guaranteed in this world, but you can increase your training, skill, and preparedness to deal with stresses and opportunities when they come along. After many years of victory, sometimes we forget the basics as believers: God's Word, prayer, and worship.

3. Soak your board.

The word "stress" has origins in the 13th century. To shape a wooden board without breaking it, they needed to "stress" the board by soaking it in water or oil. This made it pliable. For the believer, water represents the Word of God, and oil represents the Spirit of God. To make sure stress doesn't break you, spend time in God's Word and in the presence of God.

Group Dynamics Idea See if you can gather together with your group (while physically distancing and with masks, if necessary) to worship the Lord and spend time in His presence together.

Discuss

1. What are the weights you are carrying: job, house, children, finances, illness, etc.?
2. Are there any obligations or stresses you can remove? For example, get someone to babysit your children for a day, or step back from a volunteer position temporarily.
3. How can you strengthen yourself? You could attend church, read God's Word, worship, have friends pray for you, or reach out to Gateway (text 71010) for prayer or resources.
4. How can you soak your board? Take a day to pray and fast, or gather and worship.
5. Have we forgotten the basics? In Revelation, Jesus tells the church at Ephesus that they have endured, but they have lost their first love. How can we go back to the beginning, to the basics of our faith, and find our first love?

Take Home As we conclude, remember the following:

- Check your weights.
- Strengthen your board.
- Soak your board.

Prayer

Father God, in these difficult and stressful days, use these stresses to teach us and mold us into Your likeness. Lord, show us what stresses can be removed from our lives, show us how to strengthen ourselves in You, and soak us in Your Word and holy presence. May this time make us stronger and more prepared for the next season. May Your people rise up and lead to be a light for the world, leading others to know You and love You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

New Leader Tip If you need prayer for any reason, text PRAYER to 71010. If you need help with your group, reach out to Gateway staff. They are there to help.