



Stress Test - Part 2 Sermon Discussion Notes

Opening Thought

"It's not so much what happens to you that matters but how you take it." - Dr. Hans Selye

"Clearly the mind and the body are intimately related. Research has demonstrated that every thought we think produces a chemical reaction in the brain that is transmitted to every cell in the body. This amazing exchange of information happens within seconds." Lori A. Leyden-Rubenstein, Ph.D. author of the book The Stress Management Handbook: Strategies for Health and Inner Peace

Discussion Questions

1. What are stress triggers? What is a stress response?
2. Two people faced with an identical situation will have a different stress reaction from each other. What is at the core of what makes us stress?
3. When we are faced with a hassle or challenge we tend to look at it in a certain way and we tend to say things to ourselves about that situation. Why do these two things affect how much stress we feel inside?
4. Read and discuss the quote below and the principle that says, "It is not what we face that matters but how we interpret what we face that matters."

"The first important thing to note is that the stress reaction lies in your body, not in the situation. Stress is not your child who won't go to bed, nor the person who just scooped your parking space. The stress reaction is what happens in your body in response to those situations." David Posen, MD in The Little Book of Stress Relief, page 17

5. We have a map in our head about how our day is supposed to go. This map doesn't always line up with reality. Discuss the two items below that we should think about when we are facing a detour or an interruption in our plans for the day. What does it mean in Proverbs 3:5-6 when it says he will make our paths straight?

- Frustrated plans are character building opportunities. (Romans 5:3-4)
 - Interruptions of our plans are God's way of repositioning us in the place He wants us to be. (Proverbs 3:5-6 & Romans 8:28)
6. How do these Proverbs remind us that God may place obstacles or detours in our life to ultimately position us where he wants us to be?

Proverbs 16:9 (NIV)

9 In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps.

Proverbs 19:21 (NIV)

21 Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.

7. Paul's storm detour in his journey to Rome turned out to be a divine appointment. Where he ultimately ended up proved to be eternally fruitful. Read and discuss the story.

Acts 27:15-20

15 The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along. 16 As we passed to the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were hardly able to make the lifeboat secure. 17 When the men had hoisted it aboard, they passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it together. Fearing that they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along. 18 We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. 19 On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. 20 When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved. NIV

Acts 28:1-10

1 Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. 2 The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold. 3 Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. 4 When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live." 5 But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. 6 The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead, but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god. 7 There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and for three days entertained us hospitably. 8 His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. 9 When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured. 10 They honored us in many ways and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed. NIV

8. Discuss how fear creates stress in us. Look at Daniel 6.

Concluding Thought

"We see the world not as it is; we see the world as we are." Unknown