

## HANDLING STRESS IN THE FAMILY

### INTRODUCTION:

According to Webster the word **family** means: "A group consisting of parents and their children; A group of people closely related by blood such as cousins, aunts, uncles etc.; A harmonious group bound together by common interests."

**Stress:** "A state in which a strong demand is made on the nervous system."

**Etymology:** "hardship, adversity, force, pressure," from L. *strictus* "compressed," *stringere* "draw tight"

It refers to the consequence of the failure to respond adequately to mental, emotional or physical demands, whether actual or imagined.

Good stress: Challenges us to step up and give our all to over a situation, or solve a problem.

Bad stress is when we feel defeated.

Signs of bad stress may be emotional, physical or behavioral. Signs include poor judgment, a general negative outlook, excessive worrying, moodiness, irritability, agitation, inability to relax, feeling lonely, isolated or depressed, aches and pains, diarrhea or constipation, nausea, dizziness, chest pain, rapid heartbeat, eating too much or not enough, sleeping too much or not enough, social withdrawal, procrastination or neglect of responsibilities, increased alcohol, nicotine or drug consumption, and nervous habits such as pacing about, nail-biting and neck pains.

**TEXT:** "Be angry and sin not: let not the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil" (Ephesians 4:26-27).

1. We live in a stress-filled, angry society.
2. Relieve the source of the stress and you get rid of the outbursts of anger.

### I. THE FIRST FAMILY:

- A. In the first four chapters of Genesis we are introduced to the first human family, Adam, Eve, Cain and Abel.
- B. The family unit is the way God intended for mankind to live on earth with few exceptions.
- C. Despite rapid changes in American society, the family consisting of father, mother and children still remains the most common and most fulfilling of all living arrangements.
- D. Mankind continues to try to improve on what God has designed!
- E. When are we going to realize that God designs everything as well as it can be designed?!
- F. God made the human family and nothing that mankind can dream up will ever be better!
- G. However, when any group of people, all having their own personalities, likes and dislikes live closely together for an extended period of time, tension and stress are an inevitable part of the package.

### II. JESUS LEARNED THAT RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES CAUSE STRESS:

- A. Matthew 12:46-50
- B. Luke 8:19-21

### III. HE WAS AN EMBARRASSMENT TO HIS EARTHLY FAMILY:

- A. Mark 3:21-35 *"But when His own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind!"*
- B. Tells us a little about His earthly family, the other children of Joseph and Mary:
  - 1. Matthew 13:54-57 **"A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house."**
  - 2. John 7:3-5 **For even His brothers did not believe in Him.**
- C. It is not unusual for a Christian to be misunderstood or to be an embarrassment to unbelieving family members. This can cause stress and strained relationships.
  - 1. Dress differently
  - 2. Talk differently
  - 3. Participate in different types of recreation
  - 4. Engage in religious discussions at family gatherings.
  - 5. Teach our children that certain activities are not acceptable behavior.
- D. Matt 10:21-22 *"Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.*
- E. Luke 21:16 *"You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death.*

#### **IV. ANOTHER CAUSE OF STRESS IS THE REALIZATION THAT THE SPIRITUAL FAMILY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE EARTHLY ONE:**

- A. Matthew 10:34-38
- B. Luke 14:25-
- C. Religious Differences Can Be a Source of Stress in the Family:

#### **V. OTHER CAUSES OF STRESS WITHIN THE IMMEDIATE FAMILY:**

- A. Money:** Matthew 6:25-34;
  - 1) Financial hardship causes stress on families. It can lead to marital issues, spousal or child abuse and more if there is not an outlet present to air your frustrations.
  - 2) Proverbs 22:7
  - 3) Rom 13:8-10
  - 4) 1Timothy 6:6-10 The desire to be rich at all costs, can destroy a family as well.
- B. Infidelity:** can cause the ultimate demise of a family unit.
  - 1) Cheating interjects distrust which adds stress in marriages.
  - 2) Paul indicates in 1Cor. 6:18-20 that this sin is more intimate & hurtful than many others.
  - 3) There is a sense in which sin is sin, but infidelity carries with it more physical and emotional damage & more immediate consequences than some others.
  - 3) Proverbs 5:15-20
- C. Selfishness:**
  - 1) Esteem others better than yourself.
  - 2) You don't always have to get your own way.
  - 3) Philippians 2:1-8 Written to members of the church, but it also applies to the family unit.
- D. Abuse or Neglect:** Ephesians 6:4; 1Timothy 5:8; Eph 5:22-33
- E. Substance abuse:**
  - 1) Substance abused can cause great stress on families.
  - 2) This is because addicts will & usually do anything or sacrifice anything to feed their

addiction.

- 3) They often lose jobs, steal money from the family, and do not have the ability to participate in the family unit.
- 4) Rebellious, disruptive, addicted family member under the Law of Moses:
- 5) Deuteronomy 21:18-21
- 6) Do not be an enabler.
- 7) If you allow a substance abuser to use in your home, you're affecting the entire family.
- 8) If a person in your family has a problem with substance abuse, require them to receive help or remove them or yourself from the family.
- 9) 1 Corinthians 5:11 *But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner — not even to eat with such a person.*

## **VI. PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS TO STRESS IN THE FAMILY:**

A. **Prayer** Philippians 4:6-7

B. **Precepts** Psalms 119:15-16 *I will meditate on Your precepts, And contemplate Your ways. I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.*

C. **Praise** Hebrews 2:12 *I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You."*

E. Remember that second only to your relationship with God is your family!

**F. Work toward developing a spiritual atmosphere in your home.**

**CONCLUSION:** God be thanked that there are still families who are *"harmoniously bound together by a common God and a common goal!"*