

STRESS KILLS

It seems that most every illness that man has, the doctors ascribe at least partial blame to stress and it is true that stress can cause many health difficulties. It would seem that this being the case, man would be much more interested in alleviating stress than is currently being expressed. It just may be that alleviating stress is not as hard as many people seem to think. It may be that one gradual change in the views and actions of man is the major cause of stress. Let us consider that one change that we have in mind.

A principle from the time of creation has been that man is to love their fellow man and to use things. It would seem that somehow that principle has been reversed to the point that man now loves things and uses people. In other words, we have our priorities all wrong. The physical things of this world are for our using, but not for our loving. The apostle Paul wrote, "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition" (I Tim. 6:9). Much of that which is hurtful and destructive may well be to the body as well as to the soul. Just a couple of verses earlier Paul had written, "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out" (I Tim. 6:6-7). One might notice that word "contentment" in that passage. When one is content he is not stressed out! Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

Friends, let us ever keep in mind that all the physical things of this life are for a limited duration and of inferior importance. Paul wrote, "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Cor. 4:18). No matter how much you stress in gaining "things", they will all be left behind when this life passes (I Tim. 6:7). Jesus asked a rhetorical questing saying, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Mark 8:36-37).

Let's face it, life would be much less stressful if we were to put much less emphasis upon how big our house is, what kind of car we drive and other such "things". Think about it!

Tilis

PASSING THROUGH THE WATER ON THE WAY

When the children of Israel departed from Egypt and came to the Red Sea, they were still not free from the bondage of Egypt, for Pharaoh and the Egyptian army were in hot pursuit. In crossing the Red Sea they became free from the bondage of Egypt, for Pharaoh and his army were killed when they attempted to cross. However, the children of Israel were not yet in the promise land. They still had a ways to go. In like manner when one is baptized into Christ, he is free from the bondage of sin, but he is not yet in his promise land. The heavenly home is still up ahead.

Evangelism is incumbent upon every child of God. The great commission that was given first to the apostles is handed down from generation to generation (Matt. 28:20; II Tim. 2:2). None should be as those the Hebrew writer spoke of saying, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God..." (Heb. 5:12). Thus, every child of God should be able to clearly show from God's word the need for one to hear the gospel, believe that gospel (Mark 16:16), repent of their sins (Acts 2:38), confess Christ as the Son of God (Matt. 10:32-33; Acts 8:36-37) and to be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16).

However, our goal is not to get people to the baptistery, but to help people get to heaven. It is true that one must pass through the waters of baptism in route to eternal life in heaven, but just as the children of Israel were not in their promise land upon crossing the Red Sea, neither are those who we bring through the baptistery in heaven. Were the doctrine of John Calvin called the perseverance of the saints true, then there would be no problem leaving them at the top steps of the baptistery. However, that doctrine is not true, but is false. Thus, our job is not done just because we have taught those first principles and led our student through the waters of baptism. Over the years, I have personally seen a number who were taught what to do to become and Christian, and who then obeyed those commands of God, only to then return to their former man-made church and their former way of life. We need to stop looking to the future only as far as baptism and start looking beyond that, all the way to a heavenly home. When we do this, we will realize that our job is not complete upon the baptism of one we have taught, but that we need to feed and nurture that babe. *Robert*