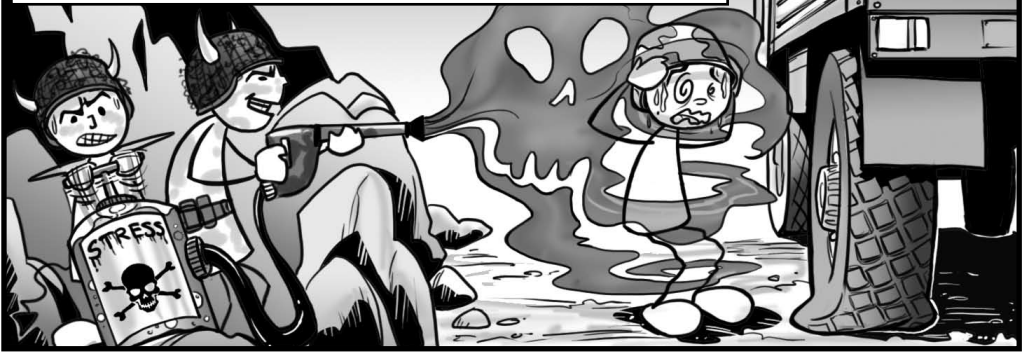


STRESS NOT

STRESS CAN BE LIKENED TO A BIOLOGICAL WEAPON OF THE ENEMY.



IT'S INFECTIOUS AND HIGHLY CONTAGIOUS AND DEBILITATING IN THE LONG RUN.



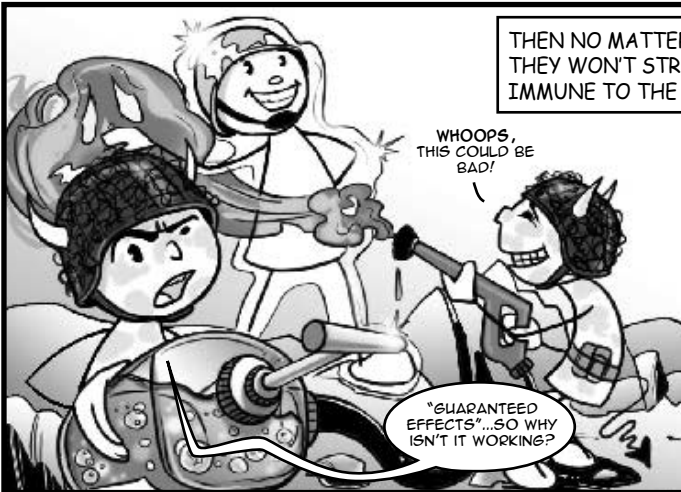
DEPENDENCE ON ME IS THE ANTIDOTE THAT WILL KEEP STRESS FROM HAVING ANY EFFECT ON YOU.



IF YOU'VE BEEN INOCULATED BY REGULAR DOSES OF DEPENDENCE,



THEN NO MATTER HOW STRESSFUL THINGS ARE, THEY WON'T STRESS YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE IMMUNE TO THE ENEMY'S TOXINS.



STRESS NOT

By Maria

FD/MM/FM 3612 11/06

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Dearest Family,

The Lord has put a burden on my heart to talk to you about stress. It's one of the big "joy killers" that the Lord wants to see us delivered from. Stress lessens your anointing and usefulness, and will destroy your health and strength if you let it continue.

2. Stress is a huge problem in the world.

It is a cause of terrible unhappiness, illness, and death. A recent news article said that 75 to 90% of doctor visits in developed countries could be traced back to a direct or indirect result of stress.

3. In the Family we have problems with stress too, although thankfully, much less than the world, because we have much more faith in the Lord to sustain us. Faith is the antidote for stress, when it really comes down to it. Faith and

trust in our Husband, that He has everything in His hands, that He is in control, that He will work everything out for good, automatically eliminates a lot of stress from our lives.

4. We trust the Lord about so many things, but there are always aspects of our lives that the Enemy tries to convince us that we need to worry about, or areas where he tries to convince us that it's our job to carry the burden, instead of giving it to the Lord and letting Him take care of it. If you let those burdens settle on you—whether physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual—eventually they will cause you stress. And long-term stress has had devastating effects on some people in the Family—in some cases on their health, and in other cases on their spirit.

5. As we talk about stress in this GN, we're talking about a very big topic. I'm not just pinpointing or talking to those people who are obviously stressed—who look haggard, or who run around like crazy, or who get sharp with others and act like they're carrying the world on their shoulders when they get under the slightest pressure.

6. I'm also talking to those of you who have learned to look calm on the outside, but inside you're still carrying the burdens in your own strength. I'm talking to those of you who have gotten out of the habit of having a balanced life, because you feel there's constantly too much to do, and you think that you're an exception to the Lord's commandments, and you don't want to stop working because you "just know" that things will fall apart without you!

7. I'm talking to those of you who don't know how to say "no" when it comes to more work than you're realistically able to manage, who feel guilty if you stop and rest. I'm talking to those of you who cut back even on your spiritual requirements of prayer, praise, and quality Word time in favor of getting a little more work done. I'm talking to those of you who are perpetual worriers.

8. There are many aspects and manifestations of stress, and I'm convinced that most of us have at least one or two areas where our lives have gotten out of balance, our perspectives have gotten skewed, because we've been carrying a load—physical, spiritual, or emotional—for too long, without the breaks, balance, and trust in the Lord that would make your burden light enough to bear. That's stress.

Being busy but not stressed

9. I think a common misconception is to equate stress with hard work, or to feel that some amount of stress is inevitable in our busy lives. But that isn't true; rather, it doesn't have to be true. You can be a very hard worker and not be stressed if:

10. • You maintain a balanced life. Work when it's time to work, play when it's time to play, and above all, keep your time with the Lord sacred. If you go through a period that's extra busy and you have to cut corners on your relaxation and fellowship with others, make sure that things slow down again when that project or time period is over. Don't let it continue indefinitely, or keep stretching it out for "just a little longer." That becomes an addiction to the fast pace, and is unhealthy.

11. • You let the Lord carry the burdens. You take action to do the job that the Lord asks of you, and you play your role, but you keep your role in perspective. Your role is not to solve all the problems and do everything; it's to be a little chess piece and let the Lord do the heavy lifting for you.

12. • You exercise faith and praise and trust in the Lord in difficult and stressful situations. Yes, there are situations that are stressful; there's no way around that. Being in persecution, for example, is stressful. When one of your children is very sick, it's stressful. When your Home's rent is due and you don't have the money, that's stressful. But stressful circumstances don't mean that you have to be stressed. You still choose how you react to those circumstances. And in order to react well and keep from being stressed by the circumstances around you, you have to be practiced in using your spiritual weapons. If you use them,

they will rescue you and enable you to rise above, to see things with the Lord's perspective, to have a clear vision of the priorities and to know what to do—and you won't wind up stressed.

13. • You know your limits and are obedient to the Lord in not trying to do more than is healthy. You are humble, or you learn humility, and resist pride and arm-of-the-flesh type tactics that push you into stress.

14. • You learn to be realistic, and if you're not realistic, you listen to others who are, and you let yourself be safeguarded so that you don't wind up creating unnecessary stressful situations for yourself and those around you. When you have unrealistic expectations, it creates stress.

15. • You learn to work in the spirit, to use the spiritual power you have access to through prayer and praise and your spirit helpers, so that you have perfect peace that you've done your part and everything else is in the Lord's hands, under His control. That is the ultimate in stress management!

16. • You regularly take times to stop and step back from the work, and don't think about work, don't try to continue working and get "just a little more" done. During these times, the Lord renews your perspective, you have fun, you rest physically, and you refill spiritually. Any burden that you carry for too long will eventually cause stress. Learn to set your burdens down in spirit! If you have a hard time stopping your work and you find yourself worrying about it, you're stressed.

17. In giving you this counsel from the Lord, I'm not suggesting that you shouldn't work hard—although some of you might need to do less than you're doing now, or your efforts might need to be refocused so that you're truly doing the most important things.

18. What the Lord's counsel in this GN means for you will be different for each person, according to your habits, your strengths and weaknesses, what causes the stress in your life, what your mindset is, what your circumstances are, etc. But I am telling you, and the Lord is telling you, that you need to learn how to rid yourself of the stress in your life. You need to find out what that

means for you, what causes stress in your life, and how you can get rid of it.

19. In some cases that will mean letting some things go while you stop and take a needed break. In some cases it might mean doing less. In some cases it might mean having some big changes in your mind and heart, but your work won't change at all. In some cases it might mean learning to do what the Lord wants you to do rather than what you want to do or think needs to be done. Whatever the Lord asks of you, wonder of wonders, you'll find that He makes it up to you many times over when you put Him first and are obedient. Put Him on the spot!

You can live free from stress

20. There are all different causes and reasons for stress. A lot of stress comes from negative mindsets, rather than actual work deadlines. For example, worry, fear, concerns, unrealistic expectations, self-imposed pressure, pride, self-centeredness; these and many other negative mindsets contribute to or create stress.

21. Please don't be discouraged or under condemnation as you read the Lord's counsel. We all need it. The Lord uses some very clear language to describe what is at the heart of stress and to help us to realize that we need to be rid of it, but I'll tell you right now, from the beginning, that He is looking at you in love. He's not judging you. He's very direct in these messages because He wants to free you from the terrible weight and handicap that stress is. He wants every bit of your efforts for Him to bring forth lasting fruit. His yoke is easy and His burden is light, and He's giving you the formula for how to bring your life back under His yoke and His burden, rather than some other heavy yoke that you've been thinking is His will for you to carry.

22. I'm not going to say that it will be easy for you to get rid of stress in your life. You will have to make some changes that will be difficult, because these kinds of habits and mindsets are difficult to break! But what we all need to realize is that no matter how much we have to do for the Lord, no matter how white the harvest and how few the laborers, the Lord is in control. He has

the master plan. He knows what needs to be done. He created the world, He brought us this far, and if we really want to be effective and fruitful for Him, we will be obedient.

23. When we take off on our own little plans and programs, trying to fix everything or do more than is His will, we wind up making a mess. We wind up hurting ourselves and others. And many of you are hurting yourselves and others through allowing yourselves to be stressed. By being stressed, you are lessening your anointing, you are weakening your health, and you are straining your relationships with your loved ones and co-laborers. You are making yourselves less effective, not more effective.

24. I have personally heard of and been involved in giving counsel in a few situations where someone has developed serious illness or afflictions that the doctors couldn't determine the physical cause for. In these specific cases, the Lord showed us that the root cause was stress—long-term stress. After they lived with stress for an extended period of time, it eventually caught up with them. They failed to keep their life and work and concerns within the bounds the Lord has set for living a healthy life. And if you do that, after a while it is inevitable that your body and your spirit will begin to feel the effects of that long-term stress and physical neglect. Now these dear ones are fighting for their health, and except for a miracle of the Lord, they could have weak health for a very long time to come, or possibly even permanently.

25. Stress affects your body and its ability to fight disease, to repair itself, and to stay healthy and strong. I am very concerned about you, my dear Family, because many of you are prone to stress. You're allowing stress in your lives because you don't realize how bad it is, and it is hurting you.

26. You are dedicated, high-powered individuals. You see the harvest ripe and ready for reaping. Your heart is broken for the needs of your sheep, children, and young people. You are convicted by the Word and want to do all that you can for the Lord. You want to do your best for our Husband. But again, what you need to realize is that your best—your very, very best—is to realize

that you don't have to do it all, that you don't have to be stressed, and to stay within the guidelines the Lord has given us for healthy living.

27. I know it's difficult. All that passion and motivation and dedication in your heart is powerful. But the balance that will keep you on track is strong faith and trust in the Lord, an active effort to remember that He is in control and that His timing is the best timing, and a constant, vigilant, proactive method of casting your burdens on to His strong shoulders and not carrying the load yourself. It really comes down to having a fear of the Lord and being obedient. You weren't meant to carry the burdens yourself.

28. You might not have realized before that you can actually be free of stress. You might have thought that it's part of your cross for the Lord, or part of the price you pay for being so busy, or having such a demanding job, or accepting your high calling of discipleship. But that's not true. You can be all that the Lord wants you to be, and get done as much as He asks of you, without stress. My prayer is that through these messages I share with you from our Husband, you will see this subject more clearly, and realize how serious it is that you have some lifestyle changes, and do whatever is necessary to eliminate stress from your life.

29. Some of the Lord's counsel is practical, and some is spiritual, and it takes both. You will have to make some physical changes, and you'll probably have to get some spiritual victories and make some changes in the way you look at things. But it's worth it! It's worth it for your physical health, and it's worth it for your spiritual health!

30. (Jesus:) "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Mat.11:28-30).

Breaking the habit of stress

31. (Jesus:) Stress is a plague of the Enemy, designed to wear you out, to steal your joy in serving Me, to make you less useful in My Kingdom, and to ultimately destroy you and take you out of My service completely. Although stress is something that everyone faces, including those in the world, it is something that the Enemy uses in very crafty ways to attack you, My brides. It's a tactic that nearly always works on you, that brings about the results he desires, because it's so easy for you who are well meaning and hard working and faithful and dedicated to fall prey to it.

32. The Enemy knows that when you're busy—which everyone in the Family is—it's easy to succumb to stress, so he tempts you with it regularly and strongly, and those who are more prone to it in the natural are often hit the hardest.

33. You might think that stress is just a byproduct of having a lot to do or being a hard worker, but that's not the case. Stress is a mindset, an attitude, something that you can either choose to live with or not to live with. It's a bit like negativity: You can either choose to be negative or not. You might feel like you have reasons in the natural to be negative, but you can still rise above it and live a positive life. It's the same with stress. There might be reasons that you can use to excuse yourself when you get stressed—because things are busy, because there's just too much to do, because others are stressing you out, or whatever—but if you make the right choices, you can rise above it and live a balanced, trusting, happy life.

34. I am the spirit of peace, of calm, of rest, of joy, of balance. All of these things are stolen from you when you give in to the Enemy's feelings of stress. You become frantic instead of peaceful; you become restless instead of calm; you become wired instead of taking time to rest; you become more prone to anger and sadness instead of having My joy; you live an unbalanced life instead of a balanced one.

35. These things don't come about simply because you work hard, or because there's so much to do. It's the Enemy, through stress, who brings these negative things into your life. You can

work hard and still have My joy, peace, and serenity in your heart. You can have a long to-do list and still be a sample of “the joy of the Lord.” It is possible. And it’s not just possible, but it’s what you should be striving for.

36. Stress is like a habit that you can either cultivate or eliminate. If you allow yourself to give in to feelings of stress, over time it will become more of a habit for you. At first you’ll only get stressed out over the big things, or when things are really hectic; but with time, you’ll begin to get stressed over little things too. Your positive, praiseful, hopeful, calm reactions and mindsets will be replaced by stressful ones, and with time it will become pretty deeply ingrained in your personality.

37. But this doesn’t have to be the case, My loves. As with any bad habit, you can break it and eliminate it. Initially it will take a conscious effort to do so, but the more you start replacing your stressful thoughts and reactions with positive, calm, praiseful ones, the easier it will get.

38. Learning to be trusting and praiseful and at peace instead of stressing out is similar to so many other things that you are learning in your lives for Me. I tell you to think positive thoughts instead of negative ones. I tell you to praise instead of giving in to discouragement or hopelessness. I tell you to turn your thoughts into prayers. I tell you to replace your carnal thoughts with My mind. All of these things that you’re already learning to do are replacing your natural reactions, thoughts, or mindset with something that is supernatural, and that’s exactly what you need to do when thoughts and feelings of stress come your way. You have to make a conscious decision to turn those thoughts and feelings into ones that are praiseful, trusting, and full of faith. You have to learn to recognize the stress when it hits and turn it around into something positive.

39. I know you’re probably thinking that this is easier said than done. And that’s true. But just because something is difficult, that doesn’t mean it’s impossible. It takes a lot of effort for negative thinkers to turn their thoughts into positive ones, just as it will take effort for those who are stressed to turn their worried, concerned, burdened thoughts and

feelings into trusting, faith-building ones. But in all cases, in every situation, I am available to assist.

40. I can and will make the difficult easier if you will give Me a chance. I am able to transform a stressed person into a calm, peaceful one. There’s nothing too hard for Me, and if you will work with Me, I will do the miracle. It may not be an overnight miracle, but with time you will become a new creature—with the same workload, with the same job, but just with a completely new mindset, and some wonderful new habits too.

41. Think about yourself and what you’d like to become. Think about the changes you want Me to make in your life. Think about the new you, a few months or years from today, and how you’d like to conduct yourself and react and think. Then focus on that image as you go to work with Me to make the changes in your life. Focus on what you want to become.

42. And don’t just settle for a goal of minimal change; expect great things! Decide that you want to become known as someone who is patient, joyful, trusting, and who exudes faith and peace, even in the midst of a storm, even when things are hectic and busy, and then become that new creature. You can discard the old you and take on new mindsets, no matter how long you have lived with stress. In fact, the more radical the change you ask Me for, the more I will thrill to and enjoy the transformation process.

43. Stress is not a fact of life. Stress is not unavoidable. Stress is something that you can eradicate from your life. Stress is something that you can overcome. It may be more powerful than you, but it’s not more powerful than Me. I am the ultimate stress buster, the stress destroyer! I am your best friend and your greatest asset in your fight to overcome stress. I am opposed to stress. I hate stress. I will do everything within My power, if you will help Me, to make sure that it has no place in your life.

44. All stress does is sadden you, weaken you spiritually and physically, demoralize you, drain you, discourage you, and destroy your usefulness. And not only that, but it makes you difficult to live with. It doesn’t do anyone any

good to live around someone who is constantly stressed, because it affects them negatively.

45. Fight stress like the plague, because that's what it is. Treat it like a disease, and do all that you can to get rid of it, because it will eat away at you and weaken you. It creeps up on you slowly but surely. At first you think you can handle it, but you can't, and with time it will sap every last drop of energy from you and leave you feeling like a pile of wet noodles—no good to anyone. So don't give in to it, My loves. Don't give it any place in your life. Make decisions every day to ward off stress.

46. Train yourself to recognize stress and be rid of it. Turn every debilitating stressful thought or feeling into a praiseful and trusting thought or feeling, and then go on. Make your life so uncomfortable for stress that it won't want to stick around. Be rid of it, and you will feel the difference!

“How heavy is this glass of water?”

Answers called out ranged from 20g to 500g.

The lecturer replied, “The absolute weight doesn't matter. It depends on how long you try to hold it.”

“If I hold it for a minute, that's not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my right arm. If I hold it for a day, you'll have to call an ambulance. In each case, it's the same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes.”

What is stress?

47. (Jesus:) Stress is pressure that has gotten too heavy or that has gone on too long. Pressure in itself isn't bad. Pressure exists in every sphere of life when there is work and action involved, and it isn't necessarily a bad thing. Consider a bucket on the end of a rope: No matter how light the bucket, when you dangle it down into a well, there is pressure on the rope. It's not bad pressure, it's just the rope doing its job and being useful.

48. But if the bucket is too heavy, the pressure starts to exceed the capacity of the rope to handle it. A bucket that's really way too heavy will snap the rope instantly, and that will be the end; but most of the time it doesn't work like that. Usually what happens in your lives is that the bucket you tie onto the rope is not so heavy that it snaps instantly, but it is too heavy for you to take comfortably for long periods of time. Thus as the too-heavy bucket swings on the end of the rope, the pressure turns to stress, which over time frays the fabric of the rope, resulting in an eventual break or crash.

49. So when you think about stress, make sure that you realize that there is a difference between the pressure of the work that I give you to do, or the pressure of the responsibilities that life brings, and stress. Pressure can even be good for you, if it makes you desperate with Me, causes you to diligently cast your burdens on Me, and pushes you to grow and stretch and change in the ways that I want you to.

50. Stress is something that happens when something is too much and goes on for too long. And the sad thing is that often the load that ends up creating that negative stress isn't more than I know you could actually handle; it's just that the way in which you're handling it has made it too much for you.

51. I know what each of you is made of and capable of. Thus I give you work and responsibilities and duties that do not exceed your capacity. The key, then, is finding a way to meet My expectations without putting stress on yourselves. Just because I say you're capable of something doesn't mean you're capable of it no matter how you approach it. There is a right way and a wrong way. Do it right, and you'll stay within your capacity; do it wrong, and you'll produce stress.

52. Here is a simple physical example: Consider a pitcher of water that I've given you to carry to another place. I know that you're capable of carrying this jug if you take it carefully in one hand by the handle, and possibly support it from beneath with your other hand. If you do that, you'll have no problem getting it to where it needs

to go. But what if you insist on carrying it flat on your palm with your arm outstretched, or maybe balancing it over your head on three fingers, or carrying it with just a couple of fingers on one hand because you're trying to hold too many other things as well? If your arm gets tired, or you lose balance and the jug falls and breaks, does that mean that I overestimated your ability to carry it?—Or does it mean that you were capable of doing it successfully and safely, but that you went about it very unwisely, and as a result, you failed?

53. This is important for you to learn: how to wisely handle each duty that I give you, while using and depending on My strength. These are busy days and you are called upon to carry a lot and to do and be a lot for Me. Sometimes when you look at your workload, you think that there is no way that you can accomplish everything without stress, simply because there is so much to do. So you go ahead and stress out, thinking that it's the only option.

54. But, My loves, when you do this, you invalidate My Word that says you can do all things through Me, and that I will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able to bear (Phil.4:13; 1Cor.10:13). When you stress out, you're telling Me that you don't believe there is a safe and successful way to do what I've asked you to do, and thus I must have broken My promise and overloaded you. Think about that, you who have problems with stress. Do you believe that I am unfaithful to My Word?—Or can you have confidence in Me that when something is My will, then I will make a way, and that maybe you just haven't discovered it yet?

55. I promise you that there is always a safe, healthy, and successful way to accomplish whatever it is that I have put in your hands to accomplish. There is never a need for negative pressure and stress. Of course, you also need to watch out about getting things placed on you that aren't My yoke or My burden, because then it is easy to undertake too much. But if you're careful to avoid that, and you only take on what I have confirmed to you is My will for you, then you can know with confidence that there is never a need to resort to stress.

56. I want to get that out of the way from the beginning and explain to you very clearly that stress isn't inevitable, and it doesn't have to be an option. Many of you suffer from stress, but you don't have to. I want you to know that, because as I talk about stress, I want you to have the faith that no matter what kind of stress exists in your life, I can deliver you from it. There is always a way out with Me, and I always have a solution to every problem.

57. But in order to understand the need for a solution, I need to talk about the problem and expose the various kinds of stress so that you can recognize and start to resist this device of the Enemy. Actually, stress itself is not the device of the Enemy. Stress is a human characteristic, built into your nature, and something that the Enemy constantly exploits with the intent to hurt and ruin you as you go about trying to do so much good. The Enemy has an easy time playing upon the human tendency to stress out, so you must watch out for him and cut him off when he comes around with his stress temptations.

Avoiding stress in legitimately stressful situations

58. (Mama:) I asked the Lord whether stress is avoidable, as there are a lot of situations that are legitimately very stressful. For example, if someone has a work overseer or boss who pushes them too hard and doesn't have a good balance; or someone has an extremely heavy workload; or someone is dealing with a tremendous amount of difficulty in their work and personal life all at once. Can stress be avoided in such situations?

59. (Jesus:) How you choose to handle what is placed on your shoulders is your choice; no one else makes that choice for you. It's similar to how I call all of you to be your brother's keeper and to be loving and to help each other be good as much as possible; but in the end, what you do and the choices you make are between Me and you. When you stand before Me, you won't be able to blame someone else for the wrong choices you made that got you out of My will, no matter how others were treating you.

60. If someone is not accountable, if they are a babe in Me, then there are times when I hold the actions of others responsible. But once you are men and women in Me, once you are a mature disciple, then you are accountable for your own actions—both how you influence others and how you react to the influence that others place upon you.

61. Stress is not of Me. It's the spirit of the world, the spirit of pride, the spirit of carnal man, the spirit of hurry, haste, tension, the arm of the flesh. You have a choice whether to yield to that spirit of stress or not. No matter how busy things get, no matter how intense the circumstances are, you can still choose to let Me bear the burdens for you. You can fight with your spiritual weapons. You can take the opportunities I give you to rest and be renewed. And through My strength, you can carry on to the end of the battle.

62. Some battles are long and tiring, and sometimes you get battle wounds along the way. But that's different from allowing yourself to become stressed. You've seen how it takes very little to stress some people, while others seem to be able to endure endless amounts of work piled on their shoulders. Whether or not someone gets stressed has very little to do with how much work they have, and very much to do with the choices they make and whether or not they let it get to them.

63. Now, that's easier said than done, I know. But this is advanced training that I'm giving you, My loves, because the dark days that are coming upon the world will try your nerves and your senses like nothing else has. If you haven't yet learned to resist feelings of stress and cast your cares on Me and draw on My strength even in very stressful circumstances, as things get worse and worse you're going to find yourselves more and more stressed, and eventually burning out.

64. So you must, you must, learn to resist the spirit of stress. And you can do it. No matter what is going on around you, no matter how busy you are, no matter how important the work is, you can choose to resist the spirit of stress, and instead keep focusing on Me, keep asking Me for help with your priorities, and keep drawing on My strength. It's when you take off on your own, like a sprinter in

a marathon, that you burn out your stores of energy, run out of grace, and truly succumb to stress.

65. Stress dulls your spiritual senses, it changes your perspective, it often is rooted in pride, and it doesn't bear good fruit. It doesn't help you to hold up under the load any better. Stress is never, under any circumstances, of Me. So you can choose to resist it. And when you find yourself under stress, you can realize that it doesn't have to be that way and you can do something about it! Amen?

66. (Jesus:) In order to gain a victory in your life, and to learn to let Me work through you, you must first accept that you are the primary cause of stress. It's easy to place the blame on circumstances—a problem you're facing, the mistakes or shortcomings of others, a demanding personal family, personal battles, new area-wide pushes, old area-wide pushes, lack of finances, lack of personnel, too much work, too much responsibility, etc. While all those issues are true and valid in their own right, you and you alone are the reason if you feel stressed about them. It is either your attitude, your inability to see your true limits, your lack of using the new weapons, your inability to trust Me, your personality, your lack of keeping Me in first place, your lack of casting your cares on Me, or your pride—or all of the above—that cause you to get stressed out.

You do have a choice

67. (Jesus:) The mentality of someone under stress is often: "The work demands it of me; I don't have a choice." Well, you do have a choice, because it is My plan for your life to have balance and the right equilibrium. And if you lose the balance and you blame your work as a result, then you've lost sight of the right motivation and objective in your work for Me; you're starting to work too much in the arm of the flesh.

68. Stress is not an integral part of responsibility; it's a spirit you allow to possess you that begins to take the balance out of your life.

It's an attack of the Enemy on your happiness, on your spiritual progress and consistency, and on your long-term fruitfulness for Me. Stress takes you down the path of burnout and nervous breakdowns when not kept in check, both of which are the opposite of spiritual health and happiness.

The spirit of stress

69. (Jesus:) The spirit of stress is an actual spirit. You need to learn to recognize it, resist it, rebuke it in the power of the keys, and through your obedience to Me and your willingness to make My priorities your priorities, it will have no part in your life.

70. The spirit of stress would like to suck the life and happiness out of you. The spirit of stress will try to steal your joy of the Lord. It will try to push you and motivate you through pride to always do more, to “just finish this project and then get things back in balance.”

71. But, My loves, it's not My will that you have stress in your life, so when you start to feel stressed, you can automatically know that's not of Me. If you want My full blessings and protection and anointing, you need to stop right there, pinpoint where the stress is coming from, and bring things back into a godly balance.

Stress is ...

72. (Jesus:) Let Me tell you some things about stress that you may not have thought of before:

73. ▶ Stress is pride. It comes about as a result of a carnal, fleshly human attempting to take the responsibility and pressure on himself for what needs to be done, rather than relying on My help and power and realizing that he needs Me to do the job and do it right. It comes about when someone believes himself capable of more than he really is and refuses to see the truth of his limitations. Or it comes about when someone feels insecure and inadequate and perhaps condemned because

he feels he should be doing more, or that others are doing more, and so he tries to push himself harder and pushes too far. All of these are forms of pride—and there are others too.

74. ▶ Stress is fear. Whether you have a little or a lot to do, if you fear you can't get it done, or fear the repercussions of not getting it done, or fear the opinions of others regarding you and your work and methods, and if you let any of these fears take you over, you will be stressed.

75. Sometimes those less experienced in carrying a heavy workload stress more than those who have been carrying heavy burdens for a long time. The reason for this is that those who have been doing it for a while have usually come to a certain realization of their limitations, and an acceptance that they can't do everything, as well as to an understanding that they will make some mistakes and fall short on some goals. They've faced those “bad, scary things” and dealt with them, so they no longer fear them.

76. Whereas, the person who's always been able to keep up with what was in his court to do, the person who's never missed a deadline, never failed or screwed up a project, or never gotten in a position where he had to re-evaluate everything and change his priorities or lifestyle, usually carries around a fear of these things, which are not really to be feared at all.

77. (Jesus:) Your life should be so full of joy and challenge that when the time comes when you're faced with a tight deadline, you'll be able to handle it gracefully and with a trusting, full-of-faith attitude.

78. ▶ Stress is self-centeredness. When you are focused only on what you have to do rather than on the needs of the “body of believers” in your Home or area or the Family overall, then you are more inclined to stress. Whereas when you look at yourself and your work as part of the whole,

and when you also put it in perspective with the workloads of others, you will usually come to better grips with the pressures of your life and see the futility and foolishness of being stressed. At least you'll realize that many others are also carrying very heavy loads, and you'll snap out of the self-pity that often fuels stress in many people.

79. ▶ Stress is doing it “on your own.” It comes about when you don't share the load with others through teamwork or delegating. There is always some point in almost any job or type of ministry where you can choose to work with others as a team or to work alone.

80. Those who choose the “work alone” route are more inclined to be stressed. Those who work in teamwork with others at some level usually are less so. Why is this? Because when you are collaborating on a project with someone else, when you are communicating, when you are keeping each other updated, this often helps you to see the issues and the overall plan of things in a more balanced way.

81. Also, when you know that someone understands what you're doing and what you're facing, you feel a sense of support, in spirit at least, and sometimes of physical help as well, and that helps to divert stress. “Two are better than one,” and this is true in almost any aspect of life (Ecc.4:9).

82. ▶ Stress is lack of prayerfulness, planning, and wise evaluation. Stress comes about when you take things on yourself that you shouldn't. This is not to say that those who have stress issues should never volunteer for anything “above and beyond” what they already have in their court.

83. However, a wise person knows that they have limits, and learns to understand what those limits are and to work within them. When they are asked to do something in addition to their regular workload, they prayerfully evaluate it, and if they can see it fits, they say yes.—Or, they realize that they can do it if they pass on something else, and find a way to reshuffle. And

when they are asked to do something, or there's a call for volunteers, and they realize that it's either not physically possible or that it will push them to where they are stressed, they say no. And in either case, the counsel of shepherds can be a help, and it is wise to consider their advice.

84. There's a fine balance in this, and there are times when it's an “all hands on deck” situation and everybody needs to help with an urgent situation whether it fits in with their stress level or not. However, even in that case I always make a way of escape, and usually that will be by showing them something else that they can put off or not do for a while in order to make space for something new.

85. ▶ Stress is lack of focus. Often a person is stressed simply because they're trying to do a number of things at once when they really don't have to be and shouldn't be. Maybe it's because they are restless, lack patience and persistence, have a short attention span, or maybe they're just a poor planner and need help in their organization.

86. ▶ Stress is unkind. When you're prone to stress, you often put burdens on those around you that they don't need, because they have plenty of their own. When someone is always talking about how much they have to do or how much they're struggling, or is often or always uptight or irritable, or regularly late and needing to call in others to bail them out or take over for them at the last minute because they bit off more than they could chew or didn't start when they should have, it's not kind to the others around them.

87. ▶ Stress is a works trip, and it's vanity. Some people actually feel, whether consciously or subconsciously, that they're a harder worker or a more valuable member of their team if they're stressed. Sometimes this is because they've seen bad examples in others being stressed, and they feel they have to fit in. Sometimes it's just a desire to impress or to make people know they're working hard. The truth is, though, that nobody really

admires someone who is stressed; and certainly no one enjoys being around them, because they emanate so much stress that they often stress out others too.

88. I think that's enough to give you a clear idea that stress is a bad thing and that it's much more a matter of the spirit than it is of circumstances. Some people's nature or makeup is such that they're more inclined to stress than others. Sometimes, as I addressed earlier, the stress is due to lack of experience or not understanding oneself or one's limitations. Often it is a result of fear, which is often born of pride.

89. There's no way around it, though: Stress is bad and is connected to so many dark things. Instead of asking you to work on eliminating stress, another way to say it would be: Don't be proud, fearful, self-centered, independent, unprayerful, unwise, unkind, and vain. Maybe that gets the point across a little clearer!

90. On the positive side, someone who is close to Me, who is humble, who is prayerful, who is trusting Me, who is unselfish, who works in teamwork and unity with others, is likely to be a person who, though he may have a lot to do—maybe even too much to do—is not stressed out.

91. Someone who is depending on Me and My Spirit by taking faithful quality time in My Word, time to praise and love Me, and bringing their requests and needs to Me in prayer, in faith, expecting Me to answer and help them, will not be leaning on the arm of the flesh. Someone who is well aware of their own lacks and insufficiencies, and is humble before Me, leaning on Me and trusting Me to help them get done what they need to do, and not taking it personally or worrying if they're not as fast or smart or talented as someone else or if they keep up with everything perfectly, will not be fearful and stressed as a result.

92. Someone who works hard, but who plans well and who evaluates prayerfully whether or not to take on all five of the new extracurricular projects that just came up, and decides maybe they'll take on one and pray that I

will raise up others for the other four, is not going to collapse from stress. Someone who wisely and prayerfully plans their time and focuses on the priorities is not going to be one who regularly dumps extra burdens on others at the last minute and stresses out everybody else as well. Someone who is willing to admit it when they just have too much to do, and to ask for help early on, or teamwork with others, or delegate if they have someone to delegate to, will keep their stress levels low enough.

93. The way to stay stress-free is to live a healthy spiritual life and keep your spirit clean, doing the things that bring faith, praise, positiveness, humility, love, and unselfishness into your life; and fighting the natural but destructive qualities of pride, fear, selfishness, self-centeredness, and independence. When you open up your life to Me and others, and when you and those you work with are fulfilling the scriptural injunction to “bear one another's burdens” (Gal.6:2)—not necessarily through doing the other's work, but through being understanding, supportive, communicating, and praying for each other—you are taking important steps to combat stress.

94. Stress levels are very much a personal matter, but the environment around a person also has an effect. It's important that each individual prays and searches his heart and hears from Me about what he can do or change in his life to avoid stress.

95. It's also important that as a Home, or as a team working on a project together, you are conscious of the overall stress level of your Home or team, and are doing your part to avoid stressing each other out. And don't expect others to provide a low-stress environment for you because you're so prone to stress! It takes action on everyone's part to create a unified, loving, humble, low-stress or, ideally, stress-free work environment. It can be done. It is being done by many people in many places.

96. Unfortunately, it's also not being done in many places by many people, and chances are that you, or someone you know, or someone you

work with, or your whole team does have some stress issues. But they can be overcome—and they need to be—because stress simply isn't healthy. It is fraught with so much that is negative and dark and of the Enemy, and it goes directly against some of the most essential principles of the Christian life—of faith, of humility, of praise, and of love. So it's to be fought against like you fight the Devil, because it is of the Devil.

97. Stress doesn't have to be your lifestyle, no matter who you are or how much you have to do. There's no appropriate time or place for stress. Learn to give it no place. I can teach you how, and I want to, and I will if you are open and hungry and desperate. If you make the decision to become stress-free, and are willing to let Me help you and are ready to obey the counsel that I give, then you can and will do it.

98. (*Jesus:*) What you must do is realize what your normal level of stress is supposed to be. And I'll tell you what, I'll let you know right here exactly what it is supposed to be: No stress at all! Zero. None. Nada. Nyet.

Roots of pride and fear

99. (*Jesus:*) There are lots of different ways that stress can be manifested. There can be physical stress, where even if you're not overworking, your working conditions are hurting your body, such as an uncomfortable chair or bad shoes. There can be stress from overwork and abusing your body, where you are working too hard and not taking breaks, missing sleep, missing exercise, eating badly, etc. There can be mental stress, where you feel like you can't stop thinking about the "what if's."—For example, parents worrying about their children, or a shepherd worrying about problem situations in his Home or area. There can be emotional stress, where you feel your heart tugged in many different directions and it's hard to cope with. There can even be spiritual stress, where the goals that

I have set for you as a disciple are causing you to be under more pressure than is good, because of your misapplication of My counsel, or setting unrealistic goals for yourself in your implementation of it. (See "Leadership Lessons, Part 2," ML #3385, GN 982, as well as an upcoming GN for more on this topic.)

100. But in all these manifestations of stress, pride or fear are usually at the root. You may have the best intentions in the world and not be outwardly doing anything bad. You're just working hard because you know that people are waiting on you, or you're just doing your best to keep things running smoothly, or keep things safe, or whatever the concern. But if whatever you're doing is causing negative emotions and unbalancing your life, then you can know for sure that deep down you are either letting pride dictate too much in regards to your accomplishments and you're trying to protect yourself and your reputation, or you have fear of some kind. One of the most common fears is a subconscious worry that I will not keep My promises to you and work things out in a way that you're happy with.

101. I'm sure that none of you want these evil roots of pride and fear to have a hold on your lives or to dictate your actions, so you're probably wondering where the line is between pressure and stress, and when you've gone from just caring about something passionately to actually stressing about it. This is a good question, because it is a fine line. I'm calling you to find this balance, even though it's a bit of a tightrope, because you're the best of the best and I know you have the skills and you can do it.

102. If you weren't so valuable and important to Me, I might be more apt to go out of My way to keep you from anything that could remotely cause stress. But that's not what I'm calling you to do, My Endtime children. You are specially trained and especially strong in spirit, and so I will put heavy loads on your backs and challenge you to carry them. I will ask you to go all the way for Me, even though it means finding the delicate balance between godly pressure and ungodly stress.

103. I can't give you lives of ease and luxury if you want to be truly useful to Me. I have to challenge you to give Me more, to do more, to see if there is any healthy and godly way that you can't wring a little more value and service to Me from your lives. I call you to be professionals, to be hardcore, to go all the way and hold nothing back. But the occupational hazard of this is that the Enemy will always be trying to push you a little further than is healthy and My will for you. And since I will not take away your usefulness by taking away your loads, I must forewarn and forearm you to defeat stress when it knocks at your door.

Signs of stress to watch out for

104. (Jesus:) With responsibility and taxing jobs, there will always be a measure of pressure that you experience. In your lives and work for Me there is so much that has to be accomplished and done that, if you're not careful and protective of your spiritual and physical needs, you can become a victim of the pitfall of stress. Simply put, stress is not of Me; it's not part of the job description when you work for Me, rather it's a spirit of hurry and fear that the Enemy tries to use to hinder you spiritually, and also to prevent the work from getting done My way.

105. Of course, with demanding jobs there will be pressure to meet the needs and accomplish what needs to get done, but pressure and stress are different. A measure of godly pressure can help you to feel motivated in your work, offer you something to work toward, and ensure that the job gets done. You start venturing into murky waters when pressure bleeds into every aspect of your life and starts to minimize your joy and throws your life balance off kilter. When you reach that point, the once positive attributes of a little pressure become negative, and your life becomes consumed and motivated by the many demands.

106. It's important to learn to identify some of the telltale signs of stress, as they often creep into your life subtly. Each of these points which follow denote a lack of balance. It's not

that any one of these symptoms means you're definitely stressed, but it means there is a lack in balance somewhere. And when you have a lack of balance in your life for an extended period of time, that is usually a pretty good indication of stress. There will be times that are less balanced, because sometimes you have to focus fully on one aspect in order to win a certain battle. But after that, you must make an effort to bring things back into balance.

107. All too often My children become addicted to the anointing or rush that they've felt when they were on a big push. The push was My will, I called them to the battle, and with their cooperation and yieldedness and sacrifice, a lot got done. But then it's time to stop, slow down, be humble and meek and wait for My signals, and instead they want to keep up that fast pace and get more done. That's where My anointing stops and stress begins.

Some typical signs of stress are:

108. • You place a lot of importance on your work—so much so that it draws you away from having a balance in the other pillars of your life: your spiritual life, your personal and family life, and your community life. [See "Training Winning Teams, Part 6," ML #3586, GN 1169, for more on balance.] (That doesn't necessarily mean that every work push you take on that requires focus for a time is a symptom of stress or the beginnings of stress, but if the "push" is allowed to continue indefinitely without returning to the right balance, it is a sign of stress.)

109. • You regularly neglect or shorten your time with Me because you "have to" rush to the business of the day.

110. • You often find yourself being distracted during your Word time because you have work on your mind.

111. • You cut back on your physical needs regularly, such as exercise, adequate sleep, time with others, getting proper nourishment, etc., in order to be able to fit in more work time.

112. • You frequently feel discouraged and burdened because you're not getting to

all the work you feel you should be, and that discouragement makes it difficult for you to know how to prioritize your work.

113. • You are rushed in your responses to others or in the decisions you make.

114. • You often don't take the time to adequately pray about something; you find yourself giving quick answers to questions without fully praying about them, because you're trying to clear them out of your court as quickly as possible.

115. • Thinking about problems and trying to come up with solutions is more common than praying for the problems. Without realizing it, you more often than not carry the weight of the problems yourself instead of consciously committing them to Me and doing your part through intercessory prayer.

116. • You feel that you need to always be "doing" something. It's uncommon for you to step back from a situation and allow Me to work behind the scenes without you doing anything except praying and trusting Me to work it out.

117. • You lose your objectivity in your work. You don't have an accurate sense of priorities, but tend to label nearly everything as "urgent" or "timely." You have a hard time knowing when to stop or what to put aside, what could wait for another time.

118. • You find yourself being curt in your communications with others, and failing to think about the other person's needs because you "don't have time."

119. • You tend to put your spiritual progress on a back burner, figuring that it's not as important as the work.

120. • You look down on or criticize others who you think don't accomplish as much as you think you're accomplishing, comparing who gets more done, or perhaps being critical of those who aren't blitzing in their work like you are.

121. • You physically overextend yourself to the point of exhaustion and fatigue.

122. • You have a hard time being honest with those you work with as to what you are capable of carrying and what is too much for you.

123. • You often resort to "arm-of-the-flesh" mode in your work rather than working in the spirit.

124. • You find yourself making excuses a lot, rather than taking personal responsibility for the results of your decisions.

125. • You take on more than you can realistically do.

126. • You agree to projects or further responsibility without really counting the cost, instead priding yourself on the number of things you can juggle and manage.

127. Aside from these points, there are also warning signs of severe stress, when it goes to a higher level that can eventually lead to burnout and nervous breakdowns if you're not careful. These signs don't automatically indicate a problem with stress—the problem might lie elsewhere—but they can:

128. • Giving little or no time to communion with Me, and instead filling that time with work. Or, even when you are taking your token Word time, you're not really stopping in spirit, but your mind is churning and you're just waiting till you can be done with your time with Me so you can go to work.

129. • Getting hit with feelings of utter hopelessness and discouragement, whether in your work or in other areas of your life.

130. • Discontentment with your calling and responsibilities.

131. • Resenting others when they ask for your help, annoyance with those who need your time.

132. • Making a god of your work, to the point that nothing else is allowed to take priority over your work.

133. • Bulldozing your plans and agendas through without taking the time to pray and counsel with others, and blaming the fallout or consequences on someone else rather than on your rushed spirit.

134. • Intense emotional ups and downs that leave you spent and emotionally unstable.

135. • Frequently labeling "they" and "them" as the cause of your busyness, and blaming others for the pressure you feel.

136. • Insomnia or disturbing or overly active dreams that leave you spent and not well rested.

137. • Extreme physical fatigue.

138. • Irritability.

139. • Negativity.

140. • Talking against or not supporting the Word or leadership; feeling that you know better.

141. • Health problems as a result of not having the right balance in your life.

142. • An inability to step back from the work and assess where you're heading, and getting angry or annoyed when others suggest you could do less or balance your life better.

143. • Anger at Me for the things that don't work out as you'd hoped they would; blaming Me for not taking proper care of you or your loved ones.

144. (Jesus:) If something is troubling you and taking over your mind—at nighttime or any time—it could be stress-related. People say they're "stressing" about something when what they really mean is that they're worrying about something, they're fearing, and they're not taking on My mind. They're expending energy but getting nowhere, and this is usually because they've done all that they can do in the physical, but the result they're after still hasn't happened; thus they keep the mental engine running, burning precious resources, but accomplishing nothing.

145. That's destructive, My loves. It's really very bad for you. If you leave your engine running too long without the good oil of My Holy Spirit that brings calm and organization to your thoughts, you will experience the dreaded burn-out and breakdown syndrome, which I guarantee none of you want to have to go through.

A balanced life is a good place to start

146. (Jesus:) A very helpful aid in recognizing and overcoming some kinds of stress is the guideline of a balanced life. Where there is balance, there must be constraint, and learning constraint and discipline will help you to avoid stress.

147. Stress is all about pushing past the constraints in an unhealthy way, or spending too much time worrying about the constraints.

To defeat stress you have to be thankful for your constraints, and learn to stay within them, because they bring you balance.

148. So look at your life and tell Me if it's balanced. What is a balanced life? It's living the way the Word has been teaching you to live, realizing that there is a time and a season for every purpose under Heaven. Let's review briefly what the Word tells you a balanced life includes:

- At least 1½ hours of quality time with Me every day.
- Half an hour spent in intercessory prayer for others every day.
- Time spent working for Me.
- Time for recreation and relaxation.
- Time spent with your husband or wife, your loved ones, and the mates of your greater marriage.
- Time spent in fellowship, bonding, and building your winning team.
- Time spent with the children, especially if you're a parent.
- Time spent maintaining your temple, which includes exercise, eating good healthy food, enough time spent sleeping, and even time for affection and sex when appropriate.

149. These are elements that, each in their own time and place, help to make up a balanced life. These are also some of the first things that stress will throw out of whack and start to take over. If you're finding that you don't have room for these good, godly things in your life on a regular basis, then something is driving you past the constraints of what is good into the stress zone.

Recognize mental stress

150. (Jesus:) Ask yourself honestly how much you worry about things that you have no control over. You have to ask yourself if you're able to fully shut down, fully turn off the motor and relax and rest in My arms. Do you truly put the cares of the day and worries aside when you have your Word time? When you have time with others, recreation, fellowship, sex, etc., do you stop thinking about all the work you have, or your worries and problems? When you sleep, is it sound and peaceful, or is it disturbed by nervous thoughts that put you on edge?

151. If you don't have those moments when you're not thinking about your worries and cares at all, then chances are you're mentally, emotionally, or spiritually stressing in some area. You're thinking too hard, trying too hard, and you need to learn to relax and trust Me more. If you can't enjoy something, or give your concentration to the moment because you're thinking about all that isn't getting done, or all that might happen, or all that might go wrong, this is a bad sign, and you need to realize that you might have a problem with stress.

152. My Spirit is calm and peaceful, active yet tranquil; not anything like the hurried, rushed, nervous, tense, uptight, stomach-in-knots feeling that so many of you let yourselves fall prey to. When you're in line with My Spirit, letting Me fully possess you, you work as hard as you can work for Me as long as you are safely able to, within the constraints of a balanced life. And then when it is time to switch gears, you switch, you turn it off, and you let it all go.

153. When you're in My Spirit and My Spirit is in you, you do all that I show you to do, and you entrust the rest to My hands—even if it seems far from completed. When you're in My Spirit you embrace your limitations and you realize that you can only do so much, and you don't really mind that. You're happy that you have limitations of ability, schedule, etc., because it keeps your life in balance and you praise Me for that. You're also happy that your inabilities, such as your inability to be omnipresent or omniscient or see the future, force

you to depend on My power more fully, and open your life up to fifth-dimension involvement that may very well be your lifesaver in the days to come.

Long-term results of stress

154. (Jesus:) The metaphors commonly used for stress include a fraying rope or a rubber band stretched too far. The end result of both of these is the same—SNAP!—Complete breakdown of expected operation and utter lack of usefulness. That's what stress in the extreme does to you: It takes you past the point of usefulness to the point where you break.

155. What "breaks" will vary from person to person, and also depends on the kind of stress and its intensity. But it's not out of the question to expect health problems, or even a complete breakdown of your body, because you've pushed past the point where you can safely go.

156. Flesh is finite, it has its limits, and it can and will break. And if that's all you're leaning on, all that you're used to going to when the crunch is on, it'll be too late by the time your flesh has failed and you'll feel lost, confused, and adrift, not knowing where your salvation lies. All the things that you depended on to get you through the day and to make your accomplishments with will be broken, and you'll have nothing left to stand on.

157. That's why you've got to have something more than your own physical strength or mental stamina and drive pushing you along. You've got to be in the habit of using My strength, and resting in Me, so that when your own strength is insufficient, you've got something else to fall back on; in fact, you're already tapping into that great and unending resource and you're in the habit of leaning on Me.

158. By this time you all know that stress is caused by working in the arm of the flesh, plain and simple. When you're on My channel, I tell you to go slow, pace yourself, take it easy, rest in Me, and that My yoke should be easy and My burden should be light. When your work and method of operation doesn't fit that criteria, then it's your own fault and your own yoke, and that's why you get stressed.

159. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and all flesh tends toward corruption, at least in this present world in which you live. You might expect your physical strength to wane gradually, maybe so slightly that you wouldn't even notice it, slowly tapering off till when it's really gone in your old age you'll be too old to care—or maybe I'll come for you first, or whatever. But it's not always like that.

160. You can feel very strong and alert and on top of things, but then from one day to the next you can collapse. One too many health problems ignored, one too many Word times skipped, one too many sleepless nights, and you can go from being in charge of your body and actions to being the servant of your decaying body of flesh, subject to all its whims and quirks—many of which will be the sad result of your own lack of care for it.

161. So don't always expect that you'll have a lot of warning. You're not a perfectly tuned racecar that has an indicator needle which shows when you're revved too high. Life isn't that predictable, and if you're beyond the point where I've told you it's safe to go, it's a real no man's land, and breakdown could occur at any time, not at easily predictable moments.

162. You may be able to last in your over-revved state for quite a while, and even start to feel that it's normal and okay. But let Me tell you, just because you haven't broken yet doesn't mean that you won't. In fact, the longer you've operated past the safe point, the greater the chances grow, day by day, that you will eventually break and lose all power. So watch out!

163. Maybe for you it won't be severe health problems. The bad results of some people's stress is manifested much more spiritually, and in many ways that's even more severe, because it can take you out of My service and onto the Devil's territory. Just as it takes work and discipline to have a healthy body that does what you need it to do, it takes discipline and mental control to have a healthy spiritual life—especially the tough and arduous battle-filled life of a disciple.

164. It takes work to use the spiritual weapons, to love and live in harmony with others,

to walk by faith and not by sight, to constantly be on guard against the Enemy, to resist doubts, to prefer others, to die daily, and all the other things that go into your life that are difficult and take real spiritual work. What do you think will happen if your mind and resources get so taxed through stress that you snap and find yourself unable to put forth the effort needed to stay alive spiritually?

165. Do you think that if you grow weary and faint in your mind, you'll be able to continue doing all those things that I expect of a disciple, and do them well and with grace? Do you think that if you push in the arm of the flesh past the safety point and start to lose it, that you'll still be able to take things by faith or have the anointing and patience needed to run the race? I don't think so. Usually once you've snapped your mental strength, your spiritual strength is overtaxed as well, especially because losing it in the physical or mental almost always means that you've been neglecting the spiritual, thus it won't be strong enough to hold you on track.

166. Leaving the Revolution is not out of the question for someone in that state. Accepting the Enemy's lies and doubts is something you become very susceptible to when your mind is weakened. Losing your love for others and becoming hard, unloving, and difficult to live around is also a likely result of this sort of breakdown. Generally just giving up in spirit and no longer being an active combatant in spirit and letting everything go is what can happen.

167. When you lower all your defenses and your shields finally power down completely, the Enemy will overrun you. Chances are he'll ravage your faith and spirit and leave you a complete spiritual weakling with no power, no energy, no abilities to do anything for Me and others. Or he may actively seek to turn you into an enemy, to turn traitor against your brothers and sisters—to not just leave, but to betray as well.

168. I'm not saying that if you let stress into your life, you will betray the Family. I'm just presenting the various scenarios that can happen when you let stress go unchecked. What will hap-

pen when each person hits that breaking point is as varied as there are personalities, and may you never have to find out what it would mean for you! But none of the things I've mentioned are out of the question. If you let your shields down, it's anyone's guess what the Enemy will try to do to you.

169. All of your systems are intended to work together and strengthen one another. Having a healthy spiritual life should motivate you to do the things that you need to do each day, like work for Me, live for others, care for your body, etc. Likewise, having a body that works well contributes to your mental and spiritual strength, because it's harder to be in the spirit or to accomplish things for Me when your body is breaking and weak.

170. But as David explained in "Breakdown," when you lose one of these systems through oversteering it, you can lose others too. They affect one another, and in extreme cases, knocking just one system offline can end up knocking all of them offline. It can have a cascade effect. It can be very hard to predict just when the snap will be, or what specific system will be affected—mental, emotional, physical, or spiritual—but rest assured that unchecked stress will damage one of them, or maybe a little of all of them.

171. Stress is something that just keeps getting worse unless it's taken care of. It's like David said about old bottles—you're either moving forward and becoming new or you're sliding backward and getting old. You're either living or dying, one or the other.

172. Stress is like that. You're either in balance or you're not. If you're not in balance, then stress is the result, and it's not a question of if something will happen but a question of when. Once stress has entered the picture, there are only two possible results—one is that the level of stress drops and things go more toward normal, and the other option is just plain SNAP.

173. Depending on how severe the stress is and how long it's gone on, it may take a very short time or a very long time. Your personality and the strengths and weaknesses I've given you can also play a part. But rest assured that if not

corrected, even the smallest stress can build up and eventually tip the scales toward breakdown.

174. It's sad when you lose something that you didn't have to lose if you could have just reduced that stress and trusted more in Me to take care of things. It's sad when your spiritual life suffers and you lose the vision to move forward, or when your physical body breaks down, or when you lose your mental capacity to think, concentrate, motivate yourself, or even get out of bed in the morning. But that's the result of overtaxing yourself. You're meant to be balanced, not to be stressed.

175. It doesn't really matter what you're stressing about, it just matters that the stress is there—that there is something in your life that you're not accepting My help in, not letting Me take off your shoulders, not yielding to Me about, or trying to solve in your own strength. It doesn't have to be stress over work. It can be stress over your children, or stress over your personal life, or even spiritual stress and expecting more of yourself than I would of you in any area.

176. No matter what kind of stress it is, the results are the same—something breaks. It's very sad, and almost ironic that you end up doing exactly the thing you didn't want to do. You're stressing because you want things to be "better"—at least according to your definition, which is that you want to do more, achieve more, and get more done. But through trying too hard you end up losing far more than if you had just gone slowly, trusted Me, and followed My guidelines for balance in your life. It's such a basic lesson, like the tortoise and the hare.

177. I know how tempting it can be to push ahead, do even more, and in the process neglect the needs of your body, life, or spirit. It can be addicting, like a drug, to think that you can go into that intense, arm-of-the-flesh mode just for a little while, to get something important done, and then afterwards you'll drop back down to a safer level.

178. Sometimes you'll get away with it; sometimes it might even seem to accomplish the job in the short term. But you should know that

it's never My best. It never accomplishes things as well as if you had let Me lead. It never bears the kind of fruit you could bear if you were content to do the same job in My Spirit, with My timing, without pushing your own plan so hard.

179. What's more, if you make a habit of working in that arm-of-the-flesh spirit, it will addict you and suck you in, and the level to which you'll push will get higher, and the time you stay there will grow longer. Soon you'll be in overdrive more often than you're in normal, and that's when the very serious problems will start.

180. Oh, My loves, you just have to listen to Me. Why can't you make the smart choice and be tortoises for Me? Why can't you be faithful plodders that daily rely on My strength and do what I ask you to do without feeling the need to always floor the accelerator? You think you're being so useful to Me as a hare, but in the end you'll break, and you'll lie there dazed and confused while the tortoises cross the finish line.

181. It's so much smarter to go slow. Don't tempt Me—that's what My Word says, and that's what you need to obey. Don't push it and see how far you can go. I don't want any of you to ever have to find out what SNAP means to you. I don't want you to have to look back afterwards and say, "If I only had!" It's a choice you can make every day to ease up, let Me lead, slow things down, and to rest in Me in heart and spirit and trust Me for everything. Make the right choices, My loves. You'll be so glad you did.

182. (Jesus:) My loves, understand that serving and living for Me is not about mere survival. It's not about constantly reaching your limit. It's not about stacking up the accomplishments. But it is about putting Me first. It is about doing few things but doing them well. I want you to make the concept of "finding rest" a regular part of your life, rather than considering it a short, temporary reprieve between stressful periods.

Stress affects your body

183. (Jesus:) Your spirit is the first place where stress is manifested and accepted or rejected through your choices. If your spirit accepts the stress, then the stress begins to take a toll on your spirit. You're not as happy and full of the joy of the Lord. You start looking at life through the eyes of weariness and things start looking overwhelming. You can easily become curt with others. You can start becoming negative and critical of others who don't "understand" or don't seem to care that you have such a "large" load to carry.

184. When your spirit has embraced the stress and not rejected it or refused to let it enter and settle, then your outlook becomes hazy with the mist that stress starts to put in front of your eyes.

185. Stress is the spirit of heaviness; it's the opposite of My joy. When you are stressed, your spirit feels heavy; it's not resting in Me; it's not partaking of the fountains of life and joy and freedom. It is clouded and marred by the haze and the mist and the spirit of heaviness.

186. So while the most immediate fruits of stress are manifested in your spirit, your physical body will feel the brunt of the long-term effects of stress. Your body responds to your spirit. When your spirit is happy and positive and full of joy and love, your body responds in kind. Your body is then happy and full of good, positive things. When your spirit is stressed, it affects your body too, because your body responds to the stress in physical ways.

187. Your body often tries to compensate for the negative effects of stress. But if stress is long-term or a way of life, the long-term effects of stress are cumulative, and your body or some function of it will eventually shut down because it is worn out from having to combat the negative effects of stress over many years. It is, in fact, easier to get rid of the effects of stress in your spirit than it is in your body. And there are those who bear in their bodies the long-term consequences of having embraced stress in their lives for years.

188. Worry, fear, stress, anger, and negativity—all of these things are negative emotions or

sensations, and your body and bodily processes respond to those negative things in a negative way. Over the long term, if those negative things are allowed to flourish in your spirit, they also cause negative repercussions in your body and its responses and in its overall health.

189. What kinds of physical manifestations are caused by stress? They are as varied as I have made an individual's body. Each person has some bodily weakness that is either their inherited constitution or the result of their lifestyle, and when stress is added to the body as a negative emotion, it is very often that physical weak spot that will "take the hit," as they say.

190. There are a very large range of negative physical outcomes that can result from continued stress: Digestion difficulties, headaches, insomnia, twitching, unexplainable pain, irregular heartbeat, breathing difficulties; even rashes or skin problems or hair loss can be physical manifestations of stress. These kinds of physical responses are noticeable and easy to pinpoint, but there can also be internal damage to the body that may be much more severe, especially if accumulated over a long period of time.

191. Some people who are high-strung, easily stressed people have damaged their bodies to such an extent that it is almost irreparable. And even if they change their spirit and habits and attitudes, except for a miracle they will always bear some of the consequences in their bodies of the years of damage that stress has caused.

192. Those of you who are young and just realizing how much a life of stress can affect your physical body have a good opportunity to change.—Not only for the sake of your spirit and avoiding the harm that stress can cause your spirit, but also for the sake of your body. In fact, it is imperative that you do change if you wish to lead a healthy, disease-free life. Even when the stress that affects your spirit is gone, it can take time to heal the physical toll that stress took on your body.

193. And even if you are up there in years, it's still never too late to change with the power of the keys. Call on Me and seek Me for specific

things you can do to eliminate the stress in your life. Ask Me what things I want you to change in your lifestyle, and I will direct you. Just as it's never too late to love, so it's never too late to turn your life around, to change stressful habits and replace them with good "balanced life" habits. All things are possible to those who believe and who wield their keys accurately in full faith.

194. There are various types of stress that will affect your spirit and your body negatively. There is physical stress, emotional stress, mental stress, and spiritual stress, and you must diligently avoid each of these kinds of stress. Various types of stress affect people differently, and there is also a great difference in the way each individual defines stress, or how clearly they recognize it in themselves.

195. Physical stress can come about because of a lot of work, long hours, and having to exert extra physical energy for a project or period of time without sufficient rest or breaks. Staying up late night after night, not getting exercise or enough rest, or not caring for your body in other ways, can cause your body to become stressed. This type of stress manifests itself in the physical right away, and you can often quickly see its consequences in your body. You become run-down or sick, you get a headache, you're tired, and so on. Sickness or disease also cause physical stress.

196. Emotional stress can come from anything that strains your emotions. Emotional stress over a long period of time can be very detrimental to your physical body. Long periods of sadness or emotional difficulty like a heartbreak, if not resolved or handled with the cleansing power of praise and faith and rising above, can cause long-term damage to the body. Any time your spirit is experiencing emotional stress, it will affect your body in a physical way.

197. Mental stress is probably the biggest category of stress, because it encompasses a person's outlook on life, and often defines what ends up stressing out an individual. People's stress levels are different. Some are not as affected by stress as others, and some individuals can easily stress over every single thing. What is processed

through your mind and categorized in a negative way causes mental stress, and it affects not only your spirit but your body. Negative emotions or negative thoughts and assumptions produce negative results in your mind and your body, and can cause mental stress that affects your body and its health in a very profound way.

198. Spiritual stress is when you look at all that I've asked of you as a disciple, and try to do it all at once—or don't do any of it, and then get condemned and under pressure because you're not making the progress you know you could be making if you just worked on it a little bit every day. I have given you a lot of instruction about the spiritual realm, using your spiritual weapons, and how you can be most effective as a disciple, but you must also remember that I take you where you're at. I don't expect perfection. I don't expect you to improve in every single area at once. I give you this information to help you, not to burden you. When your goals for yourself are unrealistic, it leads to stress. When you don't make steady steps forward and then have to "cram for an exam," so to speak, it leads to stress. The key is to make steady progress, to ask Me what to work on right now, today, take it one step at a time, and not let the Enemy condemn you about all that you're not doing.

199. Stress affects people in different ways. Some people are charged by it or feel important, while others feel dismal and depressed by it. It's not a one-size-fits-all feeling; it really depends on the individual, also the time of their life, what they are stressing over, etc. But there is nothing positive about stress. Stress is a negative, plain and simple. Negative feelings affect the body in a negative way. So stress will cause the body to respond negatively and can actually cause physical disease and bodily responses that are very negative.

200. So don't do it. Don't go there! Don't let stress affect your spirit and your body. Maintain a guard against stress in your spirit, so that it doesn't fester and begin to affect your body negatively. Don't leave yourself wide open for disease and

health problems by allowing yourself to be an uptight, easily stressed person. Don't provide fertile ground in your body for disease through being a negative person with a negative outlook. Give your body what it needs by protecting your spirit from these attacks.

201. The Enemy is all about destroying. He wants to destroy not only your spirit but your body as well. If he can succeed in destroying your physical body, he will have succeeded in taking you out of the war and you will no longer pose a threat to him.

202. Very often one of his major goals is affecting your spiritual life through stress and its resultant negativity because he knows what kind of pull it will have on your physical body. He will even use things that are "good" to cause stress in your life—like your work for Me, your need for spiritual progress and following through on the things I've asked you to do, your interactions with others, and so on. Give your burdens to Me. Rest in Me and let Me carry the load. Fight to live a balanced lifestyle. Give your body what it needs to be happy and function well.

203. Your body needs relaxation, happiness, joy, and love in order to function well. People who don't have that will not be as healthy as people who do. Keep the Enemy from attacking your body by fighting diligently against his attacks of stress.

204. And if you are stressed, well, get rid of it! Change your life and start living differently so that your body can be protected from the ill effects of stress. If you are ill because you've allowed yourself to harbor stress in your life for too long, find out from Me how to change your life. Cry out to Me desperately for deliverance from the stress, and from the spiritual and physical effects of that stress.

205. I am the Great Physician. I can heal. Though it may take time, and though you will have to change your life in order to receive the healing, I will give it to you if you are obedient and follow step by step the plans that I lay out for you.

**“As he thinketh in his heart,
so is he” (Pro.23:7).**

By Dr. Richard Schulze, an authority on natural healing and herbal medications. Taken from his book *Common Sense Health and Healing*

It’s great to be alive. Every day when I wake up, I think about how blessed I am, how great it is to be alive, and how much I love my life.

These two great healing affirmations didn’t come naturally to me. I didn’t learn them from my school teachers or hear them on television, movies, or in the lyrics of songs. And I certainly didn’t hear them from my patients either. In fact, if you heard most of my patients’ self-degrading, self-defeating mouths and negative minds, you would wonder how they were even still alive.

Imagine the kind of constant attack your immune system has to survive and defend itself against every day. If you think flesh-eating bacteria, Legionnaires’ disease and killer viral influenzas are bad, well, medical and scientific research clearly proves that your worst immune attack, your worst immune enemy, is not microbes but what you are thinking and what comes out of your mouth, every day. Furthermore, one of the most healing nutrients to your body, more than vitamins, minerals, enzymes, fresh juices, even more than herbs, is LOVE.

Your brain is constantly working, night and day, 24/7/365; it never shuts down or takes a vacation. First off, it’s your body’s master computer console, controlling just about every metabolic function and chemical balance in your body. From your nervous system and blood balances to your sexual function and thousands of other functions that you don’t even know about, your brain is the captain at the helm, creating, driving, controlling, balancing and maintaining YOU, and your entire body, every second of the day.

If this doesn’t sound exhausting enough, your brain also has to process everything you think. If you want to move your arm or leg, walk, run, sit or eat or talk, your brain has to give the command and your body follows orders. To do this, your brain and brain cells, just like every other cell and organ in your body, have to take in nourishment and nutrition and eliminate waste. Your brain needs this nourishment to create numerous chemicals. In fact, every time you have any thoughts, your brain creates a specific chemical.

Scientists now know that when you have a thought, your brain creates chemicals that open what they refer to as windows. And when the thought is over, the window closes. So when you see the person of your dreams and you feel love, and you have that incredible tingling feeling all over your body, this is a brain chemical. When you feel sexual, this is another brain chemical, and when that #%@&?! cuts you off in traffic and you wish you had laser guns on your steering wheel and could vaporize this idiot, that hate, that boiling acid in your bloodstream or stomach, well, that’s another brain chemical.

Scientists call these brain chemicals neuropeptides. Science has done a lot of research on this subject for a number of years. What we know is when you have any thought, your brain creates chemicals which alter you, and what you feel is the creation and assimilation of these brain chemicals called neuropeptides.

Your body is made up of trillions of cells: blood cells, skin cells, liver cells, brain cells. In a way you are just a bunch of cells, at least physically.

The cell wall, protective covering, membrane (or let’s call it skin) forms the outer boundary of each cell. It is made up of phospholipids (fats), protein and cholesterol. It can selectively allow various substances to enter or leave the cell. In fact, many substances

in your bloodstream like vitamins or amino acids have their own specific loading dock on the cell wall where they can connect and offload their specific cargo. Even immune cells have these same specific loading docks on their surface skin. And now here is where it gets weird.

Medical science made a big, no, huge discovery in the last decade that went for the most part unnoticed. They already knew that your immune cells, just like all cells, have specific loading docks on their surfaces to assimilate particular substances. But it was discovered that on the surface of your immune cells, the cells that are designed to protect you and fight off bacteria, virus, fungus, parasites, cancer—in fact, ALL disease—there is a specific loading dock, a specific assimilation site for NEUROPEPTIDES!

What business is it to your immune cells what you are thinking? Why do they care? Don't they have enough to do with all the germs floating around these days and the

cancer rate skyrocketing, without having to eavesdrop on your personal affairs and private conversations with yourself?

Hang on, it gets weirder. Okay, so we know that your immune system is definitely listening to your emotional dialogue, but no cell, organ or system of your body listens to another system unless it is prepared to react to the information it is receiving.

Your immune system is listening to and reacting to your emotional dialogue. This is exactly what medical science is telling us now, that your immune cells have specific receptor sites for neuropeptides, the chemicals that your brain creates with every thought, AND that your immune cells' response to germs and disease is affected, whether boosted or impaired or even STOPPED, by these brain chemicals. Your immune cells' response is determined by your thoughts.

There are physical consequences for everything that you do, and now, it appears, for even everything that you think too.

The cure for stress

206. (Jesus:) How do you avoid stress?

Stress is not the same as pressure or busyness. Having a lot to do is not stress in itself. Stress is the body's reaction to pressure, but that reaction can be controlled.

207. Have you ever noticed how some people in an emergency situation simply throw their arms in the air, become irrational, and often do themselves and others harm, while others remain calm, focused, and often find ways to get themselves and others out of dangerous and harrowing experiences? They have the same body. So why do they react so differently?

208. Avoiding stress is largely a result of the way you train your mind to see situations. Faith, implementing My Word in your life, doing the humble thing, and bringing your burdens to Me on a continual basis will form new thought patterns in your mind. Over time they will cause

your mind to react not to the negative factors, emotion, tension, and pressure in any situation, but to focus instead on the positive, the solutions, the needs of others, and most of all on Me for the answer.

209. You build stress protection into your life in a thousand little ways each day using these tools of faith, obedience, doing the humble thing, and consciously putting your concerns in My hands through intercessory prayer and praise. Then when potentially stressful situations arise, your mind doesn't react with stress and affect your body, but instead it tends to use these more familiar thought patterns to cope with the situation. It's possible for anyone to learn to do this when they have the tools I have given you.

How you react is your choice

210. (Jesus:) Here's a simple example of a stressful circumstance and various ways to

handle it: You're late for an appointment and you're stuck in traffic, or were stuck in traffic, and thus you're over an hour's drive from where you need to be in half an hour.

211. One form of stress is to go beyond your normal limits, and this would be manifested in this example as driving faster than is safe, and even leaving the roads, cutting across the grass and dividing lines, screeching up on the sidewalk to pass cars, speeding through red lights, and that sort of thing. Maybe you'll make an hour's drive in half an hour, but the much larger chance is that you'll end up in an accident or in serious trouble, because when you drive that way you break the law and run the risk of damaging your car, hurting yourself, and worst of all, hurting others. You always pay for this kind of stress.

212. Another approach is to not break the law or do anything dangerous on the road, but it's more mental instead. You do take the full hour to get where you're going, but the mental stress and worry and fear that you've put yourself through leaves you totally ragged and feeling like a bundle of nerves. All you can think about that whole time is that you're LATE, LATE, LATE! You worry about what will happen, and you worry that it will cause problems, and you worry that you'll let others down, and you worry about what they'll think of you, and you worry that they won't trust you next time, and you worry about what you did wrong, and you just worry, worry, worry yourself sick!

213. Here's a third version of our car scenario—My version—and how a balanced, non-stressed individual should handle it: Once again you're in a car that's far from your destination and you know that you'll be at least a half-hour late for whatever it was you needed to do. First of all, you pray. You commit your request to Me, letting Me know that you'll be late and that you feel you really need to be there on time. Doing this, you've done what you could do and put it into My hands.

214. Then, if I know you really, absolutely must make it there in time, I will move mountains and traffic and whatever else stands in

your way so that you will get there on time, or perhaps delay the meeting by having others arrive late too. Once you've put the situation in My hands, know that if it really is that important, I will make a way.

215. Then there's the "but if not." What if I don't make a way, and I see fit to let you arrive half an hour late? Well, the balanced, non-stressed individual realizes that I must know that somehow or another it's going to be all right. I must have a greater plan. That enables you to do what? That's right: Praise! You spend that time in the car praising Me that I'm going to work it out somehow, and thanking Me for how good I was to you to let this happen.

216. You might not know why I let it happen, but knowing Me as you do, knowing that I love you and have always had your best interests at heart, you figure there must be a good reason, and you're going to thank Me for it whether you ever figure it out or not. That kind of praise, My loves, brings down many mighty blessings and miracles from Me.

217. So having prayed and praised, you put the matter out of your mind, refuse to worry about it any further, and complete the journey safely and successfully. You even have some fun along the way chatting with your partner, or maybe getting in a few minutes of prayer vigil or memory work, or something else useful that redeems the time. You eventually get to where you need to go, not in a hurried rush and awful spirit, but in a calm, balanced spirit that is fully possessed and controlled by Me. I then work it all out in the end, accomplish more through you in half the time because you're on My channel, and the day turns out to be a success.

218. Or maybe you miss the meeting and it looks like a defeat. But because you trusted and praised Me, I make good on My promise that "all things work together for good," and in the end you find that I never take anything away from you without giving you something better. I bring something better along and you see after all that I brought a victory from a seeming defeat.

219. There are going to be some times when, stuck there in that car in traffic, you'll have a little feeling of guilt in your heart, thinking about how this is your fault. Maybe you didn't ask Me before you left, or you rushed out the door a little too quickly, or didn't check your map or pray about your route, or slept too late, or any number of other causes.

220. Well, even then the right thing to do would not be to let your pride take over and stress you out in order to cover your mistake. Rather, you should humbly admit to Me that, "Oops, if I had done it Your way, this wouldn't have happened," make a mental note to pray about this situation later and ask Me what lessons I have in it for you, and then go ahead with the steps above, starting with prayer and praise and all the rest, eventually ending again in a key-enhanced, full-possession-powered victory.

221. So, My loves, which will you choose? You get there quicker in scenario #1—if you get there at all—but there is also the chance of injury, death, destruction, and probable arrest. You get there at the expected time (late!) in scenario #2, but you're too worked up and filled with fear and doubt and lack of faith to do any good, and you're probably more tuned to the Enemy's channel than Mine. Or you also get there at the expected time in scenario #3 (also late), but you're backed up with all My power from the heavens that you brought down through prayer and praise. You're also not worked up; you're calm, at peace, and on My channel; you're a vessel that I can use.

222. It's all up to you. The circumstances are the same, they don't change; all that changes is your approach, your choice whether to choose stress or to choose faith. One way ends in victory and the power of My Spirit; the other two end in defeat for you and a victory for the Enemy. Please choose wisely!

223. (Jesus:) If you're frequently prone to stress, you're going to have to really fight to change your lifestyle and eliminate stress. I recommend that you regularly claim the keys of perseverance and humility, because you're going to need both.

224. In some cases you might need to make some major changes in your life, either by dropping certain projects, adjusting your schedule in a major way, admitting you need help, getting over pet peeves, getting the victory over comparing, or whatever it is I tell you to do.

225. In some cases you might have to learn to truly trust Me. That doesn't mean saying you trust Me, and then running off with a baby in one arm and a laptop in the other, trying to figure out how to fix the problem; but truly trusting in Me, just like, as disciples, you trust Me to save you from an attack of the Enemy or heal you of a serious, long-term sickness.

226. Call on Me for miracles before you get stressed, not when the pressure and stress of your work is about to cause you to snap. I am the God of miracles in every aspect of your life.

Practical tips for combating stress

227. (Jesus:) My loves, I look at your hearts and I see how much you want to please Me—and, oh, how you please Me! When I look at you I can't help but smile and thank My Father for you.

228. You have given up everything for Me. You have forsaken your pride, your worldly hang-ups, and everything you have, over and over again. You prove your love for Me on a daily basis in so many ways. You love Me intimately, you feed My sheep, you care for My children, you give of yourself for others, you strive to be obedient, to use the spiritual weapons, and much more.

229. I'm so pleased with you, and so thrilled that you have taken up the challenge to be the

Endtime army I need. I love you, I'm thankful for you, and I need you so much. Yet this stress some of you are experiencing is sapping your joy, your energy, your time with Me, your health, and affecting your spirit and work negatively. It's a vicious attack of the Enemy because it is sly, and is an area of your life you must tune in to if you want to make it in the long haul. It is of utmost importance at this point in time. You need to learn to more fully depend on Me and cast your cares on Me by saying no to stress.

230. I know the Enemy's going to be screaming in your ears to try to tell you that, "This is it! Mama and Peter are continually sending us tons of work, things we are required to do, spiritual warfare counsel that we need to put into practice, and now they tell us we're not supposed to be stressed out? That's impossible!" Well, maybe that sounds logical and true, but any time you hear the word "impossible," you know that's a warning signal that whatever you're thinking or feeling is not of Me.

231. The Enemy is going to fight you receiving and accepting this counsel with everything he's got, because when applied, this counsel is going to bring about the ruin of his current strategy against you. Now that you are on board, giving Me your all, and striving to be the best, most obedient disciples you can be, his tactics of compromise, lethargy, and division are no longer effective. Now you're starting to move in the direction of becoming offensive fighters, so he's trying another way to get at you: trying to get you stressed so that he can wear you down mentally, spiritually, and physically, thus opening an avenue for him to come in and deal you a low blow when you are down.

232. Many of you are caught on the "stress treadmill" at the moment, and are feeling it. You know it's not helping you to do a better job for Me, and you know it causes you to neglect making full use of your spiritual weapons; you may even realize it's beginning to wear you down, and you are desperate for solutions on how to get out of this cycle. So I'm going to walk you through some spiritual and practical steps you can take

that will help. Please understand that while these will take time, effort, and focus in the beginning, in the long run they will make things infinitely easier.

233. 1) The first step is to accept the fact that stress and living a stressed-out lifestyle are dangerous, and will at best greatly hinder, and at worst, totally ruin your service for Me if they're allowed to continue. It's not just dangerous for your spiritual life, it's also dangerous for your mental and physical health. It's "of the Devil," literally, and something you need to give no place to.

234. If you don't feel you've quite grasped this point by now, study the topic in My Word. You could also do a non-Word-based study on the effects of long-term stress if I confirm to you personally in prophecy that that would help drive the point home more clearly.

235. This step of acceptance and realizing how dangerous stress is for you is a step you cannot skip, because without this knowledge you won't have the motivation to persevere in doing your part to change your habits and lifestyle. Claim the keys of understanding and ask Me to help you really "get it."

236. Ask for prayer if you need to. Ask Me to give you a godly hatred for stress and an aversion to it. Ask Me to speak to you about what consequences you're already suffering, and what consequences you will suffer in the future if you continue letting stress in.

237. Once you've taken that step, you're ready to take a stand against this inroad of the Enemy. You've begun well, but there's still a lot of fighting and overcoming to be done, and victories to be won. Now you actually have to take both spiritual and practical steps on a regular basis and fight the battle. It's not over yet.

238. 2) Ask Me how stress is manifested in your life, and what the warning signs are. If you'd like Me to "grade" you in this area, you could ask Me to tell you how high your stress scores read on a level of one to ten—with one

being totally trusting in Me, depending on Me, and making full use of the spiritual weapons both in your personal life and in your work, and ten being totally stressed out, working in the arm of the flesh, and heading quickly toward burnout, a nervous breakdown, or sickness.

239. Then you can work on bringing it down one number at a time until you are in a “safe zone.” I don’t expect you to be able to change all at once, but I do expect you to work with Me to bring those numbers down, and then do something about it when they start creeping up again.

240. You could compare it to having high blood pressure. Those who have it have to be tested regularly and take care of themselves accordingly if they want to avoid more serious health problems. Ask Me how often you need to check in with Me about this, and set yourself a reminder of some sort.

241. 3) Realize that if you have a weakness with letting pressure in your life become stress, which is unhealthy and dangerous, it’s a long-term battle, one in which you need to be willing to set regular times to check in with Me about it and pay attention to it if you want to stay healthy physically and spiritually.

242. This is not to say that you can’t regularly succeed in keeping the stress levels in your life at a low level, and it’s not meant to discourage you. Stress is like pride. Pride is of the Devil, and stress is of the Devil. Every now and then you’ll slip and have a little stress, but I expect you to minimize it, to fight against it, to keep the levels low, to not accept it in your life. Understanding that fact should actually encourage you so that you don’t wonder what’s wrong with you and why you can’t just get the victory over it once and for all and never have to worry about it again.

243. It’s like pride, or getting daily quality Word time: It’s a long-term battle that you have to be willing to fight if you want to stay on top of it. Regularly coming to Me about it and following through on the personalized counsel I give you will ensure that you not only bring your

stress levels down into a “safe zone” but are able to keep them there.

244. 4) Share the counsel I give you, as well as your heart and the way you’re feeling, with your shepherds, and get prayer, help, support, and counsel. Your shepherds may not be the ones who will be most available to safeguard you in this area on a day-to-day basis, but they will be able to pray for you, check on you, help you find solutions, and set up safeguards.

245. This is a battle in which you’d be wise to use the weapon of brotherhood. Two are better than one, and especially in the beginning until you become skilled at recognizing and minimizing the stress in your life, you’ll need an outside perspective, help, prayer, and support.

246. 5) Realize that stress is an addiction, and that you will initially feel withdrawal pains when you begin taking steps to rid your life of it. The Enemy will be trying to feed you feelings of condemnation, telling you that you’re being lazy, letting people down, not giving your all, and a host of other negative thoughts—all with the goal of keeping you in bondage to his heavy, difficult, back-breaking load. The longer you’ve been stressed out, the stronger these feelings will be, and the more you will need the support and help of your shepherds.

247. 6) Choose some key promises to memorize and stand on, as well as some quotes to read and claim, and know which spirit helpers you’ll be enlisting the help of. Prepare these during one of your personal Word times, and have them on hand for whenever you need to fight stress and pressure—whether it’s before you sit down to read the Word, at the end of the day when you need to relax and unwind, when I’m asking you to spend time with your children or others but you feel you need to work, or at any other times you get hit with it most intensely.

248. 7) Take regular, five-minute “time-outs” during the day. You’ll have to ask Me for

personalized specifics as to what times and how many. The idea is to bring your mind and spirit to a complete stop in the middle of your work for a short period of time, in order to reconnect your spirit with Mine.

249. This one will feel like a “killer” at first, but what it’s really doing is dealing stress a nasty blow. No matter how much you feel it’s hurting you, it’s not; in fact, it’s helping. When you’re fighting feelings that are not of Me, usually the right thing to do is the opposite of what you feel like doing. This is the case with feelings of stress, and specifically when you feel “driven” to work.

250. Get away from your work, and often the easiest and most convenient place to take a few minutes of “get-away” time is in your bedroom or a bathroom. It’s a good place not just because you can have a few minutes alone, but because you won’t feel pressured that others will be wondering why you’re not working.

251. Five minutes can seem like an eternity when you’re rolling full-steam ahead, but in reality, five minutes is a very short time. Start by taking a minute to praise Me. You’ve got to choose to calm yourself, to come out of the wings and into the temple for a couple of breaths of the fresh air of My Spirit. Then ask Me to speak to you and give you some heavenly perspective, and stay there for a full five minutes.

252. You’ll find that I will calm your spirit, give you solutions, and boost your work. It’s also good practice in learning to put aside work, thoughts of work, and feelings of responsibility toward work.

253. As you get better at stopping for those five-minute intervals, you’ll find you’re getting better at laying aside the weights of your work, and it’ll come easier to stop and come to Me during your Word times, your times of loving Me intimately, your times of fellowship with others, etc. Initially you might find it helpful to have a short, powerful quote on hand to read over a few times and focus on if it’s too difficult to start thinking of things to praise Me for right away.

Five-minute “de-stressing”

254. (Jesus:) There are many little things you can do to “de-stress,” and doing so can often be a huge key to staying on top of things and not crumbling under stress and work. Here are a few:

1) Take a quick hot shower and relax as you do.

2) Go outside for a few minutes of fresh air. Breathe in deeply and relax.

3) Stand at the window for a few minutes and look at some of My creation—the mountains, the sky, the trees.

4) Get up from your desk and have a short praise time.

5) Listen to a praise song or a “Loving Jesus” song.

6) Go and hang out with the kids for a few minutes. They’re pure and happy and always cheer you up.

7) Go get a piece of fruit or something to snack on.

8) Make yourself a refreshing drink, and either stop to drink it or bring it back to your desk to drink.

9) Get up from your desk and do a few simple stretches.

10) Lie down on your bed for a few minutes and just think about Me.

255. 8) Make an effort to focus more on Me and others. You could even keep a log of “extra” time spent with Me or others, and try to improve a little every day. It’s those little moments throughout the day when you stop to tell Me you love Me and share a moment with Me that are going to last forever. It’s the times when you choose to stop and hug the children and encourage them for something that will change their lives for the better. It’s the times when you choose to put listening to or helping one of your brothers or sisters before your work that will build your unity and bring down My full blessings on your home, work, and personal life.

256. Love is a powerful force, and when you take a little time to love, it automatically puts your heart and spirit in sync with Mine, leaving no room for any of the inroads of the Enemy, whether it's stress or otherwise.

257. 9) Ask Me, your spirit helpers, and others to check you when you're starting to operate in the arm of the flesh and getting stressed out. When you get one of those checks, stop as soon as you possibly can and rebuke the Enemy. You can say whatever you like, as long as you rebuke him and make the choice to separate yourself from the stress, and not allow this device of the Enemy any place in your life.

258. 10) Take some time to get organized and ask Me to define your priorities. This will help tremendously. When you are not organized and don't have a handle on all you need to do, it's much more difficult to stay calm and trust Me. If you don't know how to get organized, do a Word study on the topic, ask for a spirit helper to help you, see if there's someone in your Home who can help you, and go on the attack. Schedule time for projects that move you forward so that you are taking consistent steps of progress and not just dealing with emergencies or last-minute things that come up.

259. If you are already organized, take a little time to reassess and reevaluate your priorities, and decide (in counsel with Me and others, of course) what is really most important, what can wait, and what doesn't need to be done.

260. 11) Put more into your prayer vigil times, and make them count. Pour out your heart to Me in prayer, and release the power of Heaven to work on your behalf, so you can see miracles. Put Me to the test, prove My power, prove the worth of the spiritual weapons by depending on them fully.

261. 12) Ask for united prayer of deliverance, and ask for "booster prayer" whenever you need it.

262. (Jesus:) Are you afraid that if you don't do something, it won't get done? You might think it won't get done, and that it's more important than your exercise or quality time with the children today. But is that really trusting Me?

263. I've told you to live a life with balance, to give each thing its due time and place, and if you think you are an exception to this rule because your work is so important, then chances are you're putting even more importance on your work than I am, because I would never sacrifice you on the altar of stress just to get a little more done.

264. Missing a couple of get-outs might not be the end of the world, but creating a culture in your life in which you repeatedly push the balance out of your life in preference of more accomplishments is wrong; it's breaking the safeties and constraints in your life and it will end up hurting you.

How to help those prone to stress form new habits

265. (Mama:) Just as the Lord said about overcoming sensitivity, if you're trying to build new habits in the area of resting in the Lord and being more trusting and praiseful and less stressed, the victory isn't in training everyone else how to treat you; it's in learning how to have the right reactions and responses no matter what the circumstances or influence of people around you. However, if you can make it easy for those around you, you should. Here are some tips from our Husband on how to help someone build new non-stressing habits.

(Jesus:)

266. 1) Communication is a key. Often people who are prone to stress are also prone to worry, and will assume the worst if things aren't commu-

nicated clearly. So if you know someone tends to stress easily, go out of your way to communicate things extra clearly to them. If you ask them to do something but don't indicate how important it is in the range of priorities, they might tend to give it greater importance than it warrants, and thus get more intense about getting it done right away, when it could have waited. Or if you don't communicate clearly about what might seem to them to be a personal matter, they'll probably assume the worst and get more stressed about it than if you had been clear.

267. 2) Acknowledge their concerns or worries, and don't try to gloss over them. Sometimes someone who is stressed about something just needs someone else to recognize the problem, and then it relieves a great deal of the stress. Sometimes people can get stressed because they feel that they're the only ones concerned about a problem or dealing with it, so they feel that they're bearing the full weight of it. So if you can acknowledge the problem, or recognize it, and pray together for it, or offer to help, or whatever is appropriate, then it sometimes helps in taking the weight off of them and they can more easily put down their burden in the spirit and trust Me to keep everything under control.

268. 3) Sometimes people get stressed when they don't have enough to do, or enough responsibility, and they start making mountains out of molehills because they feel they should be busier, or should be making more of a difference. It's because they want to feel needed. They want to feel that they are contributing something important. So they stress about little things, or make a much bigger deal out of things than necessary. Whereas, if they had more to do and felt like they were really contributing, they wouldn't stress so much about things that are very minor in comparison to the overall picture.

269. Sometimes stress is related to the need for recognition, encouragement, or appreciation—and people can become stressed about things because they feel that no one notices

what they're doing or how hard it is. This isn't always the case, but often to help those prone to stress make a lifestyle change, they need help to see more of the overall picture—whether that means being involved in things outside their little world, or simply being acknowledged for the part they're playing while also showing them more of what everyone else is doing. If they feel a part of a team and don't feel that they're off on their own, they're less likely to stress about things.

270. 4) Praise and prayer work wonders, of course. Praise brings down My power in any situation, and prayer is very helpful for relieving stress because it's the act of putting everything back in My hands, where it belongs. So using those two weapons in your interaction with someone who tends to stress can help to “let the light in.”

271. 5) Sometimes you will need to come right out and tell someone that they're acting stressed, because as your brother's keeper, you know that that person wants to do the best job they possibly can, and stress is not going to help them do that good job. Stress will in fact screw things up. So to help them, you'll have to let them know somehow, as nicely as possible, that they seem a bit stressed, and offer your help or your prayers or whatever is appropriate.

272. However, if someone is trying to make a lifestyle change and get rid of stress, it's even more important to encourage them when they're doing well, when they're handling a project wisely and praisefully, when they're reacting prayerfully, when they're flexible and flowing with things. Thank them for their hard work during those times. Thank them for their wise contributions. Thank them for doing a tremendous job and letting Me use them. Show them that they don't have to get stressed in order to do an ace job and be appreciated.

273. 6) Sometimes people fall into stress because they're concerned about getting a job done right. They might be a little possessive of the credit, or they might be sincerely worried about

the repercussions if something isn't done right, so they're trying to take too much on themselves. Sometimes they just need another set of shoulders helping them to bear the load. If you offer to help someone in that situation, make sure you can follow through and do your part, so that you don't drop your end of the load—which would only reinforce their bad habit of stressing about it and trying to get to everything themselves.

274. 7) Make it easy for others to ask for help. Sometimes people stress because they don't like asking for help. So if someone asks you for help, realize that it might have been very difficult for them, and react as graciously as you can. Whether or not you can take on more yourself, encourage them for asking and see what you can do to help them find the help they need, whether you can give it or have to find someone else.

275. 8) Help them manage their time wisely. Sometimes people who naturally tend to stress do so because they're overly unrealistic about the time it takes to get things done, and sometimes they're just poor at managing their time and need help. If someone who has a tendency toward leaving things for the last minute takes on a big project, it's a recipe for stress unless they work in teamwork with someone who is good at managing time, and can help to move things along at a godly pace.

276. This is where “as a team we do it better” comes in and where you can relieve a lot of stress—not just for the one person, but for anyone else who would have wound up helping at the last minute. Of course, sometimes emergencies can't be avoided, but knowing one another's strengths and weaknesses in the area of time management and organization can prevent a lot of stressful situations.

277. 9) Encourage those you work with to communicate freely if they feel they have too much to do, and then work together to find solutions, or delegate more, or share the load, or seek Me as to what can be dropped or changed. This is very important. Be willing to reevaluate

priorities, to take another look at things that you thought were crucial and see if they can be done without or done later, etc. Don't push someone to take on more than they have the faith for, or they will stress about it.

278. If someone naturally stresses easily, ask them if they'd prefer to just have one project at a time. Some people are not natural multitaskers, and while it's ideal that in time they grow into being able to take on more, initially they might need help or safeguards or extra support—like not being given more than one project at once, for example.

279. 10) Do what you can to make sure that everyone has the opportunity, regularly if possible, to get away from all the work and demands and have a little time—even just a few hours, but preferably at least a full day—to rest and not have to worry about anything. A “breather” like this can do wonders for someone's vision, encouragement and productivity, not to speak of their spiritual and physical health. It's well worth the effort and sacrifice to give your loved ones this time regularly, and it will benefit the work too. (*Note:* A Word and Rest day every two weeks is a Charter requirement. If you can arrange your schedule so that everyone has a day off every week, that is preferable, of course. And if you can juggle the schedule so that everyone has times when their WnR is completely free of any obligations at all, that's helpful too.)

More insight and tips on combating stress

280. (Jesus:) Picture the farmer for a moment. I know this is an odd analogy to think of when you think of stress, because the farmer's life isn't usually a stressful one, but bear with Me for a moment.

281. The farmer works year-round. He's a pretty busy fellow, and there are demands on his time—seasonal demands, and the unforeseen demands of storms or weather.

282. Let's take a look into his mind. The farmer knows he's on his plot of land for the

long term. He knows that every year there are vegetables or grains to be planted. He knows that they must be planted by a certain time each year if he wants to reap a harvest.

283. What would happen if the farmer looked at his calendar and said, “I’m really short on cash, I’ve got to rush out and plant all my fields for a second crop of wheat. I know it’s practically winter, and that harvest is long past, but I really want to do this.”

284. Wouldn’t that be silly? He’d just be wasting his efforts.

285. How does this relate to you? You need to become much more like the farmer in planning ahead, looking into the future, and planning for the future. In some circles of the Family this is almost a nonexistent element of your daily lives.

286. There is a certain excitement to be gained from rushing from one thing to another and never knowing what’s going to be next, but that’s no way to establish a long-term work. That’s no way to ensure that the harvest is planted and reaped on schedule. That’s no way to ensure good quality fruit.

287. Like the farmer, you need to take stock of your year and, in consultation with Me, start looking further ahead. You need to start looking at what’s coming, asking Me what will be needed when that comes, looking at what your goals are and what it will require to reach them. Then you need to set about creating a plan. It’s time to take a look at what you need to do and figure out a plan with Me of how to do it.

288. Not many people can scale back on what they need to do. Some can, maybe. But the Family is a busy place and there is a world to be reached, so you can’t just sit back and take it easy. But how you work is important. How you look at your work is important. How you accomplish the work is important.



289. (Jesus:) Getting under any form of stress is never the right way to go about something. Stress is from the Enemy. Stress causes damage to your health and to your spirit. Stress is the Enemy getting your eyes off Me and on to the waves. The effects of stress are never positive.

290. Even if you are “under the gun” or under pressure from the needs at hand, stress isn’t going to help you get the job done any better or feel any better about the accomplishments when the job is done. Stress is a killer, a plain and simple disease which can be terminal, dear ones. Stress leads to heart disease, nervous disorders, burnout, and strained relations. Stress kills.

291. Stress is the Enemy’s attempt to make the job I have for you kill you. He knows if he can’t get you to not do My will, maybe he can get you so stressed and overworked in your own spirit that you’ll collapse before the job is done, thereby handing him a victory.

292. Stress is the opposite of rising above. Stress is the toxin that gathers in your system when you try to do the work in your own strength. Stress is never from Me; stress is always from the Enemy. Stress is very different from pressure. Pressure is the force that requires that you do something, and stress is the sand in the gears that makes doing it difficult and wearing on your spirit.



293. (Jesus:) How do you get rid of stress? The very first thing to do is to ask Me to help you recognize stress. You have to get a diagnosis before you can seek a cure. Ask Me to show you how you fall into being stressed about the work. Find out from Me what causes stress in your life, what reactions you have that need to change so that you don’t become stressed. Then ask Me for a workable plan to help you not become stressed.



294. (Jesus:) Stress is the result of making a decision to do something in your own strength. It’s pretty simple when you look at it like that. How you deal with pressure determines whether you become stressed or not. The pressure is there just the same, and how you approach it either causes or averts stress. If you feel you have to do it all on your own, or are afraid that you’ll fail, so you work so hard at it in your own strength without giving Me a chance, you are practically begging stress to enter your life.



295. (Jesus:) The opposite of stress is rising above and letting Me work. Stress so often accompanies things going “wrong” to your way of looking at them. If everything was going right, then you wouldn’t be stressed, right? If everything was going according to plan, then you wouldn’t be stressed, because you’d have it all figured out and know what needs to be done.

296. But I allow things to go “wrong” so that you will have to seek Me and find out what to do next. I could have set a standard course for your life to follow with no surprises or challenges that you didn’t know about, but that would have been a mundane and boring life.

297. Instead, I’ve created challenges and change. I’ve created an ever-changing environment for you so that you are always faced with something new and challenging to keep you happy and fulfilled. If you begin to look at what you previously considered “wrong” as a challenge to keep you happy, you’ll be able to avert the stress that often accompanies things going “wrong” in your eyes.



298. (Jesus:) If you begin to react to the pressure of a situation by feeling stress, ask Me why and how I want you to react to it. If it’s a trap of the Enemy, I’ll show you how to sidestep it, or I’ll show you how to safely go through it without falling into the damaging reactions that accompany stress.

299. How you look at the challenge is the first step. If you look at the pressuring circumstances positively and as part of My plan, then your reactions will be positive and you’ll be able to come to Me and find out how to tackle the challenge so that it doesn’t become stressful.

More on the difference between pressure and stress

300. (Jesus:) I know how busy your lives for Me are, and I know how taxing it can be if you allow stress into your life. But, dear ones, you are only going to get busier, and working conditions aren’t going to get easier as the Endtime comes into full swing. More and more you will need to

look at events and challenges through the eyes of faith and not let stress get ahold of you; otherwise you will short-circuit and begin blowing all kinds of fuses, and that will lead to burnout in the spirit, which will then lead to breakdowns or burnout in the physical.

301. If something has come up that has the potential to cause you stress, there’s a very good chance I’m giving you an opportunity to rise above the pressure and the feelings of stress this would normally have given you, and instead, to look into My face and receive My plan and go about it in My Spirit—thereby living in the spirit and not in the flesh.

302. It all comes down to how you accomplish My will. You can rush out of My court and work so hard in your own spirit that you become drained; or you can work in My Spirit and stay fully charged and inspired. My will may still get done the first way, but it takes a toll on you and you will wear out.

303. My realm of the spirit is not stressful. We are busy and there are pressures which compel us to do what we have to do in the spirit, but stress doesn’t enter our lives. We draw the line and realize that in the spirit, when things are done by My power, the job can get done, and it can be done right and not drain the life out of our spirits.

304. Let Me recap and condense this for you:

Stress = death, overwork, sickness, strain, and collapse. There’s nothing good about stress.

Pressure, if handled correctly and in the power of My Spirit = results, challenges, tasks completed, motivation, desperation.

305. Pressure pushes you to take action. If you let it push you to Me, if you let it make you desperate, then pressure is a good thing. If you let the pressure make you stressed, then the results are negative, even though the pressure might not have been negative in itself. It’s how you react to the pressure that determines the outcome.

306. Pressure is a constant part of your service for Me because there is an urgency to

get the job done. Look at the farmer: There's pressure on him to plant and sow and harvest at a certain time, but he's not stressed about it. Pressure is part of the job, but stress isn't.

307. Pressure is not a bad thing in itself. Pressure can motivate you, inspire you, challenge you, and get you moving in the right direction to accomplish My will. Pressure is a good force in your life, so you shouldn't feel bad if you are feeling the pressure of My Spirit to get the job done. Pressure isn't what is bad.

308. Remember what Paul said: "The love of Christ constrains me" (2Cor.5:14). That's not a lazy or laid-back statement. His love for Me pressured him to do what I wanted him to do. All this to explain that pressure isn't bad; pressure is a good part of life and motivates you to get the job done.

309. (Jesus:) You don't have to analyze whether you're feeling pressure or stress. You should just let any feeling of pressure be an automatic signal for you to fly into My arms. Let any twinge of pressure push you to Me. When you're there in My arms, I'll give you the strength that you need for what I want you to do. If you're truly open to Me, yielded to My will, and desirous of the counsel and input of your shepherds and co-workers, then I'll make clear what is My will for you to do, and what is My will for you to leave with Me or others and not worry about. That simple formula will help eliminate ungodly stress, and will leave you with My calling and duty for you—which sometimes comes with a bit of pressure, but it is godly pressure that keeps you close to Me, dependent on Me, and allows Me to do greater things through you than you could do by yourself.

310. Now back to stress. When you become stressed, you pick up the giant boulder of what needs to be done and struggle beneath its weight rather than figuring out the smart way to do it with the least wear and tear on your spirit.

311. Often stress results because you don't have a good plan of how to go about dealing with and attending to the pressure you face. Stress can become a lifestyle and an addiction. It can make you feel as though you're really working hard, and that can boost your pride; it's a human response.

312. Think of where I've been leading the Family. Have I been leading you toward "human responses"? Have I been pushing you and nudging you toward becoming more earthly and more carnal? Have I been encouraging working in the arm of the flesh and doing the task on your own?—Or have I been opening your eyes more and more to My power? Haven't I been showing you solutions? Haven't I been giving you the answers to help you handle the pressures you face? Some of what I've been showing you is: full possession, the keys, dependence on Me, the strength of weakness, spirit help, and heavenly thought power.

313. From the preceding list you can probably see where I'm leading you, and that is away from stress. You may not have realized it till now, but the path I have been outlining is not one filled with stress and strain. It's a tough road with a lot of obstacles and work that needs to be done, but it isn't a stressful path.

314. How can My path be stress-free? By taking up the earnest pursuit of dependence on Me by using all the spiritual weapons I have given you. This is the answer, the solution that will help you to do My will without stress. This is the way to abolish stress in your life: full possession and dependence on Me, refusing to work in the arm of the flesh, and employing My help to get the job done.

315. It all comes down to one thing. "Is that possible?" you ask. "With all that there is to do, it can't be that simple. Surely there is some complicated formula to ridding our lives of stress, if it is possible at all."

316. Well, My loves, it all comes down to one thing: dependence. I can't make that any clearer or more simple for you. What will make you immune to stress is one thing: dependence on Me and the things of My Spirit. That takes on many forms, and there are many ways to show and employ this principle, but that's what it all boils down to.

317. Isn't that simple? All you have to do when faced with a "task too great for human hands" is to come to lean on Me and My power, and "in leaning find your strength." The answer is total and utter dependence on Me for the strength and the miracles needed. There is no other solution, no other way, no greater antidote to stress than this.

318. Stress can be likened to a biological weapon of the Enemy. It's infectious and highly contagious and debilitating in the long run. Dependence on Me is the antidote that will keep stress from having any effect on you. If you've been inoculated by regular doses of dependence, then no matter how stressful things are, they won't stress you because you are immune to the Enemy's toxins.

319. There you have it; it's a very simple solution. It's not easy to implement, I'll give you that, because you're so used to doing things in your own strength or feeling that you have to get it done; you're not as familiar with the art of dependence as you could be.

320. Even as you go to implement this counsel in your life, you'll sometimes forget to inoculate yourself and take your shot of My power, and you'll find yourself beginning to be affected by the biological weapon. You'll stumble and fall. But as you learn to depend more on My power and My strength, you'll understand what the difference is between working in your own strength and working in My power.

321. You were probably thinking that the solution to stress was very complicated. But in the spirit, My solutions are not complicated. My solutions are simple, and that's why this answer is so simple.

322. Stress is defeated by dependence on Me. That's the plain and simple truth that cannot be refuted. The antidote is dependence. It couldn't be simpler, but the implementation isn't always easy. It takes retraining your mind and your spirit. It takes overwriting your carnal reactions with spiritual ones. It means breaking bad habits and making new good habits.

323. It's hard work to erase the old ways of doing things that you've been doing for years, because they're deeply engrained in your mind and psyche. But with the keys, even the oldest dog can be taught new tricks. And the new trick is the art of dependence.

324. I can begin to overwrite the old routines in your mind with the new routines of the spirit if you'll let Me. I can open your eyes to when, how, and why you get stressed, and if you'll ask Me, I can show you the new responses that will eliminate stress in your life.

325. Life for Me is only going to get busier as we reach the final showdown between Heaven and Hell on Earth, but that doesn't mean your lives will become more stressful. It means you need to change the way you react to and carry out My will. It requires you to take a new path that eliminates stress in your life. I can change you, and I want to change you. I want to rewrite your subroutines to employ My power and let My Spirit flow through you rather than you getting all worked up and trying to do it on your own.

326. My way is humbling, however. It accompanies the realization that you can't do it; you have to admit your weakness and accept My strength. My way, the art of dependence, isn't self-glorifying.

327. Dependence glorifies Me. You can't take the credit for getting the job done, so there is very little glory to be had; but My way works, and it will get the job done. However, it requires sacrificing your desire for credit or the praise of men. Dependence is humbling, but it is the solution, and it's a solution that will work.

328. Dependence is the key. Dependence is the key!