

---

# Biblical Answers to Stress

## Radio Message by Dwight Porter, D.D.

---

WHERE does it come from? Are we personally responsible for all such pressure? Do we bring it upon ourselves?

Does anybody have complete control over what happens to us and loved ones? The origin of stress is most interesting. Some comes from obedience to God and others from disobedience. Many characters passed major difficulties, having done nothing amiss to deserve such. Others brought great loss to themselves, as well as entire nations. Stress and strain came to biblical characters in both positions of obedience and disobedience.

### Stress from Disobedience

Jonah was a prime example of such, due to absolute rebellion against God's declared will. He knew Ninevah would repent and be spared if he proclaimed God's message to them. Desiring their destruction, he refused to convey Truth concerning Ninevah's judgment. Jonah ended up in the whale of a belly or the belly of a whale, whichever description you desire. A backslidden preacher out of the will of God is enough to make any size fish sick.

The lack of faith on the part of the disciples produced mental anguish and fear. "And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind and said unto the sea, Peace be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so FEARFUL? How is it that ye have NO FAITH? And THEY FEARED EXCEEDINGLY, and said one to another, What manner of man is this that even the wind and the sea obey him" (Mark 4:37-41). Be assured, the Bible plainly states that fear and faith are at opposite ends.

Moses failed to sanctify God in the presence of the children of Israel. After denouncing them, he asked if WE must fetch the water. Moses would not help do it. God alone would supply the needs of His children. Moses' disobedience brought on the tragic consequence of his failure to enter the Promise Land. Imagine his sorrow when God communicated the following to him: "Get thee up into this mountain Abraham, unto mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho: and behold the land of Canaan which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession: And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people: Because YE TRESPASSED AGAINST ME among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel. Yet thou shalt see the land before thee; and thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel" (Deuteronomy 32:49-52).

The tragic disobedience of King Saul produced God's judgment. He brought upon himself the grief that followed his action. "And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal and the people were scattered from him. And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. And it came to pass, that, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him. And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered

from me, and that thou earnest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the Lord: I forced myself, therefore, and offered a burnt offering. And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly; thou hast NOT KEPT THE COMMANDMENT of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou HAST NOT KEPT that which the Lord commanded thee" (I Samuel 13:8-14).

The prophet's name was Nathan. He was not fearful of the king when he looked David in the eye and said, THOU ART THE MAN. David lived the rest of his life under stress and strain as a result of disobedience to God's plain commands. Instead of being with his armies on the battlefield, he was upon the roof at home at the wrong time, looking in the wrong direction. "Wherefore hast thou DESPISED THE COMMANDMENT of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbor, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun" (II Samuel 12:9-12).

God rejoiced in King Solomon's request. "Give therefore thy servant an under-standing heart to judge thy people, and I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast now asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, not hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; Behold I have done according to thy words:

lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honour; so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days" (I Kings 3:9-14).

Despite God's warning to Solomon, he disobeyed. "For they (women) will turn away your heart after their gods; Solomon clave unto these in love" (I Kings 11:2). "But King Solomon loved many strange women. . . And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart" (I Kings 11:1, 3).

If God did not allow the three kings of Israel to escape stress and strain, resulting from their disobedience, YOU will be no exception. Stress can be the automatic consequence of the sin of failure to obey God's commandments, doing that which is contrary to the same.

### Stress from Obedience

The test of obedience for three Hebrew children was not complicated. "Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, the province of Babylon. Then the herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of

music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace” (Daniel 3:1, 4-6).

These young men had a possession in their heart, mind and backbone that would not allow them to bow down before the music of the world. Their dedication to the law of their God forbade their knees to bend before any other god. “There are certain Jews, whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee; they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up” (Daniel 3:12).

Have you noticed the assurance of their convictions? “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king, BUT IF NOT, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up” (Daniel 3:16-18).

Note their fellowship in the midst of the fire. “He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God” (Daniel 3:25). If you are not willing to face the stress and strain resulting from obedience to God, you will miss fellowship with the fourth Person in your time of fiery trial. (I Peter 4: 12, 13).

Joseph’s popularity with his father was not his responsibility. His dreams that produced the hostility of his brothers were not his invention. He was sold by his brothers to slave traders heading for Egypt (where God wanted him). He was placed in a dungeon because of saying NO to the solicitations of an adulterous woman. How different from King David’s course of action! By the way, God’s method of fleeing from temptations has remained unchanged. “And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me; and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out” (Genesis 32:12). “Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (II Tim. 2:22).

Joseph did not know the ultimate plan of God while going through his specified time of stress and strain, independent of any failure on his part. Eventually he realized God’s purpose. Speaking to his brothers, Joseph said, “Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you, to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt” (Genesis 45:5-8).

Midnight! We see two preachers who had come to Philippi to hold a great crusade. *Paul, where are you? I have checked every hotel and motel in town and am unable to locate you.* Paul answers, “Come to the jail. Here Jam with my feet in stocks with blood coming down my shoulders.” *What have you done to deserve such treatment?* (How would you like to answer that question for Paul?) “A woman kept talking continuously of the things she knew by the inspiration of the devil. I took it as long as I

could, and in the Name of Jesus Christ, I commanded Satan to come out of her. But it made a few people mad, because of losing their income through her ability to tell fortunes. They whipped me along with Silas, and here I sit in jail.” (Read this story in Acts 16.)

What would you have done in those circumstances? Would you question being in the Lord’s will? Not Paul and Silas! Listen to their course of action: “And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them” (Acts 16:25). What happened? The jail, that was built to hold them, fell apart, along with all the chains that bound them. By the way, we would have more places falling apart and the conversions of jailers if we would stop complaining in our difficult times and rejoice in our midnight hour. The jailer and his family were saved from God’s wrath. God has a plan that will always mean GOOD for His children.

The betrayal by brothers, fiery furnace, fear, and jail are some of the positions of stress and strain that God is working His purpose in. They, too, will work together for good (Romans 8:28). In every circumstance that comes our way, God has a definite will, plan, and purpose to be accomplished. If we are responsible for stress due to our disobedience, we must repent of the sin of rebellion, trusting God to forgive us according to His promise. “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:32). God forgives upon the basis of the faithful work of His Son in our behalf. We rest upon the provision of God in and through his Son, Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31).

Have you found fault with God’s action in your behalf? The only way to cleansing and forgiveness for the Christian is to confess as God instructs you to do when He convicts you of such deplorable action (I John 1:9). Our sorrow, distress and grief prepares us for a ministry of comfort to others (II Corinthians 1:3, 4).

Friend, let us surrender to the accomplishment of God’s purpose. Let Him know that you intend to learn from the stress and strain of chastening and also from that which fulfills His desire. Remember, both judgment and blessing are ours only in His will.

---

*Additional free copies of this message are available. It is a reprint from our free publication, THE CHALLENGER. Also, available are nine free lessons of our free Home Bible Study Course.*

**The Hour of Grace & Power**  
**PO Box 5900**  
**Titusville, FL 32783-5900**  
[www.thehourofgraceandpower.org](http://www.thehourofgraceandpower.org)