

Supporting Christian Unity in the Alfred Community



February 2004



Running On Empty

"As a country we represent only 6% of the world's population.

Yet we consume over 90% of the prescription drugs for stress and depression."

~ Pastor John Hagee

Manifestations of excessive or poorly managed stress can be extremely varied. Many people report that stress and depression symptoms include; headaches, nausea, insomnia, poor eating habits, anxiety, anger, tension and poor concentration to name but a few. Research has shown that high levels of stress are known to exert a negative influence on our immune systems and can lead to other medical conditions, stressed individuals can experience frequent colds or other infections and illnesses. These symptoms might not be easily recognized as being stress-related.

What are we so stressed about? The causes of our stress are as varied as the ways we react thus, listing the causes of stress is tricky. There can be innumerable stress factors since different individuals react differently to the same stress conditions. Extreme stress situations for one individual may prove to be mild for another and for yet another person the situations might not qualify as stress symptoms at all. Stress is often termed as a twentieth century syndrome, born out of man's race towards modern progress and its ensuing complexities. As a consequence – many people report a feeling of being drained and feeling burned out.

We're Running on Empty one might say and we're trying to handle too much on our own. Our *reactions to* and means of *coping with* stress are as numerous as the factors that induce stress themselves. You see, stress is unique to each individual and it is important to note that at one time or another we all have experienced stress in one form or another. That being said, we should strive to be less judgmental and more compassionate of other's skills (or lack thereof) in handling the situations they are struggling with. The word 'empathy' comes to mind here.

I believe the majority of us could relate better to each other in that we have experienced many of the factors of modern day living and the stress they can cause.

- Demands placed on us at work to do more with less
- Expectations in relationships between spouses with spouses can cause discord & stress

- Financial burdens
- Fear of losing one's job in an uncertain economy
- Child rearing

...the list goes on and on and if we are not mindful we can fail to recognize stress related symptoms and struggles in the people around us every day ~ even our loved ones.

Sufferers may become more and more introverted – feeling that they are the only ones in the given situation and therefore left to deal with it on their own. And people who perceive themselves under what feels like unbearable stress may even begin a process of self medication using drugs, alcohol and tobacco products to find 'pseudo relief' which consequently have an even greater negative impact on the individuals *and* their families.

It's an all out attack from the enemy and Christ tells us this –

John 10:10

¹⁰ The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

So the truth is – We are not alone and through Christ we can have Life and that more abundantly! Further, we should help each other by sharing each other's burdens as Paul tells us:

Galatians 6:1-3

¹ Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

² Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

³ For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

So let me encourage you today – You are not alone! Whatever your struggles are, whatever your circumstances are, there is hope and respite!

Matthew 11:28-30

²⁸"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

We have an alternative to Running on Empty – we can be filled and refreshed by the Holy Spirit which is in Christ Jesus. The gift is free and available to everyone – get yours today!