

MCD Just Checking In #34 April 15 %Stress and Strife+ *Pilgrim's Process*
Psalm 39:12 "Hear my prayer, O Lord... for I am a "pilgrim" with You..."

Tom Hale: On Being an %M person+

Here follows a number of common reasons why M's drop out: health reasons, needs of aged parents, needs of children, job dissatisfaction, inability to adapt with resulting emotional stress, discouragement because of lack of fruit, disagreement with agency policy and leadership decisions, concern for professional advancement, desire for life back home, wife's unhappiness, fears – all this adds up to 25% of the total." It has been said that inability to get along with other M workers accounts for the other 75%.

Stress and strife must be overcome on our knees if we ever hope to stand on our feet and run the race with endurance. Failure to resolve stress will inevitably result in strife. Unresolved strife inevitably results in the downward spiral of team dysfunction and destruction.

Stress: pressure, tension, strain and its resulting anxiety. Stress may refer to the outward pressures of illness, extreme effort and fatigue. It may also refer to the inward experience of fear, discouragement, anger, confusion, and depression. Paul was no stranger to stress. 2 Corinthians, his most autobiographical letter, makes frequent references to stress. Many things contribute to stress: weariness, unfulfilled expectations, threats, sense of unfairness, unmet desires, failure, disappointment, unrealistic or unattainable goals, and fear of man. External, physical stress can be relieved by a few days off. Internal emotional and mental stress is not so easily relieved. Internal stress is relieved by a long term change of perspective and continual decisions to embrace eternal truth and adjust life accordingly. By continually placing our trust in God's promises and surrendering our lives to obedience to His commands, we can find relief. (2 Cor 10:3-4) He said His burden was light and His yoke was gentle. (Matt 11:28-30) Not every burden and yoke we take on is from Him. Learning to rest and renew both body and spirit has always been a part of God's plan for us. If we ignore this principle of renewal, we will pay the price in the currency of burnout.

Strife: trouble, conflict, discord, friction, rivalry. We are by nature competitors, maneuvering to get our own way, maintaining control and protecting our position and possessions. Even as believers we struggle with the tendency to cause strife, blame shift, compare ourselves with and speak negatively of others, harbor resentment and avoid those we are obligated to love, pray for, submit to and serve. We may also attack ourselves, filling our minds with self condemnation and criticism. *Self is always the focus when stress turns to strife.*

When stress occurs, we face an opportunity to grow in grace but also a temptation to allow it to produce strife. Stress and strife are common themes in *the book*. Consider the following: James 1:2-12; 1 Peter 1:3-13; 2 Tim 2:23-25

Self Check Questions:

What are my present sources of stress? External and Internal (List at least 3)

On a scale of 1-5, how would I rate their intensity level?

Are they avoidable or unavoidable at this point? What are some possible ways to make the stress level livable?

How am I (or should I begin) implementing regular times of rest and renewal? (Sabbath principle)

Has stress resulted in strife in my life lately? If so, how?

Am I quick to be critical of others and also to harbor a grudge against them?

How has stress been used of God to help me grow lately?

Suggested passages for memory and meditation 2 Cor 10:3-5 Matt 11:28-30

For Further Study: 2 Cor 1:8-11; 2:3; 3:5; 4:5-18; 6:4-10; 7:5-6; 10:3-5; 11:23-33; 12:7-10; Matt 11:28-30; Psalms 18; 27; 28; 121; Isa 12; 26:3-4

Lord, You have promised that You would give me the strength and wisdom to endure all the stress and pressures of life. You know how normal it is for me to try to handle life on my own – normal and inadequate. Give me the wisdom to know when to say No to things that are unnecessary burdens and when to say Yes and draw on Your power to sustain me. I long to be at rest in my spirit and I know this only comes from You. Forgive me for thinking I have to meet every need and respond to every request. Lord, you knew how to walk away from the crowd and find time alone with Your Father. Help me to rest. And help me to help others do the same. Give me peace rest – O Giver of all sufficient grace. In Your Name, O Lord my strength, Amen+

Remember, you are very special to us and are praying for you continually.

Living with leaving in view.... Jn 9:4 Ron & Val

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable, changed by The Immutable, running after The Irresistible with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows, spending our time on eternity, owning nothing yet possessing everything that matters and lasts. We are Pilgrims in Paradox. Welcome to THE JOURNEY.