

WEEK TWO

A Wellbeing Mindset

LEADERS' RESOURCES

Extracts adapted from 'God's Plan For Your Wellbeing' by Dave Smith (Waverley Abbey Resources)

8 Tips on How to Live a Stress-Free Life

One of the doctors in our local church recently wrote to me about the strong link between our mental state and the symptoms of stress, such as headaches, muscle tension, dizziness, sleep problems, tiredness, irritability, feeling overwhelmed, anxious or fearful. She said: 'From my personal experience, my clinical practice and ongoing current research in neuroscience, I have come to understand that the link between mental stress and the physical body cannot be overemphasised.' Then, drawing on her own medical background and the Bible, she gave '8 Tips on How to Live a Stress-Free Life',* many of which are related to our thoughts and our mindset.

- 1. Mindfulness and meditation.** These practices are frequently recommended for increased mental wellbeing. Christian mindfulness is becoming aware of the presence of God and Christian meditation focuses on the Word of God (see Joshua 1:8). Together they produce wonderful benefits: 'You will keep in perfect peace ['complete wellbeing', literally 'shalom, shalom'] those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.' (Isaiah 26:3).
- 2. Take control of your thoughts.** The NHS website highlights the importance of this, and the Bible calls us to 'take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ' (2 Corinthians 10:5).
- 3. Develop the habit of casting your cares.** The NHS advice is to accept what you have control over and accept what you cannot change. The Bible encourages: 'casting all your cares [all your anxieties, all your worries, and all your concerns, once and for all] on him, for he cares about you [with deepest affection, and watches over you very carefully]' (1 Peter 5:7, AMP).
- 4. Connect with people, help people.** Science has shown that as we do this our neural networks form better. The Bible tells us we are to live a life of love (see 1 Corinthians 13 and Week Six of this guide).
- 5. Do things you enjoy.** NHS advice confirms the biblical picture of the Creator God who 'provides us with everything for our enjoyment' (1 Timothy 6:17).

- 6. Be goal-oriented.** Again, the NHS advises to set yourself goals and challenges. The Bible talks about the importance of vision (e.g. Proverbs 29:18) and has an underlying theme of the need for us to live with true purpose (see Week Eight).
- 7. Be thankful.** Research shows people who are most grateful are generally more satisfied and less stressed. The Bible encourages us to give thanks in all things (see Colossians 3:16–17).
- 8. Live loved.** The general term for this is self-love. The Bible tells us that we will only truly know we're loved when we know we're dearly loved by God (see Ephesians 5:1–2).

What's encouraging about this list is that they are all things that are medically recommended, biblically based and practically accessible.

*Not all 'stress' is bad.