

PSALM 31: AN EXAMPLE OF HANDLING STRESS

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In Psalm 31, God provides a helpful example from David's life on how to utilize His resources for handling stress in extreme circumstances. Study this Psalm for creative ways to handle your own stress.

Intensity of David's Stress

Verses 9-13 indicate the intensity of the stress David was experiencing, and the symptoms he was experiencing as a result. He experienced intense symptoms in the following areas: emotional (vs. 9,10), physical (10), social and interpersonal (11), and mental (12). Nearly every aspect of his life was severely affected by stress.

David's Strategy for Handling the Stress

David demonstrated several specific behaviors and attitudes in his strategy for handling this intensely difficult situation. His primary method for dealing with it centered around his intimate relationship with God, as indicated by his first statement, "In you, O Lord, I have taken refuge." Let's look at how he handled the stress by taking refuge in the Lord.

1. He set his heart on who God is.
 - a. My rock and my fortress (3).
 - b. My refuge (4).
 - c. Lord, the God of truth (5).
 - d. You are my God (14).
2. He set his heart on God's attributes.
 - a. His righteousness (1).
 - b. His truth (5).
 - c. His wonderful, unfailing love (7,16,21).
 - d. His great goodness (19).
3. He cried to God for help (1,17).
4. He committed his spirit to God (5).
5. He affirmed his trust in the Lord (6,14).
6. He reminded himself of what God had done (5,7,8,19,21,22).
7. He chose to be glad and rejoice (7).
8. He acknowledged his pain and suffering, and described it to God (9-13).
9. He reminded himself that his times were in God's hands (15).
10. He praised the Lord (21).
11. He reminded himself of what God does for His own children (20,23).

12. He expressed what he wanted God to be to him.
 - a. Be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me (2).
 - b. Be merciful to me (9).
13. He prayed for what he wanted God to do for him.
 - a. Let me never be put to shame (1).
 - b. Deliver me (1,15).
 - c. Turn your ear to me (2).
 - d. Come quickly to my rescue (2).
 - e. Lead and guide me (3).
 - f. Free me from the trap (4).
 - g. Let your face shine on me (16).
 - h. Save me in your unfailing love (16).
 - i. Let me not be put to shame (17).
14. In the middle of his stress, He encouraged others.
 - a. To love the Lord (23).
 - b. To be strong and take heart (24).

Conclusion

May you increase your skills for handling stress as you study David's strategy. In this Psalm, the Holy Spirit gave us fourteen specific things to do in our relationship with our Lord when in a stress situation. Use this study as a checklist to make sure you're employing as many of God's resources as possible. Then you may want to study other passages in the Word and add other specific skills to your strategy.