



STRESS MANAGEMENT



By Tony Akinyemi

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the **20th Century**, INFECTION was the most important cause of chronic disease. However, towards the tail end of the **20th Century**, STRESS took over as the major culprit. There is obviously a link between stress and disease on the one hand, and stress and the speed of recovery from disease, on the other hand. For example, stress lowers a person's **immune system** thereby making him or her susceptible to infections. At the same time, stress also reduces a person's ability to recover from an infection. This is the reason a person often comes down with a cold, a sore throat, repeated malaria or typhoid fever attacks, or such other ailments, after a prolonged period of stress. While stress is a normal part of life, yet we need to learn how to manage our stress in order to enjoy optimum health and long life.

WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is the body's non-specific response to an inappropriate level of pressure. It is a situation in which the demand placed on an individual is perceived as too much, thereby disorganizing the individual's life and body chemistry or even causing ill health.

The human body reacts to changes, pressures, or stress, in a multi-dimensional way. The impact of stress affects us **mentally, emotionally, and physically**. **Anxiety**, for instance, is a natural reaction to stress. When anxiety begins to take its toll on us, we begin to have trouble falling or staying asleep (**insomnia**), trouble eating (**loss of appetite**), and trouble concentrating (**disorientation**).

STRESSORS

Hans Selye, an endocrinologist, defined stress in **1956** as **"the non-specific response of the body to any demand made upon it."** He went ahead to term the demands made upon the body as **stressors**. All **stressors** trigger a physiological sequence of events in our human bodies called a **stress adaptation mechanism** or **stress response mechanism**. **Stressors** could fall under any of the following categories:

Internal Stressors which could be due to **physiological factors**, such as **nutritional imbalance, gender, pain, chronic or acute infections**, etc; or **mental factors**, such as **emotional strain, depression, anxiety, fear, worry, hatred, bitterness, un-forgiveness**, etc.

External Stressors, such as **physical** and **environmental factors** like **trauma, pollution, temperature extremes, natural disasters like hurricanes**, etc. **Spiritual factors**, such as **Satanic attacks or siege** can also be responsible for our stress (e.g. **I Kings 19:1-4**).

Phase or Developmental Stressors, such as **growth challenges** (e.g. teething problems in children), **age-related issues** (e.g. menopausal challenges in women, mid-life crisis, etc.), **higher responsibilities** that come along with promotion at work, etc.

Situational Stressors arising from circumstances in and around one's life, such as having problems in relationships, living in very poor conditions and being malnourished, living in an overly populated area with its attendant consequences (such as heavy vehicular traffic in Lagos), etc.

Stressors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Sickness in the family,
- Death in the family,
- Awaiting medical examination or test results,
- Surgery,
- Barrenness,
- Loss of job,
- Demands of one's job (deadlines, etc.),
- Relocation,
- Failure in an exam,
- Pressure to produce results by all means,
- Poverty and financial uncertainties,
- Political fear,
- War,
- Refugee situation,
- The gap between goals and the means to achieve the goals,
- Relational and social conflicts,
- Accidents,
- Fear of attacks (from armed robbers, assassins, cult members, real and imagined enemies, etc.),
- Horror or violent movies on television or in cinema houses,
- Regular bad news on TV and Radio can stress us too.
- Even the birth of a new baby (the birth process could be physically stressful for mother but emotionally stressful for father. Also, the first few months of raising the new baby can be stressful for mother and father due to loss of sleep at night)
- Planning a wedding, etc.

Even retirement, that should ordinarily reduce our stress, can become a stressor for a number of reasons:

IN THIS EDITION:

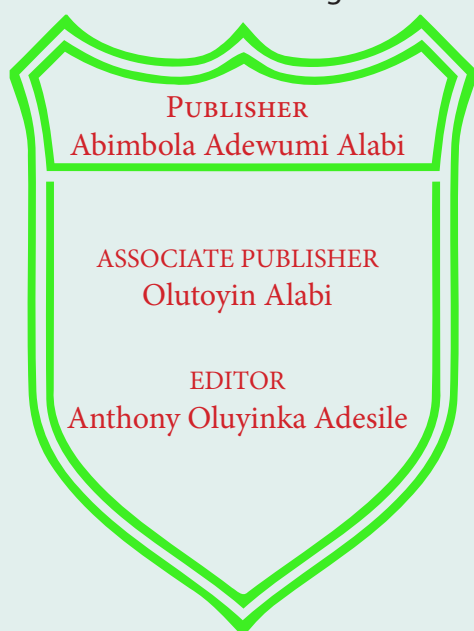
STRESS MANAGEMENT

AN HOUR WITH GEORGE MULLER: THE MAN OF FAITH TO WHOM GOD GAVE MILLIONS
UNDERSTANDING THE SOURCE OF ANGER
WASHING TOILETS

Welcome to Panoplia.

The mission of Panoplia is to help believers develop a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. It emphasises spiritual growth and leadership.

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Feel free to write to us if you have comments, contributions, observations or reactions to articles published in this journal.

All correspondence should be directed to:

The Editor
Panoplia, P.O. Box 53277,
Falomo, Ikoyi,
Lagos.Nigeria.

The Editor Panoplia,
P. O. Box 110808 Cambria Heights,
New York, NY 11411.

For Free subscription
email us at :
info@destiny-empowerment.org

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a. First, if you do not plan for your retirement, loss of regular income or a drop in income could begin to create financial stress.

b. Depression is very common after retirement for those who have not planned well in advance for it.

c. For some housewives who have been used to seeing their husbands return from work only in the evenings, having him around all day could become a burden, especially if the man is not a pleasant person to be with. In fact, some women claim that retirement simply means twice the husband for half the money!

The WEIGHT versus the IMPATCT of STRESS

Experts on stress assign a weight to each stressor, depending on its impact on a person. For example, the death of a spouse is assigned a weight of **100**, the death of a parent **90**, marital divorce **73**, marital separation **65**, sentence to a jail term **63**, a child that changes school and moves to a new school **50**, increase in the number of arguments between parents may give a child a stressor score of about **47**, etc. This weight is often referred to as ‘**Life Change Units**’ or **LCUs**. The higher the score, when all **LCUs** of a person are added together, the more the likelihood of the impact of stress on the person’s health.

GOOD versus BAD STRESS

While bad stress is known as **DISTRESS**, good stress is known as **EUSTRESS**. Distress can disturb the body’s internal equilibrium. There is a certain optimum amount of stress that we all need for peak performance. Most people do better when they are under a “healthy” amount of pressure. For example, guitar strings need adequate tension to give the right sound. Less tension gives poor sound, while too much tension can snap the strings. Good stress helps us to perform better while bad stress can lead to poor performance. Good stress helps to prepare us for things we have to face, and sometimes gives us the energy to take action when we need to. Stress generally exhausts us and may lead to or aggravate disease. Stress is positive when it keeps us alert to avoid danger or when it helps us to work harder to achieve set goals. Stress, however, becomes negative when a person faces continuous or chronic challenges without relief or relaxation between challenges. When stress continues for a long time without relief, it leads to disease.

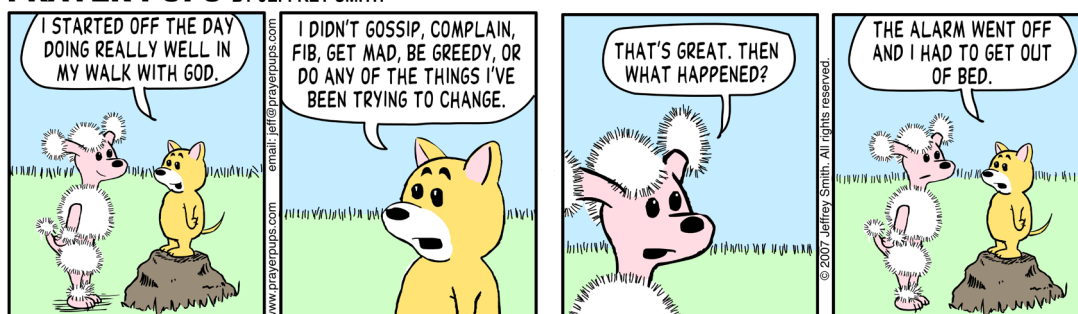
STRESS IN ANIMALS

Even though stress is a factor in disease, yet we need not blow its impact out of proportion. For instance, wild animals in the bush go through a lot of stress too, but they don’t suffer the level of disease we suffer. Wild animals are stressed by ecological factors and threatened daily by human beings. Preys are attacked daily by predators. Even predators have to be under sufficient tension to be able to launch an effective attack on their preys. A lot of **adrenalin** rushes through the bodies of both predators and preys in the wild. Compared to animals in the wild, most human beings obvious-

John 16:33 (Amplified Bible)

“I have told you these things,
so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace and confidence.
In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer [take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted]! For I have overcome the world. [I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you.]”

PRAYER PUPS BY JEFFREY SMITH



SOMETIMES IT'S HARD TO DO WHAT YOU KNOW IS RIGHT, BUT IT'S ALWAYS WORTH TRYING.

ly face less physical tension, yet have inferior health. Stress obviously impacts health, but it is my candid opinion that a person who eats right, lives right, and puts his trust in God, will be less prone to the devastating impact of the stress of daily living. According to **Dr. Edward Howell**, *“The philosophy of stress as an etiological (causative) factor in human disease has been blown out of proportion to reality.”*

DEGREES OF STRESS

Acute Stress: Usually hits hard and quickly – e.g. being robbed at gunpoint.

Intermittent Stress: Lasts over a longer period of time and recurs again and again – e.g. preparing for exams every semester or term.

Chronic Stress: These are long-term stressors. If care is not taken, an individual may have to co-habit with it for long or even throughout life – e.g. caring for a sick loved one long term or dealing with a debilitating degenerative disease.

STRESS EVENTS versus STRESS ENVIRONMENTS

Stress events are those traumatic occurrences that affect us deeply. They include **the death of a loved one, a divorce, an accident, a natural disaster, the loss of a job, a financial loss, a major illness**, etc. Stress events are not necessarily always negative. The pressure and challenges of relocation, a new job, planning a wedding, the birth of a new baby, etc, are all positive but stressful all the same. Stress events often happen suddenly. Most of the time we are unprepared for them, and they are usually inevitable parts of life. Even Jesus assured His disciples that these events are part and parcel of life when He said: *“I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace and confidence. In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer [take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted]! For I have overcome the world. [I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you.]”* John 16:33 (Amplified Bible).

While stress events are usually one-off events, **stress environments**, on the other hand, are on going. They include things like: **family relationships, our jobs, our neighbourhood, the country in which we live**, etc. While some of these stress environments can be made less stressful, we however do not always have control over some of them. For instance, while I can easily resign from a stressful job or relocate my residence to a safer and more serene neighbourhood, I cannot just walk away from my marriage, run away from my home or parents, or relocate from my country to another. These are more serious issues requiring deeper thoughts and prayers, and greater efforts and planning.

For example, **Nigeria**, as of today, exerts a lot of stress on those that live in the country. I have been to a couple of countries around the world and I can tell that the Nigerian environment is quite stressful, especially in big cities like Lagos, Ibadan, Port Harcourt, etc. There are very few recreational facilities, mass transit systems are almost non-existent, there are very few jobs and high road accident rates, high incidence of armed robbery and mysterious assassinations, etc.

The issues that stress us in this nation include: **population congestion; traffic jams** caused by **bad roads, near-insane and inconsiderate drivers** and **motorbike riders, market-places** indiscriminately situated at

bus-stops and trucks parked indiscriminately on our highways; **epileptic power supply**; an unacceptable level of **unemployment** and **poverty; insecurity** of life and property; **inadequate housing**, etc. What about **Civil Servants** who deliberately create bottlenecks in the system in order to extort money from other citizens? Sadly, the **Police Force** in Nigeria that is supposed to reduce stress for people also add their own stressors to commuters by mounting unnecessary toll-gates (excuse me, check-points and road-blocks), thereby creating unnecessary traffic hold-ups on our highways and bye-ways. Thank God that these road blocks are now gone.

Other sources of stress in the Nigerian nation include **students’ unrest, incessant strikes by labour unions, a culture of corruption and impunity with their serious negative impact on the economy and national development, the restiveness in the Niger Delta area, the Boko Haram menace, kidnapping, mysterious killings and assassinations of political opponents, late payment of salaries/gratuities/pensions in some quarters, pipeline vandalism and its attendant consequences, poverty, hunger**, and so on? High fuel prices and the attendant inflation that followed have become new stressors in Nigeria.

All of these and many more make living in Nigeria a stressful experience. I pray and look forward to the day when Nigerians would start enjoying stress-free living in all the areas mentioned above, and even more.

STRESSFUL JOBS

Many employers in Nigeria today are contributing to the destruction of people’s health and homes. The banking industry in Nigeria is particularly **culpable**. They make their staff do **4** people’s jobs and pay them **2** people’s salaries, giving them the impression that they are being well paid. Many bankers in Nigeria wake up as early as **4am**, leave their homes at **5am** or even earlier, and return home at **10.30pm** or even later (Saturdays and Sundays inclusive, sometimes). Most of these bankers are only allowed to go on vacation when their health fails. This is both unfair and unfortunate. This has two major implications:



The books are available at Amazon.com, Barnes and Nobles and other leading Christian bookstores

i. First, it has the potential of reducing the lifespan of these highly stressed workers.

ii. Second, it has the potential of breeding a generation of children with absentee parents.

The implication of this is that our children will grow up without knowing their parents well or being mentored by them. These children end up being mentored by the television or domestic servants. What that spells for our future is anybody's guess. I personally believe that people become more productive when they have time to rest and rejuvenate periodically. I have experienced high-class banking services in the USA than in Nigeria, yet these bankers in the USA don't resume as early or close as late as their Nigerian counterparts. Planning and organization, coupled with superior work culture, will lead to efficiency in any human endeavour.

MY APPEAL

To the Employer: I appeal to employers to please take it easy on their staff. Productivity is not necessarily higher because somebody consistently works late. Fit employees are more productive than stressed out ones. Fit employees are more able to take on new challenges and achieve set goals in record time. The **Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)** of the USA declares stress as a hazard of the workplace. In terms of lost hours due to absenteeism, reduced productivity, and workers' compensation benefits, stress is said to cost American industries more than **\$300 billion** annually! It is estimated that **60-80%** of industrial accidents are due to stress.

To the employee: First, make sure you manage and utilize your time during work-hours very well so that you can meet your targets and deadlines. Second, if your employer wants to 'kill' you with overwork before your time and 'destroy' your family, please prayerfully seek for an alternative job or start your own business. Don't be rash about this though. Plan before you leap. I must observe here that even some self-employed individuals are also killing themselves by running the rat race. You see, the problem with the rat race is that even if you win, you are still a rat!

To our Governments: Governments at all levels should do all in their capacity to reduce stress for the general populace by providing a good road network, well-paved roads that are free of death traps, mass transit systems, and enforcing traffic rules on our roads. I believe that no one should spend more than an hour commuting between his office and home. Anything more than this is outrageous and unacceptable. Government has a responsibility here to make this happen. All it takes is proper planning and prudent management of our collective resources. When workers are over-driven, their health deteriorates, their families disintegrate, and their children become delinquent. All of these results in even further stress and these have far-reaching implications for the larger society. Government should also ensure the security of lives and properties as well as guarantee minimum acceptable living standards for the population.

Government Agencies should make the Nigerian environment BUSINESS-FRIENDLY. Right now, the cost of doing business in Nigeria is rather too high! Government agencies and agents behave as if it is a crime to venture into private business. They make like difficult in every way they can. This must change to bring some relief to young and budding entrepreneurs.

STRESS AGGRAVATORS versus STRESS FITNESS

Stress aggravation occurs when people respond to their stress in a wrong way. Some people worry, get anxious, fret, smoke, use alcohol, and indulge in other unhealthy habits that further worsen their stress. Whatever you do, in response to your stress, that further worsens your condition is a **stress aggravator**.

Stress fitness, on the other hand, has to do with responding to your stress in a positive way, such that you are able to minimize its negative impact on your health.

EFFECTS OF STRESS ON HEALTH

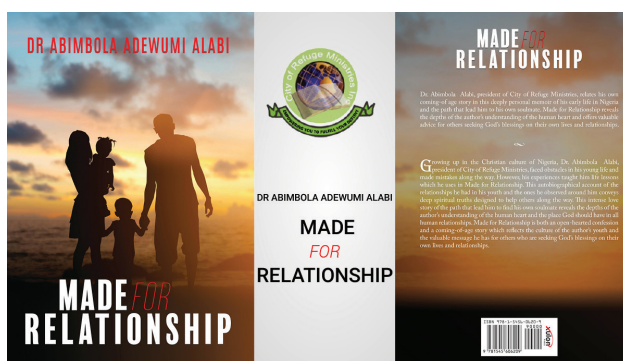
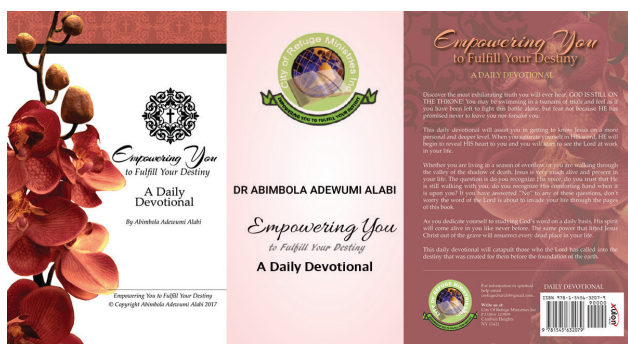
Excessive stress can be named as a causative or aggravating factor in nearly every disease and affliction known to man. Stress has been linked to **6** of the leading causes of death: **heart disease, cancer, lung ailments, accidents, cirrhosis of the liver, and suicide**. Other scientifically documented health disorders that stress can cause, be a contributing cause to, or aggravate, include: **Hyperthyroidism, Diabetes, Asthmatic attacks, Backache, Tension headache, Obesity, Drug addictions (including alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, and caffeine), Cancers, etc.**

Stress also contributes to the **intensity, duration**, and the **frequency** of pain and disease. According to **Rollin McCraty** in a paper presented at the **Steroid Hormones Clinical Correlates: Therapeutic and Nutritional Considerations**, Chicago, Illinois on **February 25, 1996**, titled **"STRESS AND EMOTION HEALTH"**, stress accounts for **75%** of all physician visits. Some surveys even estimate that stress contributes to up to **80%** of major illnesses. Stress is insidious because it affects us **24** hours each day. Even though stress starts in the mind, yet it ends up devastating the body. Chronic stress, especially of the emotional and mental types, affects virtually all our body systems. Stress affects the **Digestive System** (resulting in peptic ulcers, loss of appetite, hiccups, etc), the **Cardio-vascular System** (resulting in elevated blood pressure, abnormal heart rhythms, migraine headaches, etc), the **Nervous System** (resulting in headaches, insomnia, etc), the **Genito-Urinary System** (resulting in lack of menstruation, frequent urination, erectile dysfunction, loss of libido, impotence, infertility, etc.)

According to the **American Institute of Stress**, nearly **50%** of all adults have health problems due to stress. Precisely **43%** of all adults suffer adverse effects due to stress. Stress makes people to age faster than normal. According to a study from the **University of California at San Francisco** that was published in the **Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences**, chronically stressed people may be **9 to 17** years older than they actually are. Stress can disrupt the body's digestive system and inhibit the body's ability to absorb vital nutrients, thereby leading to malnutrition and its attendant consequences. According to the **Journal of the American College of Nutrition (volume 13, no. 5)**, **"Stress increases the need for magnesium."**

... will continue and conclude in the next issue

'Tony Akinyemi | Lead Pastor | The Shepherd's Flock Int'l Church | 18 Sogunle Street, Off Yomi Osikoya Drive, Off Mobolaji Bank-Anthony Way, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria | Tel: +234 818 811-1112 | tony@tsfchurch.com | Psalm 48:14



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Patriarch **George Muller**

An Hour With George Muller: The Man of Faith to Whom God Gave Millions

edited by A. Sims

Pastor Charles R. Parsons describes an hour's interview with George Muller toward the close of his life as follows:

A warm summer day found me slowly walking up the shady groves of Ashley Hill, Bristol. At the top the immense buildings which shelter over two thousand orphans, built by a man who has given to the world the most striking object lesson in faith it has ever seen, met my gaze.

The first house was on the right, and here, among his own people, in plain, unpretentious apartments, lives a saintly patriarch, George Muller. Passing through the lodge gate, I paused a moment to look at House No. 3, one of the five erected at a cost of \$600,000.

The bell is answered by an orphan, who conducts me up a lofty stone staircase, and into one of the private rooms of the venerable founder of this great institution. Mr. Muller has attained the remarkable age of ninety-one. As I stand in his presence, veneration fills my mind. "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man" (Lev. 19:32).

He received me with a cordial handshake and bade we welcome. It is something merely to see a man by whom God has accomplished a mighty work: it is more to hear the tones of his voice; far greater than either is the privilege of being brought into immediate contact with his spirit, and of feeling the warm breath of his soul breathed into one's own.

The communion of that hour will be graven on my memory while life shall last. This servant of the Most High opened his heart to me, counseled me, prayed with me, and gave me his blessing.

In that hour the source of George Muller's great spiritual strength was clearly made manifest. The aged saint with all his faculties unimpaired, was eloquent the whole time on one theme, the praise of Jehovah, the great Hearer and Answerer of His people's prayers. My own words were few.

"You have always found the Lord faithful to His promise, Mr. Muller?"

"Always! He has never failed me! *For nearly seventy years every need in connection with this work has been supplied.* The orphans, from the first until now have numbered nine thousand five hundred; but they have never wanted a meal. Hundreds of times we have commenced the day without a penny; but our Heavenly Father has sent supplies the moment they were actually required. There never was a time when we had no wholesome meal. During all these years I have been enabled to trust in the living God alone. Seven million five hundred thousand dollars have been sent to me in answer to prayer. We have needed as much as two hundred thousand dollars in one year, and it has all come when needed. No man can ever say I asked him for a penny. We have no committees, no collectors, no voting, and no endowment. *All has come in answer to believing prayer.* God has many ways of moving the hearts of men to help us, all over the world. While I am praying, He speaks to one and another on this continent and on that to send us help. Only the other evening, while I was preaching, a gentleman wrote a check for a large amount and handed it to me when the service was over.»

"I have read your life, Mr. Muller, and noted how greatly your faith has been tried at times. Is it so now?"

"My faith is tried, as much as ever, and my difficulties are greater than ever. Besides our financial responsibilities, suitable helpers have to be found constantly, and suitable places provided for hundreds of orphans constantly leaving the homes. Then often our funds run very low; only the other week we had come nearly to the end of our supplies. I called my beloved helpers together, and said to them, 'Pray, brethren, pray!' Immediately five hundred dollars was sent us, then a thousand, and in a few days seven thousand five hundred came in. But we have always to be praying, always believing. Oh, it is good to trust in the living God, for He hath said, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee' (Heb. 13:5). Expect great things from God, and great things you will have. There is no limit to what He is able to do. Praises for ever to His glorious name! Praise Him for everything! I have praised Him many times when He sent me ten cents, and I have praised Him when He has sent me sixty thousand dollars."

"I suppose you have never contemplated a reserve fund?"

"To do so would be an act of the greatest folly. How could I pray if I had reserves? God would say, 'Bring out those reserves, George Muller.' Oh no, I never thought of such a thing. Our reserve fund is in Heaven. The living God is our sufficiency. *I have trusted Him for one dollar, I have trusted Him for thousands, and never trusted in vain.* «Blessed is the man that trusteth in Him" (Ps. 34:8).

"Of course you have never thought of saving for yourself?"

Not easily nor soon shall I forget the dignified manner in which I was answered by this mighty man of faith. Hitherto he had been sitting opposite me with his knees close to mine, his hands clasped, his eyes betokening a calm, quiet, meditative spirit. Most of the time he had leaned forward, his gaze directed on the floor. But now he sat erect, and for several moments searched my face, with an earnestness that seemed to penetrate my very soul. There was a grandeur and majesty about those undimmed eyes, so accustomed to spiritual visions and to looking into the deep things of God. I do not know whether the question sounded to him as a sordid one, or whether it touched a lingering remnant of "the old self" to which he alludes in his discourses. In any event, there was not a shadow of doubt but that it roused his whole being. After a brief pause, during which his face was a sermon, and the depths of his clear eyes flashed fire, he unbuttoned his coat and drew from his pocket an old-fashioned purse, with rings in the middle separating the character of the coins. Placing it in my hands he said quietly, "All I am possessed of is in that purse—every penny! Save for myself? Never! When money is sent to me for my own use, I pass it on to God. As much as five thousand dollars has thus been sent at one time; but I do not regard such gifts as belonging to *me*; they belong to *Him*, whose I am and whom I serve. Save for myself? I dare not save; it would dishonor my loving, gracious, all-bountiful Father.»

I handed the purse back to Mr. Muller. He told me the sum it contained, and what he himself had given to the Orphanage and the Scripture Knowledge Institution. These matters, however, together with a few others, I am not at liberty to disclose.

There was a glow of holy enthusiasm in the face of this aged, faithful man as he related some of the incidents pertaining to his preaching tours in forty-two different countries [Note: Mr. Muller began his trav-



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els when he was 70 and continued until he was 87 (from 1875 to 1892)] and how, in traveling from place to place, in some instances thousands of miles apart, his every need had been supplied. Hundreds of thousands of men and women of almost every nation had come to hear him, and his great themes were the simple message of salvation and the encouragement of believers to trust in the living God. He told me that he prayed more about his sermons than anything else and that often the text was not given him until he had ascended the pulpit stairs, although he had been praying for it all week.

I asked him if he spent much time on his knees.

“Hours every day. But *I live in the spirit of prayer. I pray as I walk, when I lie down, and when I rise. And the answers are always coming.* Tens of thousands of times my prayers have been answered. When once I am persuaded a thing is right, I go on praying for it until the end comes. I never give up!”

These words were spoken in an exulting tone. There was a ring of triumph in them, and the man’s countenance was aglow with holy joy. He had risen from his seat while uttering them and had walked around to the side of the table.

“*Thousands of souls have been saved, in answer to my prayers,*” he went on. «I shall meet tens of thousands of them in heaven.»

There was another pause. I made no remark, and he continued: “*The great point is to never give up until the answer comes.* I have been praying every day for fifty-two years for two men, sons of a friend of my youth. They are not converted yet, but they *will* be! How can it be otherwise? There is the unchanging promise of Jehovah, and on that I rest. The great fault of the children of God is that they do not continue in prayer; they do not go on praying; they do not persevere. If they desire anything for God’s glory, they should pray until they get it.

“Oh, how good, kind, gracious, and condescending is the One with whom we have to do! He has given me, unworthy as I am, immeasurably above all I have asked or thought! I am only a poor, frail, sinful man, but He has heard my prayers tens of thousands of times and used me as the means of bringing tens of thousands of souls into the way of truth, in this, and other lands. These unworthy lips have proclaimed salvation to great multitudes, and very many people have believed unto eternal life.”

I asked Mr. Muller whether when he had any idea whereunto the work would grow when he first began. After speaking of its commencement in Wilson Street, he answered:

“I only knew that God was in it, and was leading His child into untried and untrodden paths. The assurance of His presence was my stay.”

“I cannot help noticing the way you speak of yourself,” I said, conscious that I was approaching a subject at once tender, sacred, and closely allied with his deepest spiritual moods and personal relationship to God, and I half-reproached myself as soon as the words were uttered. He disarmed my fears by exclaiming, “There is only one thing I deserve, and that is hell! I tell you, my brother, that is the only thing I deserve. By nature I am a lost man; but I am sinner saved by the grace of God. Though by nature a sinner, I do not live in sin; I hate sin; I hate it more and more, and love holiness more and more.”

“I suppose through all these long years in your work for God, you have met with much to discourage you,” I asked.

“I have met with many discouragements; but at all times my confidence has been in God,” was the reply. “On the Word of Jehovah’s promise my soul rested! Oh, it is good to trust in Him; His Word never returns void! *‘He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might, He increaseth strength’* (Isaiah 40:29). This applies also to my public ministrations. Sixty-two years ago I preached a poor, dry, barren sermon with no comfort to myself and, as I imagined, with no comfort to

others. But a long time afterwards I heard of nineteen distinct cases of blessing resulting from that sermon.”

I told him a few of the things that had discouraged me, and I expressed a hope to be used more of God than ever.

“And you *will* be used of God, my brother,» he exclaimed. «God Himself will bless you! Toil on!»

“May I venture to ask you to give me a word of special counsel in regard to my own work for God,” I asked, “that I may pass it on to other Christian toilers in the great harvest field of souls?”

He answered: “Seek entirely to depend on God for everything,” he answered. “Put yourself and your work into His hands. When thinking of any new undertaking, ask, *Is this agreeable to the mind of God? Is it for His glory?* If it is not for His glory, it is not for your good, and you must have nothing to do with it. Mind that! Having settled that a certain course is for the glory of God, begin it in His name and continue in it to the end. Undertake it in prayer and faith, and never give up!

“And do not regard iniquity in your heart. If you do, the Lord will not hear you. Keep that before you always. Then trust in God. Depend only on Him. Wait on Him. Believe on Him. *Expect great things from Him.* Faint not if the blessing tarries. And above all, rely only on the merits of our adorable Lord and Saviour, so that according to them and to nothing of your own, the prayers you offer and the work you do be accepted.”

I had no word of answer. What was there to say? My eyes were filled with tears, and my heart was overflowing; and besides—

“*There was the speechless awe that dared not move, And all the silent heaven of love.*”

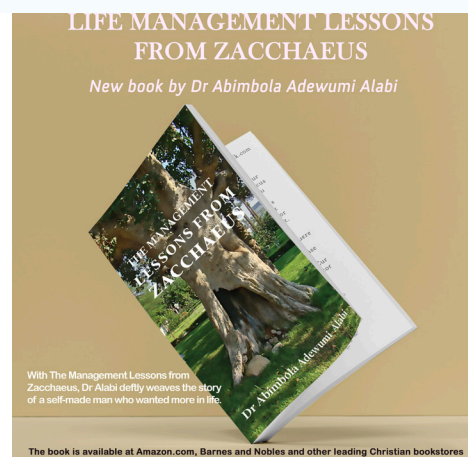
From another room Mr. Muller fetched a copy of his life, in which he inscribed my name. His absence afforded me an opportunity of looking around the apartment. The furniture was of the plainest description, useful and in harmony with the man of God who had been talking to me. It is a great principle with George Muller that *it does not become the children of God to be ostentatious in style, appointment, dress, or manner of living.* He believes that expensiveness and luxury are not seemly in those who are the professed disciples of the meek and lowly One who had not where to lay His head. On a desk lay an open Bible, of clear type, without notes or references.

This, I thought, is the abode of the mightiest man, spiritually considered, of modern times—a man especially raised up to show to a cold, calculating, selfish age the realities of the things of God and to teach the Church how much she might gain if only she were wise enough to take hold of the Omnipotent Arm.

I had been with this prince of prayer one whole hour, and only once had there come a knock at his door. It was opened by Mr. Muller, and there stood one of his orphans—one of the largest family on earth—a fair-haired girl. “My dear,” said he, “I cannot attend to you just now. Wait awhile and I will see you.” Thus was I privileged to remain uninterrupted with this man of faith, this prevailer with God, this traveler of ninety-one years along life’s rough pilgrimage—a man who, like Moses, talks to God as a man talketh to his friend. To me it was as one of the hours of Heaven come down to earth.

His prayer was short and simple. Going to his knees he said, “O Lord, bless this dear servant now before Thee more and more, *more and more, more and more!* And do Thou graciously guide his pen in what he may write in regard to this Thy work and our conversation today. I ask it through the merits of Thy dear Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen!”

“*There was the speechless awe that dared not move, And all the silent heaven of love.*”



George Muller's Life and Work

The writer of the foregoing interview furnishes the following particulars concerning the life of George Mueller:

The Founder of the Ashley Down Orphanage, Bristol, England, was born in Prussia, September 17, 1805. In his young manhood he lived a godless life, but at the age of twenty-one he was suddenly converted to God at a prayer-meeting held in the house of a pious tradesman. Shortly afterwards, he came to England, bringing with him no letters of introduction, no money, no name, no recommendations, and only a very imperfect knowledge of the English language. What, then, did he bring? *He brought God with him.* Shortly after landing, he wrote in his journal: *My whole life shall be one service for the living God.* His principles were deeply rooted in the Holy Scriptures, and he adhered to them through the course of his long life. He never asked help from anyone and never hinted that help was needed. Solely in answer to believing prayer *more than a million and a half sterling*, seven million, five hundred thousand dollars, was sent to him for the building and maintenance of "*God's Orphanage*," for his missionary enterprises, and for the circulation of the Scriptures.

In his homes ten thousand destitute orphans have been received, trained, educated, and sent out into the world.

In his old age he traveled nearly two hundred thousand miles in forty-two countries, preaching the Gospel to three millions of hearers.

Having thus served God in his day and generation, his spirit, like that of Moses, was kissed away by the mouth of Jehovah, when all alone in his room, on the early morning of March 10, 1898. His age was ninety-three.

"He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever."

From *An Hour With George Müller: the Man of Faith to Whom God Gave Millions* edited by A. Sims. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, ©1939.

Understanding the Source of Anger

"A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control." - Proverbs 29:11

The workplace can be a pressure-packed world. The demands that are often put on us can bring out things that we never knew were there. Sometimes, we begin to think that the source of that pressure is to blame for our response to the pressure. It could be an event, a spouse, a boss, a client, a child, or even a driver who cuts us off in traffic.

I recall responding one time to a close friend, "If you had not done that, I would never have responded that way." Later I learned that this response had little truth to it. We all choose to get angry. No one else is to blame for our anger.

"The circumstances of life, the events of life, and the people around me in life, do not make me the way I am, but reveal the way I am" [Dr. Sam Peebles].

This simple quote has had a profound impact on how I view my anger now. Anger only reveals what is inside of me. I can't blame anyone but me for my response to a situation. I have learned that anger is only the symptom of something else that is going on inside of me. This quote now resides on my refrigerator door as a daily reminder of the truth about my response to life's situations.

It has been said that anger is like the warning panel on the dash of your car. It is the light that tells us something is going on under the hood and we need to find out what the source of the problem is. I discovered that the source of anger is often unmet expectations or personal rights. We believe we are entitled to a particular outcome to a situa-

tion. When this doesn't happen, it triggers something in us. At the core of this is fear, often a fear of failure or rejection, fear of what others think, fear of the unknown.

If you struggle with anger, ask God to reveal the source of that anger. Ask Him to heal you of any fears that may be the root of your anger. Ask God to help you take responsibility for your response to difficult situations.

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Washing Toilets

"...those he wanted to promote, he promoted; and those he wanted to humble, he humbled (Dan 5:19b).

Paul desired a career in the building industry. Early in his career, he was working with a large ministry to help direct several of their construction projects.

As the projects were completed, Paul was asked to stay on for future projects. To keep him busy he was given a number of jobs - one of which was cleaning toilets. He recalls getting down on his knees each day and complaining to the Lord, "I'm a college graduate!"

Discouraged, Paul told the Lord, "I will not leave here until You promote me. Please give me contentment with my circumstance."

Paul felt totally forgotten by God. A few months later, Paul received a phone call from a man in the Midwest who owned five successful businesses who wanted to interview Paul for a job. This came as a total surprise to Paul. As he drove to the interview, he told the Lord, "I only want your will in my life, nothing else. I am content to remain obscure for the rest of my life if I have You. You must override my lack of experience for me to get this job."

The owner of the company asked Paul a surprising question: "If I asked you to clean a toilet, what would you do?" Paul sat there, stunned. He wanted to burst out laughing. Paul assured him that he would simply pick up a sponge and start cleaning.

Amazingly, Paul was hired even though other candidates were more qualified. After several months of success Paul asked his boss why he hired him. His boss replied, "Paul, I still have a large stack of applications from people who wanted this job. Do you remember the first question I asked you in the interview? I asked each one the same question. You were the only one who said he would clean the toilet. Paul, I am a wealthy man, but I grew up dirt poor. I clean my own toilets at home. I can't have people running my businesses who are too proud to clean a toilet."

Sometimes God places us in situations to see if we will be faithful in those before He is willing to promote us to greater things.

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'How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.'

ACTS 10v 38

Olutoyin and Abimbola Alabi,
City Of Refuge Ministries Inc,
P. O. Box 110808
Cambria Heights,
New York, NY 11411.

"EMPOWERING YOU TO FULFILL YOUR DESTINY"
Phone:1-646-496-5046
Please visit: www.destiny-empowerment.org
counseling.window-UnderstandingTheThrone
Email: cityofrefugechurch8@gmail.com
City of Refuge Ministries Inc