**Good Stress?**

When a child gets a wood splinter, or fragment stuck in their fingers, we want to take it out for them. When they become teenagers, they need to learn to do this for themselves. The ability to identify the pain and remove the problem is the process of maturing. But what if the problem isn’t a wood splinter? What if it is moral failure, sin or being irresponsible? Say when a person is habitually late? Why have they not noticed the stress it causes? Why be habitually late for work/school and being stressed about it? Driving faster simply adds stress to stress. Why not identify the problem and remove it?

In the book of Hosea God sees Israel has sinned by not being faithful to him by worshiping idols & committing adultery (Hos.4:13-14). How stressed out people are when they are cheating. They are living a lie and they know it. They have not matured enough to identify that cheating is the problem. That stress is telling them that something is not right, but they try and ignore the stress. God will not bring healing while you are in that sin. God says,

“I will go away and return to My place

 Until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face;

 In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.” (Hos. 5:15).

Here in this passage, “affliction” is God given. God has turned away from them, and they are afflicted. And in this affliction or pain God is screaming at them to make a change, repent. First identify that “guilt”. God wants you to “acknowledge” it. Confess it. To those who are already Christians, God says, "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1John 1:8-9).

If you have cheated, confess it to God (and the one whom you cheated). Then stop. If you have stolen, give it back (Ex.22:4 etc.). But confess it was wrong in the first place, and then “seek God’s face” by doing good. “All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.” (Heb. 12:11). (Note “peaceful”, i.e. no stress).

The stress that is beyond our control, give it to God, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” (Phil. 4:6). The stress that is self-inflicted, identify it, and make the change. At that point, God is the ultimate healer (Exo. 15:26). Jesus is the great physician (Mat. 9:9-13). But only after we have “acknowledged” our guilt. Dan Peters