

How to Keep Your Cool When It Gets Hot

If you can't stand the heat, then you can't. . .

- *live in Texas*
- *be a parent*
- *be a Christian*

STRATEGY IDEAS: React slower. Don't trust your immediate feelings related to the event, but realize that your feelings may be at a higher level than the current situation deserves. It may take more than sincerity to be honest with yourself; it may take some painful reflection to get to the truth. You may have "leftover pain" from similar events in the past. These "feel like" past hurts are added to current hurts. [Remember—a child with a sunburned neck responds to a slap on the back with more pain than one that has not been burned.] Perhaps, add an encouraging or calming Bible verse to your strategy of reacting: i.e. Phil 4:7 *And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus* and other verses.

You are not the first person to feel overwhelmed. It is a natural part of life. We want to reduce stress in our life, but we also need to develop a way to get through them with grace. There are many wise believers who have been through the fire and lived to smile again. We do not need to "go it alone." That is the code of the Old West and not the New Testament.

STRATEGY IDEAS: Make a list of women and men who have demonstrated a "peace that passes all understanding." Send a letter, email, or call the ones that seem the most approachable and ask them for the things that helped them get

through devastating times. If appropriate, ask for a personal visit. [Respect their time and set a limit – you don't want to burn out your cooling off partner!] Develop an accountability friend. Find someone that may be “growing” through life at the same pace that you are, but is willing to be honest and supportive.

The saying made famous by President Harry Truman, “If you can't stand the heat, then get out of the kitchen,” has great meaning for Christians who are attempting to live their life of faith in this world that is boiling over with difficulties. I live in central Texas and we survived several days of over 100-degree weather. A cold front came today—the weatherman promises it will not top 95! We learn to cope with the heat. I used to brag about our endurance and toughness until a friend in the ‘snow belt’ reminded me that Texans never have to “shovel heat.” No matter where we live or who we are, we will face the scorching of life's trials.

When life gets too hot to handle

Stress/Anger/Depression can be signs that we are getting burned out on life. We all have these at times, but when they seem to be “normal,” then it is time to cool down. The Apostle James recognized that even Christians are not immune from the pressures of life – if anything, living a Christ-pleasing life will put us at odds with what the world finds comfortable. *Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.* James 1:2-4 NAS

Keep your Christian cool

One of the goals of maturity is to actually learn from life's successes and failures. Listed are some HOT ideas that can make living with stress more productive. Honest— after a

particularly difficult experience has cooled, take an accurate reflection on how it grew to be so hot, how you reacted.

Triggers

There may be contributing factors that add to the stress that is causing conflict in other areas. Many times the thing

that triggers our anger or anxiety is not the true source. Other times, food is seen as the enemy when it is in reality intended to be a source of strength. Eating inappropriately can be an attempt to deal with pain in personal, relational, professional, and spiritual issues in our lives. Getting TOO busy can also be a disguise for the source of true discomfort. We may fear that if we slow down too much, we will have to think and feel.

STRATEGY IDEAS: Take an inventory of how you are taking care of the truly important things in your life. Begin with how you are taking care of yourself. This is not an indication that you think you are the most important thing in life – rather it is recognition that you cannot do your best if you are not at your best. You cannot give away what you do not possess.

If you want your children to eat healthy, respect those in authority, take care of your body, love your fellow family members and have a powerful relationship with Christ – “Live It” and then teach it. If it is important to you, then do it. Living the healthy life is a great stress reducer [not eliminator]. If you can't stand the heat...then you will miss out on some of life's greatest challenges and life shapers.

The goal for the Christian is to not play with fire or get burned out, but, rather to be tempered like a tool to be used for God's purpose.

We too can be a cool shade in a broiling world!

Archived article from Dr. Bill Heston.