
INSIGHT INTO

STRESS

WAVERLEY ABBEY INSIGHT SERIES



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STRESS

Beverley Shepherd

CWR

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WAVERLEY ABBEY INSIGHT SERIES

The Waverley Abbey Insight Series has been developed in response to the great need to help people understand and face some key issues that many of us struggle with today. CWR's ministry spans teaching, training and publishing, and this series draws on all of these areas of ministry.

Sourced from material first presented over Insight Days by CWR at their base, Waverley Abbey House, presenters and authors have worked in close co-operation to bring this series together, offering clear insight, teaching and help on a broad range of subjects and issues. Bringing biblical understanding and godly insight, these books are written both for those who help others and those who face these issues themselves.

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FOREWORD

There's something you need to know about Beverley Shepherd before you read this book. But I'll come to that.

Two years ago I discovered the difference between pressure and stress.

I'd been under intense pressure many times before – working in advertising on Madison Avenue, working in a theological college (yes, really), and working at the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (quite definitely). Pressure can be unpleasant but pressure can be exhilarating, pressure can focus the mind. Pressure can be a spur to creativity, and an encouragement towards excellence.

Stress, I discovered, was something altogether different – darker, more acidic, a jangly current running through one's veins, a mind that won't shut down, emotions that are too intense, a weariness in the marrow, a loss of joy in the things that usually put a zing in the day, and the sense that it ain't going to change. And I knew from talking to others that I didn't even have it that bad.

Something I also knew was that switching to camomile tea (heaven forbid), doing deep breathing exercises and sticking a picture of a Caribbean beach on top of my computer wasn't going to make enough of a difference to deal with the real issues.

This book will help you deal with the real issues. It will help you chart the interactions between external circumstances and inner turmoil and identify the external things that might be changed and the internal attitudes that need to be addressed. Still, this is not just a book about stress management, rather it is about making the most of any stress you're facing. After all,

as Beverley suggests, God might be using stress to teach us something more significant than simply how to avoid stress. As such, this is a book about liberation and spiritual flourishing, about forgiveness and repentance, about learning to hear what God is saying in the maelstrom, and about finding shalom in the maelstrom, not just an escape from it.

So here's what you need to know about Beverley Shepherd: she's not stressed.

She's been in stressful situations, certainly, and she may well be in one now, but she is one of those people who radiates a joyous peace, whose brow is not deeply furrowed by worry and whose heart always has room to listen to others. This is certainly not because she ambles through life on the income from her invested billions. On the contrary, she is a freelance management trainer – just the word 'freelance' is enough to send my stressometer soaring. But Beverley knows how to deal with stress and she knows how to help others deal with theirs. She's been doing it for years – prayerfully, thoughtfully and sensitively. She's not called 'Shepherd' for nothing.

Of course, you may be too stressed to find time to read a book on stress, if you are, this may well be the book for you. Will it be as soothing as a hot herbal bath? No, it will be more like a deep muscle massage – you might have to go through some discomfort to get the knots out but once they're out ...

Shalom be with you.

Mark Greene