

**STRESS  
FREE  
LIVING**



# **STRESS FREE LIVING**

**GUILLERMO MALDONADO**



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ERJ Publications credits:

Editor: Jose Anhuaman

Editorial development: Gloria Zura

Cover design: Danielle Cruz-Nieri

## **STRESS-FREE LIVING**

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King Jesus Ministry / ERJ Publications

[www.kingjesus.org](http://www.kingjesus.org) / [www.ERJPub.org](http://www.ERJPub.org)

ISBN: 978-1-64123-335-4 • eBook ISBN: 978-1-64123-336-1

Printed in the United States of America • © 2019 by Guillermo Maldonado

Whitaker House • 1030 Hunt Valley Circle • New Kensington, PA 15068

[www.whitakerhouse.com](http://www.whitakerhouse.com)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data (pending)

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## FOREWORD

I met Apostle Guillermo Maldonado of King Jesus Ministry while we were both attending an event in Washington, D.C. You could say that we met by coincidence, but I think it was more than that. I believe God's hand was in it. He and I immediately hit it off. We share the same passion: to guide people to wholeness in their lives physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. When we met, I told him how I felt a call to bring health and healing to men and women who are serving God. Since then, I have developed a close friendship with Apostle Maldonado, as well as a professional relationship with him as his doctor. I regularly speak at events at King Jesus Ministry on healing, health, and nutrition, and I give his books to my patients.

As a medical doctor who digs deeply into the original causes of illness, as well as the underlying elements that promote health, I know of a variety of factors that either influence the development of disease or support our overall well-being. I am not only referring to what might strictly be termed “medicine,” but also to elements such as diet, hormones, toxins, emotions, thinking patterns, and much more. I can affirm from both personal and professional experience that the potent effect of negative stress is one of those influences that has a significant impact on our health.

In my book *Stress Less*, I define stress as “the pressures of life and how one perceives, believes, reacts, and copes with these pressures.” As Apostle Maldonado points out, prolonged stress in a person’s life can lead to a number of serious illnesses, the interruption of normal daily living, estrangement from others, and additional problems. While there are various elements that contribute to stress, it is easy to latch on to one or two of those elements and ignore other factors that contribute equally or perhaps to an even greater extent. While physical, emotional, and mental elements all play a part, in my decades of exploration into healthy living, I have always recognized the central role of the spiritual component in our lives. This is an area that some people ignore or dismiss. But we have a Creator who loves us and wants the best for us in all aspects of our lives, and He offers us wisdom in His Word and spiritual



power to address our problems and concerns. There are some issues that only the intervention of God can overcome.

Apostle Maldonado has seen the destructive toll of stress on people in America and around the world. *Stress-Free Living* is based on his years of experience in helping people to be released from stress and its devastating effects. It includes first-hand accounts of those who have overcome the oppression of stress through his ministry. This book will help you to identify the factors that contribute to your stress—especially entrenched cycles of stress that are controlling your life and robbing you of inner peace, strong relationships, and fruitful living.

Most important, you will not just find a quick fix to help you through today's anxiety, fear, or depression—you will find answers to achieving long-lasting relief from stress through the wisdom and power of God.

—Don Colbert, M.D.

Best-selling author of over forty books, including *Stress Less*, *The 7 Pillars of Health*, *Eat This and Live!*, *The Bible Cure for AutoImmune Diseases*, and *What Would Jesus Eat?*



## A STRESSFUL WORLD

A recent Gallup poll found that more than a third of the world's population experiences a lot of worry and stress. Stress is having such a negative effect in the U.S., where nearly half of Americans say they're suffering from it, that it's eating away at their overall well-being, according to the American Psychological Association.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Maggie Fox, "The World Is Significantly Unhappier, Gallup Poll Finds," *Today show*, September 12, 2018, <https://www.today.com/health/americans-world-feel-more-stress-less-happiness-t137282>. Christopher Bergland, "Stress in America Is Gnawing Away at Our Overall Well-Being," *The Athlete's Way* blog, *Psychology Today*, November 1, 2017, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-athletes-way/201711/stress-in-america-is-gnawing-away-our-overall-well-being>. See also <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2017/state-nation.pdf>.

In one way or another, all of us experience stress—regardless of our age, race, gender, social standing, or financial status.

We live in an agitated world, and many people find themselves constantly running against the clock, struggling to keep up with responsibilities and trying to make ends meet. Often, we find ourselves needing to make key decisions that affect our lives and those of our family members. All these factors can contribute to mental and emotional stress. In addition, on television and the Internet, we are bombarded by news about crises in our country and around the world: natural disasters, wars, hunger, misery, economic failures, political discord, crime, societal breakdown, environmental worries, and more.

Our world is full of stress. Our lives are full of stress. These are the times we're living in.

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*Experiencing ongoing stress takes a  
tremendous toll on us.*

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Yet experiencing ongoing stress takes a tremendous toll. Many people deal with constant anxiety or fear. Others struggle with deeper issues of anguish and oppression. Depending on its degree, stress can be uncomfortable, life-disrupting—or life-threatening. According to the American Psychological

Association, “Chronic stress is linked to the six leading causes of death: heart disease, cancer, lung ailments, accidents, cirrhosis of the liver and suicide. And more than 75 percent of all physician office visits are for stress-related ailments and complaints.”<sup>2</sup>

## WHAT IS STRESS?

You have probably picked up this book because you or a loved one is affected by some level of stress. I felt an urgency to write *Stress-Free Living* to help people address the destructive effects of stress—its causes and consequences physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. I want to demonstrate that you can experience relief, hope, and joy, no matter what level of stress you are dealing with. Together, we will discover the underlying causes of stress, how to keep it from getting a grip on your life, and how to live free of stress.

Generally speaking, stress is a state of alertness, anxiety, or fear. However, the first thing we must understand is that stress itself is not always negative. In its basic form, it is a built-in physiological response that is triggered in emergency situations when we believe we are facing a threat or danger, whether real or perceived, or during times when we experience heightened expectations for performance regarding a particular task, whether the expectations are self-generated or come from an outside source.

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2. Deborah S. Hartz-Seeley, “Chronic Stress Is Linked to the Six Leading Causes of Death,” *Miami Herald*, March 21, 2014, <https://www.miamiherald.com/living/article1961770.html>.

How does the body react to stress? It releases hormones, such as adrenaline, as a “survival mechanism.” Adrenaline accelerates the heartbeat, raises blood pressure, tenses muscles, increases blood flow to the large muscles, produces sweat, reduces pain, and generates other effects. When we face danger, a short-term stress response can save our lives by enabling us to take immediate and effective action. However, if we remain in an ongoing state of stress, then physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual damage can occur. Our mind and body become overloaded, causing us to pay a high price, whether in the short run or the long run.

What this means is that, in a temporary form, in situations such as those described above, stress can help us to function quickly under pressure and motivate us to give the best of ourselves. But when such stress reaction is prolonged, it can be extremely harmful to us. Our body, mind, and emotions are not designed to live perpetually in an emergency state.

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*If you surrender continuously to stress,  
it will enslave you.*

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Whatever people constantly tolerate or consent to becomes their norm. That is why, if we give in to anxiety or fear in our lives, it will begin to define us. This is the point where

stress is not just something we experience from time to time in certain circumstances, but has developed into something that has taken hold of us. When this occurs, we are dealing with spiritual factors as well as physical and emotional ones. Many people don't recognize this spiritual element to their stress, and that is why they remain in its grip.

## **TWO TYPES OF STRESS**

For the purposes of this book, we will define stress in two ways: natural stress and spiritual stress.

### ***Natural Stress***

Natural stress remains largely in the physical, emotional, and mental spheres, although spiritual elements can influence it. There are various causes of stress, and we will cover a number of them in chapter 2. Natural stress can produce physical symptoms such as headaches, neck and shoulder tension, back pain, fatigue, stomach problems, sleeplessness, and severe skin irritation. It can also produce emotional and mental symptoms, such as anxiety, deep sadness, anger, impatience, irritability, feelings of hopelessness, trouble concentrating, a certain degree of memory loss, and negative thoughts. Although we might temporarily feel stress when we are placed in new situations or are challenged to meet high expectations, in many cases, stress manifests as a result of upsetting situations we are exposed to over time.

## ***Spiritual Stress***

When stress is in a natural stage, an individual has the ability to learn to manage and control it. However, when it has entered the spiritual stage, it cannot be controlled using natural methods, and therefore significant spiritual issues must be addressed.

With spiritual stress, there are several types of controlling “yokes” that can manifest, such as jealousy, fear, anger, and depression. For example, when a person crosses over from feeling under pressure regarding a situation to living in a state of depression, they become imprisoned in despair. The yoke of stress shapes or molds them into certain ways of thinking, which are reflected in their behavior. When someone falls into depression, their very countenance changes. Their features may droop or become hard. Some people move into a self-destructive mode as their depression dulls their ability to function normally. Among the symptoms of depression are deep and continuous sadness, feelings of hopelessness, low self-esteem, pessimism, guilt, physical pain, digestive problems, changes in sleep patterns and appetite, abuse of alcohol or drugs, illicit sex, gambling, and thoughts of suicide.

When we live in depression, we have no expectation of anything good, and we cannot see a way out of our problems—even at times when a challenge may be relatively easy to overcome.



The Bible provides several examples of people who suffered from depression as a result of stress. I believe that the great leader and lawmaker Moses fell into depression, and it kept him from entering into the promised land even after he had freed God's people from Egyptian slavery. It was what ultimately ended his leadership. For years, Moses had been accumulating all the burdens of his people in his heart, until he became exhausted and depressed. Because he was angry about the people's continual rebellion, complaints, and disbelief, he disobeyed God in a major way. (See Numbers 20:8–13.) As expressed above, when we struggle with depression, we may behave in self-destructive ways—which we will later regret.

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*When stress enters the oppressive  
stage, it cannot be controlled  
through natural means; it must be  
addressed spiritually.*

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In another example, Elijah was one of the greatest prophets of the Old Testament. In faith, he boldly defeated four hundred and fifty prophets of the false god Baal in the power of the living God. However, when he was threatened with death by Queen Jezebel, he became afraid and chose to flee. After a while, he lost all hope and fell into a state of depression; he was

spiritually oppressed, to the point of wanting to die. But Elijah was ultimately restored by rest, nutrition, encouraging words from God, spiritual strengthening, and renewed faith. His story gives us a preview of how we, too, can overcome stress that comes from fear, fatigue, and lost hope. (See 1 Kings 18:20–40; 19:1–18.)

If we are in a state of advanced stress, but do not understand what has us bound, we will not recognize that we are being oppressed by an outside force and not just our own inward struggles. Only the power of God can free us from such a tyrannical influence. The Bible teaches us, “*Do not give the devil a foothold*” (Ephesians 4:27 NIV). When we allow the devil—the evil spiritual being that opposes God—to gain a foothold in our lives through a prolonged period of stress in which we hold on to fear, anxiety, anger, or hopelessness, we will become oppressed.

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*God has more than enough power to  
break the tyranny of stress and remove  
every burden from us.*

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However, we can be assured that no matter what type of yoke comes upon us through stress, God has more than enough power to break it and remove every burden from us. We have

this assurance from the Scriptures: *“It shall come to pass in that day that his burden will be taken away from your shoulder, and his yoke from your neck, and the yoke will be destroyed because of the anointing oil”* (Isaiah 10:27). Jesus Christ, God’s Son, has already defeated the devil. He wants to set us free, and we can learn to live continually in His victory.

## **MANAGING AND DEFEATING STRESS**

We must remember that when we encounter various stressful situations at home, at work, at school, and in other contexts, this is often just a natural part of living, and we can learn to manage our stress. In this book, I demonstrate how we handle these situations by looking to God’s peace and strength. Beyond that, there may be other times when we sense we are holding on to stress for extended periods of time or that stress seems to have a grip on us. It is not God’s will for us to live stressed, depressed, and on the verge of collapse. We need to be set free and begin to trust in the One who rules heaven and earth and can help us in our circumstances. Jesus said, *“If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes”* (Mark 9:23), and *“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world”* (John 16:33).

If you recognize that you have some symptoms of oppressive stress, then you need the help of Jesus and the power of God’s Holy Spirit. Perhaps you don’t know how to

pray and ask God for help. Before we move on to the next chapter, I invite you to pray the following prayer with me, knowing that if we declare it in faith, your stress can begin to change to peace, your sadness to joy, and your despair to hope. Pray believing in your heart that God will act in your life:

Lord Jesus, I recognize that there are situations beyond my control that have robbed me of peace, bound my emotions, and caused sickness in my body. Stress has progressed into spiritual oppression and taken over. I repent for the mistakes I have made, and I ask You to forgive me for allowing stress to invade my life. Today, I need Your help to be free. I accept the forgiveness You have provided for me by Your death on the cross, when You took my sins and failings on Yourself, and by Your resurrection from the dead. I receive You into my heart, and I ask the Holy Spirit to bring peace, faith, and freedom to my mind, soul, and body. Today, in Your name, I make the decision to let go of all anxiety, sadness, worry, and everything else that causes me stress and depression. I receive peace, healing, faith, and hope from You. Thank You, Lord Jesus! Amen.

## **TRUE STORIES OF OVERCOMING OPPRESSIVE STRESS**

### ***Delivered from Fear***

Michael has worked in law enforcement in Miami, Florida, USA, for twenty-four years, nine of those years as a police officer and fifteen as a detective. However, while he was growing up, the stress of shyness and losing his parents at a young age degenerated into a terrible fear of public speaking, until he discovered that true identity, confidence, and courage come from God the Father.

The biggest battle of my life—my biggest giant—was always fear. I was very shy from the time I was a little boy, and I was always afraid to speak in public. Then, my parents died when I was thirteen, and I became very insecure. I did not know who I was. I was always quiet and stayed away from everyone else because fear dominated me. I had a girlfriend, who is now my wife, and people always asked her why I did not speak, why I sat alone, apart, with a grim face.

My fear and insecurity caused me a lot of stress. It was exhausting! I had no peace! And I continually suffered from my fear of speaking. I was afraid that people would see that maybe I was not as educated or intelligent as I wanted them to believe. I felt I had nothing to offer.

When I joined the police force, I was terrified to speak before another officer. I did not feel smart, and that caused me stress. Today, I thank God because when I started seeking His face with all my heart and had an encounter with Him, He set me free from that terror. As a police officer, I now face people with the courage of God. In the force, that is called “command presence”; now, I walk with that presence. My life has been transformed! I walk with the authority that God has given me as His son. I know who I am, I have an identity, and I can fulfill God’s will.

Currently, I am a House of Peace<sup>3</sup> leader and I mentor several people. I can minister to them and speak to them with authority. When I go to work, I know that the atmosphere must change because I am a child of God and I have His authority and His power. So, I can raise my voice of command and rule from the spiritual realm. In fact, I have seen how crime has decreased in my city. Now, I am a husband, father, mentor, and leader, and I live free of stress. Fear has remained in the past. Now I see the glory of God with every step I take!

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3. A House of Peace refers to the home of a member of King Jesus International Ministry who opens his or her door to receive neighbors, relatives, and friends with the purpose of sharing the gospel of God’s kingdom—teaching the Word of God and imparting His power.

## ***Freed from Depression***

Aretha had spent her entire life dealing with depression, which she thought she had under control by taking pills. During a time of great stress, due to excessive work and studies, she had a crisis and the medications began to produce adverse side effects that were difficult to manage.

Ever since I was in high school, I had struggled with depression. I felt so much pressure and stress from my studies that I started having depressive thoughts. The psychologists wanted to give me medicine, but I refused to take it. Later, after graduating as a nurse, I was talking about prayer at work, and a patient was listening to me from the other side of the curtain in her hospital room. This patient was having surgery, and when it came time for me to interview her before the surgery, she gave me a small, blue book entitled *Power and Authority to Destroy the Works of the Devil* by Guillermo Maldonado. She told me, "I want to read it, but I feel I should give it to you."

I took the book and put it on a small table next to my bed. It sat there for almost a year, because I was "very busy." Last year, I was under a lot of stress because, in addition to working two jobs, I was getting my master's degree. I started having suicidal thoughts. That scared me! I called a nurse friend of mine and asked

her if I could be prescribed antidepressants. I did not tell her that I wanted to kill myself; I did not want to worry anyone. She told me it would take a month for the medicine to have an effect, but it only took six days. I felt that I was flying! I had so much energy. I had found my cure, but I had a lot of insomnia.

One day, around three o'clock in the morning, awake and regretting the effects of the medication, I prayed to God, saying, "Lord, look at all these side effects; I'm so sensitive. What else is going to happen to me? Though I do not want to stop taking the medicine, I need to talk with You." Then, I began to read the book the patient had given me as a gift. In a very small paragraph, the author said that the Father loves His children and heals them. At that moment, I put down the book, took the medication in my hands, and said, "Lord, I have prayed for so long for You to deliver me.... At this moment, I have one thousand percent confidence in the pills. Are You telling me that You do not love me enough to heal me?" When I said that, I must have touched God's heart, because my life changed from that moment on. I have been totally free of depression for two years and I am living the best days of my life. I do not take pills and I am helping others to get out of depression.