

THE CHRISTIAN MANAGEMENT OF STRESS

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SESSION THREE

I. THE EMOTIONAL MANAGEMENT OF STRESS

II. THEORIES OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

A. Jean Piaget

B. Francis Ilg and Louise Bates Ames – *Child Development*

- Stages of equilibrium and disequilibrium

C. Erik Erikson – Psychosocial Development

Erikson's (1959) theory of psychosocial development has eight distinct stages. Like Freud, Erikson assumes that a crisis occurs at each stage of development. For Erikson (1963), these crises are of a psychosocial nature because they involve psychological needs of the individual (i.e. psycho) conflicting with the needs of society (i.e. social).

According to the theory, successful completion of each stage results in a healthy personality and the acquisition of basic virtues. Basic virtues are characteristic strengths which the ego can use to resolve subsequent crises.

Failure to successfully complete a stage can result in a reduced ability to complete further stages and therefore a more unhealthy personality and sense of self. These stages, however, can be resolved successfully at a later time.

Stage	Psychosocial Crisis	Basic Virtue	Age
1	Trust vs. mistrust	Hope	Infancy (0 to 1 ½)
2	Autonomy vs. shame	Will	Early Childhood (1 ½ to 3)
3	Initiative vs. guilt	Purpose	Play Age (3 to 5)
4	Industry vs. inferiority	Competency	School Age (5 to 12)
5	Ego identity vs. Role Confusion	Fidelity	Adolescence (12 to 18)
6	Intimacy vs. isolation	Love	Young Adult (18 to 40)
7	Generativity vs. stagnation	Care	Adult hood(40 to 65)
8	Ego integrity vs. despair	Wisdom	Maturity (65+)

D. Lawrence Kohlberg = Moral Development

E. *Passages: Predictable Crises of Adult Life* by Gail Sheehy

- Author, journalist, and popular lecturer, Gail Sheehy has changed the way millions of women and men around the world look at the stages of their lives. In her 50 years as a writer she has interviewed thousands of women and men and written 17 books. Her earliest revolutionary book, *Passages*, was named by a Library of Congress survey one of the ten most influential books of our times. *Passages* remained on The New York Times Bestseller List for more than three years and has been reprinted in 28 languages. Five other books on the passages theme revisit the stages of adult life.
- Mid-life Crisis
- 71-year-old man with frog

III. STRESS THRESHOLDS

A. Unusually High Stress Thresholds

B. Low Stress Thresholds

C. Diagnosis

D. Labeling

“Quick to paste a label on everyone he knew,
His tongue grew sticky and he gagged on glue.”

E. Medication and Over-medicating

IV. UNDERSTANDING DESPAIR

A. Normal Despair

Exogenous

S.A.D.

B. Clinical Depression

Endogenous

- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Impaired concentration, indecisiveness
- Sleep Disruption - Insomnia or hypersomnia
- Markedly diminished interest or pleasure in almost all activities
- Restlessness
- Sense of moving in slow motion
- Recurring thoughts of death or suicide
- Significant unintended weight loss or gain
- Feeling distance from or absence of God

V. UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY

A. Normal Anxiety

- Exogenous
- The Work of Worry - Irving Janis

- **Jesus on anxiety**
 “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear.... Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. ...Indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.
 So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.” (Matthew 6:25-34)

B. Clinical Anxiety

- **Endogenous**

C. Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

- **Constant, chronic, and unsubstantiated worry, often about health, family, money, or work**
- **Occurs every day, possibly all day**
- **Anxiety disrupts social activities and interferes with work, school, or family.**
- **Often manifest in physical symptoms**
 - **Muscle tension**
 - **Fatigue**
 - **Restlessness**
 - **Difficulty sleeping**
 - **Irritability**
 - **Edginess**

D. Stage Fright

- **Martin Luther**

E. Phobias

- **A phobia is an overwhelming and unreasonable fear of an object or situation that poses little real danger but provokes anxiety and avoidance.**
- **Paradoxical Intention**

VI. UNDERSTANDING ANGER

A. Anger as a Secondary Emotion

B. Anger Resolution

C. Anger Management

- **Cognitive Restructuring**
 - **Stop**
 - **Think**
 - **Check – count to ten**
- **Problem Solving Skills**

- Improved Communication
- Use Humor
- Change the Environment
- Find Alternatives

VII. LIFE CHANGES AND STRESS

- A. Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe
- B. The Holmes-Rahe Life Change Units Scale

VIII. Viktor Frankl

- A. *Man's Search for Meaning*
- B. Logotherapy

IX. THE ISSUE OF TIME

- Routine
- Pastime
- Activities
- Intimacy
- Solitude

X. SOUL MATE

XI. CHRISTIAN ALTERNATIVES

- Noble Thoughts

“Beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen ... and the God of peace will be with you.” (Philippians 4:8-9)

- Thanksgiving

“An attitude of thanksgiving is the single greatest stress reducer.” Hans Selye

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:7-8)

- Forgiveness

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.” (Ephesians 4:32)

- The Healing of Memories

**“Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy**

blot out my transgressions.
 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
 and cleanse me from my sin.
 For I know my transgressions,
 and my sin is ever before me.
 Against you, you alone, have I sinned,
 and done what is evil in your sight,...
 You desire truth in the inward being;
 therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart....
 Create in me a clean heart, O God,
 and put a new and right[b] spirit within me.
 Do not cast me away from your presence,
 and do not take your holy spirit from me.
 Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
 and sustain in me a willing spirit.” (Psalm 51:1-4, 6, 10-12)

XII. PRAYER OF SERINITY

God grant me the serenity
 to accept the things I cannot change;
 courage to change the things I can;
 and wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time;
 enjoying one moment at a time;
 accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
 taking, as He did, this sinful world
 as it is, not as I would have it;
 trusting that He will make all things right
 if I surrender to His Will;
 that I may be reasonably happy in this life
 and supremely happy with Him
 forever in the next.
 Amen.

Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971)