

BALANCING EXPECTATIONS

MARCH 2024

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UNDERSTANDING EXPECTATIONS

WHEN MY HEART IS OVERWHELMED...

GROWING IN RESILIENCY & MAINTAINING JOY

“Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress.”

- It means “bouncing back” from difficult experiences, which is a process God is deeply involved in.
- God calls us to joy regardless of our circumstances:
 - *Habakkuk 3:17-19*
 - How is this possible to balance our expectations with the joy He calls us to?

A Psalm of David - *Psalm 61:1-4*

Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.

From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, **when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock [that] is higher than I.**

For thou hast been a shelter for me, [and] a strong tower from the enemy.

I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. *Selah.*

“WHAT KEEPS YOU UP AT NIGHT?”

Not having enough time for the demands

Not doing enough

Managing children's needs

Fear of how sermons are impacting certain people

Navigating criticism

Lack of clarity on the role of an elder wife

Not agreeing with how things are being handled

Dealing with those that seem to have a lack of respect for leadership/the church

Knowing about all those that are hurting

Struggle to maintain balance

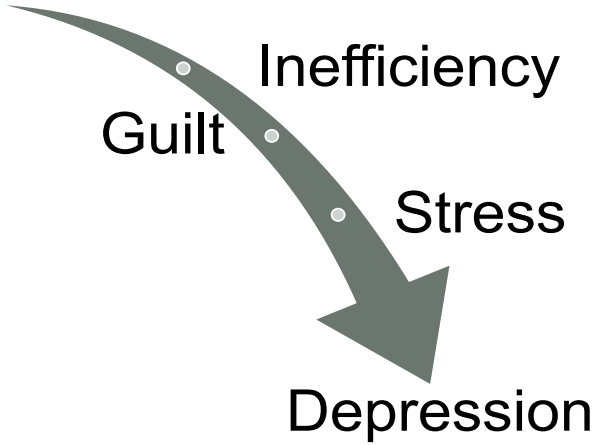
Managing husband's needs

VARIOUS EXPECTATIONS PLACED ON AN ELDER WIFE

- Administrative/Scheduling
- Visiting
- Congregational health
- Evangelism
- Teaching
- Counseling
- Personal Growth
- Crisis management
- Conflict resolution
- Support for your husband
- Care for your family
- Authentic Fellowship
- Modeling of self-sacrifice
- _____?

COMPOUNDING EFFECTS OF FATIGUE

Fatigue



COMPARISON



*“...but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.”
2 Corinthians 10:12*

COMPARISON SELF-REFLECTION

- What is your biggest insecurity?
 - How is this affecting your role?
 - What are you doing to deal with it?
- Consider your stereotype of what an elder's wife is "supposed to be"
 - Where did that come from?
 - What has maintained that?
- What is one thing you should change to reduce stress that comes from comparison?

PERFECTIONISM

When perfectionism is driving us, shame is riding shotgun and fear is that annoying backseat driver! – Brené Brown.

- Definition: driven primarily by internal pressures such as the desire to avoid failure or harsh judgment.

PERFECTIONISM SELF-REFLECTION

- Are you currently pushing the limits of your humanity?
 - In what areas?
 - What beliefs fuel this?
 - How did you get here?
- Are there warning lights on your dashboard?
 - Do you know what your warning lights are?
 - Do you work to prevent them? Or do you just fix the problems as they come?
- What is one thing you should change to reduce stress that comes from perfectionism?

TABLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How have you seen the demands or expectations of your role as elder's wife change over the years? What aspects of this role made you hesitant to take on this role as a couple?
- Share a recent joy that you have experienced in this role.
- Do you see Comparison or Perfectionism creeping into your life? If so, how do you reduce the stress these can bring?

MAINTAINING BALANCE

...LEAD ME TO THE ROCK THAT IS HIGHER THAN I

A Psalm of David - *Psalm 61:1-4*

Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.

*From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, **when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock [that] is higher than I.***

For thou hast been a shelter for me, [and] a strong tower from the enemy.

I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.

MAINTAIN A BALANCED MINDSET ABOUT WORK & REST

There is much work to do:

- **Genesis 1:27-28** “So God created man in his own image... And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion...”
- **Genesis 2:15** “And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.”
- **1 Corinthians 15:58** “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”
- **Colossians 3:23** “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men”

There is much need for rest:

- **Genesis 2:2** “And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.”
- **Matthew 11:28** “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”
- **Psalms 46:10** “Be still, and know that I am God...”

MAINTAIN REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS ABOUT OUR ROLE

- Remember we are *vessels* not solutions:
 - *2 Corinthians 4:6, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."*

MAINTAIN AN ACCURATE PERSPECTIVE ABOUT OUR SITUATION:

- Would you choose a different path if given the option?
 - If you did choose a different path, what would be the same?
 - What would be different?

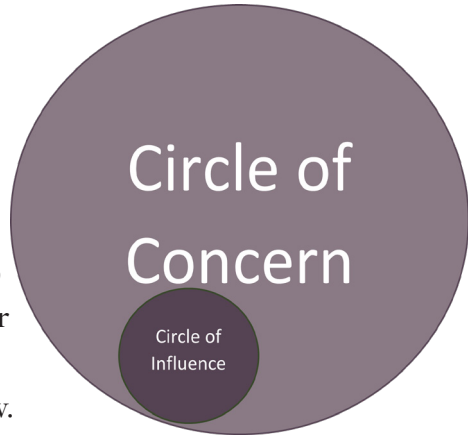
SKILLS TO LEAN INTO

SETTLING OUR BODY AND OUR MIND

SKILL #1 - CIRCLE OF CONCERN & INFLUENCE

Circle of Concern represents 100% of the things which concern you in life.

Circle of Influence (~10% of Circle of Concern) represents the portion of your concerns you can actually do something about right now.



7 Habits of Highly Effective People, Stephen Covey

SKILL #2 - CALMING OUR FEARS (BODY)

- Settling our body
 - Deep Breathing
 - Exercise
 - Rest
 - Slow down
 - Unplug

SKILLS TO LEAN INTO

SKILLING #3 - CALMING OUR FEARS (MIND)

- Settling our mind
 - Solitude
 - Meditate on comforting scripture
 - Enjoy God's creation
 - Hymns and Calming Music
 - Pursue more helpful ways of thinking

PSALM 23

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”

Psalm 23 Prayer Reading - “The Lord is my Shepherd”
(youtube.com)

TABLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How do you maintain a realistic level of expectations for yourself and your role? What has proven to be helpful for you?
- What skills do you use to calm your fears and balance yourself in the midst of difficult times?
- If you are willing, share a prayer request with your table to support you in your walk as an elder's wife.

NOTES

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RESOURCES



UNKNOWN EXPECTATIONS PODCAST

www.accounseling.org/unknown-expectation

PERFECTIONISM PODCAST SERIES

www.accounseling.org/perfectionismpodcasts



RESILIENCY PODCAST EPISODES

www.accounseling.org/resiliency-podcast-episodes

UNMET EXPECTATIONS PODCAST

www.accounseling.org/unmet-expectation-podcast-episodes



EMOTIONAL REGULATION SKILLS COURSE

www.accounseling.org/emotional-regulation-course

SPIRITUAL FORMATION COURSE

www.accounseling.org/spiritual-formation-course



BOUNDARIES & BALANCE WEBINAR

www.accounseling.org/boundaries-balance

ELDER WIVES RESOURCES



ELDER WIVES PRESENTATIONS

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ELDER SPECIFIC RESOURCES

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MINISTER RESOURCES

www.accounseling.org/ministers



BREAKING BREAD PODCASTS

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ACCFs WEBINARS

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