

For Broadcast: 28th November 2021

LETTING GO OF CONTROL

Round The Table

Celia: You know you have that little voice in your head saying I should be able to manage I should be able to do this and this and this, all of it together. You feel like you should be able to do it all.

Announcer: Do you ever feel stressed, trying to meet everyone's expectations, as well as your own? Stress affects us all in different ways. Some stress actually helps us and protects us, other stress gradually destroys us. Today we're talking about the stress that brings us down and what we can do about it. When does stress have a negative impact on you?

Voxpops

"If you're counting on something and you're expecting it to happen and then for whatever reason it doesn't, yeah that bugs me. That gets me going."

"I get stressed when there's a lack of clarity."

"Particularly when you start seeing things spin out of control. And you really want to get out."

"People expecting me to do things and I try and do them but it's just too much."

"Hard work doesn't equal stress. However if the hard work starts to erode away at relationships, that's the stress inducer."

"Not having enough hours in the day to get done what I'd like to get done trying to work on the work life balance."

Announcer: We can't always get rid of the source of our stress, but we can learn how to manage it. Today Celia, Noel and I will talk about what lies behind stress and how that knowledge can help us cope better.

Noel: You look a bit tired this morning Richard.

Richard: Yeah. I'm struggling to sleep at the moment to be honest.

Noel: Why, what's going on?

Richard: Oh just stressed about lots of different things, trying to meet some deadlines and get work done. So it's really stressing me out at the moment.

Noel: I've had a bit of a revelation about that.

Richard: Well have you?

Celia: Tell us more?

Noel: I've realized that I'm not God. I can't be God. So I better give up trying to be God.

Celia: Good for you Noel!!

Noel: Well I just can't control anything. I think there's some bits we can control but when you actually boil it down we're hardly in control of anything at all.

Celia: That's the hardest thing for me is that control thing. I'm a control freak and I like to have everything under control. I find that really is a hard thing because I'm always trying to juggle things and trying to keep control of it all. I manage my kid's schedules, I manage the household, I go to work. I've got all these balls that I'm juggling and I can't let go of it.

Richard: Yeah I struggle with deadlines, trying to keep up with everything. It keeps me up at night and stresses me out. So how do you cope?

Celia: And why do we feel like we have to be in control?

Noel: Well for me I've just come to see more and more of that I'm not God and I don't have to try and pretend to be God. Part of our control thing is because we feel that we need to take hold of it all.

Celia: You have that little voice in your head saying I should be able to do this or I should be able to manage. I should be able to do all of it. Society tells us that I guess

Noel: Yeah. And there's an inner pressure as well as a societal one isn't there. We're very hard on ourselves sometimes.

Richard: I suppose you feel like you should do it because if you don't do it it's all going to fall apart and nothing's going to work anymore.

Celia: And I know that I should trust people and let go. But I find that that's one of the hardest things for me to do. My head tells me other people can do it and do it just as well if not better. But it's just that feeling of if I let go of that, is it still going to work. Is it still going to be the same. I find it really hard.

Announcer: **This is messages of hope and today we're talking about stress. Have you found ways to cope with stress?**

Voxpops

"Just get out in the fresh air. Nature's a good way of unstressing."

"Sit down on the couch, veg, watch some telly."

"I think sport is important. I think it's important to do some physical exercise."

"I just tinker round at home."

"I just put my head down and try and get as much done as possible."

"I usually try to break things down and manage little bits instead of the whole."

"What I'd like to do is kind of step back, chill out and relax with a beer. What actually happens is I normally shut down."

"The first thing I do to unwind is take my watch off. Without being able to see the time, life just seems to become a lot simpler."

"Coming home from work and seeing Sadie who is 21 months old. She brings me a cup of tea in an imaginary tea pot and just lying on the floor playing with Sadie is a great stress straight after work."

Announcer: There are all sorts of ways that we can deal with stress and different things work for different people at different times. But when you think about the core thing that lies behind stress it's possible to approach it in a more permanent way. Earlier Noel talked about giving up on trying to be God. That is, giving up on trying to be responsible for everything and the answer for everything. So Noel, did you get any revelations that actually provide some help with the realization that you're not God?

Noel: Well the other side of that is that God is God. You know we don't have to say I'll let God take control of this situation. God already has. There's no part of my life or anyone's life that he's not already God over. There's no empty space where God is not. So it's just to recognize that that is the case and rather than say well I have to control everything to say "No God's already here". I can trust what's going to happen.

Celia: So it's not a matter of thinking I'll give control to God and letting go of fearing that control going because he is already there.

Noel: Exactly. Exactly right.

Richard: I tend to lean on prayer as a way to help me through stress. So when I fall apart, even in the middle of the night when things are bothering me and on my mind and stressing me out, that just gives me rest. To know that this is God's problem now to deal with, it's not my issue alone to deal with and direct. It gives me that sense of peace and calmness and actually helps me get to sleep too. It also gives me that perspective of what's important to me as well so I don't sweat the little stuff then so much.

Celia: And you don't want anybody to see you out of control or that fear of you know unravelling in front of people.

Noel: My wife often says that God is a safe place to unravel. She saw me unravelling and it's been a great comfort to me at certain points.

Celia: Because there's no judgment is there.

Noel: There is no judgment. No.

Richard: Even if you don't quite get it right.

Noel: And sometimes some of the things that we're most fearful of, in fact when they unravel God's doing something there that's really important for us.

Celia: So we don't need to be in control.

Noel: No. No. And that's why for me one of the most beautiful verses in the Bible is come unto me all you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.

Celia: It must be a really freeing thing then isn't it? To just be able to let go.

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