

Only You Can Be You

Day 5

TODAY

Releasing Your Roles and Relationships

¹⁴This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. ¹⁵And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him. (1 John 5:14-15)

Sometimes, we may have some extraordinary event in our lives that induces stress, but Eric Rees points out that we play a myriad set of roles and that how we handle these roles is where our normal stress originates. The many roles we have - spouse, friend, planner of your future, financial organizer, provider, employee, parent, and family chauffeur are all roles we play and how much we worry about each one becomes the accumulation of the stress in our life. Each role is unique and includes a unique set of stresses, but the long waits, unruly pets, wailing kids, deadlines, broken equipment, physical aches, financial strains, and uncaring/selfish people all add up.

Our roles can be wonderfully fulfilling and can be painfully maddening. Sometimes, even the same role can provide both the greatest joys and the worse frustrations. Many times, the frustrations and the stress can lead one to ask why God has us in these roles. If one of your roles seems too stressful or you don't understand, you need to stop, evaluate this role, and ask God where this role fits in his plan. It is essential that you ask God before you get overwhelmed or you may find yourself somewhere you don't belong. Once you know that this role is a role God has for you, you must remember that we have a release. We can give our frustrations to God because He cares (1 Peter 5:7).

So, you must ask God's help and first examine each of your roles. You should insure it is a roll God would have you do. Then, for those roles that come with stress, you can surrender the frustration part to God and relieve your stress.

Eric Rees suggests that we list on paper our roles that we have. We should examine each role for fulfillment and frustration. Take time to celebrate the ones of fulfillment. Examine the frustrating roles. Should you even be in that role? For example, do you have a job that pays bills but has no joy or fulfillment? Sometimes, you may find that God has a role that you don't enjoy. His method is not always apparent. Once you recognize a role that is God's will, but brings frustration, thank God for the direction and give those frustrations to him.

Your most important roles are in relationships. God brings people into your life without you having a say. What you do with those relationships is up to you. You need to identify those fulfilling relationships and rejoice in them, striving to use them for the glory of God. By the same token, you must identify the frustrations in your relationships. Any negative impact they have in your life you should turn over to God. Again, Eric Rees suggest a list, a list of all your relationships. Thank God for all of them and ask for direction. And remember to turn over the frustrations to God.

Don't forget. Our roles change and evolve. Repeat these exercises often.

Organizing your roles and giving the frustrating bits to God is only the tool. Now you are identifying the roles that have purpose, minimizing frustrating roles, and giving the frustrations to God. This gives you the ability to move on, to focus your roles, and to add new roles. Eric Rees writes, "If you're stewing over finances or business problems or relationships, or any other problems that are largely out of your hands, you can't be effective for God or anyone else right now – and you're wasting your time. God will use anything we place in his hands to bless others and glorify him. It flies in the face of human logic, but the fact is, God wants to use all of us."

So we must give God all of our day, every day. Paul cautioned us about wasted time. ¹¹⁻¹⁶*Don't waste your time on useless work, mere busywork, the barren pursuits of darkness. Expose these things for the sham they are. It's a scandal when people waste their lives on things they must do in the darkness where no one will see. Rip the cover off those frauds and see how attractive they look in the light of Christ. Wake up from your sleep, climb out of your coffins; Christ will show you the light! So watch your step. Use your head. Make the most of every chance you get. These are desperate times!* (Ephesians 5:11-17 MSG)

Stressing over things we can't change is a waste of time. You should recognize your roles, minimize your worries, and then give the stresses to God. To seek God's help, pray this prayer:

Thank you, Lord. For showing me that although the roles and relationships in my life have not always been what I would choose for myself, they are all a part of your great plan for my life. Both the good and the not so good serve your purpose. As the story of Josef tells us in Genesis 50:20, what others might mean for evil, you can turn to good. Help me, God, to always be grateful for what you bring into my life and to look expectantly to you for what you will bring out of it. In Jesus' name, amen.