**Why Can't I Ever Seem to Get All  My Ducks in a Row?**

 Learning to ***"Cope with Life"***and the things that life throws at us, has been a major source of stress in a person's life since the beginning of time. The funny thing is...God created our brains to deal with multiple tasks and problems at very advanced levels of thinking all at one time. Our brain actually is used 90% of the time as a filter of all mental inputs and stimuli it receives and then processes them into our conscious thought for the activities around us. It allows us to consciously focus on and function at accomplishing just one or two things at a time. People with ADD or ADHD struggle with this because their "filter" is not working correctly and in some cases a medication can cause the brain to work correctly and increase attention and focus. But that's another whole teaching. We have the capacity to train our brain to do more.  To allow more "ducks in our pond", so to speak, without being overloaded. So where does stress come into play and how does my inability to cope with that stress cause me pain? Why am I always freaking out because I can't keep all my ducks in a row?

 What I have learned over the years is, that when our emotions enter into the coping equation it causes us to enter into stressful situations. Jesus said in John 16:33, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble (your ducks will not be in a row-a Rock insert) But take heart! I have overcome the world." This is actually the heart of the matter. When He spoke to the disciples in John 14:27 He said, "...Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

Here's an important concept, God created us in His image so that we could experience relationship and Agape love with him and others here on earth. The richness of that love when we find it is so cool! But we have limited brain ability in our human form and our emotions often get out of sync with God's Will. Too many ducks get out of line and we begin to focus on the ducks and not on the Duck Maker.

 Inevitably we begin to take control of things because of fear. Fear that I am going to lose something I love, fear that someone I love will get hurt, fear that I will not look good, feel good or sound good. Fear that I will not be a success. You can see there are many fears that can come upon us. But that's why Jesus said we would have these troubles but not be afraid. Stress is driven by our emotions getting into control of our will and not letting the Holy Spirit control those emotions. We know scientifically that you will **do** only what you **believe.** So a battle rages between our soul(our feeling, intellect, emotions) and our spirit(God's truths and power) as to who will CONTROL our will.

 Will

 Soul Spirit

Emotions can only react to the facts of our circumstances that we see and sense around us. But our Spirit can focus on Gods truth and promises even though at the time we see no evidence of solution.

 This is the process of coping and we start learning to cope from a very early age. Unfortunately, many of use learn some really poor coping behaviors early on in life.

 So coping is accomplished in two ways. By *Worldly Standards* or by *Godly Standards*. From an early age it is pounded into our heads that we must be number one, be the best, be all that you can be, or you'll be a LOSER! So we begin ***striving*** to be the best or we strive to gain your acceptance and love. As we get older more and more ducks are allowed into our "pond of life". The more troubles that beset us the more the ducks begin to scatter and the more we struggle to get them all in a row. Just like we've been taught we must do...cause I don't want to be a LOSER... or look bad or look dumb or look unsuccessful but the real fear is I may look out of CONTROL!

 Let's be honest here. When the bills pile up, a loved one is sick, you've lost your job, your marriage is not going well, your kids are in trouble or worst yet, maybe going off to the "money drain" called college....

Things begin to feel like they are getting out of your control and you don't like it. You are striving to keep all those ducks in a row and they are just not lining up. MAN, I've been there many a time! We all get there in life. The world then tells you..."take these medications, do this yoga, run long distances listening to music, work out, smoke marijuana, have a drink, find sexual releases, or maybe just escape in fantasy." But worldly standards will drive you bananas!

It never works...we end up running ourselves, our marriages and our children into the ground and the ducks just never line up in a row!

 So coping must come when we listen to what Jesus said to the disciples in John 15:5, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man abides in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit(the ducks begin to line up-a Rock insert) Apart from me you can do nothing." So the answer to the "Duck" dilemma is learning to cope with Godly Standards. The bible says "...God is Agape (Love) and we worship Him in spirit and in truth". So as we learn to trust God with every aspect of our life he will teach us more and more truths about how to abide in Him and not have to be in CONTROL! When I learned to Trust the Father in Heaven with everything and everyone in my life and by doing so, give up Control, I found a place called "Rest". Godly coping is learning to live in his Grace and rest in Him during all the storms. When that happens I don't have to strive to please anyone anymore! I can merely do my best and let the Holy Spirit inside of me guide me through the stormy waters of my current situation. I will still need to be engaged in life and all its problems but I won't have to have stress or anxiety. So it's a willingness to give up control and then an intentional desire for learning how to abide in Christ. When I keep my eyes focused on the Duck Maker all my ducks start to line up. If you are feeling the stress of all your "Ducks just way out of line" stop right now and just say this prayer:

"Father God in Heaven thank you for life. I want to give up control today of all these life issues \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(fill in the blank) and I choose to come and abide in your love and trust that you will lead me to all the proper solutions for the things I am dealing with. I willingly choose to listen to the Holy Spirit in me rather than the emotions of my soul. Jesus I ask that today you speak to all the "Ducks in my Pond" to bring them into order according your will. I trust in you and release all control into your hands. In your name, Amen".

For more teaching on how to get your ducks in a row, come join us at the Transformation Ministries School of Ministry Part I class called, "The Keys to Inner Healing." Registration on line is still open (trministries.org) and come see what Godly Standards can do to helping you abide in Him and live in His Rest!                                      Rock