

Mental Health and Wellbeing



Context

- Increased incidence of stress related illness
- New technologies
 - Faster pace of life
 - More distractions
 - 24/7 connectivity
 - 24/7 news stories (more often bad!)
 - Social media pressures
- Breakdown of family life
- Huge recent political shifts – Brexit, Trump, refugee crisis, wars



What Does the Bible Say?



“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind”
- Romans 12:2

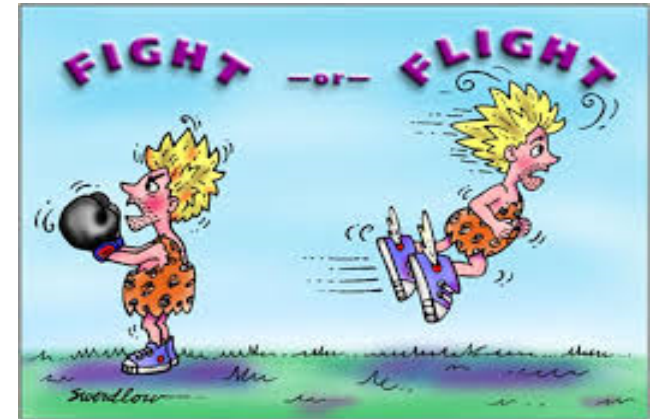
“Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts”
- Proverbs 4:23

“So do not worry about tomorrow; it will have enough worries of its own. There is no need to add to the troubles each day brings”
- Matthew 6:34

“So then, anyone who hears these words of mine and obeys them is like a wise man who built his house on rock” - Matthew 7:24

Stress physiology

- Thoughts → emotions → behaviour
- Primitive brain (limbic brain) scans environment for threats
- Response to danger – “fight or flight”
- What happens when this continues....e.g.
 - Brain fog and poor performance
 - Anxiety
 - Depression
 - Physical illnesses and pain
 - Unhealthy coping mechanisms
- Good news - we can reverse the formula and inoculate ourselves against stress



Positive psychology

- Rewires the brain to have a more positive bias
- Commit to 5 daily practices over 3-8 weeks
- Daily practices:
 - 15 minutes cardio exercise
 - Journal and pray about one positive experience a day
 - Write down and pray for 3 new things you're grateful for each day
 - One random act of kindness
 - Christian Mindfulness meditation



“The greatest weapon against Stress is our ability to choose one thought over another”

William James



Other resources

- www.40acts.org.uk/ #40 Acts – ideas for random acts of kindness. Also have Lent resources for groups (starts March 1st)
- www.christianmindfulness.co.uk
- Fit Fish – Christian health and fitness organisation, runs weekend health retreats www.fit-fish.co.uk/
- <http://www.ruachministries.org/audioresources.htm>