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THE BULWARK

WINNETKA AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST

STRESS: AN ADULT "BINKY"!?!

In an article that appeared in Euronews, last September the growing adult trend of using a latex pacifier is "all the rage". Okay, maybe in Europe (and upon checking, also in parts of Asia), but certainly not in the good old United States of America. Au contraire as the French would say, as a growing number of American Gen Z individuals have resorted to sucking on a pacifier as a way to relieve stress and anxiety. But it isn't just Gen Z, as even the aged in care facilities have been spotted sporting an adult pacifier. "Adulting 101", it would seem can be too over powering for some.

Surely there is a mature option in dealing with stress and anxiety that doesn't involve alcohol, drugs (whether they be illegal or legal) or harkening back to infantilism by slurping on a pacifier. Jesus, the *"Wonderful Counselor"* spoken of prophetically in Isaiah 9:6 stated, *"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light."* (Matthew 11:28-30) A directed promise. But in order to find that rest, it requires a willingness to learn and apply what has been taught.

Life's circumstances caused David to "adult" (grow up) quite quickly as seen in the pages of God's word. One might well say his formative years were caught up in eluding the treacherous clutches of those who sought his life. Stress and anxiety were a constant companion of David. Yet notice what he wrote as seen in Psalms 55:22. *"Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken."* Could you imagine a man like David being labeled as a "Snow Flake" or making use of a latex pacifier as a way of soothing away the stressors of the day. One might well say using such a device is a regression back to the halcyon days of childhood.

Stress is a beast that must be tamed day by day. It fosters fear and seems to be accelerated by the growing intrusion of social media into daily life. It seems as if there is no escape. Peter was a man who was well acquainted with the rigors of life and the anxiety and fear found therein. Yet rather than retreat he offered the following. *"Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you."* (1Peter 5:6-7)

Anxiety is defined as "an abnormal and overwhelming sense of apprehension and fear often marked by physical signs (such as tension, sweating, and increased pulse rate), by doubt concerning the reality and nature of the threat, and by self-doubt about one's capacity to cope with it". Yet another key word in 1Peter 5:7 is *"casting"* which carries the meaning of "to place as if by throwing; to throw off, out or away". Now stop and fully consider what Peter is saying about our stressors and the fact that God does indeed for us. Because God cares, we can throw our anxieties and fears at His feet and move forward. *"When I am afraid, I will put my trust in Thee. In God, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me?"* (Psalms 56:3-4)

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7) (wbe)