

# Be Found Virtuous<sup>©</sup> Newsletter

*The most virtuous women have something within them, something that is never chaste.*

*Honore de Balzac*

## ♻ JUL / AUG / SEP ♻

*Greetings! I pray this quarter's newsletter finds all of you in the favor of the Lord.*

This quarter we want to take a look at stress and the affect it has on self-esteem. Give yourself an honest answer to these questions:

1. Am I stressed or stressing?
2. Do I "suffer" from low self-esteem?
3. Do I deal with my low self-esteem?

It is unfortunate when we cannot be honest with ourselves to answer these kinds of questions. I am especially talking to those of you who say, "I don't have self-esteem problems." I haven't met a woman yet who doesn't — and I know some very positive, powerful, confident women! I believe we all know some area in our lives where we feel we don't measure up. Labeling it "low" self-esteem may seem extreme, but it is the descriptor we will use.

When I look over my life, I realize that parts of my life were ruled by stress from things like my job, being a single parent, and poor decision making. All of these resulted in questions like, "Why me?", "Why does everything have to be so hard?", "Why can't at least one thing in my life work out?" These classic questions were met with classic responses like, "I am cursed.", "No one likes me.", "God has targeted me for everything bad that I have ever said and did." The more I asked and responded to them with these statements, the worse I felt about myself. I never felt good about anything I had accomplished and I negated every blatant blessing God had bestowed upon me. My stress was a direct impact on my self esteem.

Let me share a recent experience. One way I recognize stress is when I feel unhappy. This particular time, I was happy but did not realize how mentally worn out I was. My body kept going and my mind was in overdrive but I could not sleep for more than four hours. I was always trying to stay on top of work. I got up one morning and **BOOM!** I saw it. My hair was uneven. I looked in the mirror and my hair was longer on one side than it was on the other. What happened? I was so stressed, my hair had broken and I didn't realize it until I actually took a moment to look in the mirror. *How busy did I have to be to*

*not see myself in the mirror?* Even though the stress was a positive driver (getting things done — and with excellence!), it was still stress. Just that quickly, my self-esteem cracked. I began to wonder what people had been saying about me behind my back. Here I was being the super-powered, corporate-working, ministry director and my hair has been lopsided! *See how quickly and negatively this works?*

I know that stress manifests itself differently. We lose or gain weight, eat, don't eat, exercise, lay around, cry, whine, moan, drink, smoke, become depressed, take medication, and do anything we can when life becomes unbearable. Once stress is prevalent, then we talk about ourselves; releasing termites into the wood of our self-esteem. We look at ourselves, don't like what we see, and actually tell ourselves demoralizing things. We do not realize that we are thinking and speaking our own self-esteem into the toilet.

Take a good look at yourself. Determine that no matter how hard your day, how long your night, or what life says, promise an allegiance to yourself that you are not going to allow worldly forces to govern the internal woman of V.I.R.T.U.E. God has perfected in you. You have the power to decide who you will be. Begin to do the right things for yourself. Pursue your passion. Reach out using God's arms as extension cords. Don't be afraid to be unique. Do your best. It is the works of the world that brings us stress. Don't allow life to force you into its mold. Break out and tame life to your liking. It can't overpower you because its yours to live. It can't take you because you are fearfully and wonderfully made. Stop stressing. You're not the bad person you've told yourself you are. Bishop Paul Morton says,

*"I see you in the future and you look better...I see you walking in favor and prosperity too...let me encourage you. Let me speak life to you. You can depend on God to see you through. You can depend on me, to pray for you."*



*Grace & Peace be unto you  
I'm still glad I don't look like what I been through.*

**Qualice T. Seymour**  
Ministry Director

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*And So Much More...*

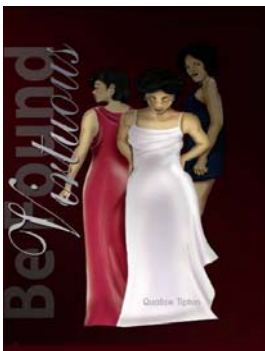
So many things will offer themselves to me for "worship" today. But reveal Yourself, God, in all Your creativity, as the only Being worthy of my true adoration.

Gary Wilde

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VOLUME 4

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JULY, 2010

# For the Virtuous Woman

VOLUME 4

# Stress & Self-Esteem

Stress has many definitions and is often viewed as something negative. For the purpose of this article I will use a basic definition. Stress is defined as “a mental, emotional or physical tension or strain.” In actuality, stress is the way we respond to change. There is also “positive” stress which is referred to as “eustress”. Examples of this type of stress are: a new job, promotion, having a baby, planning a wedding, etc. All are seen as positives, but they can become stressful. Self esteem is defined as “a realistic respect or favorable impression of oneself; self-respect; pride in oneself.” As with stress, we often focus on low self-esteem rather than high self-esteem. Where low self-esteem is negative, high self-esteem is viewed as being confident, self-assured, and sometimes arrogant.

Research shows that there is a direct correlation between stress and self-esteem. Some studies suggest that raising self-esteem lowers stress. However, there is no hard evidence that says that increasing stress will reduce self-esteem. There are many theories, so for the benefit of this article, let’s keep it simple. Our focus here is mainly on how stress affects self-esteem and basic steps for improving low self-esteem that could be caused by stress.

The body responds to stress whether it is negative or positive. It is not able to differentiate between good or bad stress. Stress is manageable when it is balanced with periods of rest, self-care, healthy eating and exercise (no alcohol or drugs). Stress can affect a person physically, emotionally, spiritually, mentally, and relationally. Unmanaged, stress may result in feeling bad about oneself which, in turn, causes low self-esteem. Often times, when we feel good about ourselves, we are less stressed and in control of situations. Stress, when it is good, can be motivating and push us forward. It can excite us and activate positive responses in the body. Managing that stress is key.

Unmanaged, stress can become overwhelming and out of control. It is suggested that you know what the stressor is; define the stressor and address the issue before it becomes a major concern and you feel out of control. Being self-assured or bold helps with the stress and self-esteem and makes it manageable. Let’s discuss ways to handle the stress and look at how it affects self-esteem:

Thought Stopping --Changing the way you view things or stopping negative messages that continue to play in your head. Negative thoughts often depress or cause anxiety which hinders positive self-esteem. Use distractions such as clapping your hands or snapping your fingers to get your own attention, saying “no” to the negative or using visual images to rid the mind of unwanted thoughts. Below are a few suggestions that might help:

- ♥ Replace negative thoughts with positives—Use positive affirmations: **I am worthy....I feel loved....I can do this...**
- ♥ Use positive self-talk—Rid yourself of certain words such as **ALWAYS** and **NEVER**. Use rational language by focusing on what is reasonable regarding the situation, try to use sensible, logical statements and remember that “Positive thinking = Positive action”.

Once you change the way you think, the behavior will follow and you will begin to feel good or better about yourself, the situation, or both.

Negative thoughts often stem from variables such as painful past events, fear of others being better than us, childhood events, what we watch, listen to and read, sin, and guilt. Once we de-stress ourselves from those things, our outlook on the situation may be brighter, thus resulting in feeling better. Often times, we are able to master the stress by taking quiet time to make a list of things we wish to change. Be wise and choose one at a time so as not to become overwhelmed.

Finally, let’s take a look at exercises for developing high self-esteem:

- ♥ Make a list of your assets; also take time to start a blessing or gratitude list
- ♥ Make a list of those things you wish to change or improve; set goals that are measurable
- ♥ Prioritize the lists and work on one thing at a time until you master it, then proceed to another
- ♥ Use positive affirmations, surround yourself with positive people and with those going in the same direction as you

Lastly, if stress is unmanageable, seek professional help. There is nothing wrong with getting help. Counseling provides a safe environment that is confidential. It allows you to talk to someone who can be objective and give another perspective. It also allows you the opportunity to process and eventually develop answers for yourself.

Donna S. Thompson, LPC

## The Total Woman of V.I.R.T.U.E. Affair



*We have stepped it up a notch! I want to use this quarter’s newsletter to give you an overview of what to expect!*

We will honor The Total Women of V.I.R.T.U.E. in the light of God’s glory.

Our guest speaker will travel to Memphis to share with us the Word of the Lord along with a special praise & worship.

Our vendors are ready to show you their wares and there’ll be so much for you to explore; exclusive items that can only be purchased at the Total Woman of V.I.R.T.U.E. Affair. The BFV Boutique has new items you don’t want to pass up!

*And....* We have some *special* announcements!

Call us today to get your tickets at 901.356.7698 or visit us online at [www.befoundvirtuous.com/twov](http://www.befoundvirtuous.com/twov)

## Aunt Suz’s Corner

Yeah...about my ex-, he is simply a shiver looking for a spine to run up



# Pillar Talk

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V. I. R. T. U. E.

Tara's done it again. She's sent a powerful word that links to our pillar talk of "truth" for this quarter. Read on to see how she's opened herself to the "Truth".

## *Sleeping with the Enemy*

*"For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."*

II Timothy 1:7

During the first month of my incarceration, I slept with my enemy for an entire month. This enemy wasn't a person, but it still had life-like qualities. It wasn't until my sister brought it to my attention that I decided to address the problem.

The enemy I was sleeping with was "fear". Each night as I would prepare to go to sleep, I would tuck my favorite Bible on my pillow, right beside my face and go to sleep. The Bible was my security blanket in an unfamiliar world. This was a world I was still trying to adjust to. I was green to prison life and wasn't sure what to expect even though I was in solitary confinement due to my sentence. Unknowingly, fear was dictating my desire to sleep with my Bible each night as I had never slept with it prior to my incarceration.

It wasn't until a phone conversation with my sister that I discovered I was acting out of fear. She stated, "Tara, you are sleeping with your Bible out of fear." That was a sobering statement for me. I made my decision right then and there not to do it anymore — and I didn't. The enemy had been fear, but my Friend and Protector had been there all along. I just needed to trust Him (Jesus) and surrender my fears to him.

Tara R. Lyle

*BFV asks: Are you sleeping with an enemy that needs to be released to Jesus?*

# De-Stressors

Here are some helpful tips on how to de-stress...

### Your Health:

1. Drink plenty of water
2. Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince, and dinner like a beggar
3. Eat more foods that grow on trees and plants
4. Live with the 3 Es: Energy, Enthusiasm, and Empathy
5. Make time to pray
6. Play more games
7. Read more books than you did in 2009
8. Sit in silence for at least 10 minutes each day
9. Sleep for 7 hours
10. Take a 10-30 minute walk daily and smile while you walk

### Your Personality:

1. Don't compare your life to others
2. Invest your energy in the positive
3. Know your limits
4. Don't take yourself so seriously
5. Don't waste precious energy on gossip
6. Dream more while you are awake
7. Envy is a waste of time; you already have all you need
8. Life is too short to waste time hating anyone or being vindictive
9. Make peace with your past so it won't affect your present
10. No one is in charge of your happiness except you
11. Realize that life is a school and you are here to learn.
12. Smile and laugh more
13. You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.

### Your Social Life:

1. Call your family often
2. Each day give something good to others
3. Forgive everyone for everything
4. Spend time with people over the age of 70 and under the age of 6
5. Try to make at least three people smile each day
6. What other people think of you is none of your business
7. Your friends will take care of you when you are sick; stay in touch

### Your Own Life:

1. Do the right thing
2. Get rid of everything that is not useful, joyful, or beautiful
3. REMEMBER: God heals *everything*
4. Situations will change; so do people — give them both a chance
5. Say *Thank You every* morning that you wake up
6. No matter how you feel, get up, get dressed, and show up
7. Remember the best is yet to come
8. Decide that you are going to be happy — by any means necessary!

*I'm just sayin'...*



*For every problem under the sun  
There is a solution or there is none.  
If there be one, seek till you find it;  
If there be none, then never mind it.*



*BFO Pledge of Allegiance*



*I pledge allegiance to the Lord  
and to myself to be a Total Woman of  
V.I.R.T.U.E.*

*and to those virtues for which I stand  
including*

*Value, Integrity, Righteousness, Truth,  
Uniqueness, and, Excellence*

*One woman, under God, indivisible,  
with faith, liberty, and hope for all.*

*Thoughts & Wishes for  
2010*



*God is already where you are  
going to be, just like He was  
there when you were*

*Joy Bowen*



POSTAGE

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## BFV Ministry News

### The 2010 Total Woman of V.I.R.T.U.E. Affair

August 28<sup>th</sup>

*Vendor Booths will open at 9:00 am & again after the Affair*

*The Affair begins at 10:00 AM*

University of Memphis  
Fogelman Executive Business Center  
Memphis, TN

**TICKETS ON SALE NOW — Online or by calling 901.356.7698**

### Facebook

We're still looking to sign up 1,000 fans on our FaceBook page. We're listed under *Be Found Virtuous*. Tell your friends to tell their friends and then tell more to help us reach our goal.

*Our next issue will recap our Total Woman of V.I.R.T.U.E. Affair*

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