



## HOW TO TELL IF YOU ARE A STRESSED OUT PREACHER

J.J. Turner, Ph.D. ©

I have found through my 45-years of preaching that humor is a major reliever of stress. King Solomon was a leader who obviously was under a lot of stress; he wrote about the benefits of a merry heart: *“A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken...All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast... A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones”* (Proverbs 15:13, 15; 17:22).

There should be little doubt that humor and laughter are positive expressions of a merry heart. Laughter makes the sun shine on cloudy days; it helps to lighten the burdens of the moment. Scientist have studied the effect of humor and laughter and discovered they have a dynamic impact for good. Laughter for example has an instantaneous effect on virtually every major organ in the human body. Laughter reduces stressors that sap the body of energy, joy and desire; as well as relaxing the tissues and exercises most vital organs. It has been proven that even a forced laugh results in a positive benefit both mentally and physically.

The next time you feel anxious, uptight, jittery, nervous and stressed; take time for a good laugh.

Jeff Foxworthy has turned *You Might be a Redneck if...* into one of the most successful comedy routines in America today, as well as a successful business. I have taken the liberty to spin a few responses to *How to tell if You Are a Stressed Out Preacher*. They are not Foxworthy caliber, but maybe they will place a grin on you face or even elicit a laugh or two.

1. You might be a stressed out preacher if you cry watching a comedy movie.
2. You might be a stressed out preacher if you “forget” to set your alarm clock for Sunday mornings.
3. You might be a stressed out preacher if your computer loses your sermon notes every Saturday night and your associate has to fill in for you.
4. You might be a stressed out preacher if you continually forget the code to the office copy machine.



5. You might be a stressed out preacher if you have a sudden desire to lay hands around an elder's neck.
6. You might be a stressed out preacher if your retirement dream is a monastery.
7. You might be a stressed out preacher if you suddenly get an urge to go to the bathroom during a business meeting.
8. You might be a stressed out preacher if your favorite book is Lamentations.
9. You might be a stressed out preacher if you have a cross tattooed on your forehead.
10. You might be a stressed out preacher if you have made application to be a greeter at Wal-Mart.
11. You might be a stressed out preacher if you fall asleep while waiting to go to the pulpit to preach.
12. You might be a stressed out preacher if you feel like your ministry is one of trying to herd cats instead of sheep.
13. You might be a stressed out preacher if you volunteer for a mission trip to Mars.
14. You might be a stressed out preacher if you never get mad but are constantly "grieved in your spirit."
15. You might be a stressed out preacher if you pull the shades so you won't see the sun go down on your wrath.
16. You might be a stressed out preacher if you wish the baptistery was deeper and you couldn't swim.
17. You might be a stressed out preacher if you've tried to get others to take your job but nobody wants it.
18. You might be a stressed out preacher if you envy used car salesmen or garbage truck drivers.
19. You might be a stressed out preacher if you had rather attend a funeral than an elders meeting.
20. You might be a stressed out preacher if you are on your third series of sermons based on Peter's remarks in John 21:3, "*I go fishing.*"
21. You might be a stressed out preacher if none of these jokes about stressed out preachers bring a grin, smile or laughter to your countenance.



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Take time every day to lighten up. Read something that makes you laugh; read the comic strips. Watch a Three Stooges movie. Road Runner cartoons will make you laugh. Learn some good clean jokes and share them.

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The **Jeremiah Institute** has developed a dynamic seminar to help ministers and church leaders manage stress and burn-out, both preventive and corrective. Read our NEWS section for information or contact us.