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Two of the largest stressors I've seen in my life are

1. Insecurity
2. Purpose

Insecurity meaning not being confident that things are alright. For example, relational insecurity (according to Tony Robbins) means you're unsure and unconfident about a relationship/ships.

- There's emotional insecurity

(according to wikipedia) is "a feeling of unease or nervousness" that may be triggered by feeling vulnerable or inferior in some way. And the list goes on.

I also recently found out, academic insecurity is a thing as well. It's on one side not feeling confident that you can do well academically and on the other side feeling like what you do is insignificant because someone else always does it better.

When we're not confident that things are alright we often feel stress. Because who honestly wants things to not be alright.

The second, is purpose.

Everyone has heard that anecdotes of celebrities, "being rich and famous isn't all that it's cut out to be." There are people the excell relationally, are confident emotionally, and abound in their academics and or careers, but yet still feel stressed that their life isn't worth living.

I mean, it makes sense. The things we often work for are either never ending or can be achieved:

- Work for a charity, your work will never end since there will always be problems in the world no matter how much you try to fix the problems. And if it is fixed? What do you do then?
- Work for money, once you have a lot of money your goal just becomes to have more money
- Live for your family or friendships, eventually people will hurt you and those you sacrifice the most for cut you the deepest (we're all broken people so it's going to happen).
- Live for helping people, some people you just won't be able to help.

And every other thing we commit our lives to can be disregarded by something a friend of mine recently said. "If all you do eventually will be forgotten, what's the point of being known in the first place?"

And that causes stress. That causes anxiety.

And that's the end of the devotional! Have a nice day and let's start making some gifts!

Ok no, obviously I'm not going to end it there. I don't believe in the next 10 minutes I'm going to solve all insecurities and purpose issues all of us experience, these are things that we have to work through over a period of time which is different for each of us, it doesn't happen over night, usually. But, we can create a framework from which we can evaluate these problems.

Since there are two things you can do with problems, you can either let them eat away at you like a parasite or you can tackle them, wrestle with them, and try to come to some sort of understanding on how to conquer or live in harmony with them.

And lemme to you, my grandma didn't raise me to be a loser so I'm gonna fight.

The author C.S Lewis has a very apt summary of the different ways people handle this. Three ways in particular.

1. Go from thing to thing looking to fill that hole in your heart

I think this is what most people do. Go from hobby to hobby, spouse to spouse, vocation to vocation, all in search of something to fit this longing they have for purposefulness only to be disappointed time and time again.

2. Give up

People that give up say that people who want to have an higher meaning for their life are just idealist dreamers. People that are chasing rainbows.

3. To believe it's out there

He describes this belief as understanding this:

"Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger: well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim: well, there is such a thing as water and he goes on."

And he concludes the thought with this idea...

"If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation..... is that I was made for another world."

Heaven. Heaven is the framework Christians use to evaluate the feelings of purposelessness and insecurities that come up in life.

We see this throughout all of history. Nearly every religion calls out to some other world, a place to fill a void we experience in the world as we see it now.

The Norse (vikings) had Valhalla, Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) have heaven, Hinduism has Nirvana, many Native American tribes had a concept called "Wakan Tanka" which is the place people go after death that has no pain and suffering.

It's as if there's something encoded in the human mind to tell us that there's something more that makes life worth living.

The logical question to ask here, though, is how does heaven, and I'm going to speak from the Christian perspective, help us start to navigate insecurities and purposelessness?

The orthodox belief (as in orthodox, the widely accepted belief among most Christians) says that we go to heaven if we accept the sacrifice God made for us, Him dying on the cross. And implicit in that is the idea of having a relationship with God we could even say relationship with the father because God is referred to as the Father throughout the Bible. We can go more into what that means exactly later. That's the basic concept though, you go to heaven because of your relationship, Christians often say faith, in the Father.

Is that clear, any questions?

So for insecurities. A good analogy is a human father. Let's say my father, Mr. Petitema, were to be a multi-billionaire. And he that told me that all the money he has is mine because he loves me. To be frank, I'm not going to bottle up anxiety over how much my next job is going offer to pay me if I know I have multiple billions waiting for me. Because of my relationship to my father, many of the anxieties and insecurities of the present go away because I know what he has in store for me in the future.

The analogy is the same in Christianity. When you choose to have a relationship with God and accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, when you keep in mind the promise your Father God in heaven made to you, you can begin to work towards living a life where the insecurities don't bother you. Caveat, this isn't something that happens overnight. A lot of the conditioning we receive from our environment or upbringing makes us stress out about things regardless of the facts, but when we start to accept this we can move away from many of the insecurities that plague us.

That's insecurity, and now for purpose.

As we said, Christians believe you have to accept the sacrifice that Jesus Christ, who is God (we can talk about what that means later), in order to go to heaven. One of the reasons why that is crucial is because the fact that Jesus died on the cross says a lot about who you are as a person.

Another analogy! There is a parable in the bible that best illustrates this:

Matthew 13:44 (NKJV)

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field"

The basic idea is that a man found something in a field, and when He found it decided to give up all He had so He could buy the field and get what he saw as treasure. I also want to make a note, **the reason why the thing was so valuable was because of the price the man was willing to pay for it.**

There are multiple ways you can interpret this parable. The one perspective that's important to this conversation is that it's Christ finding you. You are the thing hidden in that field. And He found you so valuable that He decided to give up His entire life so that He could have you.

The fundamental questions to purpose are "does what I do or who I am matter. Do I bring value by existing?"

And when we accept that God died on the cross to have us, that shows that we have so much value, we matter so much and what we bring to the world is so valuable that God Himself was willing to give up everything so that He could have us.

So what this says, and what this means, is that your purpose isn't found anywhere near to what you do, but exclusively in who you are, God's child.

We can be secure knowing that God has heaven in store for us and we can live knowing what we bring to the world is valuable because God was willing to give up everything to have us.

We can live and work with purpose knowing that our purpose lies much deeper than what we do or what we outwardly see.

It was these concepts that put forth some of the most monumental achievements throughout history. From the conversion of the Roman empire, to the findings of Isaac Newton, to the abolishment of the slave trade. The idea that our purpose runs deeper than what we do and that we are intended for greater glories than this life can show us has pushed people to live lives of impact.

Does that answer the question of "what should I do after I graduate" or "how do I fix this relationship or get better grades?" No. But it helps us start to operate in a way where we can work to try and figure those things out knowing that in the end it will be alright.

And that's the message I believe God wants to tell you. When you're up late at night stressing, All God wants you to hear is: "No matter what happens, it's going to be okay."