

8/27/25

**Week 35: Christmas Shoes & Smiles**

**James & Betty Robison**

**Charles Stone**

**Studio discussion:**

**JAMES:** You know, when you preach about The Rock, and you have a name, Stone, it looks like God had something to do with your life. Charles Stone has written a book called, *Stress Less*. I can understand when I hear what people say, and when you hear about young people, they have a stress problem. A serious stress problem.

Charles, it's good to have you here.

**CHARLES:** Great to be with you.

**JAMES:** This is an amazing book. You say something up at the top: "Nine habits from the Bible and Brain Science." Where does brain science come in here?

**CHARLES:** Well, my passion for understanding this amazing thing called the human brain actually began in a high chair some 34 years ago. Here's what happened. In Laurel, Mississippi, visiting my wife's parents, our youngest daughter, Tiffany, was in a high chair. I was feeding her pureed peaches or whatever. When I lifted up the spoon, I noticed her left eye was quivering. And that doesn't sound right. You know, that's not right. So we freaked out a bit. Down the street was a pediatrician. We took her down there. He said, "It's probably something called a strabismus, which is an eye development problem." But he said, "When you go back to Atlanta," where we were living, "see a specialist." Went to the specialist, he says, "Probably it's strabismus but we'll take a picture anyway, CAT scan." Had a CAT scan. And I kid you not, James, at the very moment I opened the door to our little rental house, the phone was ringing. Went into the kitchen, picked it up, and that was the day's of the corded phones, all that. I said, "Hello?" On the other end was the neurologist. He said, "Mr. Stone, we know what's wrong

with your daughter.” I said, “What is it?” “She has a brain tumor.” It was like a punch in the gut. Fast forward to today. She's really doing well but the first 20 years, she had over ten brain surgeries. Dr. Ben Carson performed a couple of those. And, she's a real testimony to God's grace.

But that stirred my interest in the human brain. I've got some education in that area, written some books. So that's kind of what brought me to this one. Integrating Scripture, God's Word with science, and that's kind of the genesis of my interest.

**JAMES:** And to say that you and your wife had to experience stress through that would be an understatement.

**CHARLES:** Yes! Was it stressful? Oh, my!

**JAMES:** Let me, I'm going to hit some of these chapters here. Just listen to the practices about dealing with it: Cease and Breathe, Reveal How You Feel, Broaden and Build, Audit Your Thoughts, Soak Your Soul, Cultivate Certainty, Grow Gratitude. You know, ungrateful people are some of the most miserable, stressed-out people on the planet.

**CHARLES:** That's exactly right.

**JAMES:** That really is a truth. Safeguard Safety, Sleep Smart. Some people say, I just wish I could sleep, period. And they have to get so doped up and they can't think straight after that. Final Thoughts.

Okay. Tell our viewers what you want them to hear, that you want to take them in depth through the book and through everything you've shared. It's big because you experienced it. And now you see it, and you're caught up in it. I sense that you're excited about what you're learning and sharing.

**CHARLES:** I really am. I think about when I was in elementary school. Remember show and tell when you bring something? I have a couple of show-and-tell items that really kind of explain it. I've got a coin here. It's a fake penny. You know, they're going to quit making pennies, I understand. Stress, James and Betty, is like a two-sided coin. One side is that thing out there that's causing stress or even in our minds. On the other side of the coin is how we respond to stress. Now, there's another little idea important to understand what's really happening in the book. There are two flavors. Now, I couldn't bring any ice cream, but I like ice cream, but I didn't bring any ice cream. There's acute stress and there's chronic stress. Now, to be honest with you, I felt a little bit of acute stress walking in the studio. You know, like, oh man, this is really like. But you know what? That's good because it helps us focus. It helps us pay attention. My stress level will go down. It's going down right now because you guys just make it very, very easy and natural to talk. Chronic stress, that's what does the bad work. When we have some stressful experience that we're responding in an unhealthy way over days, weeks and months, that's when it does, it's bad stuff.

Now, the response to stress is something called resilience. Let me describe it this way. Let's say this table actually had a glass top, and it had it right out here. I brought a couple more show-and-tell items. This is a heavy metal ball. Now, glass tables here. What would happen if I drop this heavy metal ball on the glass? It would shatter. Okay, keep that in mind. Also, I have an egg. I held the egg up and drop the egg, what would it do when it hit?

**JAMES:** It would likely break.

**CHARLES:** It would break, exactly right. Some people respond to stress in such a way they have no resilience. So when they face stress, they break stuff. Other people have no resilience and they break up. We've got one more here, a tennis ball. If I dropped the tennis ball, what would it do? It would bounce. That's the picture of resilience. It's the way God made us to be able to bounce back from difficulty, but also learn from it for the next time we face stress.

So that's just the essence. And resilience is really character. Romans 5:3, 4 says, "We also rejoice in our suffering because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance

character, and character hope. So responding to stress, I believe, is one of the ways that God helps build character in us.

So yeah, that's the genesis of it. And that's the kind of the meat of what people would want to take away with it.

**JAMES:** So when you get stressed and you say we should respond properly, what do you see as the initial action or reaction or response that should come when stressed? What initiates the positive progress?

**CHARLES:** Well, I covered nine of these principles that are grounded in Scripture.

**JAMES:** Where I read them off.

**CHARLES:** You read them off, yeah. It's supported by God's Word. And probably the first one is one of the most important. I call it Cease and Breathe. Now let's just say we find ourselves in a stressful situation. Our stress is really amping up. The cease part means to literally stop. And we don't do that sometimes. We're just so busy. Just to stop, pull away, get into a quiet place. If you're in an argument with someone, pull away. Pull off to the side of the road, stop. That's the cease. The breathe part is, all throughout Scripture we see breath and breathing. God breathed into Adam, he became a living being. Jesus breathed on those early disciples, the Holy Spirit came. So it's all throughout Scripture.

Here is a very interesting insight about the brain. When we breathe deeply, especially on the exhale, it lowers the stress response. Yes. And here's a little what I call a sniff breath. It's like this. You're in a stressful situation, you pulled away. A big deep breath, and then an extra breath. Hold it a couple of seconds and breathe out. And let the exhale be a little longer than the inhale. That is a very easy practice anybody can take.

**BETTY:** I do that nearly every day. I do take the breath, hold it for a little bit, and then whoo. It really does make a difference.

**CHARLES:** Yes, it does, Betty. You're exactly right.

**JAMES:** That's what I was about to say. People don't realize that's an important aspect to everything that you want to do to make progress physically, even in strength, even in working out, gaining balance. Everything that you need, a deeper breath, a deeper breath. Hold it, and let it -- it's almost like breathe in the fullness of God. Don't just glimpse at God. But really soak in it. Breathe in. It makes a difference.

**BETTY:** It really does. What about guarding your thoughts? I think that's very important.

**CHARLES:** That is so important. Paul talks about it quite a bit. Philippians 4:8 says, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about those things."

Now, I want to share a word with you that can seem to be like a big word for people not kind of versed in neuroscience, but it's a good word. It's called metacognition. Metacognition simply means think about your thinking. It means to build into your life those times during the day when you stop and you ask yourself, now, Charles, what are you thinking about? Who's sponsoring those thoughts? Is the evil one sponsoring those thoughts? Is my worry sponsoring those thoughts? Or is God's Word and His spirit sponsoring those thoughts, informing those thoughts?

And here's a simple little practice I use. I don't know if you guys do this, but I talk to myself sometimes. Not in a public but in private. There's something good about that. My next door neighbor's name is Kevin. Let's say he just did something that made me really mad. He's a great guy, he wouldn't do it. This is the wrong way to deal with that stress. I am so mad at him. I just eww! No. The best way to deal with it is to have a conversation with yourself. Kind of separate from it and say, okay, Charles. Like I'm talking to Charles, I see you are really angry at Kevin. Let's think about what's the best way to respond to this. So it's creating a little bit of that

separation. But we have to check in often, and build a discipline. What's going on up here? Paul was a perfect, perfectly described the importance of checking in up here.

**JAMES:** How did he describe it?

**CHARLES:** Well, Philippians 4:8. All throughout the epistles, he talks about the mind quite a bit. In fact, “the mind” is in Scripture some 200 plus times. The mind is so important. It's what's so important. There's something called neuroplasticity. It's actually how the brain reconfigures with all these brain cells and brain circuits. And one of the ways we do that, Paul, is an example of this, is filtering God's Word into our minds; reading it and meditating on it. What actually happens is there's a physiological change that happens. These thoughts, this worldview, biblical worldview becomes who we really are. And Paul, he was the perfect example of that.

**JAMES:** And then set your mind on things above. You can set your mind on God's Word and His truth. It has transforming power. Okay, talk to us about stress. What do you think is the greatest possible stress causer, typically, in America?

**CHARLES:** Wow! Today, our world is just so topsy-turvy. I think one of the biggest stressors, to be honest with you, is social media. Now, I like social media because I like funny cat videos and dog videos. That's what I use social media for. I want to laugh.

**JAMES:** I love the animals!

**CHARLES:** Yes! But unfortunately, and especially among the younger generation, social media, there's so much comparison. Like you don't put on social media what's going wrong with your life. You put that best foot forward. A lot of young people, students, they see this perfect girl, a perfect guy, or their experiences and they don't measure up, and so that creates a great amount of stress.

Covid, all the experts are saying there is that lost generation, almost. Covid really left a very profound negative experience upon our kids. And we're seeing now stress levels and anxiety

and depression are skyrocketing among young people. So I think in our world today, that's one thing.

And then one of the things I do have a problem with is I spend too much time on the news, and just negative –

**JAMES:** And it runs 24 hours a day. You can get it in so many different sources. And you need to understand the deceiver is crafty and he's cunning. He will use every scheme possible to deceive us and to misdirect our thoughts. That's why it is so terribly important that we understand the power and the importance of God's word, and what God says. Because what he says when we hear it and we heed it, it begins to change the way we think. It begins to change the thought process. And it will give us peace rather than stress and anxiety, and I experience that.

You know, when you were talking about the stressful things that happen to people, I'm thinking about how they happen. I'm thinking about how simple it is for me to deal with it, because I immediately talk to God. I immediately go to what he has said, what he says, what his word says. And there's a peace that comes in the Word of God immediately. That has to be a big part of what you teach.

**CHARLES:** Yeah, yeah. And one of the keys is remembering to do that. Scripture says, "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." What often happens is we get caught up in this negative thinking like this -- some issue that's the size of a pea. Something causes stress. Well, instead of immediately, Lord, I need your wisdom to deal with this. What does scripture have to say? We begin ruminating and worrying. And we wrap narrative and more thoughts around that. So what was the size of a pea, now is the size of a basketball, and now that's become the issue.

The key is to develop the discipline to not believe everything you read on social media. To not believe every thought that pops into your mind, but to build into your routine every hour on

your smartphone. Have it beep at you, Okay, check in. Are these thoughts honoring God, or do I need to change channels?

**JAMES:** Let me just ask you, because it seems to me that you communicate with a comfort level, a peace level, and no one can question that you had reason to stress with what happened to your daughter. That would load up every loving parent with an indescribable load of stress. Well, since you've gone through it and you've studied it, are you amazed right now when you get somebody's attention and you begin to point them to transforming truth and to the way of peace, the Prince of Peace? Are you actually finding yourself becoming amazed at how quickly the spirit and the truth of God, the transforming truth, and the peace of God can begin to relieve stress?

**CHARLES:** Absolutely. I think part of it, James, is just wisdom of many years. I've done some dumb things in my life. I've stumbled. I've been harsh, made mistakes in ministry. None that disqualified me, but as you grow and mature, and hopefully, become wiser, you recognize and you're quicker to going to the Prince of Peace. Instead of your own ways of dealing with it, you go to the Prince of Peace. I think that's part of -- I appreciate so much your ministry. I mean, you aren't stopping. You aren't quitting. You have these decades and decades of fruitful ministry. And I believe that maybe these are going to be your most fruitful years.

**JAMES:** They already are becoming. And Betty and I are in our 80s, and we plan to live a long time. We already have. Well, I'm full of life and we flow life. I hope you'll get this book, *Stress Less*. I really think Charles will help you. Charles, you know what I have found gives people tremendous peace? That is to focus on a need in others that love can meet. That's what happened when God sent Betty and me to the Third World. It wasn't somewhere Betty wanted to go. We were going into war-torn countries. And I went with total peace. She didn't necessarily, but she had trust in me and in God to trust me to lead.

We began to put our arms around the least of these and the people that feel unnoticed. One of the things we did was give shoes and smiles to children that never had shoes, and to children



that had terrible cleft palate. I want you to watch and listen. And just see if you don't think you would find joy and peace putting God's arms around these who seem helpless and hopeless, but they're not because the love that flows through us never fails. Watch!

**Transition roll-in: [Christmas Love and Joy]**

**JOHN:** Well, it's a great day here in South Sudan as we come and we get to bring Christmas shoes to these precious children who have no shoes. As you know, for years now we've been giving hundreds of thousands of pairs away, but there's still a great need, and we want to be a part of just sharing a little bit of joy and a little bit of Christmas love with children around the world. It's going to change the way they walk. It's going to help with infections on their feet. We've seen so many children as we've come through, their feet are infected, their toes are infected. They've got cuts on their ankles. So we need your help. It takes just a small amount. We'll put a pair of shoes on each one of these kids' feet.

And remember, it's not just shoes that we give at Christmas time, it's also the smiles. So around the world, kids that are in need of cleft palate surgeries, or kids that are in need of shoes will be able to have a little extra something of joy this Christmas because of your giving. So whatever you can give, maybe it's small, maybe it's great, but whatever you can do, would you please help us give Christmas shoes just as a simple way of reminding children that God sees them and that God loves them.

**Studio appeal:**

**JAMES:** Betty, we're told oftentimes, you don't look 80. You don't look old. Betty, you look so young. You want to know one reason why? We have a joy and a peace in sharing God's love with the least of these, with the most overlooked. Those who feel so unimportant and forgotten. Jesus said, If you help the least of these, those that are hungry, those that are hurting, those that are in prison, so to speak, they're defeated, they're thirsty, and you meet that need, you do it to me. And you know what he says? And you are my sheep. If you ever wonder who's saved, who really knows him, you see the least of these. You see the hurting and the suffering. And you can

be a healing factor, and you do it, he says, you are my sheep doing my will, and you bless me. I think that keeps us young. And I think that alleviates a lot of stress.

**BETTY:** And, James, to give a special gift to these children, shoes of all things. I love to see my grandchildren, my great-granddaughters, they get a new pair of shoes, some of them have sparkles on them and everything. They're so proud of them. Well, these children are just as proud because they have shoes on their feet. Feet that walk every day. Everywhere they go they have to walk to get there, and their little feet step on stones, they step on all kinds of things. They cut their feet, James, and then they get infections and they get diseases from it.

This is a gift they can enjoy because it's a gift of shoes, but it's also a protection for their body. So please join with us and let's offer the shoes for Christmas for these beautiful little children.

**JAMES:** Yeah, I agree with everything you said. And then let's do this. Let's put a smile on a child's face that never believed they could smile. We've seen so many with cleft palates that when they would see themselves in our television camera, they would run, they would pull back. They hadn't seen -- a lot of them had never seen a mirror. Kids would walk up and look in the rearview mirror on the side of a truck, and they'd see themselves and they wouldn't like it.

But do you know what we can do? We can give them the miracle of a smile. I'm asking everyone right now to make the greatest gift you can. Your gift will give shoes. It's amazing that \$36 gives ten children shoes. Isn't that amazing? Please, would you do whatever you can? And then remember this. We're able to do the cleft palate surgeries because of the donation of the time of surgeons. They have to have certain equipment, and they have to pay for certain things, but we can do it for \$500. Imagine what that means to a child and the parents, the family, the friends to that person.

Would you right now go and get your bank card? And would you make the best gift you can, please? Give the greatest gift because you're giving, truly, the greatest gift of love and the life of Christ. It is because of him that we do it. Please, if you write a check make it to LIFE. But let's

give some shoes and smiles for Christmas starting right now. And we've got to do it now to deliver by Christmas. Please do it.

**CS&S Cause 2025:**

***ANNOUNCER:** Poverty is a killer, and because of it, children needlessly suffer not only from lack of food and clean water, but also from a lack of things we take for granted, such as a healthy smile or a protective pair of shoes.*

*Far too many children living in extreme poverty have never owned a pair of shoes. And while that may seem minor, walking with bare feet puts them at risk of painful infections, injury, and life-threatening diseases.*

*But this Christmas, you can bring hope and healing. Your gift today will help provide new shoes for 150,000 children in time for the holidays. And for some children, a beautiful new smile. Your gift of \$36 will help provide shoes for ten children, \$72 will help provide for 20, \$180 will help provide shoes for 50, and a gift of \$500 will help provide a cleft surgery, restoring a child's smile forever.*

*As a thank you for your gift of support, be sure to request the beautifully crafted yellow crystal shoe ornament, a treasure to display each Christmas. With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request this keepsake set featuring four of LIFE's colorful crystal shoe ornaments. Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,000 or more to help provide over 275 pairs of shoes or two children with corrective smile surgeries, and you may request the beautiful bronze sculpture, "Lion of Judah."*

*Please call, write, or make your gift online today.*

**Field appeal:**

**RANDY:** All right! Merry Christmas. More shoes than smiles here in a village made possible by you. Those of you who watch and respond. We want to do this again this Christmas for other children in need. Not just for their well-being, but for their health. It actually protects them from a few things that can make them sick.

Your gift of \$36 will actually provide shoes this Christmas for ten children. And these shoes last a long time. Maybe you can give shoes to 20 children for \$72. Some of you 40 children for \$144. Don't forget the cleft palate surgery is so important. Literally changing, oftentimes, saving the lives of little ones.

Whatever you can do, I pray that in the spirit of Christmas, in the name of Christ who is born this season, you would just reach out with the love of God and be a part of Christmas Shoes and Smiles. Go online. Go to the phone. Make the best gift you can.

**Studio good-bye:**

**JAMES:** And Father, I pray for stress to be alleviated in the hearts and minds of many just because of what they've heard, and they'll continue the journey; in Jesus' name.

Thank you for giving to the least of these. For blessing Jesus. What a way to do it! And would you consider getting Charles Stones' book, *Stress Less*? I'm telling you, it's good. It's really good. Charles, I want to thank you. I'm glad we've crossed paths and we had some kind of effect just from the impact you heard that we were having. And we do thank you for the impact you're having.

We'll send you this book along with the other gifts if you'll just simply help us give some shoes and some smiles. Thank you so much.