

GRACE-PACED LIVING REALITY CHECK (WOMEN)

Read through the following warning signs worksheet* and check ones that you resonate with from your life over the last month.

PHYSICAL WARNING SIGNS

- You suffer with the over 70% of Americans with stress-induced physical symptoms (*headaches, stomach cramps, sore joints, back pain, ulcers, breathlessness, bad skin, an irritable bowel, chest pain, and palpitations.*)
- You feel tired, exhausted, and lethargic all the time.
- You find difficulty getting to sleep or getting enough sleep when you do go to bed. You wake up frequently, and then you are unable to get back to sleep, and, therefore, no matter how many hours you spend in bed, you never rested or refreshed.
- You find that you can do nothing but sleep. *“Generally, when I’m stressed or anxious, I feel like I can’t get enough sleep. I think it can be both physical need and emotional—as in, I’d rather stay in bed than face the day.”*
- You are gaining weight through overeating, irregular eating, unhealthy eating, constant snacking, and lack of vigorous exercise.
- You are losing weight through loss of appetite and skipping meals.

MENTAL WARNING SIGNS

- You have difficulty concentrating. *Maybe you are reading the same verses over and over during your devotional time but struggling to remember what you read. You can’t decide what to do next—empty the trash, make your bed, start supper, feed the dog, check email, or go to the shop.*
- You are forgetting things you used to remember easily.
- You spend endless hours second-guessing your choices and decisions.
- You spend hours and hours obsessing about the same thing. It’s like a repeating voicemail that you simply can’t switch off. Most of your thoughts are negative. You dwell on the bad, the sad, and can’t see the glad.

EMOTIONAL WARNING SIGNS

- You feel sad most of the time, often on the verge of tears, and sometimes cry for no obvious reason. *Minor things make you cry. Laughter seems distant, faking it is becoming harder, and hearing others laugh is painful. Emotional numbness is the norm.*
- You wake with worry, live with worry, and/or go to sleep with worry. *Your heart pounds and your stomach churns when you think of the day’s decisions and people’s expectations. You fear your children are going to turn away from God and end up in immoral and ungodly lives. The future looks hopeless, and you feel worthless.*
- You take on additional emotional burdens that God has not called you to carry. *Stories of pain and need on social media and other media outlets capture our minds and our hearts, and every request for prayer seems to be addressed personally to us.*

RELATIONAL WARNING SIGNS

- Frustration, irritability, and impatience are boiling inside you and often erupting. You’re angry at your husband, your children, the pastor, the shop assistant, and that other driver.
- Socializing is too much bother, and friendships are all in the past tense.

VOCATIONAL WARNING SIGNS

- If you work outside the home, you're falling behind there, feeling constantly overwhelmed. *You are cutting corners and making more and more mistakes. Wrong decisions are easy and frequent. Indecision breeds procrastination, which breeds indecision. Instead of motivation and drive, there's apathy and passivity.*
- If you are a mother, you have little joy in your children and even wonder if they are worth all the effort. You feel trapped in an endless circuit of seemingly menial diaper changes, meals, lunches, dirty floors, crying kids, laundry, and generally being everybody's gofer. You hold yourself responsible for every accident, mess, crying fit, episode of bickering, and every failure of character in your children.
- You find it difficult to say no, and you agree to every request that comes your way: *school fundraising, making meals for needy families in the church, leading a Bible study, taking on nursery duty, driving your kids to multiple sports events, and saying yes to work that you know you can't possibly finish on time.*
- You feel guilty or anxious when you are not running yourself ragged and consider yourself lazy if you take even five minutes to sit and have a break.

MORAL WARNING SIGNS

- You are reading books and watching shows and movies with language and images you'd never have tolerated in the past.
- You are fantasizing about close relationships with men to whom you are not married, or perhaps beginning to flirt with them at work or at church.
- You are shading the truth in conversations, exaggerating or editing as appropriate.
- You are medicating yourself (and your conscience) by overspending, overdrinking, overeating, or over-Facebooking.

SPIRITUAL WARNING SIGNS

- Your personal devotions are becoming shorter and shorter. Or nonexistent.
- You find yourself checking email and social media before your quiet time or even during it. You spend more time chatting with strangers on Facebook than time in conversation with God.
- You have started skipping church for any reason you can think up. You find church boring, sermons sleep-inducing, and Christian fellowship a drudge.
- You are sensing a gnawing discontentment. *"In a relationship," for example, "if things are not going the way I had imagined or wanted, I am often dissatisfied. This results in anxiety, a bad attitude, and ingratitude."*

ASSESSMENT AND RESULTS

1. **How many checkmarks are there?** _____ More than 5 should be cause for concern.
2. **How serious are these issues?** Rate the intensity of each of checkmark from one to five, with five being the most serious.
3. **How long has this been going on?** The longer a symptom has lasted—especially if it has been a month or more—the more dangerous it is.