

Subject: Sermon Ideas – Pieces from my Heart

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The needle on my sewing machine was going up and down through the fabric with speed and precision. The stitches were smooth and even. Then, as I stepped down even harder on the foot pedal, the needle suddenly stopped. Looking closer, I discovered the stitches had become uneven, resulting in little loops of excess thread. I tried to remove the fabric, but couldn't. The needle wouldn't budge. After tugging on the wheel, one way and then the other, I finally raised the needle enough to free the fabric. When I turned the fabric over to inspect the underside of the stitches, I discovered a large gnarled mess.

It reminded me of life. A busy schedule with lots of activity keeps me operating at my best potential. Yet, there is a fine balance that can be difficult to maintain. A proper tension is required. With too much stimulation, I procrastinate, and accomplish little or nothing. When too much is required or expected, my stomach aches and I get grumpy and tend to fall apart at the seams.

Tension can be good. If I invite company for dinner, I feel positive tension that helps me accomplish a great deal as I make my preparations. A day I might have idled away is suddenly filled with meaning and purpose. If, however, I invite company for dinner on a day that's already too hectic, I become overly stretched. My smooth tension becomes tense and tight. Stress results, and ultimately sends its poison surging through my system.

When I was a child, my mother encouraged me to learn to sew. However, she also regularly warned me not to mess with the sewing machine's tension. If it got out of whack and off kilter, she said it would be tedious and time consuming to properly regulate and get back in sync.

Just like a sewing machine, I must learn to carefully set the tension in my life. It takes time to discover a smooth and even balance which maintains an inner fiber strong enough to endure life's unplanned stresses without becoming raveled.