



Life Is Complicated. We Can Help.

Stress

#nplifeiscomplicated

Week 4

October 4, 2020

Bottom Line: Peace is a gift to be received.

Icebreaker: What's your go-to stress food? A pint of chunky monkey? Half a chocolate pie? Bag of chips? Fast-food burger and fries? Or something else? What habit pops up when you are stressed? Who or what helps you most when you are stressed and worried?

Key Verse: *"I am leaving you with a gift---peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid."* John 14:27

As we look around our world, it's hard to experience peace. Stress seems to be the prevailing emotion. Hard to imagine, but stress is actually a gift from God. Stress, much like pain, is a warning that helps us avoid danger or give focus to meet goals. In the right amount, stress can help strengthen our physical, emotional, and spiritual lives. However, in large amounts, stress can very quickly turn into unhealthy anxiety. It will destroy intimacy, damage friendships, diminish our capacity to give and receive love. You will be isolated, even with people. God wants us to have peace, so He has given us ways to manage our stress. We were created to live in harmony with God, so first we must **ACCEPT GOD'S FORGIVENESS**. The number one cause of stress, according to psychologists, is guilt. There is no peace of mind without a clear conscience. God wants to forgive you, wipe the slate clean. He wants to forgive you of all your past. He wants you to start over. It's called being born again. Then, you must **RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE**. Jesus promises that we are never alone. He's always with us. It's one thing for Him to say that and another thing for us to believe it. Sometimes you **NEED** to recognize that you are not alone. You are not facing this by yourself. Your Father is right there with you. He is walking through your situation with you, always faithful. **OBEY GOD'S PRINCIPLES**. You were made to abide by certain principles. If you ignore them, the result is stress. Stress comes when you ignore the way God created you to live. Peace comes through obedience. The more I do what God says, the more at peace I am and the less stressed I am. **TRUST GOD'S WISDOM**. It is unconventional but trustworthy. You can either trust your wisdom and worry, or trust God's wisdom, which brings peace. You can panic or pray. Prayer enables rest in the sovereignty and wisdom of God. **CONNECT WITH GOD DAILY**. To appropriately manage stress in our lives, we need to set aside time to connect with God alone in prayer. This is more than simply connecting with Him. This is time to talk, think, and meditate with Him. God's goal is for you to have peace enroute to a change; for you to be better before life is better.

THINK IT OVER >>>

What impacted you most from the message?

Guilt is the common human condition and a major cause for stress. Agree/Disagree? Discuss.

Stress doesn't come from the circumstances of life but their interpretation. How have you experienced this?

How would you help someone who fears that God will restrict his/her lifestyle?

Not living by God's principles has consequences. Consequences bring stress. Can you share examples from your own experience? Do you see these as "punishments" or natural consequences?

True trust is trusting God even when I don't understand why things happen as they do. Andy Stanley says that trust for Jesus-followers always requires trusting God to work out a situation that He could have prevented in the first place. Reflect and discuss.

LOOK IT OVER >>>

Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us the elements of trust that will handle our stress: **Trust in the Lord with all your heart**. Depend on Him even when it doesn't make sense. **Lean on God's wisdom, not your perspective and understanding**. A big reason Christians don't have peace is that they are trying to figure everything out. God does not promise an explanation for everything in life.

Acknowledge and admit some basic facts.

Acknowledge that God is a good and loving God. He knows all about my problems. He is in control and has the power to change things, He knows what He is doing, has a plan and a purpose, and does not make mistakes. In which of these areas do you struggle most?

The result of doing these things is that God will give you peace. He will direct you and take away the indecision that causes stress. How are you experiencing this now? How do you need to experience it? What would it mean for you to experience freedom from worry?

NEXT STEPS

1. Where are you lacking peace in your life? Where are stress and worry seeping in?
2. Commit to a daily connection time with God.
3. Use Proverbs 3:5-6 as a guide for stress relieving with God.

EVALUATION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

Bottom Line: Peace is a gift to be received.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at newpointe.org/daily:

Monday: Isaiah 26:2

Tuesday: Isaiah 32:17

Wednesday: Romans 11:33

Thursday: Matthew 11:28-30

Friday: Psalm 29:11; Phil.4:7

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.

(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)