



Tested Stress (Apr 27)

Series Summary: Situations and emotions come up in life that test our faith. The question is not if these situations and emotions will come about. Instead, the question is how will we respond when they do?

Big Idea/Question: The solution to stress is God's strength, not our own.

GET THEM TALKING

What are some things you find yourself stressing over?

How do you handle stress? Do you think you handle stress well?

GROUP DISCUSSION

Phil 4 Context: In Philippians chapter four Paul writes to the Philippians from Prison.. Throughout Philippians, Paul is open about the many hardships, poverty, beatings, illness, and current imprisonment. Yet through all of these hardships, Paul remains steadfast and focused on God's plan by being content in his situations and continuing to serve him. Paul learned to deal with highly stressful situations because he relied on the Lord in all circumstances.

Philippians 4: 4-6 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! **5** Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. **6** Do not be anxious about anything,

but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

What is Paul commanding us to do in this passage?

Leader Note: Paul is not suggesting that we rejoice always and to never be anxious about anything. He is commanding us to do so! Casting our worries on the Lord is not just a good idea, it is a biblical command.

Vs 6- Why is it so important that we be anxious (stressed) about nothing?

How does stress affect our walk with the Lord?

Verse 6 tells us not to be anxious about anything but to pray and present our request to God. How is prayer a way of dealing with our stress?

Leader Note: It is important to emphasize that more times than not, we tend to have the “I can fix it, I don’t need any help” mentality. This is the wrong way to respond to stress. We can not find a solution by relying on our own strength. We must rely on God’s strength. Without Him, we will crumble under pressure, fall to temptations, and many times get angry at God for “putting me through this.” It is crucial that we turn to God in times of stress.

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
6 in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight.

How do you know if you are trusting in the Lord with all your heart?

Leader Note: If we are constantly stressed, we have to ask ourselves if we truly trust in the Lord with all our heart and with every part of our life?

How do we go about trusting in the Lord rather than leaning on our own understanding and strength?

What is the author of this Psalm saying in verse 6?

Leader Note: he is not saying trusting God means everything works out and problems never arise. Far from it! Instead, trusting in the Lord at all times gives us a clear direction to take in every situation.

VIDEO TEACHING

We tend to over-focus on the things that cause us to worry. Whether that be school, family, friends, etc. In this passage, Jesus is teaching His Sermon on the Mount. He is teaching his disciples and followers that any righteous acts of devotion should be focused on our Heavenly Father and not worldly things.

Matthew 6:25-27

Jesus tells us to not worry about our lives, about what we will eat, or drink, or wear. He speaks of these specifically because they are common thoughts among those who live without God in their lives.

He goes on to compare us to birds in the sky, these birds flying in the sky represent freedom from stress or worry as they go about living. The birds live without worry because they know God will take care of them and their needs. If these are just birds, able to live life without a worry, then shouldn't we as children of God do the same? Shouldn't we also have faith that our Lord will provide for us as well? He finally states that worrying and stress cannot add time or value to our lives, just wasteful time.

Matthew 6: 28-34

GROUP DISCUSSION

(application)

So often we are told that we need to remove stress from our lives. I am not sure that is possible. Nor do I believe it is the goal. If we have lives, jobs, relationships, etc... we will have things that are important and at times stressful. The solution is not to change how we remove all responsibilities (and therefore stress with it) , the solution is to learn how to deal with stress in a way that honors God. So, In your own words what is a God-honoring response to stress?

As you get closer to the end of the school year, think back to the times when you felt stressed out. What caused your stress and how did you respond? Did you shut down, turn to a friend, or something else?

What do you need to change in your life so that you can honor God in the midst of stressful situations?