

Curriculum



Hard at Work
Stress



PRAYERS



LEARN

Blindsided

“You have 90 days.” With those four words, everything shifted. Andrew knew change was coming but he believed the division he led was safe. After all, they were setting record-breaking margins. But leadership had informed him that profit was not the problem, it was misalignment with the company’s long-term strategy. Yet, as he had done in the past, Andrew believed that he could prove their value and demonstrate that they could fuel the company’s future. But he was wrong. Andrew was trying to maintain control. He was trusting only what had been true, not what was becoming true.

Andrew blamed the circumstances for his stress, when in reality he was creating stress by holding on too tight. While Andrew may have known his division inside and out, he lacked the big picture which included other divisions, the broader financial pressures, and the long-term strategy. His perspective was incomplete. But God’s perspective is never incomplete! Andrew’s stress momentarily made him forget that God is bigger than any circumstances we face. God sees what we can’t and is always in control.

Trust

We may be limited in our knowledge, understanding, interpretations, choices, etc. But God has no limitations. When we put too much trust in our own abilities and forget God is in control, we are under an illusion. Grasping for control only creates stress we were never meant to have. Even when we don’t understand, God does.

The sooner we can realize and trust that God is making our path straight, the quicker our stress can be relieved. God often moves in ways we couldn’t imagine in the moment, but we later realize that the result exceeds anything we could have done in our own strength.



LIVE

Discussion questions: Read the text and scriptures below, and prepare to answer the questions.

1. Read [Isaiah 35:3-4](#), [Mark 2:17](#) and [Matthew 11:28-30](#). Where are you striving in your own strength or avoiding hard things because the burden feels too heavy?
2. Read [Matthew 9:11-13](#), [Proverbs 1:24](#) and [Psalm 142:3](#). What feels out of control for you right now?
3. Read [1 Kings 19:3-9](#), [Psalm 23:1-3](#) and [1 Peter 5:8](#). What happens when you aren’t prioritizing rest?
4. Read [Philippians 4:6-7](#) and [1 Peter 5:7](#). What is causing you to feel pressure? How are you letting it build? What can you do to release it safely?
5. Read [Isaiah 26:3](#) and [Philippians 4:8-9](#). What thoughts regularly consume your mind? What are some things you can do to have a steadfast mind?

Application Question: What have you learned that you can now practice when your circumstances are stressful?



PRAYERS

Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer



PRAYERS

Opening Prayer & Prayer Requests



LEARN

Before you begin, read the AGENDA LEARN introduction together and review the APPLICATION QUESTION from the previous meeting's RECAP.



LIVE

Discussion Questions: Have someone read each Bible verse aloud and then ask the corresponding question. Be sure everyone has enough time to find the Scripture before the verse is read.

- 1) Read [Isaiah 35:3-4](#), [Mark 2:17](#) and [Matthew 11:28-30](#). Where are you striving in your own strength or avoiding hard things because the burden feels too heavy?



Jesus is never disappointed in you or mad at you. He wants you to turn to him so you can know that He is always there to love, encourage and support you.



Self-reliance, doubt, and fear do not allow for rest. They only breed more of the same. When we seek security in our own strength we will find stress. But when we surrender to the strength of God and submit our security into God's hands, we find rest. This kind of rest allows for more energy, clarity, and security in our endeavors. Strength does not come from what you can hold on to in surrendering it to the One who holds it all.

Notes:

- 2) Read [Matthew 9:11-13](#), [Proverbs 15-6](#) and [Psalm 142:3](#). What feels out of control for you right now?



When you remove the illusion that you are in control, you can better rest in God's sovereignty.



The Pharisees were under the illusion that they were in control. They didn't think they were "sick." (Matthew 9:12) It's no different today. In our own strength, we try to overcome failure with hard work. We match our guilt with busyness, afraid to say "No." We forget that our actions and checked boxes do not lead to salvation. But Jesus came so that we would see that God is always in control. Even when we do not understand, God is making our paths straight.



For encouragement you might ask, "When have you let go of control only to watch God do something greater than you could have imagined?"

Notes:

3) Read [1 Kings 19:3-9](#), [Psalm 23:1-3](#) and [1 Peter 5:8](#). What happens when you aren't prioritizing rest?



In the everyday and mundane or even when it feels like everything is at stake, God wants to care for you and equip you to face the enemy.



Elijah was overwhelmed by fear and exhaustion so much so, he would rather die. But God provided nourishment, rest, and gentle encouragement from others. David was a shepherd, and he understood how to care for his sheep. Think about a tired sheep – the easiest one to become prey for the hunter. We have a shepherd who wants to care for us, too. Rest may feel foreign to you, but without it, there is a cost. Satan is prowling around us – waiting to do his best work – when we are most vulnerable.



For additional discussion you might ask, “How do you embrace rest? Do you fight it or intentionally embrace it? How has God shown up for you in the overwhelming, fearful, exhausted times like Elijah?”

Notes:

4) Read [Philippians 4:6-7](#) and [1 Peter 5:7](#). What is causing you to feel pressure? How are you letting it build? What can you do to release it safely?



Gratitude and prayer can lead you to experience God's peace that will settle you down, bring new perspectives and keep you from causing irreversible damage.



The pressure and stress winds us up so tightly that at any moment we might explode just like a jack-in-the-box. Our relationships, work, and health suffer when the built-up stress explodes out of us. God wants us to bring our burdens, questions, and anxiety before him because he cares.

Notes:

5) Read [Isaiah 26:3](#) and [Philippian 4:8-9](#). What thoughts regularly consume your mind? What are some things you can do to have a steadfast mind?



When your mind is focused on stress, you feel more stress. When your mind is focused on excellent and praiseworthy things, peace will be with you.



Our souls long for peace and trust is the key. We can trust that God's Word is true and reveals His promises to us. But as Paul reminds us in Philippians 9 – we can only gain trust by learning, receiving, hearing, and experiencing God through His Word. (see also [Deuteronomy 11:18](#))



Spend time with your thought patterns. Ask Holy Spirit to check the stress-filled, worrisome, anxiety-ridden ones with a pause and a re-frame to one of eight categories Paul lays out in Philippians 4:8.

Notes:

Application Question: What have you learned that you can now practice when your circumstances are stressful?



PRAYERS

Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer



LEAD

Ask Yourself: When I am at work, at home and in my community, what do I need to do to keep my stress in check?

Sample



PRAYERS

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ROADMAP

This [BBT volume of curriculum](#) helps us look at ways we can better navigate the daily stress in our lives.



LEARN

Jesus did not come for the righteous but for the sinners. Jesus modeled what it looks like to trust God, rest in Him and allow it to keep him steadfast in His mission. Paul reminds us to practice what we learn from God's Word to have peace.

Scripture References for this study: [Isaiah 35:3-4](#), [Mark 2:17](#), [Matthew 11:28-30](#), [Matthew 9:11-13](#), [Proverbs 3:5-6](#), [Psalm 142:3](#), [1 Kings 19:3-9](#), [Psalm 23:1-3](#), [1 Peter 5:8](#), [Philippians 4:6-7](#), [Peter 5:7](#), [Isaiah 26:3](#), [Philippians 4:8-9](#) and [Deuteronomy 11:18](#)



LIVE

- Give up unnecessary burdens
- Give up your control
- Give up consuming thoughts

Application Question: What have you learned that you can now practice when your circumstances are stressful?



LEAD

Ask Yourself: When I am at work, at home and in my community, what do I need to do to keep my stress in check?