



## Small Group Curriculum

# Topic: **RESPONDING TO A CRISIS**

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*Ecclesiastes 8:14 (NCV) Sometimes something useless happens on earth. Bad things happen to good people, and good things happen to bad people.*

## **We don't always get what we deserve!**

Because we live in a decaying world of sin and evil, we experience the 'side effects' like; sickness, suffering, disappointment, broken relationships, injustice, poverty, discrimination and all kinds of abuse and so on...

Jesus warned that "... here on earth **you will have many trials and sorrows...**"  
*John 16:33 (NCV)*

**Jesus does not address the question 'Why?'** Yet, we do!

- 'Why do bad things happen to good people?'
- 'Why do children and innocent people have to die?'
- 'Why so much devastation and grief?'
- 'Why God why?'

*Psalm 62:8 (NIV) Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to Him, for **God is our refuge.***

God will comfort us in our hardship!

## Jesus uses our hardship to draw us to Himself.

**C. S. Lewis** said, *“God whispers to us in our pleasure. He speaks to us in our conscious. But He shouts to us in our pain. Pain is God’s megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”*

Jesus uses our suffering to develop our character in becoming more like Him.

***Romans 5:3 (NIV)** We also rejoice in our suffering because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance character, and character hope.*

## We choose either to turn bitter or turn to God!

***Job 21:25 (GNB)** Some people have no happiness at all: they live and die with bitter hearts.*

***Hebrews 12:15b (NIV)** See to it, that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.*

We have to decide when we go through a crisis, *“Am I going to allow this to make me a bitter person, or a better person?”*

If we choose bitterness, we are only hurting ourselves and guaranteeing unhappiness!

**Bitterness is like a spiritual cancer.**

**The answer to why is there suffering?** - is not found in words - but it is found in the **WORD** (Jesus)

Jesus came into the world identify with us in our suffering and we share in His victory over suffering.

Jesus said; *“...In Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation but take courage. I have overcome the world.” **John 16:33 (NASB)***

Jesus **IS** the answer to the WHY question of suffering.

We either run **from** Jesus or run **to** Jesus!

Jesus provides the courage we need to face a crisis and the assurance that we will come out the other side victorious, as we trust and rest in Him.

Corrie Ten Boom writes this while suffering in a Nazi concentration camp, **“No matter how deep our darkness, God is deeper still.”**

# Personal Devotion

## AVOIDING STRESS

Stress is an overwhelming feeling that's created when we react to particular events.

Too much stress isn't good for anyone. Stress is self-perpetuating and does not go away by itself.

There is a stress management program that will cost you nothing and may seem all too easy. It is found in the Bible!

### 3 Ways to avoid stress.

There are many practical disciplines that a Christian can and should exercise to avoid stress.

Getting enough rest, a proper diet, regular exercise, and keeping a balance between work, ministry and family time - these are all practical ways the Bible teaches us to regulate stress in our lives.

However, from a spiritual standpoint, stress relief for a Christian begins and ends with these three basic disciplines:

#### 1. PRAY

Instead of worrying over our problems, further compounding our anxiety and stress, the Bible recommends taking everything to God in prayer.

*Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, **but in everything, by prayer and petition**, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

#### 2. APPLY

The Bible is filled with incredible promises from God. Applying and incorporating these promises by faith and persistence into our daily lives can dispel our worry, doubt, fear and stress.

Here are some examples of the Bible's stress relieving verses:

*John 14:27 I am leaving you with a gift - **peace of mind and heart**. And the peace I give isn't like the peace the world gives. So don't be troubled or afraid.*

*Psalms 4:8 I will lie down in **peace and sleep**, for you alone, O LORD, will keep me **safe**.*

*Philippians 4:13 I can do **all things** through Christ who **strengthens** me.*

*Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of **peace** and not of evil, to give you a **future** and a **hope**.*

*Isaiah 41:10 Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. **I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you** ...*

*James 4:7-8 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and **he will flee from you**. Draw near to God and **He will draw near to you**.*

*Deuteronomy 31:8 And the Lord, He is the One who goes before you. **He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed**.*

## REST

*Matthew 11:28-30 Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and **I will give you rest**. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke fits perfectly, and the burden I give you is light."*

**Pastor Barry Silverback wrote concerning Matthew 11:28-30;**

- This is not a promise of rest **from** neither labour nor burdens, **no!**
- It is a promise of **rest** in the midst of these two things - **work** and **burdens** (weight).
- This is identified with the words 'take my yoke upon you.' because there is still a **load** and a **burden**. But **rest** makes the load lighter.
- It is rest **in** work! **not** rest **from** work!
- It is **rest while working** and whilst in the process of carrying something that is related to that work - or our service unto the Lord.
- Jesus promises a **rest** which will **reach down** to our souls. That part within us that '*thinks*', '*decides*', and '*feels*'. (the mind, the will and the emotions).
- The true disciple should be able to find the place of rest in the Lord while yoked together with Him in active service for the Father; because He **promised** it to be so!
- To carry this load should **not be burdensome**, nor grievous, otherwise His words are untrue!

# Group Discussion

1. Discuss any general comments about the teaching on Responding to a Crisis or from the personal devotion on Avoiding Stress.
2. Has there been a time in your life where you know God has comforted you in a time of difficulty? If so, please share this with your group.

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3. Share some ways how Jesus draws us to Himself in times of hardship.

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4. Discuss the effects that bitterness can have in a person's life and why we should avoid becoming bitter.

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# Group Prayer / Needs

1. Are there any prayer requests from group members that can be prayed for before closing?
2. Are there any needs that the group can help each other with? Please discuss.