



Week 4

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Overview

In the forth message of the series entitled, *Triggers*, we will learn how to properly manage and respond to stress.

Discussion Questions

What is stress? Stress is the pressures of life and how one perceives, believes, reacts, and copes with these pressures. When we experience stress, there are two ways we could respond: in the spirit or in the flesh. We want to respond in the spirit, and the Holy Spirit will help us to do this. **James 1:2-4** says, **"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."** We can still maintain the joy that only the Lord can fill us with and give us, even when we are dealing with stress.

- What are ways that we can remain hopeful even while stressed? How can we prepare ourselves to respond with this mindset rather than responding how we might have before?

In **Luke 22**, Peter was facing intense pressure and stress. He was recognized as someone who knew Jesus, and he denied even knowing Jesus three different times! When triggered by pressure or stress, we can do and say some things that are unwise or even untrue. This is why we must learn how to properly respond to our triggers. They can lead us to make poor decisions.

While we cannot avoid stress altogether, we can learn how to manage it properly. Jesus promises us in **John 16:33b** **"In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."** We have an example in Jesus Christ of how to manage our stress.

Four Things You Need to Know in Order to Manage Stress Triggers:

1. Know your audience.

Galatians 1:10 says, **"For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ."**

Remember that we live for an audience of One, Jesus Christ.

- How can we be sure to please God instead of man?

2. Know your mission.

We were put on this earth to fulfill a God-given purpose. **Acts 5:29** says, **"But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: 'We ought to obey God rather than men.'" Our mission in life comes from God. We should look to Him, and not other people, to set priorities. We should live by priorities rather than pressure.**

- What is something you've had to say "no" to in order to focus more on priorities that align with your purpose in life?

3. Know when to rest.

Even when God was creating and designing the world, He rested. **Genesis 2:3** says, **"Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made."** If our Creator Himself needed to rest, we certainly need to know when to rest. We have to schedule time to rest and rejuvenate our minds and bodies like we schedule other activities.

- When do you rest?
- Why is the Sabbath so important?

4. Know your lifeline.

God is our source. Praying and meditating on His Word can greatly reduce and relieve stress. **Joshua 1:8** says, **"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."** Start and end your days reading the Word of God and talking with Jesus.

Life Challenge

God promises to never leave nor forsake us. We can cast our stress on Him. **Psalms 55:22** says, **"Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved."** Memorize one or two verses to say out loud when you feel triggered by stress.

Prayer

Lord, thank You for all that You do for us. Please fill us with joy and peace. Remind us when we face stress that we can come to You; we can cast all of our anxieties and burdens on You. Help us to manage stress your way and not in a fleshly way. Amen. Pray for the specific needs of the group.