

ZONDERVAN

God's Answers to Life's Difficult Questions Study Guide
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Requests for information should be addressed to:

Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49530

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SESSION ONE

HOW CAN I COPE
WITH STRESS?

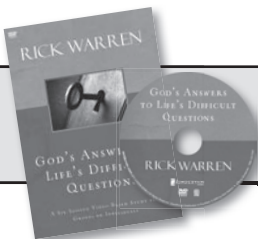
LOOKING AHEAD

- If your group is new or you have new members, take a few minutes to let everyone introduce themselves and share how they came to be part of this group.
- Share with the group why you are here. What is the one question you want God to answer in your life as a result of this study?
- In this first session, share what you would ask God if you had five minutes in person with him right now.

KEY VERSE

*Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you;
he will never let the righteous fall.*

Psalm 55:22 (NIV)



Watch the video now and fill in the blanks in your outline. Refer back to the outline during your discussion time.

SESSION ONE

HOW CAN I COPE WITH STRESS?

INTRODUCTION

Jesus summarized the secret of stress management when he said:

²⁸“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Matthew 11:28–30 (NIV)

THREE KEYS TO STRESS MANAGEMENT

1. _____ to Jesus

- Jesus says, “I will give you rest for your souls.” This is much deeper than physical rest. This is _____ .

²⁹He gives power to those who are tired and worn out; he offers strength to the weak . . . ³¹those who wait on the LORD will find new strength.

Isaiah 40:29, 31 (NLT)

- The antidote for an overloaded soul is a _____ .

2. _____ **His Yoke**

If you want to lighten your load, you need to let go of control.

A yoke is a wooden beam that attaches two farm animals together. By sharing the load, they lighten the load.

- A yoke is a symbol of _____ .

Pile your troubles on God's shoulders—he'll carry your load, he'll help you out.

Psalm 55:22 (MSG)

Jesus says, "Join up with me, connect with me, get attached to me, put on the yoke with me and I'll carry the load with you."

- A yoke is a symbol of _____ .

Oxen yoked together are controlled by the master; when you are yoked with Christ you are controlled by God.

- When you're yoked with Christ you move together in the same _____ and at the same _____ .

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Galatians 5:25 (NIV)

Our lives get in step with God . . . by letting him set the pace, not by proudly or anxiously trying to run the parade.

Romans 3:28 (MSG)

Who's setting the pace in your life right now? Let God be your pacesetter.

3. _____ to Trust

Learn to trust by following Jesus' model. Study how Jesus lived and do what he did, and you'll have the same kind of peace that Jesus had.

Learning is a process . . . it takes time. Your habits of a hurried, worried lifestyle didn't start yesterday, and they won't go away overnight. You've got to unlearn some old things. And you'll have to learn some new things from Jesus.

- Jesus' secret of peace: _____ to the Father.

If you are at the breaking point from overload, come to Jesus. Take up his yoke. Learn to trust. Let Jesus be your pacesetter and find rest for your soul.

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

1. Rick asked, "Who's setting the pace for your life right now?"
How would you answer that question?

2. Why do you think we tend to overload our schedules? What steps can help keep us from doing that in the future?

3. How can we take on Jesus' yoke? What does that look like to you?

4. In what area of your life do you need rest for your soul?

5. Where are you in learning to trust God? Share honestly with your group and ask for prayer to grow in this process.

LIVING ON PURPOSE

Discipleship

Jesus says, "I only do what the Father tells me to do." If Jesus only did what the Father did and what the Father said, then his pace was set by the Father. Examine the current pace of your life. If you desire to be like Christ, how is it possible? How can you hear what the Father is saying and do what he is telling you to do? How can you find and follow his pace for your life?

PRAYER DIRECTION

Admit to God that you are tired of being tired, and worn out with trying to control everything around you. Ask him to help you build margin in your life and to trust him more. Ask him to pour Christ's likeness into you, and be ready to receive it.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Which of the three points Rick addressed for coping with stress caught your attention most? Do you need to:

1. Come to Jesus? Are you tired and worn out? Make a place in your schedule this next week to literally come to Jesus. Find that secluded place talked about in Matthew 6:6 and seek that soul rest only he can give you.
2. Take up his yoke? Maybe you've been carrying your own burdens so long you can barely stand up under their pressure. Surrender them now into his hands. Just say, "Lord, I'm sorry for trying to live life by my own power. Please take my problems, my burdens, and help me learn to depend on you." Now the trick is—you need to leave them with him. No taking them back!
3. Learn to trust him? Remember it's a process, learned over time. Keep in mind Jesus' model of doing only what the Father told him to do. Seek to live a life of obedience. You won't regret it.

Focus on one of these three points this week, and share your progress at your next group meeting.

DIVING DEEPER

Read Chapter 1 of *God's Answers to Life's Difficult Questions*.

