



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Stuck / Week 2

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

BOTTOM LINE

This isn't as forever as it feels.

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students understand that even when they feel down, there's still good all around them.

SCRIPTURE

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 NIV).

CONTEXT OF SCRIPTURE

Through this passage we're reminded that there's a time for everything we feel and experience. In other words, it's normal and okay to feel down, get upset, and just be in a bad mood. But the inverse of this is also true: There's a time to feel excited and be joyful. There's not a time or a season when it's okay for us to perpetually be in a bad mood.

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

The summer before my senior year of high school, my dad had a work opportunity that took him to Alaska.

TENSION

Today we're going to talk about feeling stuck in a mood.

When you get stuck in a negative place emotionally, it drains the whole room.

The truth is, most of us have experienced feeling stuck at one time or another. But we deal with it differently.

But feeling stuck is not a new condition. We're going to look at a passage of Scripture today that's going to show us that this is something people have been dealing with for all of history.



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TRUTH

The passage we're going to look at is from the book of Ecclesiastes.

The book of Ecclesiastes is believed to have been written by King Solomon—the son of King David, the most famous king of Israel.

At the beginning of the passage we're looking at today, Solomon says there is a time for everything. There is a time for everything. And it's important to know when one time has ended and another one is starting.

In other words, there *is* a time for the emotions we're feeling. *It's okay.*

At some point soon, it will be time for something else. In other words, a bad day doesn't equal a bad life.

Think of it this way: This isn't as forever as it feels.

That's a huge deal at this point in our lives. Because often we're making long-term *decisions* based on short-term *emotions*.

We can pay attention to our emotions, but they don't need to run our lives.

APPLICATION

Now, if you've ever been stuck in a bad mood, negative feeling, or low season, the idea of getting unstuck *sounds* good, but we all know that it's easier said than done.

Just like your mood can drag your behavior along, the reverse is true as well: Sometimes your behavior can change your *mood*.

You can actually behave your way into feeling differently!

Don't be afraid to ask for help, to ask someone to give you the perspective you need, helping you see what you can't see on your own.

LANDING

Before you head out today, I want you to know that you can talk to your heavenly Father about *anything*.

You can trust His Word when He says there's a time for everything, even your low emotions, and a time for them to pass.



TEACHING SCRIPT

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BOTTOM LINE

THIS ISN'T AS FOREVER AS IT FEELS.

INTRODUCTION

1 MINUTE

The summer before my senior year of high school, my dad had a work opportunity that took him to Alaska. My parents thought it would make a great family vacation, so just a few weeks before school started up again, we hopped on a plane and made our way west. And north.

And that would have been great, except I didn't want to go. There was someone I was interested in back home. And the idea of being away for a week sounded like torture. Not only that, I wanted my family to feel as miserable as I was.

Yes, I know how lame it sounds *now*, but at the time, it made a lot of sense.

For the record, I killed it. I did a really good job at having a terrible attitude. I didn't throw a temper tantrum—that's for amateurs. No, I just made every negative comment I could think of. My family had made plans to ride ATVs through the forests of Alaska, visit glaciers, and take hikes, and I literally refused. "I'm not going," I told them. "I don't want to be here. I'd rather be home."

So, I stayed in our hotel room—in *Alaska*—pouting, hating the world, playing the martyr—and missing out on the experience of a lifetime.

TENSION

3 MINUTES

Has something like that ever happened to you? Maybe it wasn't on a family trip to Alaska—because maybe you aren't as big of an idiot as I am—but have you ever found

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yourself in a place where you started out feeling kind of miserable about something, and it kept you from enjoying an experience in life? Or maybe you started feeling miserable, then decided that you didn't want to feel that way anymore, but you couldn't figure out how to get out of it.

I remember being in Alaska, looking out the hotel window, BORED out of my mind, but also frustrated that I felt so miserable. I wasn't pretending, I was actually really sad. But I wasn't even sure how to get out of feeling that way.

I felt stuck.

That's what we're talking about in this series. Last time we talked about being stuck in a relationship. Today we're going to talk about feeling stuck in a mood.

You know what I'm talking about. One bad thing happens in second period class and it ruins the whole day. You fight with your mom, and you're still ticked off hours later. Or you just wake up feeling like you hate everything for no particular reason, and you can't quite shake it.

It's not a great feeling for you. But it's also not a great feeling for the people around you. **When you get stuck in a negative place emotionally, it drains the whole room.** You bring this sort of cloud around with you. It creates a toxic environment—inside of you *and* outside of you.

The truth is, most of us have experienced this at one time or another. But we deal with it differently.

1. **Overflow.** In other words, our mood overflows into the way we behave around others.
2. **Bottled up.** We keep it bottled up, trying to work through these feelings on the inside on our own.

But regardless of how being stuck shows up, we can all relate.

But feeling stuck is not a new condition. We're going to look at a passage of Scripture today that's going to show us that this is something people have been dealing with for all of history.

And that's kind of cool, because most of the time we think of the Bible as our go to "fix it" manual. And while the Bible does share ways to improve our lives, that's not all it does. It also offers us insight into people who are a lot like you and me: who got into trouble, made poor choices, felt fear, discouragement, anger, and temptation.

It lets us know, we're *normal*. Which, let's be honest, is good to hear. And it lets us see how other people dealt with the same situation—good or bad—so we can learn from them.

TRUTH

5 MINUTES

The passage we're going to look at is from the book of Ecclesiastes. This book is found in the Old Testament and is considered a wisdom book.

These kinds of books were common at the time they were written and in the place of the world they were written in. Wisdom books were simply a collection of sayings or insights that talked about the nature and reality of life.

The book of Ecclesiastes is believed to have been written by King Solomon—the son of King David, the most famous king of Israel. Solomon was not only the wisest man to have ever lived, he governed a country that was doing really well at the time. He was wildly wealthy, successful, and rich . . . how's that for easy to relate to?

And in his place of power, influence, and experience, Solomon writes this:

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 NIV).

So what does this mean exactly?

It means what Solomon said in the beginning: There is a time for everything. **And it's important to know when one time has ended and another one is starting.**

When it comes to feelings, one might say, "There's a time to be miserable, a time to move on, a time to be sad, a time to celebrate, a time to be down, and a time to pick yourself back up."

In other words, there is a time for the emotions we're feeling. *It's okay.* We aren't being asked to live happy lives all the time. That's impossible. And not real. It's normal and good to let ourselves feel down when something bad happens. It's okay to be mad when someone hurts us. It's perfectly normal to be sad when a friend moves away. There's a time for that and it's normal.

But there's a time when we have to get ourselves unstuck from our feelings, too.

In fact, this verse tells us that there is a time to weep and a time to laugh. That means our lives will have both. One feeling one day does not determine how we will *always* feel. At some point soon, it will be time for something else. In other words, **a bad day doesn't equal a bad life.** And the healthiest thing we can do when we feel stuck in a bad emotion is to remember that there is a time for everything. And this time won't last.

Think of it this way:

This isn't as forever as it feels.

That's a huge deal at this point in our lives. **Because often we're making long-term decisions based on short-term emotions.** We're deciding . . .

- Whether or not to quit a sport or activity.
- Whether or not to try in school.
- Whether or not to drink or experiment with some type of drug.
- Whether or not to fight with our parents.
- Whether to treat or bodies well or poorly.
- Whether or not to give up on the whole God thing.

These are decisions with long-term effects, yet we're basing them on feelings that may change.

In other words, our short-term mood can drag our behavior down with it.

But here's the reality: Our mood isn't the boss of us. **We can pay attention to our emotions, but they don't need to run our lives.**

Look, I know that bad moods never feel temporary. In fact, they make you feel like things will *never* get better. But you need to know this truth: The emotions are real now, but they won't be there forever. And when you can see them in that way, it will help you handle them better. And eventually, it will help you get unstuck.

APPLICATION

3 MINUTES

Now, if you've ever been stuck in a bad mood, negative feeling, or low season, the idea of getting unstuck *sounds* good, but we all know that it's easier said than done.

So I'm going to let you in on something that can be a game-changer for you. Lots of people have learned this from experience. Just like your mood can drag your behavior along, the reverse is true as well: Sometimes your behavior can change your *mood*.

You can actually behave your way into feeling differently! And here are some things that can kick-start the process for you:

- **Remind yourself that this isn't as forever as it feels.** That doesn't mean it doesn't *feel* like forever now. It just means that you can start *believing* that it isn't. Even when the negative emotions feel powerful, heavy, all-consuming, and never-ending, fake it and behave like they don't.
- **Know that you have more power than you think.** You are not a victim of your emotions. You are in control! They don't have to dictate your behavior. They are a part of you, but they are not all of you. When you behave in a way

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that demonstrates this, you take back the power that belongs to you and put emotions in their proper place.

- **Focus on the good.** It's possible in life to experience both good and bad at the same time. Life is not 100% one thing and 0% another thing. When life feels amazing, epic, and awesome, there are still some things in life that are negative, frustrating, and need some improvement. The reverse is true as well. Even when life feels awful, there are still some good things. No really, I promise, there's at least one or two things that aren't tragic. You don't have the flu. You have warm water to take a shower. You just found a bag of Skittles in a random drawer in your room. See how the blessings are piling up? Allow yourself to see the good around you and pay attention to it—even when you feel like doing the exact opposite. Learning to see both and not be held captive by the negative is a skill you can use your whole life.
- **Get outside of yourself.** Sometimes we stay stuck in our negative emotions so long that we feel lost in them. Sometimes just behaving differently or trying to change our mood doesn't work. But that doesn't mean we're doomed to be stuck there forever.

Don't be afraid to ask for help, to ask someone to give you the perspective you need, helping you see what you can't see on your own. Sometimes there is something more going on. In those cases, talk to your Small Group Leader, parents, your school counselor, or a professional outside counselor. Ask for help. Because whether it's depression or just a cycle of negative emotions you've been in too long, you can't always find your way out on your own.

I get it; it can be a little nerve-racking to invite someone else into the personal parts of your mind. But when you do, you'll find that you aren't as alone as you thought, and things aren't as hopeless as they feel.

LANDING

1 MINUTE

Before you head out today, I want you to know that you can talk to your heavenly Father about *anything*. Even if you feel like you're in a bad mood for a silly reason, you can still talk to Him about it. Even if your parents tease you and tell you you're dramatic, you can still talk to Him about it. Even if you feel like, as a guy, you're not supposed to have major emotions and negative feelings, you can still talk to Him about it. And chances are good that He has put some adults in your life who can help you get unstuck.

This isn't as forever as it feels. You can trust His Word when He says there's a time for everything, even your low emotions, and a time for them to pass.



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS