



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Stressed Out / Week 1

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

BOTTOM LINE

Cast your cares on Him because He cares for you.

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students understand that God can give them ways to deal with their stress in a healthy way.

SCRIPTURE

"Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you"
(1 Peter 5:7 NIV).

CONTEXT OF SCRIPTURE

Peter wrote this letter and this verse to a group of churches in Asia Minor who were suffering from religious persecution. In other words, these people were likely very stressed out. And more than that, this stress was largely out of their

control; they couldn't simply ignore it, escape it, or resolve it themselves. In this situation, Peter tells those people to give their stress and anxiety to God, instead of trying to carry and handle it on our own. The same principle is true in our lives today. In the situations we control—and in the situations out of our control—we can cast all of our stress and anxiety in those moments to God, and trust that He will carry us and care for us through it.

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

One day as my sister and I left the drive-thru, a song came on the actual radio about having too much to do and being stressed out.

I didn't *really* get it until I was about four years older. I was stressed out.

TENSION

Life is stressful. *All of it* is stressful.

We can't run on constant mental and emotional overload and NOT expect it to affect our attitudes and the way we treat others.

Whatever it looks like for you, stress is definitely affecting your quality of living.

Maybe one of the worst things about living a life that's stressed out and anxious is the feeling that you're in it alone.

One of the reasons I love the Bible is because it's real stories of real people. So no matter what you're facing, you aren't the first and you won't be the last.

TRUTH

In a letter cleverly titled *First Peter*, The apostle Peter writes to a group of his friends to cast their anxiety on God because He cares for them.



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TEACHING OUTLINE

We don't use the word "cast" ever in our day-to-day lives, but it just means to throw.

Peter wrote this letter to a group of churches who were suffering from religious persecution.

They had worries, stress, and anxiety, and Peter writes to offer them hope by saying this: Cast your cares on Him because He cares for you.

It feels like the verse is just telling us to magically *not* feel stressed, and we know that's just not possible.

However, Peter isn't telling us to *not stress*; he gives us something to *do*.

This is what Peter is telling us: It takes practice.

Whatever stresses you out, whether it's big or small, is still significant. Why? Because it causes *you* stress and worry. And whatever it is, God can handle it. He *wants* to handle it.

APPLICATION

What should someone actually do to cast their cares on God? Talk to God!

Casting your cares on God is a HUGE first step, but there's more to it: Talk to someone else & learn helpful practices.

Then, make it a habit.

LANDING

As you head out, I want you to imagine if you actually practiced casting your stress on God. Imagine if it *worked*.

It'll take some practice, but you'll be glad you did. And your life will be better because of it.

INTERACTIVE

This Interactive happens during the Tension. Darken the room lights and have students turn on the flashlight on their phones, but face them to the ground. Read the list below and ask students to raise their phone if what you mention stresses them out.

- A sport you play
- Your Lit class
- A club you're in
- Your parents
- Your alarm clock
- The opposite sex
- The idea of going to college
- What other people think of you
- What God thinks of you



TEACHING SCRIPT

Stressed Out / Week 1

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BOTTOM LINE

CAST YOUR CARES ON HIM BECAUSE HE CARES FOR YOU.

INTRODUCTION

1 MINUTE

When I was in middle school, I thought I was the coolest kid around on the days when my older sister would come pick me up, and I didn't have to ride the bus home. I was glad to avoid the bus, but I also knew a ride home with her was sure to include a stop at McDonald's. We'd both order large fries and a medium coke and enjoy our arteries clogging as we made the drive home.

One day as we left the drive-thru, a song came on the actual radio (I know, I'm ancient!) about having too much to do and being stressed out. My sister sighed a dramatic teenage girl sigh, like she was carrying the weight of the world, and said, "That is SO my life!"

I was in 8th grade, but I nodded along like I totally got it. "Oh, I know," I told her, "Me too!"

I didn't *really* get it until I was about four years older (the same age she was when she said it). I was trying to juggle school, church, post-graduation plans, trying to get a date to prom, extracurricular stuff, and tension with my parents.

I was stressed out.

TENSION

4 MINUTES + INTERACTIVE

Life is stressful. Not just school, sports, family, the future, or relationship drama.

All of it is stressful.

- Does it sometimes feel like you have teachers who think they're the *only* teachers on the planet assigning you work to do?



- Have you ever felt pressure to play better, perform better, and achieve better?
- Do you ever get any not-so-subtle messages from family members about how you're never around, how your attitude is bad, about the way you look or dress, or a million other things?
- Do you every feel like you're bombarded with questions about what you're going to do *after* high school? And you don't know if you're going to college, taking a gap year, getting a job, or enlisting in the military, but you kind of wish everyone would stop asking.

And *that's* just the big stuff. There's also . . .

- Trying to plan a dramatic prom-posal.
- Class presentations.
- Your GPA.
- Finding a partner for a group project.
- Finding a way to avoid changing in front of other people in gym class.
- Driver's Ed.



INTERACTIVE

The Interactive for this message happens right here in the script. Check out the Communicator Guide that precedes this script to find out what to do here.

It all adds up after a while and takes a toll on us. **We can't run on constant mental and emotional overload and NOT expect it to affect our attitudes and the way we treat others.**

The thing is, the impact of busyness and a high-demand life isn't always clear. But if you were honest, there are probably some common things that happen when you feel stressed:

- You're constantly *irritated*.
- You can't stop feeling like something bad is about to happen.
- You feel like you can't enjoy one thing, because you're worried about what might happen next.
- You feel panicked, like you can't handle it all.
- You feel like a big disappointment, because as much as you want to do everything well, you aren't, or you can't.

If your stress makes your heart race, gives you a sinking feeling in the pit of your stomach, and feels like an ache in your shoulders, just know that your body is physically reacting to the stress you're carrying around. Maybe you find it hard to eat, or maybe you eat too much. Maybe you find it hard to sleep, or maybe you sleep too much.

Whatever it looks like for you, stress is definitely affecting your quality of living.



It's rough, but we tell ourselves, **"That's just how it is."** That's just the way it is when you . . .

- Have parents like mine.
- Play a sport like this one.
- Take academics this seriously.
- Have this hard of a time with school.
- Are on varsity, student council, debate team, dance, theatre, or whatever it is for you.

Besides, isn't this what you're *supposed* to do? Aren't the "good," high-achieving students (and successful adults) always a little stressed out?

Even if a stressful life is true for a lot of people, do you *want* it to be true for you? Aren't you tired of feeling the physical reactions to the speed of your life and brain, and the amount of stuff you have going on in your life?

Sure, you can keep going like this. But what if I told you it could cost you something significant?

Maybe one of the worst things about living a life that's stressed out and anxious is the feeling that you're in it alone. Like, everybody else is doing okay, but you feel terrible!

One of the reasons I love the Bible is because it's real stories of real people. So no matter what you're facing, you aren't the first and you won't be the last.

TRUTH

4 MINUTES

In a letter cleverly titled *First Peter*, The apostle Peter writes to a group of his friends:

"Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7 NIV).

Other translations of this verse say, "Cast all your cares" or, "Cast all your worries." We don't use the word "cast" ever in our day-to-day lives, but it just means to throw. It's like when you throw a fishing line in the water. Or when two people play catch and throw a baseball to each other.

Peter wrote this letter to a group of churches in Asia Minor who were suffering from religious persecution. *These people knew what it was like to live stressed out!* While they had found a genuine faith by discovering what God was really like, ruling authorities wanted nothing to do with it: They saw people who followed Jesus as a threat. And they were willing to go to extreme measures to get rid of them.

They had worries, stress, and anxiety, and Peter writes to offer them hope by saying this:

Cast your cares on Him because He cares for you.



Maybe you want to roll your eyes when you hear this. It's like when you're stressed out and someone says something like . . .

- "Don't worry."
- "It'll all be okay."
- "Just trust God."

And you're thinking, "Oh, *that's* helpful . . . *not*."

It feels like the verse is just telling us to magically *not* feel stressed, and we know that's just not possible. We want to *do* something. So we worry. We have the same conversations over and over in our minds, we check to-do lists, scroll through our phones, or text everyone we know about how stressed we are.

However . . .

Peter isn't telling us to *not* stress; he gives us something to *do*.

Think about fishing. To get your bait in front of some fish, you have to cast your line into the water. And this takes some practice. If you've never been fishing before, casting a fishing line is awkward. For people who've been fishing their whole lives, it's natural and easy!

This is what Peter is telling us: It takes practice.

By the way, Peter was one of the guys who walked with Jesus and knew Him well. In fact, in one of his more famous moments, Peter was on a boat in a storm and saw Jesus walking on water. Jesus invited Peter to join Him. Peter literally *walked on the sea* to get to Jesus. It's a great story and totally worth reading, but here's what I don't want you to miss: When Peter says "cast your anxiety on God," it isn't just a nice thought. He's speaking from experience! He knows exactly what it's like to be in a stressful situation and trust Jesus. (By the way, when Peter took his eyes off Jesus on the water, he started sinking.) It's as if he's saying to his friends, "Listen, I've *experienced* this. I know what I'm talking about. You don't have to live in fear, stress, and anxiety. Don't just mildly give your cares to God. GO FOR IT. *Throw* them His way.

Whatever stresses you out, whether it's big or small, is still significant. Why? Because it causes *you* stress and worry. **And whatever it is, God can handle it. He wants to handle it.**

- He wants the best for you.
- He wants you to live a great life.
- He wants you to trust Him to handle the things you can't—because He can.

He wants you to cast your cares on Him because He cares for you.

What Peter is saying is a big deal. Because—ahead of his time—Peter knew that stress, anxiety, and fear are a big deal.



Because here's some truth about stress and anxiety:

- Stress is the basic cause of 60% of all human illness and disease.¹
- Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the US.¹
- 44% of stressed people lose sleep every night.¹

I could go on. The point is that stress and anxiety are a big deal in our world. And I can promise you this: They're a big deal to God! He doesn't want you to live your life not operating at full capacity because you're weighed down by worries He can carry for you!

APPLICATION

2 MINUTES

What should someone actually do to cast their cares on God?

1. **Talk to God.** Learn to name the thing that creates stress, worry, and anxiety, and tell Him about it. Dig deep and think through the real causes of your stress. Is it the pressure of grades or sports? Or is it not wanting to let anyone down or make anyone mad? Whatever the cause is, talk through it with God.

Casting your cares on God is a HUGE first step, but there's more to it:

2. **Talk to someone else.** You can't carry stress and anxiety alone. God is big, and He listens to *everything* we tell Him, but He has also put other people in your life. So confide in someone who can help you carry your burdens.
3. **Learn helpful practices.** This is really important for when you're feeling the physical symptoms of stress and anxiety—when you can't get your body or your mind to turn it off.

Figure out what practice works best for you to confront stress.

- Maybe it's writing down all the things that are bothering you.
- Maybe it's drawing a picture or using a coloring book. (Don't knock it until you've tried it. There's a reason adult coloring books are making a fortune right now. They actually help!)
- Maybe it's learning to take deep breaths to slow your breathing and bring your heart rate down when the anxiety feels overpowering.
- Maybe it's going for a walk.

Whatever it is, learn what settles you down. **And here's a hint: There are things that seem to "settle you down" that will eventually create more stress.** If you find yourself "relaxing" with alcohol, porn, drugs, cutting, or anything else that *hurts* you, it isn't actually stress-relief. It's a stress-generator, and it's something you *need* to share with an adult so they can help you find another way to deal with stuff.

¹ <https://www.stress.org/stress-is-killing-you/>



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4. **Make it a habit.** God has created countless ways to cast our cares on Him. And learning the best way for us to do that, and then doing it *over and over again*, will make us better at handling stress and anxiety when it comes our way. No matter who you are, learning how to cope with your stress and anxiety is a good thing. And trusting that you have a Heavenly Father who *wants* to help you is a great place to start.

LANDING

1 MINUTE

As you head out, I want you to imagine if you actually practiced casting your stress on God. And imagine if it *worked*. And imagine if it became something you do naturally. How could that change your life now? What would it mean for your life in the future? In college? At work? With your own future family?

It would be a game-changer!

You could live a life out-of-the-ordinary! You could be a high schooler, and one day an adult in your 20's, 30's, and beyond, who had a rare life, because you didn't live your life stressed out and anxious!

It'll take some practice, but you'll be glad you did. And your life will be better because of it.



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS