



NEW
HOPE
WINDWARD

~~WEARY~~

FINDING REST IN A HURRIED WORLD

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

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SMALL GROUP TIPS

- 1. START & FINISH ON TIME.** Doing this will show your small group that you value their time.
- 2. BE COMFORTABLE WITH SILENCE.** Uncomfortable silences are bound to happen. It's okay! A long pause during a group discussion can be powerful. A *pause* gives space for quieter people to break into the conversation; silence allows people to figure out exactly what they would like to say.
- 3. CONFIDENTIALITY IS IMPORTANT.** Confidentiality is the key to building trust in relationships. Here are a few mottos to remember to be confidential: "What is said in small group, stays in small group." **Nothing, nobody, never...** "*Share nothing, to nobody, never*" outside of the group.
- 4. MAKE GROUP A PRIORITY.** Communicate in advance when you will be unable to attend by either calling and/or texting your host or responding to the zoom email invitation by accepting or declining. This will help your host to plan accordingly and especially if it is an in person small group gathering.
- 5. LISTEN WITHOUT FIXING AND TEACHING.** People desperately need a safe place to share their thoughts and be real with others. Give people space to talk without trying to fix them, correct their thoughts, or teach. Choose the relationship over the desire to cast judgement or prove your point over theirs, to be "right".
- 6. ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION.** While not everyone will be ready or willing to help lead or answer questions, participating and reading God's word with others will help build confidence in each member and the group. Encourage all members to read sections and/or scriptures aloud for the group.
- 7. ASK FOR HELP.** The Small Group Ministry is here to help. Email smallgroups@nhww.org to ask any questions, request training or other assistance for your small group.

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FINDING REST IN A HURRIED WORLD

TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

- **LISTEN WITHOUT FIXING AND TEACHING.** People desperately need a safe place to share their thoughts and be real with others. Give people space to talk without trying to fix them, correct their thoughts, or teach. Choose the relationship over the desire to cast judgement or prove your point over theirs, to be "right".

Week 1: Finding Strength Through Your Struggles

ICEBREAKER

Who is someone in your life that you have looked up to as an example, motivating you to strive for improvement? Give one reason why (e.g., Coach, parent, peer, celebrity, etc.)

INTRODUCTION

This world and everything in it can wear us down and make us lose our spark. In today's digital age, the constant streams of media can end up draining our lives. How do we keep going when everything seems to be against us? How do we get back up when life has knocked us down? This week, we will discuss four actions and attitudes you can apply to your life when you feel like quitting, helping you reach the finish line.

READ | #1 - HONESTLY TELL GOD WHAT YOU'RE FEELING

Trying to meet the expectations of the world can be exhausting, especially in the age of internet and social media. To keep up, many feel like they can only show the best parts of their lives while ignoring any frustrations, discouragement, or doubt. That is why the first key to finding daily strength is to tell God the truth about how you are feeling.

*If you will humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, in his good time he will lift you up. Let him have all your worries and cares, for he is **always** thinking about you and watching **everything** that concerns you. -1 Peter 5:6-7 (TLB)*

God doesn't want us to carry around worries and burdens; He wants us to give them to Him. He already knows everything, including your true thoughts, emotions, and concerns. God is always thinking about you and loves to listen when you talk to Him. He wants us to honestly confess our feelings about anything we are facing.

Do you ever hesitate about being open with God about your feelings? Why or Why Not? What is one benefit you have experienced from sharing your worries and feelings with Him or others?

READ | #2 - HUMBLY ASK GOD FOR STRENGTH

The struggles we face in modern life can wear us down to the point where we want to stop, give up, or give in to the pressures we feel. When we are worn down, we need to seek emotional strength. The next key is to turn to the Lord for His strength.

*The angel said to me, "Daniel, God loves you. Stand up and listen carefully to what I am going to say. I have been sent to you." When he had said this, I stood up, still trembling. Then he said, "Daniel, don't be afraid. God has heard your prayers **ever since the first day you decided to humble yourself** in order to gain understanding. -Daniel 10:11-12 (GNT)*

Daniel was in a situation of enormous pressure within his culture, and God says to him, "Don't be afraid. I've heard your prayers the moment you humbly prayed to me for understanding." Humility moves God to respond to your prayers. When we stop focusing on negative feelings such as **confusion, anger, weariness, bitterness, or fear**, we can start to focus on His love for us and His promise to hear our prayers. So, when you feel the pressures of our culture and your strength starts to fail, do not be afraid. Humbly ask God for strength, provision, and understanding, then stand up and listen.

Which of the feelings above in bold do you experience most when under life's pressure? Who do you typically look to for emotional strength? (e.g., Friend, family member, God) This week, before you look to another for strength, first look to God.

READ | #3 - GRATEFULLY THANK GOD IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

Multiple scientific studies have confirmed what the Bible has always taught: gratitude is the healthiest and most important emotion humans can have. It is easy to be grateful when life is going well. However, it is much harder when we are going through problems. The Apostle Paul teaches us to choose gratitude despite struggles.

*Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.
-1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NLT)*

Notice the verse above says "in all circumstances," not "for all circumstances." There will be circumstances we face that we should not be grateful for (e.g., death, disease, divorce, etc.), but even in those difficult situations, there is always something to be grateful for. God's will is to develop an attitude of gratitude in you, no matter what is happening to you. When you take time to express gratitude about anything to anyone or to God, it helps unlock God's strength in you.

Share two things you are grateful for in one of your difficulties. (Please don't mention the names of people you may be struggling with.) How has expressing your gratitude helped you? (e.g., changed your perspective, refreshed you, etc.)

READ | #4 - CONSTANTLY KEEP GOD & HEAVEN AS MY FOCUS

The times when we feel worn down by our struggles are the times when the enemy will work hardest to keep us down. The next key to getting back up and finding the strength to keep going through any pain or hardship is to keep your life focused on Jesus.

...let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. -Hebrews 12:1-2 (NIV)

The reason Jesus was able to keep going strong, even through the pain and the shame of the cross, was because of what He focused on. He wasn't focused on the current pain, the current problems, the current stress, and the current criticisms. He was focused on God's will and the future joy of His glory in heaven. If you want to be like Jesus, you need to look past the pain toward the promise of joy and rewards in Heaven.

What are some practical ways you keep your eyes fixed on God and the blessing of Heaven? (e.g., daily devotionals, worship music, watching sermons online, dedicated prayer times, etc.) How do you fight distractions to prioritize God in your life?

READ | SEEK INSPIRATION FOR YOUR DETERMINATION

When we can't understand how to find strength in our struggles, it is important to look toward the examples set by others who have. The Bible is full of examples of determination in the face of trials and struggles. Whether it is Joseph, Moses, David, Job, Jesus, or Paul, we can always find inspiration and examples in the Bible to help us get back up and keep going.

But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' " *-Matthew 4:4 (NKJV)*

In this scripture, Jesus is being tempted by the devil and resists his attempts by quoting scripture. The Word of God is found in the Bible, and the examples, stories, and scriptures it provides give us the inspiration and instructions to get through tough times and attacks from the enemy. It is easy to be physically fed, but to be spiritually and emotionally fed, we need to open the Bible, read from its wisdom, and apply the teachings to our lives.

What's a specific person, passage or verse from the bible that has inspired or strengthened you through a challenging circumstance?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

This week, take time to inventory your life and identify any areas where you are worn out or heading towards burnout. Then, look for ways to apply this weeks lessons to:

- **Honestly tell God what you are feeling**
 - **Humbly ask God for strength**
 - **Gratefully thank God for the good, despite the bad**
 - **Constantly keep your focus on God**
 - **Find inspiration for determination in God's Word**
- Read additional scriptures and feed your mind, heart, and soul with God's word. We have provided SCRIPTURES on the next page for you to do your daily devotions.

CLOSE IN PRAYER:

Dear God, Thank you for being the source of strength needed to see me through my difficult times. Give me the courage to come to you honestly in those areas to share the whole truth of how I am feeling. Keep me humble and grounded on you as I trust that you will answer my prayers in the ways I need to help me grow in my faith. Develop in me an attitude of gratitude as I focus on You and all the amazing things you have done and are doing in my life. Help me to keep my focus on you and the joy awaiting me in Heaven. In Jesus' name, amen.



Make Time to be in God's WORD

Reading God's Word daily re-patterns the way you think & transforms your mind. Doing your daily devotions is an excellent way to record, process, & share what God is teaching you on a personal level. We do this using S.O.A.P.

- S - Scripture**
- O - Observation**
- A - Application**
- P - Prayer**

Here's an example:

S: *Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "*
--Matthew 4:4 (NIV)

O: Jesus said that we can't live on food alone. Our life is sustained through His Word.

A: Just as food is important to me, God's Word is even more because it will sustain me and give me the strength to live out my life.

P: Jesus, thank You for reminding me that I need Your Word to give me the wisdom & strength to follow You. Help me to make time to spend with You daily. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

SCRIPTURES FOR S.O.A.P.

Day 1:

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

--2 Corinthians 12:9-10 (NIV)

Day 2:

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

--Isaiah 41:10 (ESV)

Day 3:

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

--Psalm 73:26 (NLT)

Day 4:

But the Lord stayed with me and gave me strength, so that I was able to proclaim the full message for all the Gentiles to hear; and I was rescued from being sentenced to death.

--2 Timothy 4:17 (GNT)

Day 5:

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

--Psalm 46:1 (NIV)

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TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

- **BE COMFORTABLE WITH SILENCE.** Uncomfortable silences are bound to happen. It's okay! A long pause during a group discussion can be powerful. A *pause* gives space for quieter people to break into the conversation; silence allows people to figure out exactly what they would like to say.

Week 2: When A Setback Leaves You Emotionally Empty

ICEBREAKER

What is your favorite way to recharge after a stressful day? (e.g., Listen to music, hang out with family or friends, read a book, watch a show, exercise, alone time, etc.)

INTRODUCTION

Part of the beauty of the Bible is that it gives us examples of human nature and experiences we will all face. As we relate to the struggles of the characters in the Bible, we can draw inspiration for how to choose God in those circumstances. This week, we will look at the example of the prophet Elijah and what it teaches us to do when we encounter a setback that leaves us feeling emotionally empty.

READ | RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS OF BURNOUT

The demands of life, even in our faith, often require us to go, go, go. Even when we are doing the best we can in life for God, setbacks are a reality. The prophet Elijah, after experiencing a major spiritual victory, faced a setback that left him depleted. Let's look at his example to help us recognize the ten signs of hitting empty in our emotional tanks.

Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a town in Judah, and he left his servant there. Then he went on alone into the wilderness, traveling all day. He sat down under a solitary broom tree and prayed that he might die. “I have had enough, Lord,” he said. “Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors who have already died.”
-1 Kings 19:3-4 (NIV)

Based on Elijah's example, when we are running on empty and facing burnout, we often:

1. feel fear;
2. want to run;
3. distance ourselves from relationships;
4. make poor decisions;
5. push past our limits;
6. lose interest in things;
7. talk about quitting or giving up;
8. isolate and blame others;
9. complain and compare ourselves to others; and
10. consider death as a solution.

When we recognize these signs and symptoms, it's time to stop and turn to God or others for help.

Which of the 10 signs and symptoms above have you experienced before? Discuss how recognizing these signs might help you turn to God before you reach empty.

READ | REST YOUR BODY

We often don't realize how tired we are until something makes us stop and take stock of how we are doing. When we finally take our foot off the gas pedal of life, some of the signs and symptoms catch up to us all at once, and we find ourselves depleted. The antidote to recovery is to rest.

He looked around and there beside his head was some bread baked on hot stones and a jar of water! So he ate and drank and lay down again. Then the angel of the Lord came again and touched him and said, “Get up and eat some more, or the journey ahead will be too much for you.”
-1 Kings 19:6-7 (NLT)

When Elijah hits burnout, he is met by an angel of the Lord who immediately leads him to eat and rest multiple times. Like Elijah, when we are running on empty, God will give us opportunities to rest, and if we don't listen, sometimes He will make us rest. That is because God knows we need to be well-rested for the journey He has ahead of us.

Discuss a time when God had you rest after you reached a point of exhaustion. How does knowing that it's God's design for you to rest help you feel better about taking breaks and sleeping in when you start to feel empty or experience a setback?

READ | RELEASE YOUR EMOTIONS TO GOD

While physical rest is important, it's also essential to release our emotions to God when we're empty and tired. We need to get real with God in order to find and release the things that are weighing us down.

And a voice said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He replied again, "I have zealously served the Lord God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too." -1 Kings 19:9-10 (NIV)

Elijah, after resting from his burnout, now confesses to God what brought him to his tipping point. Just as God asked Elijah, "What are you doing here?" we should ask ourselves what led us to emptiness and then openly confess it to God and, if appropriate, to others. Bringing our burdens into the light of truth releases them to God and allows Him to help us carry the load so we can keep going, even in the middle of stressful situations.

**How often do you honestly and openly release your burdens and concerns to God?
How can you prioritize being honest with God about your burdens?**

READ | REFOCUS ON GOD

When we are rested and unburdened, it can be easy to drift from God. He will often allow us to experience distractions that test our faith before He speaks into our lives. If we are not intentional about refocusing on Him, we may end up missing out on what He has to say.

"Go out and stand before me on the mountain," the Lord told him. And as Elijah stood there, the Lord passed by, and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper." -1 Kings 19:11-12 (NLT)

The Lord tests Elijah with many amazing distractions. As Elijah stands still and focuses on God, he is finally able to hear the whisper of the Lord's voice. In today's digital world, distractions are literally everywhere. To hear God through the noise of the world, we need to engage in spiritual habits that help us be still and hear God speak. This can include reading God's word, listening to sermons, praying, and solitude with God.

Do you find yourself easily distracted by things? What habits or accountability systems do you have that help you refocus on God in the face of distractions?

READ | RE-ENGAGE IN SERVING GOD

After experiencing a setback and going through the steps above (Recognize, rest, release, refocus), it's now time to re-engage in serving God and others. The hard truth is that God allowed you to go through that setback for a reason, and the experience likely helped prepare you for the trials He has ahead of you.

The Lord said to him, "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet.
-1 Kings 19:15-16 (NIV)

Elijah is commanded by God to re-engage in serving God through his prophetic work towards the fulfillment of God's will for the people of Israel. Although Elijah was far from perfect in following God's instructions, his faithfulness to re-engage in serving God's plans and purposes made a huge impact for the kingdom of God.

Is there anything that you stopped doing in your faith because of a setback that you need to re-engage in? How can you re-engage in serving God and helping others in your church and community?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

This week, look to apply the steps of recovering when you are emotionally empty, especially if you have recently hit a setback. Stay close to God, His Word and His people this week while you:

- **Recognize any signs of burnout.**
 - **Rest and feed your body in healthy ways.**
 - **Release burdens in your life to God.**
 - **Refocus on God to refill on Him.**
 - **Re-engage in serving God, to discover His purposes.**
- Read additional scriptures and feed your mind, heart, and soul with God's word. We have provided SCRIPTURES on the next page for you to do your daily devotions.

CLOSE IN PRAYER:

God, thank you for designing me to need you. Help me have eyes to see any setbacks I may be working through and recognize any signs and symptoms that suggest I may be getting close to empty. Guide me to rest and recover to renew my strength and prepare me for a fresh filling of Your Holy Spirit. Give me the strength to release anything that is unhealthy or heavy on my heart to You or to another trusted brother or sister in Christ. Refocus my mind, body, and soul to be in your presence and to remember who You are. Finally, Father God, help me re-engage with a cheerful heart in any areas I may have walked away from in my emptiness. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Make Time to be in God's WORD

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O: Jesus said that we can't live on food alone. Our life is sustained through His Word.

A: Just as food is important to me, God's Word is even more because it will sustain me and give me the strength to live out my life.

P: Jesus, thank You for reminding me that I need Your Word to give me the wisdom & strength to follow You. Help me to make time to spend with You daily. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

SCRIPTURES FOR S.O.A.P.

Day 1:

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,

--Psalm 23:1-2 (NIV)

Day 2:

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

--1 John 1:9 (NIV)

Day 3:

People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy.

--Proverbs 28:13 (NLT)

Day 4:

Whether you turn to the right or to the left, you will hear a voice behind you saying, "This is the way; walk in it."

--Isaiah 30:21 (GNT)

Day 5:

The Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says, "Only in returning to me and resting in me will you be saved. In quietness and confidence is your strength.

--Isaiah 30:15 (GNT)

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FINDING REST IN A HURRIED WORLD

TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

- **CONFIDENTIALITY IS IMPORTANT.** Confidentiality is the key to building trust in relationships. Here are a few mottos to remember to be confidential: “What is said in small group, stays in small group.” **Nothing, nobody, never...** *“Share nothing, to nobody, never”* outside of the group.

Week 3: From Overwhelmed to Overflowing

ICEBREAKER

What is your favorite underdog story? (Someone who won with all odds against them.)

INTRODUCTION

Being overwhelmed can be an intense experience. The word 'overwhelm' is often defined as a sudden covering by something that can't be resisted or fought against. Imagine a huge wave breaking over you at the beach. When the big wave comes down on you, it can be disorienting, exhausting, and scary. Similarly, the stresses in our life can overwhelm us like a wave of emotion and distress. This week, we will be looking at how our faith can take us from being underwater in our problems to overflowing in our blessings.

READ | **TURN BACK TO GOD**

When life becomes overwhelming, it's natural to go into survival mode, where we turn inward and rely on our own strength and understanding. However, the Bible reminds us that instead of turning away from Him, we need to turn back to the one true God.

Jehoshaphat lived in Jerusalem, and he went out again among the people from Beersheba to the hill country of Ephraim and he turned them back to the Lord...
-2 Chronicles 19:4 (NIV)

This verse finds the king of Judah seeking to restore the people's devotion to God after a period of unbelief. Despite the challenges he faced, Jehoshaphat recognized that the first step was to turn away from self-reliance and back to the Lord. Similarly, when we find ourselves overwhelmed, we need to stop trying to do it our own way and turn to God for His strength and help.

What practical things do you do to turn to God for guidance and perspective when faced with overwhelming circumstances? (e.g., going to church, listening to sermons online, seeking godly counsel, reading God's Word, worshiping, etc.)

READ | **PRAY FIRST AND PRAY BOLDLY**

2nd Chronicles Chapter 20 finds three enemy nations coming against Judah after they start to make godly changes in Jerusalem. In our own lives, the enemy will often come against us even harder as we look to make godly changes. Luckily, the Bible teaches us what to do to stay strong.

*Shaken, Jehoshaphat **prayed**. He went to God for help and ordered a nationwide fast. The country of Judah united in seeking God's help—they came from all the cities of Judah to pray to God.*
-2 Chronicles 20:3-4 (MSG)

Even though the king was still overwhelmed, he knew where the help he needed would come from, and he immediately prayed to God. Jehoshaphat's situation required all the help possible, so he ordered a fast and brought in others for group prayer. Fasting and group prayer are bold and powerful tools we can use to fortify our own prayers as we face overwhelming situations.

Briefly share a time when your prayers helped you through a difficulty. What will you commit to doing in order to prioritize prayer in your next overwhelming situation? (e.g., fasting, asking for prayer, praying publicly, engaging in group prayer, etc.)

READ | **FOCUS ON THE SOLUTION NOT THE PROBLEM**

One common characteristic of being overwhelmed is feeling weighed down by our struggles and stresses. However, we can find light in our darkness by focusing on God instead of fixating on the problem.

They said, "Whenever we are faced with any calamity such as war, plague, or famine, we can come to stand in your presence before this Temple where your name is honored. We can cry out to you to save us, and you will hear us and rescue us."

-2 Chronicles 20:9 (NLT)

The people of Judah built the temple in Jerusalem as a place of worship and a dwelling space for God's presence. Through Christ, each of us has become a temple to God. When you go through problems, shift your focus off of what's wrong and onto **how BIG our God is**. Remind yourself of His promises and power, along with **how much He has done for you** in the past. God worked in your life in the past, and He will do it again.

Do you tend to focus on and stress about your problems? Share a time when you cried out to God, remembered His greatness, and were rescued from your distress.

READ | **REMEMBER IT'S NOT YOUR BATTLE**

Even as our confidence grows in God, it is important that we stay humble in our inability to overcome overwhelming situations by our own strength. We need to invite and rely on the power of God to fight for us through our circumstances.

*"You will not need to fight in this battle. **Stand firm**, hold your position, and see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.' Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, and **the Lord will be with you.**"*

-2 Chronicles 20:17 (ESV)

In this verse, the people of Judah came into the presence of the Lord, and the Holy Spirit spoke to one of them with the message above. This powerful truth stands today as it did then: When we have Christ with us, we do not need to fight the battles overwhelming our lives. We only need to obediently march behind Jesus in faith and trust that the battle is His. With God for us, victory is at hand, regardless of the outcome.

How does it feel to know that God wants to fight your battles for you? What can you do to ensure that you don't get ahead of God when facing your battles? (e.g., slow down, walk away, read scripture, pray before taking action, discuss with others, etc.)

READ | FIND THE GOOD IN THE BAD

As we put our prayers, focus, and trust in God to lift us out of overwhelming situations, it is important to look for His goodness in our difficult situations. God is working all things for the good of those who love Him and follow Him. We need to develop our eyes to see beyond what is happening to us in order to recognize His blessings working through us and all around us.

When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take their spoil, they found much among them, including goods, garments and valuable things which they took for themselves, more than they could carry. And they were three days taking the spoil because there was so much.
-2 Chronicles 20:25 (NASB1995)

The troops of Judah came upon the armies that were set to overwhelm Jerusalem, only to find them already defeated. Even though they had not fought, God still provided an overflow of blessings for them. The key to experiencing overflow is to approach overwhelming situations with eyes to see how God is teaching, growing, and training us through them. When we obediently look for the lessons, skills, or blessings God wants us to receive, He will always leave us with more than enough to continue in His grace.

Hindsight is often 20/20. Share about a time when you went through something bad, but God brought some good out of it. What is one good thing God is doing in one of your current difficulties?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Turn to God or reach out to other believers for help in turning to Him. Pray boldly for His help, including group prayer and fasting as needed. Keep your focus on God as the solution to your problems. Humble yourself and rely on His Holy Spirit for strength while trusting Him to fight your battles. As He fights for you, look for the blessings He is overflowing into your life.

- Read additional scriptures and feed your mind, heart, and soul with God's word. We have provided SCRIPTURES on the next page for you to do your daily devotions.

CLOSE IN PRAYER:

Father, thank you for wanting to help me through any situation and for desiring to fight my battles with me, and at times, for me. Give me strength to turn away from distractions and distress, and to turn towards You. Hear my prayers and lead me to those around me who will pray for my benefit. Keep me fixed on You and Your greatness as the solution to all of my problems. I trust You to take me from victory to victory, glory to glory, as I march behind You in faithfulness. Overflow Your blessings onto me as I look for all the lessons and gifts You leave for my benefit. In Jesus' name, amen.



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SCRIPTURES FOR S.O.A.P.

Day 1:

That is why the Lord says,

"Turn to me now, while there is time.

Give me your hearts.

Come with fasting, weeping, and mourning.

--Joel 2:12 (NLT)

Day 2:

Therefore, confess your sins to one

another and pray for one another, that

you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

--James 5:16 (ESV)

Day 3:

Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the

power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all.

--1 Chronicles 29:11 (NIV)

Day 4:

For the Lord your God is he who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies, to give you the victory.'

--Deuteronomy 20:4 (ESV)

Day 5:

Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

--James 1:2-4 (NASB)

~~WEARY~~

FINDING REST IN A HURRIED WORLD

TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

- **ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION.** While not everyone will be ready or willing to help lead or answer questions, participating and reading God's word with others will help build confidence in each member and the group. Encourage all members to read sections and/or scriptures aloud for the group.

Week 4: KEEPING YOUR TANK FILLED INSTEAD OF RUNNING ON EMPTY

ICEBREAKER

How low do you let your car's gas tank get before you refill it?

INTRODUCTION

God knows that you will go through struggles and setbacks that can lead to weariness and burnout. He is aware that there will be times when your emotional, relational, vocational, financial, and/or spiritual tanks can go empty. This week, we will look at how to keep our tanks filled with Him instead of running on empty.

READ | **RUNNING ON EMPTY?**

So far in this series, we have seen how life's circumstances can leave us emotionally empty. This week, we will start with two reasons why our tanks get down to empty.

We run on empty because of our pace. We are often well-meaning in our hurried pace; there is a lot to do in life, and we need to get things done for ourselves, our families, and our jobs. However, the fast pace of life can lead to mistakes.

Enthusiasm without knowledge is not good. If you act too quickly, you might make a mistake.
-Proverbs 19:2 (ICB)

Whether we forget to stop and refuel or don't have time for regular maintenance to check for leaks, the pressures to "do it now" can leave us overloaded and speeding through life in an unsustainable way that will surely leave us on empty.

We run on empty because we are not living based on God's manual. God's Word, the Bible, is the instruction manual for how to live and operate on Earth. To simplify the manual, God gave us the Ten Commandments and Jesus to model them. One of the Ten Commandments is the required Sabbath or holy day of rest each week.

You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God...
-Exodus 20:9-10 (NLT)

Sometimes, to meet the demands of the world, we push beyond the limits God sets forth for us in the Bible by not taking a Sabbath day of rest each week. Whether we don't think the limits apply or we are too distracted to gauge our own limits, it's easy to hit empty when we don't live as God intends.

Do you take a regular Sabbath to rest and fuel up on God? If so, share how you Sabbath. How has a hurried pace in the past affected your quality of life?

READ | **COME TO JESUS**

Usually, we don't change when we see the light; we change when we feel the heat. So the first thing we need to do to avoid running on empty is to get fed up with how we are living and admit that we need Jesus. So, when we're exhausted, Jesus tells us to...

Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.
-Matthew 11:28 (NASB)

Jesus wants us to come to Him for rest when we are tired of carrying the load of our busy lives. After a tiring and stressful day, we all look for ways to decompress, but how often do you go to Jesus for that rest instead of television, streaming or social media?

How do you usually relax or decompress after a stressful day? What are some practical ways you can come to Christ for rest when you are weary? (Ex: Take a sabbath, Go to church, talk to Jesus, read God's word, listen to worship music, etc.)

READ | *LET JESUS TAKE THE WHEEL*

Part of the reason the heat goes up is because we have too many irons in the fire. In other words, we are trying to do and control too many things at one time. When we carry our burdens alone, it can wear us down.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
-Matthew 11:29 (NIV)

A yoke is actually a board with two arches that you put over two cattle so they can pull a cart together. The value of a yoke is that it halves the load. Without a yoke, one cow's got to pull the entire load by itself. But if you yoke up the cow with another then the two animals share the load, and it's half as heavy for each. When Jesus says to take his yoke upon you, he's inviting you to share your stress and let Him help you carry it. With our lives yoked to Christ, we can start to give up the need to carry and control everything by ourselves in order to learn from and trust Him to help steer us along the right paths.

How does it feel to know that Jesus wants to share your burdens and teach you to be less stressed? What are some practical ways you can you can better yoke yourself with Jesus? (Ex: Seek His guidance, obey His commands, pray for His strength, etc.)

READ | *FILL UP EACH MORNING WITH GOD'S STRENGTH*

The best way to make sure you don't hit empty is to start each day with a full tank. This sounds simple, but we must be intentional to carve out a few minutes each morning to have God be our first priority in order to fill up with His strength.

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.
-Mark 1:35 (NIV)

As Jesus started his busy mission here on earth, He modeled for us the importance of connecting with God in the morning. Jesus understood that God would be the source of His power to complete the important tasks for each day. Similarly, we should make it a priority to slide out of bed, onto our knees each morning to start the day with God and invite in the power of the Holy Spirit to fuel and guide our day.

Do you notice a difference when you start your day with God versus when you don't? Share. What are some practical ways you can connect with God each morning? (Ex: Prayer, sing worship songs, read God's word, S.O.A.P. devotionals, etc.)

READ | STAY CONNECTED TO CHRIST THROUGH CHURCH

God provides us with various filling stations that allow us to receive a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit. Church is one of those filling stations that He wants us to pull into each and every week so He can refill us with His wisdom, power, and peace.

God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.

-Ephesians 1:22-23 (NLT)

Your church family is the body of Christ. Jesus is the head and we are His body. Coming to church is one of the best ways to keep your life fueled by Jesus. The more plugged in we are with other believers through church, small group and fellowship, the more we are made complete by Christ, who refills our weary tanks.

Share how staying connected to Christ through his church and his people has been helpful to you when you were going through a difficulty? How can you prioritize your connection to the body of Christ (church & fellowship) more this season?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

This week, take time to review your pace and direction in life to ensure you are living within the limits God designed for us. Prioritize taking a weekly sabbath day off this week and beyond. Start each morning in a posture of prayer and praise as you invite in a fresh filling of the holy spirit. Then at the end of the day come to Jesus to decompress from the stress of life and trust him to help you carry the load for tomorrow. Remember that the best way to be refilled by Christ is to stay connected to come to church each week and connect with your church family.

- Read additional scriptures and feed your mind, heart, and soul with God's word. We have provided SCRIPTURES on the next page for you to do your daily devotions.

CLOSE IN PRAYER:

God, thank You for providing me with all the fuel I will ever need in my life. Cover me and my family this week as I look to slow down, be faithful in my sabbath and live my life according to your manual and instructions. Give me the wisdom to see where I am carrying too much and the courage to take it to Jesus and trust Him to guide and carry the load along side me. Grant me the focus and determination to start each morning in devotion to you for a fresh filling of the holy spirit and to end each day in the comfort of your love. Thank you for the ways you refill me with your presence, power and peace when I connect with you through your church and your people. In Jesus' name, amen.



Make Time to be in God's WORD

Reading God's Word daily re-patterns the way you think & transforms your mind. Doing your daily devotions is an excellent way to record, process, & share what God is teaching you on a personal level. We do this using S.O.A.P.

- S - Scripture**
- O - Observation**
- A - Application**
- P - Prayer**

Here's an example:

S: *Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "*

--Matthew 4:4 (NIV)

O: Jesus said that we can't live on food alone. Our life is sustained through His Word.

A: Just as food is important to me, God's Word is even more because it will sustain me and give me the strength to live out my life.

P: Jesus, thank You for reminding me that I need Your Word to give me the wisdom & strength to follow You. Help me to make time to spend with You daily. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

SCRIPTURES FOR S.O.A.P.

Day 1:

He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

--Psalm 46:10 (NIV)

Day 2:

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

--John 6:37 (ESV)

Day 3:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

--Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)

Day 4:

After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness.

--Acts 4:31 (NLT)

Day 5:

We have many parts in the one body, and all these parts have different functions. In the same way, though we are many, we are one body in union with Christ, and we are all joined to each other as different parts of one body.

--Romans 12:4-5 (GNT)



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