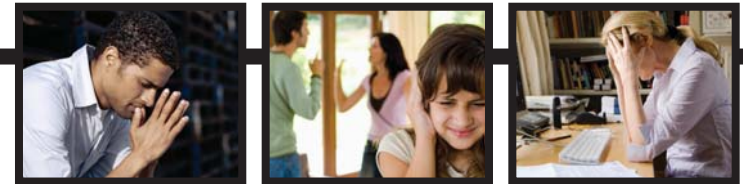
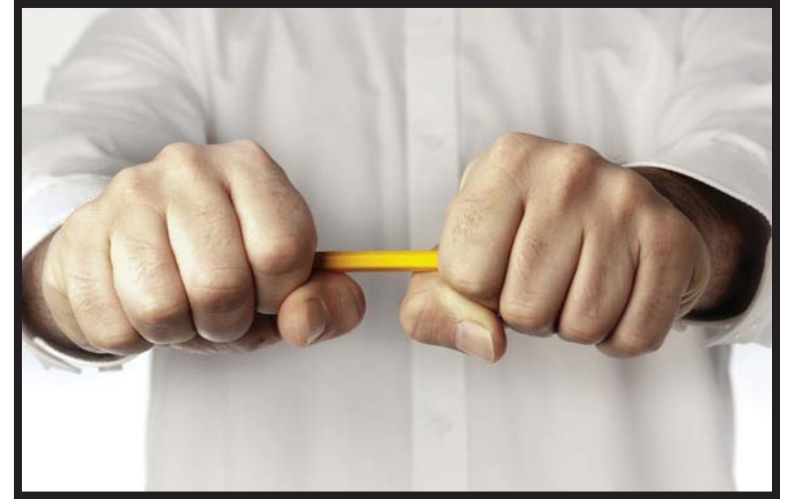


What makes this series so valuable is that each Bible event leads the reader or the group to discover the deepest truths of the Bible for themselves. This is done through insightful multiple choice questions which draw the readers to enter into the story and find for themselves its meanings and implications which they then can apply to their own lives.

The series is best “taught” by persons who encourage the group to do most of the talking and thinking. The teacher best acts as a leader in which the group discovers its way through the Scriptural events. The teacher may help the group when he or she believes that valuable truths have been overlooked, but the first discoverers should be members of the group itself. This stirs tremendous interest on the part of the group. This also relieves the teacher of the responsibility, under older systems of teaching, to carefully master all the truths of the text and present them in a way that would hopefully interest and “teach” the group.

Almost all teachers report that their classes or groups show much more interest than before and that teaching this series is much easier than it was under the older systems of teaching.

Individuals who use these lessons for their own personal study find this investigative method interesting and meaningful. The reader is invited to sense the drama of each story in his or her own Bible and be led to discern the spiritual truths that are packed into each story.



Stress SURVIVORS

“Bible Event Series”

NATIONAL BIBLE READING
CAMPAIGN



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Materials Adapted from the Serendipity Bible

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6. What do you do when "storms" come up in your life?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> turn to a person I can trust | <input type="checkbox"/> turn to God |
| <input type="checkbox"/> act like nothing is wrong | <input type="checkbox"/> get touchy and irritable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> take charge of things | <input type="checkbox"/> panic |

7. What brings on most of the storms in your life?

- ☐ financial difficulties
- ☐ hassles with relationships
- ☐ overwhelming demands
- ☐ insecurity: worry about job/future
- ☐ disappointment: feelings of failure
- ☐ tragedy: sickness/death

8. As time goes on, have you seen improvement in the way you handle storms? What difference does your faith in Christ make?

9. How would you compare your life right now to the storm in this story?

- ☐ smooth sailing: enjoying the ride
- ☐ choppy water: a storm is brewing
- ☐ furious squall: sinking fast
- ☐ storm is over: clearing up

10. "Quiet! Be still!" If Jesus were to speak these words to you today, what would they mean?

11. Opinions: What is the most stressful recurring storm you face?

JESUS CALMS THE STORM

Mark 4:35-41



Life may not always be stormy, but the storms will surely come. Where do you find your security when the storm comes? Consider what happened to Jesus' disciples when a real storm hit them.

1. If you had been one of the disciples when the boat was about to sink, what would you have done?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> started bailing water | <input type="checkbox"/> jumped overboard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> taken command | <input type="checkbox"/> awaken Jesus |

2. Why do you think the disciples awakened Jesus?

- ☐ They were afraid for their lives.
- ☐ They wanted help bailing water.
- ☐ They wanted a miracle.
- ☐ They were mad that Jesus was sleeping through their crisis.

3. What was the tone in Jesus' voice when he said, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> angry | <input type="checkbox"/> Disappointed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> scolding | <input type="checkbox"/> Compassionate |

4. Why did Jesus allow a storm to come up in the first place?

- ☐ He didn't, storms are natural.
- ☐ He was asleep on the job.
- ☐ He wanted to test them.
- ☐ He wanted to stretch their faith.

5. If you had been there, what would you have told your friends afterward?

- ☐ "I just about got killed!"
- ☐ "Jesus sure is a sound sleeper."
- ☐ "I can't figure Jesus out."
- ☐ "Only God can do what I just saw."

Stress SURVIVORS

Our daily work along with all our other tasks may tire us, but can also help us to get a delightful night's sleep at the end of the day. When problems develop for which there seems to be no solution or when we work very hard but don't get the needed results, we can lose a lot of sleep.

Stress is most common when we face demands that we cannot satisfy or when we find ourselves in impossible situations, due to the circumstances or to the fault of effort on the part of others.

What solutions can we find to the creation of stress, when we do not easily find the solution to our problems? The real-life stories of people under stress reported in the pages of the Bible can help us to live above stress and the circumstances that cause it.

ASKED TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE

Exodus 5:1-21

BRICKS WITHOUT STRAW



Impossible demands are guaranteed to raise stress levels to the exploding point. “Life isn’t fair,” say many, recognizing that injustices are so common to life. Moses was a man who lived with this kind of stress. God has called Moses, with the help of his brother Aaron, to lead the Israelites out of slavery into the promised land.

1. What do you think Moses’ mood was as he approached Pharaoh?

- ☐ excited
- ☐ fearful
- ☐ optimistic because of his faith
- ☐ pessimistic because God said Pharaoh wouldn’t let them go

2. Why did he ask that Israel to be permitted to offer sacrifices in the desert?

- ☐ He was following God’s orders.
- ☐ The Israelites needed to worship.
- ☐ It was ridiculous to ask Pharaoh to allow them to leave permanently.

3. Pharaoh refused Moses’ request because he:

- ☐ didn’t know the Lord
- ☐ couldn’t afford to give the Hebrews time off
- ☐ had a hard heart
- ☐ knew his slaves wouldn’t return

4. How did the Israelites feel about Pharaoh’s response?

- ☐ angry at Pharaoh
- ☐ angry at Moses
- ☐ angry at God
- ☐ wished Moses hadn’t interfered
- ☐ they called out to the Lord

5. How do you usually react to failure, and how would you like to react differently?

- ☐ kick myself for days
- ☐ try to be extra good for a while
- ☐ shrug it off
- ☐ admit it and get on with life
- ☐ become afraid to try again
- ☐ talk to God about it

6. How has failure changed you?

- ☐ I’m more determined.
- ☐ I’m more humble.
- ☐ I’m more realistic.
- ☐ I look out for myself more.
- ☐ I’m emotionally fragile.
- ☐ I don’t feel I can serve God again.

7. What failure in your life comes closest to hitting you like Peter’s failure hit him?

- ☐ when I went through a divorce or a separation
- ☐ when I lost my job
- ☐ when I went through bankruptcy or financial failure
- ☐ when I failed my wife/husband and children
- ☐ when I had a chance to talk about Christ, but didn’t

8. Would you give yourself a “plus” or a “minus” for each of the following characteristics:

- ☐ bouncing back after you fail someone
- ☐ forgiving those who fail you
- ☐ standing up for Christ
- ☐ spiritual desire
- ☐ spiritual consistency

9. How has this course, and especially those in your group, helped you learn to deal better with stress?

WHEN FRIENDS FAIL

Luke 22:54-62

PETER DISOWNS JESUS



Of all the Apostles, Peter was one of the most trusted by Jesus. Peter was sincere in his statement, but was unaware of his weakness. At the most critical moment, Peter not only failed his Lord but even denied knowing him. The failure of our friends toward us, and our failure toward our friends can be one of the great trials of life. How will we handle it?

1. After Jesus was arrested, what made Peter deny knowing Him?

- ☐ momentary insanity
- ☐ spiritual weakness
- ☐ personality weakness
- ☐ fear for his own life

2. If you could put in a good word for Peter, what would it be?

- ☐ He meant well.
- ☐ He was the only disciple to follow Jesus to his trial.
- ☐ He was only human.
- ☐ He came back to Christ in the end.
- ☐ I wouldn't have done any better.

3. How do you think Peter felt when Jesus looked at Him?

- ☐ He realized how stupid he'd been.
- ☐ He felt ashamed of his behavior.
- ☐ He was humiliated by his failure.
- ☐ He was afraid Jesus would never forgive him.

4. The impact this failure had on Peter's future was that it probably:

- ☐ made him less cocky
- ☐ took away all his self-confidence
- ☐ made him more sensitive
- ☐ helped make him into the man of God he became

5. How do you think Moses felt about what the foreman said in verse 21?

- ☐ like a martyr
- ☐ like a scapegoat
- ☐ like running away
- ☐ like running to God
- ☐ frustrated with God
- ☐ defensive
- ☐ very angry

6. Which of the possible answers to the last question best describes how you feel when like both Moses and the Hebrew slaves you suffer for something that isn't your fault?

7. What do you think God expects of you when you suffer injustice?

- ☐ not to get mad
- ☐ not to get even
- ☐ not to be a doormat
- ☐ to bring it to God in prayer
- ☐ to simply turn the other cheek

8. How is this story like the stress in your life?

- ☐ I've got some Pharaohs telling me what to do.
- ☐ Every day is the same old grind.
- ☐ I feel like a slave to the expectations of others.
- ☐ I don't have time to get it all done.
- ☐ I get blamed for other peoples' problems and mistakes.

9. In your anxiety about work, how do you identify with Moses and the Hebrew slaves? How do you think God wants you to respond to the "tyrants," injustices and frustrations of your job?

10. When have you felt trapped and unfulfilled in your career? What effect do these situations have on your relationship with God? What can you do when you're unfulfilled in your work?

WHEN WE ASK: "LORD, WHY?"

Exodus 5:22 - 6:12

GOD PROMISES DELIVERANCE

Almost everyone faces, at one time or another, situations for which there is no possible solution. That was Moses' experience with the Pharaoh. However, what is impossible for man is possible for God. People who live without God in their lives have no hope in the worst of crisis. But God is a God who rescues His people, and who has special mercy on those who have faith in Him. See this in Moses' story.

Pharaoh's response to Moses' request to let the Israelites worship the Lord in the desert was to oppress the Israelite slaves even more. The Hebrew foremen, who were beaten for not meeting their quota of bricks, in turn had just taken their frustrations out on Moses. Then Moses asked God: "Lord, Why?"

1. What was Moses most concerned about?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Israelites' rebound | <input type="checkbox"/> Pharaoh's power |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Israelites' suffering | <input type="checkbox"/> God's seeming inactivity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> God's reputation | |

2. What do you think was Moses' reaction to God's words in 6:1-8?

- ☐ I hope these are more than just nice words.
- ☐ I hope my fellow Israelites will believe this.
- ☐ God said it; I believe it.
- ☐ I have some reservations, but I'll hold on to these promises.

3. As this story ends, what stands out to you the most?

- ☐ Moses' discouragement
- ☐ The Israelites' discouragement
- ☐ Moses' lack of confidence
- ☐ The Israelites' lack of confidence in God
- ☐ God's promises
- ☐ God's persistence



4. What do you suppose was the hardest thing about this event for Jesus?

- ☐ being betrayed by a friend
- ☐ being deserted by all the disciples
- ☐ knowing what was going to happen to him next
- ☐ knowing He could have called on multitudes of angels to rescue Him

5. In times of crisis or severe stress, how do you respond?

- ☐ I stay cool like Jesus.
- ☐ I get hot like Peter.
- ☐ I run off like the disciples.

6. Have you, like Peter, ever felt you had a better way to deal with things than Jesus? What happened?

7. On a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest), how would you rate your level of loyalty to Jesus now? (It is not necessary to give your answer to the group)

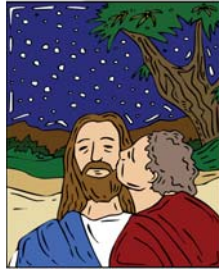
8. What should you do to deal with the stress of feeling let down or betrayed?

- ☐ hit somebody's ear
- ☐ punch a pillow
- ☐ get some exercise
- ☐ call on God for help
- ☐ try to understand where that person is coming from
- ☐ talk to that person about how I feel
- ☐ other: _____

BETRAYED

Matthew 26:47-56

JESUS IS ARRESTED



Jesus is always true to His friends, even as He was to Judas. But that did not mean that He would not be betrayed. In the arrest of Jesus, we see illustrated vividly the torment of conflicting loyalties that swirled around Jesus. In our lives, in the most critical moments, we may have similar experiences. Jesus has just finished an agonizing time of prayer at Gethsemane, during which his disciples kept falling asleep.

1. How do you think Jesus felt when He saw Judas and an armed mob coming toward him?

- ☐ frightened
- ☐ angry
- ☐ surprised
- ☐ betrayed
- ☐ prepared
- ☐ confused

2. How do you feel about the disciple (identified in John's Gospel as Peter) striking a member of the crowd?

- ☐ He didn't have very good aim.
- ☐ He didn't understand Jesus' mission.
- ☐ He was just trying to help.
- ☐ He hadn't absorbed Jesus' teachings against violence.
- ☐ I would probably have done the same thing.

3. Why did the disciples desert Jesus?

- ☐ They panicked.
- ☐ Their leader appeared defeated.
- ☐ They feared for their lives.
- ☐ Jesus wasn't the kind of Messiah they thought he was.
- ☐ They didn't know how else to handle Jesus' acceptance of his arrest.

4. When has it been the most difficult for you to believe God's promises?

5. Like the Israelites, do you have a hard time trusting God when you're discouraged or mistreated?

6. When have God's promises been all that's kept you going? Which of God's promises do you most need to hear right now?

- ☐ I will deliver you from bondage to your enemies.
- ☐ I will be your God.
- ☐ I will forgive your sins.
- ☐ I will take care of you.
- ☐ I will help you find your place.
- ☐ Other: _____

7. Whom do you know who needs to be reassured of God's love and care? How will you encourage them?

8. What is your greatest anxiety about your job?

- ☐ getting fired or laid off
- ☐ getting stuck where I am
- ☐ making mistakes
- ☐ failing to meet quotas
- ☐ failing to meet deadlines
- ☐ failing to please my boss
- ☐ other: _____

9. When do you worry the most: At work? Traveling to or from work? At home? At night?

10. How can this Bible passage help you?

WHEN YOU ARE ALONE WITH YOUR CRISIS

Mark 14:32-42

JESUS IN GETHSEMANE



The Bible, speaking of Jesus, says, ***“Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”*** Hebrews 2:18 Jesus is God, but He is also truly man, and He knows our sufferings from personal experience. It is our comfort and assurance to know that He is able to help those who are being tempted.

Many times we face different kinds of personal crisis. Often, we seem to face them alone. This is a mistake, because Jesus is always with those who belong to Him, and He personally understands the pain that we bear. This is seen in today’s Scripture reading. Just after the Last Supper and before His arrest, Jesus goes to an orchard outside Jerusalem to pray.

1. Why do you think Jesus went to Gethsemane to pray?

- ☐ It was part of His routine.
- ☐ He was stressed out and knew He needed strength and guidance.
- ☐ He wanted to provide a good example for His disciples.
- ☐ It was His last chance to ask God for a plan other than the cross.

2. Why did Jesus take Peter, James and John along with Him?

- ☐ He wanted them on the lookout.
- ☐ He needed their support.
- ☐ He was testing their endurance.
- ☐ He wanted them to pray for Him.
- ☐ He knew they needed to pray for themselves.

3. If Jesus knew His mission was to go to the cross, why was He flinching at doing God’s will?

- ☐ Being human, He was scared.
- ☐ He faced the same battle we face: submitting to God’s will.
- ☐ He knew the cross was painful.
- ☐ He dreaded taking the sins of the world upon Himself.

4. How do you think Jesus felt when He said to His disciples, “Could you not keep watch for one hour?”

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> let down | <input type="checkbox"/> angry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sympathetic | <input type="checkbox"/> lonely |
| <input type="checkbox"/> unimportant | <input type="checkbox"/> sad |

5. What is more of a struggle for you?

- ☐ finding God’s will for my life
- ☐ doing what I know God wants
- ☐ standing alone without the support of others
- ☐ watching someone I love struggle

6. If you were to go through a time of agony like Jesus did in this story, which three people (not in this group) would you choose to be with you?

7. Which of the following experiences of loneliness have you had in the last month?

- ☐ feeling alone in a crowd
- ☐ feeling abandoned by friends
- ☐ feeling desperate for close friends
- ☐ feeling nobody understands me
- ☐ feeling everyone was out to get me
- ☐ having no one just to have fun with

8. How does this story relate to your situation in life?

- ☐ It’s not wrong for me to ask God for my situation to change.
- ☐ Part of prayer is becoming willing to submit to God’s plan for my life.
- ☐ God’s will for my life may not be easy, but it is best.
- ☐ God can give me strength and grace to be alone.