

FOCUS ON FAMILY 2022 OUTLINE



FAMILY MATTERS-Weathering the Storms Of Life

Scripture: *“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.” Isaiah 43:2a*

Book: Less Fret, More Faith, By: Max Lucado

Biblical Comparisons: Noah (Genesis 6-8)
Jonah (Jonah 1-2)
Paul (Acts 27)

FOCUS CLASSES

WEEK I-Walking Out the Word: New Market Community

WEEK II - Preparing For the Storms/ What Really Matters

WEEK III – The Impact of Storms

WEEK IV Finding Peace in the Midst of Your Storms



FOCUS ON FAMILY AUGUST 2022

FAMILY MATTERS-Weathering the Storms of Life

“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee”
Isaiah 43:2a

Over the past few years, the world has been reeling from COVID-19, conspiracy theories, threats of insurrection, inflation costs, job loss, food shortages, wars, gun violence, inequalities, global warming, and so much more. People have been left wondering how all this will affect them, their future, and their families and loved ones.

For some, all this has created a sense of hopelessness, which have in turn created feelings of frustration, anger, distrust, fear, worry, and anxiety.

Devastating news can sometimes feel like a storm whirling around, dark clouds, thunder, lightning; not knowing which way to turn, who to trust, or what place is safe; feeling as if you are about to be swallowed up by the storm.

Some people, in response to these traumatic events, have reached their breaking point and reacted out of fear or anxiety; causing even more fear and anxiety for others. Reports show that just hearing about devastating news- even if it didn't happen to you-can trigger a trauma response.

There is hope (a silver lining in the midst of all this) for those who put their trust in God.

God's Word reminds us that *there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven* (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Instead of focusing on all that is going on around us, God calls His people to trust in Him (Proverbs 3:5-6).

God did not promise that His people would not have storms in their lives, but He did and still does promise to bring them through those storms. **As we compare the lives of Noah, Jonah, and Paul, along with the book: *Less Fret, More Faith*, by Max Lucado, we will see how God remains faithful to His promises and helps His people during the storms in their lives.**

Just like He promised the children of Israel, God has promised to be with us today: *“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee”* (Isaiah 43:2a).



**FOCUS ON FAMILY
AUGUST 2022**

FAMILY MATTERS-Weathering the Storms of Life

*"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers,
they shall not overflow thee"* *Isaiah 43:2a*

BOOK: Less Fret, More Faith; by Max Lucado

**WEDNESDAY NIGHT LESSON OUTLINE
WEEK II**

TITLE OF LESSON: PREPARING FOR THE STORMS/ WHAT REALLY MATTERS

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES: Genesis 6-8

Jonah 1-2

Acts 26, 27

BOOK: Less Fret, More Faith, by Max Lucado (CH: 1, 3, 10, 11)

**FOCUS: What you do/How you prepare for your storm makes a difference in the
outcome**

DISCUSSION POINTS:

I Background Info

II Spiritual Storms

III How God's Chosen People Prepared For Storms

IV Suggested Ways To Prepare (Book: Less Fret, More Faith)

V Review Questions

I. **BACKGROUND INFO:**

Many gospel artists have encouraged us with songs about storms: The Barrett Sisters (The Storm Is Passing Over, Hallelujah); Kirk Franklin (The Storm Is Over Now); The Mighty Clouds of Joy (I've Been In The Storm Too Long); Douglas Miller (My Soul Is Anchored In The Lord); and so many more. Storms (natural and spiritual) are a part of every person's life.

STORM DEFINED: is a generic term, popularly used to describe a **large variety of atmospheric disturbances**, ranging from ordinary rain showers and snowstorms to thunderstorms, wind and wind-related disturbances, such as gales, tornadoes, tropical cyclones, and sandstorms. (britannica.com)

***Storms in Nature:**

- Thunderstorms
- Lightning
- Strong winds
- Hail
- Tornado
- Flooding
- Ice storms
- Blizzards
- Tropical storm
- Hurricane
- Tsunami

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is an American scientific and regulatory agency within the United States Department of Commerce that forecasts weather, monitors oceanic and atmospheric conditions, charts the seas, conducts deep sea exploration, and manages fishing and protection of marine mammals and endangered species in the U.S. **Its Mission** is to understand and predict changes in climate, weather, ocean, and coasts, to share that knowledge and information with others, and to conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources. (noaa.gov)

Storms are formed when the movement of cold and warm air currents creates extreme air pressure difference (as warm wet air rushes, causing cold air to move towards the area where air pressure is lower, eventually creating a rotation).

***Storm Watch -Vs-Warning**

WATCH DEFINED: indicates that conditions are favorable and that a weather hazard is possible

WARNING DEFINED: means that a weather hazard is imminent or is already occurring in your area and you need to take action now

Severe weather can happen quickly. It's important to be prepared by planning ahead. It can strike anywhere at any time. It is important to be aware of the forecast, so you can be safe.

Whatever type of severe weather comes your way, having a [plan](#) and knowing what to do could save your life.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is an agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security. Initially created under President Jimmy Carter April 1, 1979; it became a part of Homeland Security March 1, 2003.

FEMA's primary purpose is to coordinate the response to a disaster that has occurred in the U.S. and that overwhelms the resources of local and state authorities. The only exception to this requirement is if an emergency or disaster occurs on federal property or to a federal asset.

FEMA's Mission is helping people before, during, and after disasters. (ready.gov)

FEMA has created "**Ready Guides**" to help people plan for and prepare ahead for disasters.

The objectives of the Ready Guides are:

- Know Your Risks**- understand the type of hazard (disaster or storm) presented to you
- Make a Plan**- evacuate or shelter-in-place
- Take Action**- regularly practice your disaster plan and review your insurance

Make sure everyone knows where to go and what to do in case of an emergency.

Since you may have to evacuate on short notice, pack your emergency kit into backpacks and have them ready to go. Everyone in the family should know exactly where the emergency kits are located. If you can't afford a kit, make sure to have as many of these items as humanly possible.

Your emergency kit should contain:

- [Battery powered flashlight](#)
- [Portable battery powered radio](#)
- Extra batteries
- List of emergency phone numbers
- Prescriptions and essential medicines
- [First aid kit](#)
- Nonperishable emergency food
- Bottled water (1 gallon per person, per day)
- [Non-electric can opener](#)
- [Disposable camera](#)
- Credit cards and cash
- Change of clothing
- Sturdy shoes or boots
- Important papers, identification and bank information

II. SPIRITUAL STORMS

These are **challenges or situations that we go through from time to time**. The storms of life are difficult things and times we face in our walk with the Lord.

Whether you are a Christian or not, everyone goes through spiritual storms in their life (Matthew 5:45). Storms have a beginning, a middle, and an end. You may be in a storm now (middle), or perhaps you are coming out of a storm (ending), or even about to enter a storm (beginning).

***What Is Necessary In Preparing For A Spiritual Storm**

Just like storms in nature, it is important that we prepare for spiritual storms. Becoming

lax in our preparations and letting our supplies dwindle can be devastating.

***Types of Spiritual Storms**

Spiritual storms come in different forms, strengths, and severities. Sometimes you may be hit with multiple storms at one time (so many things happening at once; **The Perfect Storm**). Some things may be out of your control, but some are not. Knowing the difference matters. Understanding which storm is approaching helps you to be better prepared to face it (Proverbs 3:5-6).

- sickness (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual)
- financial hardships (job loss, mismanagement)
- family/relationship problems
- loss/grief

***Three Other Types of Spiritual Storms**

- storms to be resisted, rebuked, or fought** (temptations or satanic attacks)
Matthew 4:1-11; Matthew 16:19; I Corinthians 10:13; James 4:7
- storms to seek shelter from** (be still, take shelter and let the Lord work on your behalf) II Chronicles 20:15; Psalm 57:1; Psalm 61:1-3; Isaiah 40:29-31
- storms to endure** (sometimes we must just hang in there and endure and allow God to bring good out of our difficulties) Romans 5:3-5; II Corinthians 12:7-10; Hebrews 5:8

***Purpose of Storms**

Just as there are certain conditions that cause storms of nature to form, there are conditions that cause spiritual storms to form as well. Before Adam and Eve sinned everything was peaceful, there were no storms on earth.

There are laws that God set in place at the foundation of the world. These laws govern God's influence on the earth. Man was given dominion over the earth; when man sinned in the Garden of Eden, he surrendered his dominion to Satan. The world is under Satan's dominion now, which is why there is so much evil present and why God allows storms in our lives (Ephesians 6:12).

Spiritual storms are not meant to destroy us (Jeremiah 29:11), but failure to heed God's warnings could result in death. Some reasons God might allow storms to come into our lives:

- because God cannot break His laws (Psalm 115:16)
- to strengthen us (Hebrews 12:2)
- to cleanse/reset (Genesis 6:7, 12-13)
- to reveal God's Will/point us back to our purpose (Jonah 2:1-10)
- to point us to God (Exodus 33:18-20; Acts 27:25, 35-37)
- to equip us for service (Genesis 50:20)

***Having, Knowing, and Following the Plan**

Like FEMA, God provides His people with a guide (Bible) to help them prepare and plan for disasters. In fact the word “B.I.B.L.E.” was used as an acronym (Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth). The Bible:

- teaches us what to look for; risks (Proverbs 22:5; Matthew 26:41; Romans 15:4; I Peter 5:8)
- tells us how to make a plan; prepare/equip (II Timothy 2:15)
- compels us to take action; “Go” (Matthew 28:19-20)
- tells us what to include in our emergency kit (Ephesians 6:10-18)

Following sound advice is detrimental to surviving a storm. Who or what we listen to makes a difference in whether or not we have accurate information to prepare. Unfortunately, many believers (like many people in disaster-laden communities) fail to heed God’s warning.

Having the right attitude is also important to surviving a storm. It has been said that “attitude determines altitude”. Without the proper attitude you could be wasting precious life-saving minutes focusing on the wrong things. More often than not, if the plan is formed in haste, it is probably formed out of fear, lacks the information necessary to forming a good, solid plan. And, unfortunately, by then it is too little too late, which could ultimately result in death, destruction, and demise.

Some plans may call for us to **evacuate (leave)**, while others may call for us to **shelter-in-place (stay put)**. How we prepare (what we do) before, during or after a storm hits makes a difference in the outcome and the impact the storm has on you and those connected to you. Having, knowing, and following the plan matters. It is important to prepare our minds and hearts for the inevitable trials of life. Without a theological foundation in place for how to face such storms, we are at greater risk for being blown over by the fierce winds of suffering when they arrive.

Here are four simple ways, like gathering hurricane supplies, that we can prepare for the storms of tomorrow.

1. Study the Word.

Why do they exist? How should we respond? How does God use suffering in our lives? We also need to study what Scripture teaches about God, who he is, and his character. It makes a big difference whether we believe God is out to get us or whether we believe that he is holy, righteous, and good in all that he does.

2. Affirm God’s sovereignty. What we believe about God’s sovereignty plays a significant role in how we face suffering. Do we believe that he is in absolute control over everything that happens? Do we trust that he will use all things, even our suffering, for our good and his glory? How can we trust in and find hope in his sovereignty?

3. **Memorize Scripture.** We need to learn and memorize verses that point to the truth about suffering and the trials of life. We can memorize passages on God's promises toward us, the hope we have in Christ, and how God uses suffering in our lives for our transformation and his glory. There are several important verses in Romans 8, such as **Romans 8:18, 28–30, 35–39**.
4. **Pray.** We need to develop an active prayer life. During the calm seasons of life, we need to grow in prayer and learn to turn to God for all things. The more we trust and rely on God in prayer, the more we will utilize prayer during the trials of life. In a crisis, we tend to do things by instinct. Prayer should be instinctual, like breathing.

III. **HOW GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE PREPARED FOR THEIR STORMS**

***Compare How Noah Prepared for the Storm (Genesis 6:14-16, 19-22)**

-Genesis 6:14-16

-Genesis 6:22

***Compare How Jonah Prepared for the Storm (Jonah 1:1-17)**

-Jonah 1:1-2

-Jonah 1:3

***Compare How Paul Prepared for the Storm (Acts 26:16-22; 27:1)**

-Acts 26:16-18

-Acts 26:19, 22

-Acts 27:1

***Who's With You In The Storm**

Having the right people with you makes a difference in how you weather the storm. Like FEMA and NOAA, God provides us with others (friends, family, a body of believers; church members), equipped to help us recognize, prepare for, and handle whatever storms we might be presented with. The survival of everyone could be at stake if everyone does not know, communicate the plan, or is not working towards the plan; and the results could be even more devastating.

-Genesis 6:19-21; 7:1-5, 7-9

-Jonah 1:4-10

-Acts 27:10-25

IV. **SUGGESTED WAYS TO PREPARE- *Less Fret, More Faith*, by Max Lucado**

ANXIETY DEFINED: a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome

In the midst of your storm, emotions can run high and sometimes get out of hand. In order to follow the plan these emotions need to be brought or kept under control.

***Assess Your Tool Kit: we all have coping strategies; a tool kit to open in times of anxiety (Ch. 1)**

- some tools are healthy; others are counterproductive
- an important step in assembling good tools is identifying the bad ones
- does your response to anxiety create even more problems
- reduce your list to the tools that actually help resolve the problem
- Scripture Passage: James 1:17

***Clean Your Life Lens: everyone has assumptions about life- many are useful and constructive; some however, are toxic and contrary to the truth (Ch. 3)**

- many false beliefs were formed in the early years of our lives
- correct faulty thinking with accurate thoughts
- don't allow false assumptions to take up any space in your mind
- Scripture Passages: Romans 12:2

II Corinthians 10:5

Luke 12:24-26

***Interrupt The Downward Spiral: anxiety is an out-of-control thought pattern (Ch. 10)**

- it settles over the mind like a severe weather system
- it feeds on what-ifs and worst case scenarios
- this thought pattern is a sinkhole
- take a deep breath and:
 - pray about it
 - identify the culprit
 - take a reality check (is it real or is it a rumor)
 - take an action step
 - ask, "can God solve this"?
- God is never baffled or belittled; take the problem to Him
- Scripture Passages: Isaiah 54:17

I Peter 5:7

Psalms 139:4

Hebrews 4:15

***Tell Yourself The Truth: how much energy is wasted on counterfeit concerns? (Ch. 11)**

- gather the facts
- control what you can control
- don't second-guess yourself; make the best decision you can with the facts at hand and live with it

-Scripture Passages: Proverbs 3:3-6

Psalms 33:4

Psalms 100:5

12:19

51:6

117:2

23:23

85:10

119:142, 151

Psalms 25:5

96:13

145:18

V. REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) How do you prepare for storms? What plan do you have?**
- 2) What tools do you have in your Spiritual Emergency Kit?**
- 3) Are you in a spiritual storm now? What type of storm are you in?**
- 4) Who is in your storm with you? Do they know the plan?**
- 5) Are you viewing your storm through the right life lens?**
- 6) Looking back at a storm God brought you through, were there signs warning you before the storm came?**
- 7) Did you heed or ignore the warning signs? What was the result?**
- 8) Do your everyday responsibilities sometimes make you feel like you're in a storm?**
- 9) Are you wasting time/energy on things that don't really matter?**
- 10) How did Noah, Jonah, and Paul prepare for their storms?**



**FOCUS ON FAMILY
AUGUST 2022**

FAMILY MATTERS-Weathering the Storms of Life

*“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers,
they shall not overflow thee”*

Isaiah 43:2a

BOOK: Less Fret, More Faith; by Max Lucado

WEDNESDAY NIGHT LESSON OUTLINE

WEEK III

August 17, 2022

TITLE OF LESSON: THE IMPACT OF THE STORMS

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES: Genesis 6-8

Jonah 1-2

Acts 27

BOOK: Less Fret, More Faith, by Max Lucado (CH: 2, 4, 7)

FOCUS: Storms can have a lasting affect on the individual as well as the people and things connected to them

DISCUSSION POINTS:

- I Impact**
- II Who/What Is Impacted**
- III Things Lost/Gained As A Result**
- IV How Storms Impacted God’s Chosen People**
- V Suggested Ways To Combat The Impact (Book: Less Fret, More Faith)**
- VI Review Questions**

I. IMPACT DEFINED: having a strong effect on someone or something

- Life is hard and many people struggle to stay on top of the storms in their lives. Others crumble under the pressure.
- Storms happen to everyone. None of us really want to go through storms. Storms are vital for us.
- Sometimes you can prepare for life's storms, but you can't predict when storms will happen and how severe they will be.
- Sometimes storms are not your fault
- Sometimes you may be hit by multiple storms at one time (The Perfect Storm)

***Short Term/Long Term Impact**

We are meant to go through storms; not camp out in them. Fear and anxiety can cause you to feel as if you are unable to do anything (paralyzed); become stuck in your storm.

- storms won't last forever; however, the effects of a storm may be minimal and easy to recover from, or sometimes they may last a lifetime
 - flooding/roads or bridges closed or washed out
 - wind/hail damage
 - boat capsizing
 - power outage
 - food or supply shortage/higher prices
 - closed businesses
 - displaced families
 - divorce
 - loss/grief
 - financial troubles
 - health issues
- Storms can have a positive or a negative effect on the individual
 - stress/anxiety//depression/phobias/insecurities
 - relationships (strengthened or severed)
 - outlook on life

II. WHO/WHAT IS IMPACTED

***Individual/Relationships**

Storms not only affect the individual, but those people and things connected to the individual. How often do we consider how our actions will affect others connected to us (family, loves ones, friends, co-workers, church members)?

Social media has introduced a different level of connectedness (secondary traumatic stress). According to Dr. Janelle S. Peifer, PhD, those who have the same race or ethnicity, or gender can be impacted by the event just by hearing or learning about it.

***Compare How God Used A Storm To Impact Noah's Life (Genesis 6:7, 12-13, 17, 19)**

-6:7, 12-13

-6:17-21; 7:10-23

***Compare How God Used A Storm To Impact Jonah's Life (Jonah 1:1-17; 2:1-10)**

-1:1-3

- 1:4-10

- 1:5- 10

-1:4

-1:14-16

-1:17; 2:1-10

***Compare How God Used A Storm to Impact Paul's Life (Acts 27)**

-Even though Paul was in God's Will, God still allowed him to go through a storm

-v. 9-11

-v. 25

-v. 37

-v. 42

-v. 27-32

***Storms Impact Our Godly Purpose**

If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, God has a plan and a purpose for your life (Jeremiah 29:11; I Corinthians 6:19). God has equipped all believers with Spiritual gifts, talents, and abilities to be used for His purpose (Ephesians 4:12). God's desire is to shape His people into the image of Christ. Just as Christ submitted his Will to the Father's, God desires all believers to submit their Will to His. Who and what you surround yourself with determines how your image is shaped.

-God can use storms to shake off those people or things that are detrimental to your future

-Storms may come in different forms:

-Perfecting Storms: James 1:3-4

-Protecting Storms: Mark 4:35-41

-Correcting Storms: Jonah 1

-Storms can bring clarity or focus to your purpose and strengthen you; sometimes your plans may not be in line with God's plans and purpose for us (faith, study habits,

prayer life, witness to others)

- Sometimes it may seem as if God is silent or has forgotten you
- Following the crowd instead of God's command can cause you to lose out on what God has for you. Noah, Jonah, and Paul were all called to do God's Will, but each of their responses had different results
 - Noah** obeyed God, built the ark, and was spared
 - Jonah** tried to run from God, encountered a storm, and had to be reminded of his purpose; Jonah learned that he couldn't get away from God and that God gives second chances
 - Paul** was in God's Will even though he had to go through a storm;

III. THINGS LOST/GAINED AS A RESULT OF STORMS

***Storms can cause severe damage;** some damage may be costly to recover from, some things may be a total loss

-Genesis 6:5-8; 18-20; 7:1

6:9

-Jonah 1:14-15

2:4, 7-9

-Acts 27:25, 44

***Storms can cause you to cry out to God** (Jonah 1:14; 2:1-2)

***Storms can cause you to lose your strength** (Acts 27:33-38)

***Storms can cause you to see things more clearly** (Acts 27:39-41)

***Storms Can Teach Us Many Lessons:**

-**Real Gratitude:** God is at work all around you. Stopping to look for God's good hand in the midst of your storms can help you to see that

-**Real Joy:** God brings moments of joy even in the midst of your storms

-**Real Peace:** peace is not the absence of difficulties, it's the presence of God

-**Real Treasure:** what's really valuable becomes clearer during a storm

-**Real Strength:** trials/storms bring you to the end of yourself; you realize you need to depend on God for wisdom, faith, and strength

-**Real Faithfulness:** you see firsthand how God meets your needs and takes care of you during your storms

-**Real Home:** storms remind you that this world is not your home:

I Corinthians 4:17

IV. HOW STORMS IMPACTED GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE

***Compare How God Used A Storm To Impact Noah's Life**

Genesis 6:7, 12-13

6:17-21

7:10-23

***Compare How God Used A Storm To Impact Jonah's Life**

Jonah 1:1-3

1:4-10

1:14-16

1:17; 2:1-10

***Compare How God Used A Storm to Impact Paul's Life**

Acts 26:13-17

27:9-11

27:25

27:27-32

27:37

27:42

V. SUGGESTED WAYS TO COMBAT THE IMPACT- *Less Fret, More Faith, by Max Lucado*

ANXIETY DEFINED: a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome

***Evaluate Your Worry Pattern: Make a note every time you feel anxious (Ch. 2)**

- what were you worried about
- what triggered the anxiety
- how did this anxiety make you feel
- how did you react
- what have you observed about your worries
- try to identify the core fear or insecurity behind the anxiety
- how many of your worries materialized
- was the gain worth the pain
- how id your anxiety affect others
- is there anything you can do to address the source of anxiety
- remind yourself of what you are doing
- Scripture Passage: Romans 8:28

***Cast A Vote In Your Favor: You are your worst critic or greatest cheerleader (Ch. 4)**

- you tear yourself down or build yourself up
- the words you tell yourself can usher in fear or faith; they have power
- hold fast to the promises of scripture
- Scripture Passages: Romans 8:31, 37-39

Isaiah 43:1

Proverbs 15:4

18:21a

***Grow In Gratitude: How positive or negative is your thinking? (Ch. 7)**

-nobody other than you has the power to make you miserable or unhappy

-place your mind in a healthy posture of gratitude

-Scripture Passages: I Thessalonians 5:16-18

Philippians 4:8

***God never leaves us to go through storms alone; He is always in the midst of them (Isaiah 43:2).**

Even though we may experience pain, doubt, or discouragement, God offers to be our comforter (Psalm 23:4)

VI. REVIEW QUESTIONS

1) Who is in your storm with you?

2) Are you in someone else's storm?

3) How have you been impacted by your storm? What have you lost, gained, or able to see more clearly as a result of your storm?

4) Have your storms impacted someone close to you?

5) Have you been impacted by someone else's storm?

6) How were others impacted by Noah's, Jonah's, and Paul's storms?

7) Have you ever attempted to run from your Godly purpose? What was the result?



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they shall not overflow thee”* *Isaiah 43:2a*

BOOK: Less Fret, More Faith; by Max Lucado

**WEDNESDAY NIGHT LESSON OUTLINE
WEEK IV**

TITLE OF LESSON: FINDING PEACE IN THE MIDST OF THE STORM

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES: Genesis 6-8

Jonah 1-2

Acts 27

BOOK: Less Fret, More Faith, by Max Lucado (CH: 5, 6, 8, 9)

**FOCUS: Who and what you rely on determines how you go through
your storms**

DISCUSSION POINTS:

- I. Source of Worry**
- II. Source of Strength**
- III. Staying Focused/On Course/Afloat**
- IV. Seeing The Bigger Picture**
- V. How God’s Chosen People Demonstrated Peace**
- VI. Suggested Ways To Find Peace (Book: Less Fret, More Faith)**
- VII. Ways You Can Help Someone With Anxiety**
- VIII. When To Seek Help**
- IX. Review Questions**

I. SOURCE OF WORRY

Sometimes the sea is calm and the wind blows softly; but other times the wind rises, the sky becomes dark, and we find ourselves in the midst of a terrible storm. **Not all storms are peaceful**

- lightning strikes
- thunder trembles
- the wind blows
- trees sway and snap
- windows break
- homes, cars, and businesses are destroyed
- relationships are affected

PEACE DEFINED: The biblical concept of peace rests heavily on the Hebrew root *slm* (*salom*), which means "to be complete" or "to be sound."

When you are in the midst of a storm in your life, it can cause you to worry. When you look at the news, it can become overwhelming to see all that is going on around you. Feeling helpless about your future can cause you to become worried or anxious; these feelings can seem like storms in your life. II Timothy 1:7; Genesis 50:20.

It is hard to have peace and anxiety at the same time.

II. SOURCE OF STRENGTH

SHELTER DEFINED: a place giving temporary protection from bad weather or danger

LIGHTHOUSE DEFINED: serves to warn mariners of dangerous shallow and perilous rocky coasts

Knowing where your source of strength is can bring peace in the midst of storms. The peace that God gives cannot be found in worldly things. Worldly things only give temporary relief; rather than help solve your problems, they sometimes add to or are the source of your problems.

Having somewhere to retreat to where you feel safe brings peace during storms. God has promised to be your shelter in times of storm (Psalm 61:3). God has also promised to give you light for your path (Psalm 119:105). Stumbling in the dark brings feelings of uncertainty; like ships sailing in the night with no light, you can find yourself in troubling situations. Just like a lighthouse, God's word can guide you to safety. Knowing that God is in the midst of your storm can bring peace.

- Hebrews 13:5
- John 14:27

***Recognizing the type of storm you're in helps you to find peace**

-Normal Storms: a natural part of life (Matthew 5:45)

- Engineered Storms:** storms we create because of our own foolishness and disobedience (Jonah 1:1-4)
- Growth Storms:** God allows these storms so that we can grow/develop (Romans 8:28)
- Other People's Storms:** storms we're dragged into because of our connections to other people (Jonah 1:7-10)

III. STAYING FOCUSED/ON COURSE/AFLOAT:

When storms hit, or flood waters rise, you will either sink or swim. There are some things that are out of your control. It's important to focus on those things you do have control over. Knowing how to handle your storm will determine whether you come out victoriously or defeated. There are **actions that you might take that might tend to sink your ship (Acts 27)**

- Make decisions in haste (v. 9)
- Depend upon worldly wisdom (v. 11)
- Take the easy way out (Acts 27:12; II Timothy 2:3)
- Follow the crowd (v. 12)
- Depend upon circumstances (v. 13)
- Responding to Rain (v. 15, 18-20, 30)
 - today we see "**escapism**" in different forms
 - drugs
 - alcohol
 - food
 - other people
 - job
 - material possessions

ANCHOR DEFINED: a device usually made of metal, attached to a ship or boat by a cable and cast overboard to hold it in a particular place by means of a blade that digs in.

- When you get caught in a crisis (storm) you may begin to drift** (let go of your goals). The waves may beat you back and forth and unless you are properly anchored you go Wherever they take you (Acts 27:18). God has promised to be your anchor to keep you from drifting away in your storm (Hebrews 6:19).
- You may be tempted to get rid of everything** (including things that are important) (Acts 27:20, 38, 43-44). Isolating you from Godly friends and family is one tactic Satan uses to destroy believers. Staying connected to God and other believers is vital to keep you from being overcome by your storm (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12).

Your mindset can drift like waves in an ocean or shift like the sand in a moment. You can become a victim of your mindset if your thoughts are left unchecked. **God has made a way to help you overcome and renew your mind.**

-Be Transformed: Romans 12:2

-Be Reformed: Philippians 4:8

-Be Informed: Proverbs 4:23

-WWJT (What Would Jesus Think): Isaiah 55:8

We were created with the mind of Christ I Corinthians 2:16b

IV. SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE/BEYOND THE STORM

Having the peace that only God gives enables you to stay focused on the plan. **Sometimes when you're in the midst of a storm all you see is the storm; you may not always be able to see the bigger picture** (understand the cause of the storm) (Job 37:9-13). This may cause you to feel hopeless. When you stay focused on God He is able to bring hope to a hopeless situation.

Even when things seem hopeless, you can trust that God knows the outcome and is working on your behalf (Jeremiah 29:11). The battles in your mind and for mental health can be the most difficult battles to fight. One test of Christian maturity is how we handle a crisis (storm)

***it's easy to live "like a Christian" when things are going great** (James 1:2-4)

***the safest thing to do in a storm is to drop your anchor** (be still) (Psalm 125:1)

***we can change the narrative in our minds if we**

-yield to God's thought

-repent

-reflect and meditate on what God says

-take captive our thoughts (what God doesn't think)

-inform our minds rather than letting our minds inform us

-find a new circle of friends

-guard what you allow to seep into your mind (through your eye and ear gates)

***when morning came the crew members aboard the ship with Paul were able to see more clearly** (Acts 27: 39-41)

All believers should have a sense of destiny. Storms may be temporary setbacks toward fulfilling that purpose. Storms can also push you towards your purpose. Trust the process.

***Stand Firm In The Word**

Storms are not meant to make us "run from" God, but "to" Him. There are times when you may pray and feel as if your prayers bounce off the ceiling (you hear

nothing). It's hard to just sit and wait on God during those times. Storms can present opportunities for you to turn your attention back to God.

- get into God's Word
- stand firm in it
- meditate on it
- allow it to penetrate your heart
- pray without ceasing
- ask the Holy Spirit for guidance
- focus on Jesus, not self
- turn the problem into an opportunity to encourage others

V. HOW GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE DEMONSTRATED PEACE

***Compare How Noah Demonstrated Peace in the Midst of the Storm (Genesis 6:22; 7:23-24; 8:1-20)**

- Genesis 6:22; 7:5
- 7:23-24
- 8:1-20

***Compare How Jonah Demonstrated Peace in the Midst of the Storm (Jonah 1:1-17; 2:1-10)**

- Jonah 1:1-3
- 1:14-16
- Jonah 2:3-7
- 1:5, 10
- 2:7-10
- 1: 4

***Compare How Paul Demonstrated Peace in the Midst of the Storm (Acts 27)**

- v. 9-11
- v. 27:25, 37
- v. 42
- v. 29-36
- v. 39-41

VI. SUGGESTED WAYS TO FIND PEACE- *Less Fret, More Faith, by Max Lucado*

***Catch Your Breath: time must be taken daily and weekly so you may be refreshed:**

(Ch. 5)

- this is a command from God:
- the penalty is death
- rest is a sign of reverence
- high adrenaline output depletes the brain's natural tranquilizers and sets the stage for high anxiety
- tips for rest
 - don't over do it

- once you reach your limit, stop
- maintain regular breaks
- rest from technology
- learn to relax
- entrust your work to God
- Scripture Passages - Exodus 23:12

Matthew 11:28-30

***Pray It Through: worry is the interest we pay on a prayerless life (Ch. 6)**

- present our problems to false gods (money, muscle, or humankind)
- peace happens when we pray
- steps to take
 - take your worries to God
 - find a promise (in scripture) to match your problem
 - pray specifically
- Scripture Passages -Exodus 32:13

Hebrews 4:16

***Learn The Message Of The Manna: God promised to supply Moses and the Hebrews with manna each day. But, He told them to collect only one day's supply at a time. (Ch. 8)**

- the only exception to the rule was the day prior to the Sabbath; they could gather twice as much
- God gave them what they needed in their time of need
- each day has its share of challenges; some repeat themselves, others are one-day Specials
- face today's problems
- treat each day like a self-contained unit
- meet them with God's strength
- you can't cross a bridge until you reach it
- don't over stress your coping skills
- shut the gate on yesterday and don't touch the gate on tomorrow
- Scripture Passages- Exodus 16:16-28

Matthew 6:33-34

Psalms 118:24

***Take Responsibility For Your Feelings: Peace 101 says that God is greater than your challenges; in spite of a world gone wacky, you can remain at peace (Ch. 9)**

- if your peace is contingent on circumstances you open the door to a horde of anxiety
- being happy is a choice

- long-lasting peace depends on God
- you can take control of your thoughts
- Scripture Passages: I John 4:4

John 14:27

VII. WAYS YOU CAN HELP SOMEONE WITH ANXIETY

LIFEPRESERVER DEFINED: a buoy (floatation device) designed to be thrown to a person in water, to provide buoyancy and prevent drowning.

Sometimes someone you may know or even be related to may be experiencing anxiety. You may even know of someone who has decided that suicide was the only option to relieving their feelings of anxiety. Good friends don't just appear when things are going well, they stick close when hard times come as well (Proverbs 17:17).

The right people can be viewed as lifepreservers individuals you can reach out to when you feel as if you are about to drown. The church is an excellent lifepreserver for those in the midst of a storm. According to the article; "*Rethinking Mental Health Care: How the Church Can Transform a Broken System*", by Matthew S. Stanford, people with mental issues often go to the church first. God desires for His people to prosper in all aspects of their lives (John 10:10; III John 1:2). God has prepared a place and people to find what you need.

It's not always easy to support someone else especially if you are worried about saying or doing the wrong thing. Dr. Benjamin F. Miller, PsyD and adjunct professor of psychiatry and public mental health at Stanford University of Medicine in California suggests 5 ways you can help

- validate their feelings by letting them know its okay not to be okay
- don't tell them to calm down; it could be misunderstood
- encourage them to focus on things they can change; what they have control over
- help them help themselves; by educating yourself on coping tools and skills, you can encourage them to use these tools when they are anxious
 - Grounding Exercise** suggested by the University of Toledo Counseling Center is to focus on your immediate physical environment (the room you are in) and name
 - five things you see
 - four things you feel (chair on your back, feet on the floor, etc.)
 - three things you can hear
 - two things you can smell
 - one good thing you can say about yourself
- discourage the use of alcohol or drugs to cope with anxiety; let them know in a gentle and non-judgmental way. Encourage them to use healthier coping methods

VIII. WHEN TO SEEK HELP

Everyone faces storms in their lives. There are times when circumstances may be out of your control. Whether you are a believer or not, there will come a time when you will go through storms that will leave you stronger or broken. Sometimes you may become overwhelmed. Devastated, overpowered, swamped; these words describe what it means to feel overwhelmed or anxious.

God is our ultimate source of strength, help, and peace. He has gifted individuals with abilities to care for your physical as well as mental health needs. Seeking help should not be viewed as a negative thing. Just as you would seek a medical doctor if you suspected something was not right with your body physically, it is okay to seek someone trained to help when you are struggling with thoughts, emotions or behavior difficulties beyond what you can handle.

Everyone gets anxious, restless, and frazzled- but if you constantly feel worried, tense, or on edge. If you have feelings of anxiety (preoccupied with strong emotions or distress) that you are not able to shake off and that are interfering with your day-to-day functioning, you should seek help from someone (trusted friend or family member or a professional) who can help you to sort out your feelings or guide you towards other steps to take.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), **if you are experiencing these symptoms for at least two weeks, you might consider seeking professional help:**

- Feeling down** with symptoms of depression, apathy, or negativity
- difficulty falling asleep** or staying asleep because of stress or conflict in your life
- sleeping more** than usual or excess fatigue
- appetite changes** (not eating enough, skipping meals, or turning to comfort foods and binge eating)
- loss of interest** in things you usually find enjoyable (withdrawing from friends and family, hobbies, extracurricular activities)
- thoughts of death or self-harm** (including turning to alcohol or drugs to numb your emotions)

If you need immediate support call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273- 8255) to talk confidentially to a trained counselor. Beginning July 16, 2022 everyone across the U.S. will be able to connect the Lifeline by calling **988**

(excerpt from *How Do I Know If I Need Therapy?*; by: Carmen Chai- May 11, 2022)

IX. REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) According to these scriptures where does fear come from (Proverbs 29:25; II Timothy 1:7; I John 4:18?)**
- 2) According to these scriptures what is your source of strength/peace Psalm 27:1; Isaiah 26:3-4; II Timothy 1:7?**
- 3) Are you anchored or are you drifting?**
- 4) Do you feel closer to God when you're in the midst of a storm or when everything is going smoothly?**
- 5) How did Noah, Jonah, and Paul find peace in the midst of their storms?**
- 6) What do you think the church's role should be for those going through storms?**
 - shelter**
 - lifepreserver**
 - lighthouse**
 - first aid station**

SCRIPTURES TO READ WHEN YOU FEEL OVERWHELMED

Deuteronomy 3:22
Deuteronomy 31:6
Numbers 6:26
Joshua 1:9
Psalm 4:8
Psalm 9:9-10
Psalm 23:4
Psalm 27:1, 4
Psalm 29:11
Psalm 31:24
Psalm 34:4
Psalm 34:7
Psalm 34:17-20
Psalm 46:1-4
Psalm 46:10
Psalm 55:18, 22
Psalm 56:3
Psalm 62:1, 2
Psalm 85:10
Psalm 89:8-9
Psalm 91:1-16
Psalm 94:19
Psalm 107:28-29
Psalm 118:6-7
Psalm 119:105, 165
Psalm 120:1
Proverbs 1:27
Proverbs 3:2
Proverbs 10:25
Proverbs 12:25
Proverbs 29:25
Jeremiah 29:11
Isaiah 25:4-5
Isaiah 26:3
Isaiah 35:4
Isaiah 41:10, 13-14
Isaiah 43:1, 2
Nahum 1:7
Zephaniah 3:17

Matthew 5:45
Matthew 7:24-27
Mark 4:39-40
Mark 5:36
Mark 6:50
Luke 12:22-26
John 14:27
John 16:33
Romans 5:1
Romans 8:6
Romans 8:28
Romans 8:38-39
Romans 14:17
Romans 15:13
Romans 15:33
1 Corinthians 1:3
1 Corinthians 14:33
2 Corinthians 4:17
2 Corinthians 12:9
Galatians 5:22
2 Timothy 1:7
2 Thessalonians 3:16
Colossians 3:15
Philippians 4:6, 7
Philippians 4:19
Hebrews 6:19
Hebrews 10:23
Hebrews 12:11
James 1:6
James 3:17
1 Peter 3:11, 14
1 Peter 5:6-7
2 Peter 1:2
1 John 4:18
Revelation 1:17