

Leadership Tip!

Be ok with an awkward pause after asking a question.
This gives people time to think about the answer.

UP – WHEN YOU’RE FEELING STRESSED OUT**STARTER QUESTIONS:**

What are some of the causes of stress in your life this Christmas season?

Do you think that these stressors cause you to forget the true meaning of Christmas?

What are some of the ways that you could put Christ back into Christmas?

MAIN IDEA:

We are currently in a series titled “Up,” to remind us to look up to God for our needs instead of trying to solve them ourselves. This week we are studying how Stress causes us to miss the best and most important part of Christmas, Christ. Pastor Hank listed four things that often cause stress in our lives and cause us to miss the real meaning of Christmas. He challenged us, not only to recognize the stressors in our lives, but to do something about it!

The fact is that everyone experiences stress during the holidays, what is different is how we react to that stress.

How can stress affect your Christmas joy?

Often, realizing that you are not the only one experiencing stress helps give people encouragement in dealing with that stress.

Ask group members to share one or two things that cause them stress during the holiday season.

Ask someone to READ Galatians 5:22 (ESV) aloud.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,”

1. Commercialism:

Ask someone to READ Matthew 2:11 (NIV) aloud.

“...then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”

How has commercialism affected how you celebrate the birth of Christ?

2. Chaotic:

Ask the group to think about this silently:

If you had to rate your life's Chaos on a scale of one to ten, where would you be?

Ask the group:

Name one thing that you could drop from your schedule to make your life less stressful?

3. Correctness:

Ask someone to READ Romans 1:16 (NIV) aloud.

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.”

Ask yourself if you are afraid of sharing the good news because of pressure to be more *correct*.

4. Concern:

Pastor Hank compared problems and concerns to fog obscuring your vision.

Think about what problems or concerns you have today and how you can overcome them.

Ask someone to READ Matthew 11:28 (NIV) aloud.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

FINAL THOUGHTS:

Jesus can't be your savior until he is your Lord. Christmas is about Jesus and our relationship with him.

READ Matthew 11:28 (NIV): “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

How can our group pray for you this Christmas season?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

UP

"When you're Feeling Stressed out: Look Up"

December 11, 2016

"The star they had seen... stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed."

Matthew

2:9-10 (NIV)

- The Wise Men: "...were overjoyed." Matthew 2:10
- The Shepherds: "...returned glorifying and praising God." Luke 2:20
- Mary: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." Luke 1:46-47

What keeps us from LOOKING UP during the Christmas season?

1. Commercialism

"Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem... wise men from the East came to Jerusalem saying, 'Where is He who has been born King...?'"

Matthew

2:1-2 (NKJ)

"Go and make a careful search for the child."

Matthew 2:8 (NIV)

What's 1 tradition I will adopt to help me LOOK UP this Christmas?

2. Chaotic Schedules

"When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.' So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger."

Luke

2:15-16 (NIV)

**What's 1 good thing I will drop from my schedule so I will feel less stress
LOOKING UP this Christmas?**

3. Correctness

"When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them."

Luke

2:17-18 (NIV)

Who is 1 person I could invite?

4. Concern

1 Concern that tends to drain my joy:

"They were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:9-11 (NIV)

- Savior = "Soter" - Deliverer, protector, healer
- Christ = "Christos" – the anointed One; the promised Messiah; God's Son
- Lord = "Kyrios" – supreme in authority; controller; Master

Jesus can't be your Savior until He's your Lord!