



LESSON 1: GOD > STRESS

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO LEARN: God is greater than any stress or worry they may experience in their lives.

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO DO WITH WHAT THEY'VE LEARNED: To identify the major stressors in their lives and to consider what it looks like to give those over to God.

Scripture Focus: Luke 12:22-31

OVERVIEW: Students today live in a world of stress. The fast pace of life in the 21st century alone is enough to create feelings of anxiety and uneasiness. So, what is stress for today's teenagers? We can think of stress as their mental, emotional, and even spiritual state as a result of the tension caused by the demanding circumstances of their lives. When you think about all the changes facing students today like a parents' divorce, moving to a new city, preparing for college, pressure to perform in school and athletics, relationships, and so on, and then add their own physical and emotional changes, it's easy to see that a series of lessons on stress is needed. But you might ask, did Jesus address stress in the lives of His children? Yes, He did. And in this first lesson, we will discover why God is definitely bigger than stress.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO

The Jesus And Stress Teacher Prep Videos are short videos designed to help you grasp the main points of the lessons as you prepare to teach.

To access your "Jesus And Stress Lesson 1 Teacher Prep Video," click on the URL below.

- <https://youthministry360.com/jesus-and-stress-teacher-prep>

BIBLE BACKGROUND

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. The Details give you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what's happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by “context”?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson, you’ll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By “context” we mean at the very least helping students know who wrote the book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **What’s The Big Deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don’t get a “big picture” understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God’s plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

THE DETAILS

- **Author:** Luke was a doctor, a Gentile Christian and a companion of Paul.
- **Time frame:** The Gospel of Luke was written around 60 AD.
- **Purpose:** Luke is the only Gentile author of the Bible. His entire purpose was to write an accurate account of the life of Jesus so as to present Jesus as Savior, fully God and fully man. It is one of the synoptic Gospels, having much in common with the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.

THE SETTING

Luke 12 includes teaching from Jesus intended specifically for His disciples. Jesus tells the parable of the Rich Fool in verses 13-21 then immediately follows with the passages this lesson will focus on. The teaching is on releasing our stress to God as it relates to “things in life” and comes in stark contrast to the rich fool who was obsessed with storing up more and more “things” in life. You may want to read Luke 12:13-21 ahead of time and be ready to point out the contrast to your students.

THE MAIN POINT

The main point of this lesson is to help teenagers recognize the sources of stress in their lives and why they cause worry and anxiety. With that accomplished, you can move on to help them understand that God is bigger than any stress they may face in life. But just the knowledge that God is bigger than their worries is not enough. In this lesson you will challenge your students to put their trust in God when it comes to the stresses in life, and to believe that He will always take care of them. God is bigger than anything we face in life. You’ll challenge your students to live out that truth each day.

LESSON PLAN

The Lesson Plan contains three elements: An introductory activity called The Lead-In; the Bible study section called The Main Event; an application-focused segment called The Last Word.

THE LEAD-IN

- **Goal:** To help students discover that some of their favorite things are not necessarily the most important things in life.
- **Set-Up:** Provide a copy of Lesson 1 “Lead-In Activity Sheet” (located in your Lesson 1 folder) and a pen or pencil for each student.

FIRST, ask your students if they’ve ever seen the classic movie *The Sound of Music*. If they have, they’ve no doubt heard the song “My Favorite Things.” (Even if they haven’t seen the movie, there’s a chance they’ve heard a cultural reference to it at some point.) If possible, you may want to find a way to play the song or even show a video clip of the song from the movie. Tell them you want to begin the lesson by allowing them to list five of their favorite things.

THEN, pass out copies of the Lead-In Activity Sheet and have them list their favorite things in the space provided. Give them a few minutes to finish the list. Then, when they’re done, lead them in a short discussion. **Ask:**

- **Who would like to share a list of their favorite things? (Allow students to share.)**
- **Look at your most favorite thing on that list. What would your life be like without this thing?**
Answers will vary.
- **Look at the rest of your list? How would not having these things impact your daily life?**
Answers will vary.

NEXT, ask students to look at the section titled “My Needed Things” and explain that there are some things they must have in order to just survive in this world. Instruct them to list up to five things they absolutely have to have to survive in this world.

When they’ve finished, **tell the students that most experts agree on five basic needs for human survival. As you call them out, see how many students had these on their lists:**

- **Water**
- **Food**
- **Shelter**
- **Clothing**
- **Companionship/Love (This last point may be a fun point of debate for your students, but don’t let it get too far off track.)**

Ask students to consider what their lives would be like without these things. (Of course, the answer is something like, “not very good.”) Then ask them to think about the two lists they’ve made. Of those two lists, which one represents the things they truly couldn’t live without? (Of course, it’s the second list.)

FINALLY, transition to the Main Event section by **saying something like the following:**

- Over the next four weeks, we are going to be looking at what Jesus had to say about stress. When we experience stress, we have an opportunity to respond in ways that honor God and protect us from added anxiousness, worry, and hopelessness. In this first lesson, you are going to find out about a little math formula and that is this: “God > Stress.” The starting point for learning this valuable truth is discovering that God is greater than any need you will ever have. Since God created you, He knows your needs, or your “Must Have List,” better than you do. Let’s open our Bibles and see what Jesus had to say about stress.

THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To help your students understand that God is greater than stress because He is always big enough to meet the needs of our daily life.
- **Set-Up:** None needed.

FIRST, begin the Bible study portion of the lesson by quoting this fact from a recent study by the American Psychological Association:

- “82% of teenagers in a recent survey admitted that they experienced extreme to moderate stress in the past school year.”

Then, lead students in a brief discussion. **Ask:**

- Do you think this is a fair picture of the students in your school, or do you think the number should be higher or lower? Why?
- What are some of the things that stress you out the most?
- Do you ever hear your friends talking about how stressed they are? What kind of effect does this have on you?

After giving the students a few minutes to respond, explain the bottom line is that young people in America are feeling stressed on a large scale. That means that if they aren’t currently experiencing stress, they can bet that someone around them is. Tell students that over the next four weeks you are going to help them see what the Bible has to say about stress.

NEXT, explain that the Bible passage for this lesson comes from the 12th chapter of the Gospel of Luke, verses 22-31. While they’re turning to the passage, provide some context for the passage by referring to the Details or Setting sections of the Bible Background. Then, once students have found the passage, read or have a student read Luke 12:22-23. Explain to students that Jesus’ disciples were just common men. And when they left their jobs to follow Jesus, they would have put themselves in a position of relative poverty. **Say something like:**

- Because Jesus had called each of them to the lifestyle of a wanderer, the disciples may have spent time worrying about having basic necessities like food and clothing. But Jesus wanted to reshape the thinking of His disciples. He starts by reminding them that life is greater than food and the body more important than clothing. The idea here is that Jesus wanted His followers to know that the human being was the greatest accomplishment in all of God’s creation. Just as the psalmist David said in the 139th Psalm, “I will praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made,” Jesus wanted the disciples to know that they were each important to God.

THEN, read or have a student read Luke 12:24 and have students summarize the verse by asking something similar to the following:

- What point was Jesus trying to make when He brought up the analogy of the ravens?
Answer: Ravens don’t worry about their provision. They just go find food and eat. God provides the food for them.



THE JESUS STUDIES

You need to be reminded of the issues teenagers deal with as they try to live out their faith in a world that's often opposed to their core beliefs. Navigating these issues can be rough. Teenagers get so many mixed messages; the world says one thing, their friends may say another. And we hope they know enough about their faith to know how to make sense of it all. We hope...

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THE JESUS STUDIES

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