

# Life's Big Stresses Call for One Big God

## Study 1: The Only Real Superhero

### INTRODUCTION

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No one is exempt from the stresses of life, so we might as well have the one true God walking through it with us. Yes, that is the one Almighty Father who loves us eternally, the one Lord Jesus who holds all the power and authority of the universe, and the one Holy Spirit who dwells within us. The one Creator who thought us up before the foundation of the earth and the one Savior who conquered sin, death and the devil to save us forever. The one who knows us completely and loves us fully. The one who wants to be in an eternal relationship with us. Yes, He actually wants to hang out with us, be there for us when we need Him and comfort us in times of distress. To put it simply, life is going to be stressful, do we want to do this stressful life with or without Jesus? It seems so obvious, but with all the distractions of this world and deception of the Enemy, it is easy to forget our identity is in Christ and we forget just how big God really is and what He has already done for us.

### INTO THE WORD

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Read John 3:16-17.

**Why did Jesus come?**

Read Luke 2:40-52.

**What did we learn about Jesus as an early teen?**

**What characteristics do you imagine Jesus developed in His teen years and early 20s based on verse 52?**

Here is a reality check. Everyone take your right hand and gently touch the front and back of your left hand. Feel the realness of your skin. Notice the temperature, texture, and weight of your flesh. Now shake a friend's hand. Your hand and your friend's hand is tangible and you can feel it. Jesus is just as real and walked the face of this earth like us! In fact, it doesn't get more real than knowing that Jesus's hands, which are just like the one you just touched, were nailed to a hard, rough, wooden cross through the skin and muscles...for real...and for us.

**Read two different translations (NLT or TPT) and (NKJV or ESV) of Ephesians 2:1-10. Why do we need to be "SAVED"?**

Read 1 John 4:10.

**Based on Ephesians 2:4-5 and 1 John 4:10, why did He save us?**

**What thoughts or feelings do you have about what Jesus did for you?**

Read Leviticus 17:11; Hebrews 1:3; 1 Peter 3:18; Romans 5:12-21; Philippians 2:5-11.

**What was accomplished by Jesus for us?**

**How often in our life would we want to have Jesus come in like a superhero and conquer our problems by force? Share a time you experienced this feeling.**

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Just like the Jewish people of Jesus's time, we don't always understand why God has a different plan or method than we think He should have. But unlike the Jewish people 2000 years ago, we have the whole story. Most didn't recognize that Jesus was the Messiah that fulfilled prophecy and was the one they had been waiting for.

Read Hebrews 10:12-18.

***Since we have the whole story in His Word, how could we apply the fulfilment of Jesus's story to our life story?***

## HEAD AND HEART

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Take a few minutes to answer these questions then please share with the group.

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***How has God spoken to your heart?***

***Truths spoken in the Word today:***

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## Study 2: The Roaring Waters of our Life

### INTRODUCTION

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The focus was on Psalm 46 at the 2019 LCMS National Youth Gathering with the theme "REAL. PRESENT. GOD." As we prepare to look at those areas of our lives that are stressful, let's read two different translations (NLT or TPT) and (NKJV or ESV) of Psalm 46. With any of the translations, answer these questions.

***What are the stressful events in this Psalm? Underline the events that might be stressful.***

***What does God do? Circle all the things God does.***

***How does He tell us to respond to Him?***

***What are some of your "earth giving way" and "roaring waters" stresses in your life?***

***Take some time to share some of your current life stresses. Do you share some similar stresses with each other? Are some very different? Are some of you in different phases of stress (beginning, middle, toward the end of it)? Can you see the intensity of the stress change over time?***

Stress is a normal part of life. We can experience stress through the environment around us, our bodies, and our thoughts. Stress is how the brain and body respond to any demand, perceived or real. Every type of demand or stressor—such as exercise, work, school, major life changes, or traumatic events—can be stressful. Even events that we are excited about, like prom, graduation or a first date, can produce experience of stress.

As we have already discussed, God doesn't always swoop down and take our stress away, but He does teach us how to respond in stressful situations.

### INTO THE WORD

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Read Psalm 94:19. This Psalm encourages us with this reminder, "When anxiety was great within me, your consolation (comfort, reassurance, kindness, mercy, counseling) brought me joy."

***What kind of "consolation" does God give? How have you experienced God consoling you in the midst of stress?***

Read Exodus 14:1-12.

***What was the stressful situation and how did God's people initially respond? How do you think you might have responded?***

Read Exodus 14:13-31.

***How did Moses respond to the stress? How did God respond in this stressful situation? How do you imagine the Israelites felt after God resolved the situation? What do you think they learned about how big God is in stressful situations?***

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**Reread Psalm 46:1. How was God REAL and PRESENT for the Israelites?**

This is an excerpt from *Teen Magazine* called "Overcoming Teen Depression and Anxiety: Brynn's Story" by Brynn."

*I have always been a quieter kid, so when I started retreating into myself my junior year, it seemed like no one noticed. I got two to four hours of sleep a night, ate infrequently, felt worthless, and began to lose interest in everything—classes, friends. As time went on, I became more and more convinced that this was just how I was. I would think about asking for help and then be afraid of being a burden on my friends and family—constantly reinforcing the idea that they did not want me around. I woke up every morning crying and dragged myself out of bed, feeling like I was carrying around a 50-pound backpack.*

*Despite this, I kept up my grades and my parents had no idea what was happening; they were frustrated with me for being "too sensitive."*

*That winter, I began wanting to hurt myself. I finally worked up the courage to say something to my mom, and she was adamant it was just PMS. My confidence was crushed. And my symptoms only got worse. My relationship with my parents deteriorated as we fought more and more. My siblings, whom I used to be so close with, now asked me "where the old Brynn was" when I snapped at them. It took all my energy just to get through the day.*

*Eventually that summer, I confessed to my friends how I had been feeling—the worthlessness, the suicidal thoughts. But what could they do? I was entrusting them with something way too important and complicated for 16-year-olds to handle. As the summer went by, I became increasingly fixated on my weight, weighing myself daily, over-exercising, and restricting myself to one meal a day.*

*Then it was time for school again. I felt crushed and helpless with all the pressures of college admissions, my job, orchestra, good grades, a varsity sport. That's when*

*the anxiety attacks started. In a way, I think they saved me. The overwhelming shaking and hyperventilating was something physical my parents could see, and that's when they urged me to see the school guidance counselor. She almost immediately referred me to a therapist who right away saw the bigger issue—depression.*

Can you relate to some of Brynn's experiences or know of friends or classmates who can? Stress is a very real challenge, especially for your age group. Which is why it is so important to remember as we did earlier in this lesson, that God is very REAL and very PRESENT in times of stress, even when we still need to walk through it. He is with us. He wants to help us. He is waiting for us to turn to Him. He is our best friend and Savior!

## HEAD AND HEART

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Take a few minutes to answer these questions then please share with the group.

***How were some of your thoughts of God challenged today in light of some new biblical knowledge?***

***How has God spoken to your heart?***

***Truths spoken in the Word today:***

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## Study 3: Earthquakes and Angel Birds

### INTRODUCTION

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*In previous lessons, we have shared many stresses in our lives. As a group, make a list of these stresses. Then, circle the ones that they relate to as well.*

*Which stresses were circled the most? Share why those are the most stressful?*

### INTO THE WORD

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Read Acts 16:16-24 together.

**What kinds of stresses were Paul and Silas dealing with?**

**Can you think of a time you felt like everyone was ganging up on you?**

Now continue reading in Acts 16:25-34.

**How did Paul and Silas respond to their stressful day?**

**On my most stressful days, I would certainly find it difficult to choose singing hymns of praise. What do you think allowed them to respond like that?**

**What great act did God do for Paul and Silas and for the main prison guard?**

**How do you usually respond when you are feeling overwhelmed by stress? Have you ever felt like you couldn't handle one more bad thing happening in your day? Have you ever felt like one more trouble in your life might break you?**

Read Psalm 5:1-2

**How is King David responding to stress?**

**What does it mean to cry out and lament?**

This story is from Katy Sensmeier, author of this Bible study. She shares about a time when her stress limit was maxed out and she felt defeated! This is now a part of her testimony of faith, because when she cried out to God in my lament, her superhero showed up. Jesus is REAL and PRESENT in our lives.

*I went through a challenging time in my life. I was scared, depressed, stuck, and hopeless because I found myself in a situation that felt unfixable, unchangeable, and I was afraid. On Easter Sunday after church, I walked outside to my backyard to try to find a small sense of comfort and peace. My yard was green with trees and flowers and usually had birds chirping or breaking the silence of the air with songs. I pulled up two chairs, one to sit on and one for my feet. I sat alone with a lump in my throat, feeling the pain in my heart and the tears in my eyes. In all my years believing in Him, praying to Him, learning to trust in Him, I never asked God to show me a sign, any sign to let me know everything was going to be okay. It was one of the shortest prayers I have ever prayed, but I know that God knew the pain in my heart. "Please show me, God."*

*Psalms 34:18 says, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."*

*As my request went up to heaven, I heard a loud chirp from across the patio in a group of small trees. I had just turned my head to look in the direction of the noise when I saw a robin-like bird with long tail feathers fly right under my long patio table to perch on the closest table leg next to me. I was stunned. Why would a bird, who clearly sees me here, come this close to me? From this point-on, I wish I could have done the rest in slow motion, because it was so cool, I always want to remember this! Looking right at the bird, I watched it fly from the table leg right onto my lap! It sat for a moment on my left thigh and looking around it looked up at me. You don't have to watch too many National Geographics to know that this is a very vulnerable position for a bird to be in, so it is not a common behavior. When that bird looked up into my eyes, I received, what I can only describe as, a Holy Spirit message. This message was not spoken out loud and it was not a thought form, I knew it bypassed the natural into the supernatural. The message was clear in these words, "Everything is going to be okay." As soon as I received the provided message, a peace washed over me. Then as quickly as it popped on my lap, it jumped down my leg, then onto the chair back with my feet, and flew*

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*off. I sat there in shock, but so very grateful. I felt a peace and a calm that I hadn't sat in for some time. Although my situation didn't change right away, just like Jesus did not become Israel's King, I knew that my God heard my cry and that He is real. I could continue walking in the confidence of knowing that my Lord Jesus is REAL and so very PRESENT. I learned that He was trustworthy. From then on, I remind myself, just as Scripture does, that God will be with me always and He has always been there whether I could see Him or not.*

Read John 14:26-27.

***How does my experience relate to what the Holy Spirit provides as described by this scripture?***

Read Psalm 77.

***Based on this scripture and John 14, why is remembering what God has done in our lives and others' lives so important?***

Read Psalm 56:3-4; Psalm 16:8; Isaiah 40:31; Philippians 4:6-7.

***What does God's Word teach as a response to stress?***

***What is one word from each scripture to summarize what we can do?***

***How can responding to stress God's way make a difference in our stress level?***

## HEAD AND HEART

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Take a few minutes to answer these questions then please share with the group.

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***Truths spoken in the Word today:***

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## Study 4: Our Unseen Battle

### INTRODUCTION

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Remember the verse from John 16:3, "In this life you will have troubles." What is the source of these "troubles" or stresses in our lives? Fortunately, Jesus goes on in this same verse to say, "But take heart! I have overcome the world."

**Why is it helpful to know some of the sources for our stress?**

*How does this stress show up in your life?*

**What is the pride of life?**

*How does this stress show up in your life?*

### INTO THE WORD

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Read Colossians 1:19-23 out loud. The reminder is that Jesus has saved us, ETERNALLY!

Read Romans 8:31-39.

**What does Romans 8 confirm?**

### NOW LET'S LOOK AT WHAT THE WORD SAYS ABOUT STRESS THAT COMES FROM THE FLESH.

Martin Luther speaks regarding our flesh:

*"Original sin is in us like our beard. We shave today and look clean; tomorrow our beard has grown again, nor does it cease growing while we remain on earth. In like manner original sin cannot be extirpated {destroyed completely} from us; it springs up in us as long as we live."*

Read Genesis 4:3-7:

Read Galatians 5:16-21.

**What is our flesh?**

### LET'S LOOK AT WHAT THE WORD SAYS ABOUT STRESS THAT COMES FROM THE WORLD.

Read 1 John 2:16-17:

**What is the lust of the flesh?**

*How does this stress show up in your life?*

*How does this stress show up in your life?*

**What is the lust of the eyes?**

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## LET'S LOOK AT WHAT THE WORD SAYS ABOUT STRESS THAT COMES FROM THE ENEMY, SATAN.

Read John 10:10:

Read 1 Peter 5:8-10; James 4:7-8; 2 Corinthians 4:18; Revelations 12:9

***What are the characteristics of the Enemy?***

***How does this stress show up in your life?***

Read Ephesians 6:10-18.

***How do each of these weapons equip us for battling temptation?***

Here is an example of a Spiritual Warfare Battle Plan.

1. PRAY
2. BE ALERT & FOCUS ON HIS WORD
3. FILL YOUR MIND WITH SCRIPTURE
4. REBUKE LIES WITH BIBLICAL TRUTHS
5. REASSERT YOUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST JESUS
6. PRAISE GOD
7. PRAY...REPEAT!

***How is the armor of God a part of these plans? What would you add, or change for your own Battle Plan?***

Take a few minutes to write your own. Feel free to use any part of this one too.

## HEAD AND HEART

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Take a few minutes to answer these questions then please share with the group.

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## Study 5: Designed to Thrive

### INTRODUCTION

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Read Genesis 1:26-27.

**How did God make us?**

***If you chose to listen to Paul's teaching, how would the shift in focus of your thinking be helpful in responding to stressful situations in your life?***

Read 2 Peter 1:3-4.

**What has God given us?**

***How do you suppose making this way of thinking a habit, or as Paul refers to "putting these things into practice" make a difference in our overall stress level?***

Read 2 Timothy 1:7.

**What else has God given us?**

Let's build on this Scripture with another. Read Romans 12:2.

***What does Paul mean when he tells us to "be transformed by the renewing of our mind"?***

**Did you realize how God made you?**

**What difference could it make in your day when you remember the truths of these Scriptures?**

***How do Philippians 4 and Romans 12 support each other?***

**Why is it so challenging to remember our God-given strengths? What gets in our way?**

Read 2 Corinthians 10:4-5.

***What does it mean to "bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ"?***

### INTO THE WORD

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**What does Paul tell us to think about? What does he say the result of this thinking will be?**

***As we bring all three of these Scriptures together, 2 Corinthians 10:4-5; Romans 12:2; Philippians 4:8, how can we apply these awesome truths to our lives to help reduce our stress?***

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## HEAD AND HEART

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Take a few minutes to answer these questions then please share with the group.

*How were some of your thoughts of God challenged today in light of some new scriptural knowledge?*

*How has God spoken to your heart?*

*Truths spoken in the Word today:*

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## Study 6: Our Identity in Christ

### INTRODUCTION

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Read 1 Corinthians 6:19.

**What does His Word say about who we are?**

Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-21.

**Again, what does His Word say about who we are?**

In light of knowing who we are and we look at Jesus, beaten and unrecognizable on that cross, what is our response?

Do we turn away and pretend we don't see Him, so we can continue to do whatever we want based on how we feel or what we think according to our flesh?

Do we appreciate what He did for us, but not recognize the fullness and power in our lives of what His loving and heroic sacrifice really did for us as the world distracts us?

Do we stare and not feel worthy to accept this great love freely given as a gift to simply be received as the Enemy lies to us?

Or do we recognize and acknowledge this great love poured out for us with full awareness of the power and truth of Jesus's fulfillment of God's Word and respond by giving our love and lives to Him?

### INTO THE WORD

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Read Galatians 2:20 and 1 Corinthians 5:14-15.

**What is this Scripture confirming?**

Read Galatians 4:4-7 and 1 John 3:1.

Read Galatians 5:1.

**How do Paul's words apply to Satan's identity theft?**

Skit: Life's Big Stresses Call for One Big God

Wake up in the morning and put on the wrong glasses that Satan switched out.

Scenario 1: Mirror (self-loathing)  
Scenario 2: School (work and friends)

Teacher  
Students  
Friends  
Boyfriend

Scenario 3: Home (family)  
Dad  
Mom  
Brother  
Sister  
Dog

Prayer-God switches glasses at night

Wake up in the morning and put on the correct glasses.

Scenario 1: Mirror (God's truth)  
Scenario 2: School (work and friends)

Teacher  
Students  
Boyfriend

Scenario 3: Home (family)  
Dad  
Mom  
Brother  
Sister  
Dog

Pray and Praise

Read Colossians 2:6-7.

**How can we continue to have our identity "rooted and built up in Him"?**

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## HEAD AND HEART

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Take a few minutes to answer these questions then please share with the group.

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# Life's Big Stresses Call for One Big God

## Study 7: Cast our cares on Him

### INTRODUCTION

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*How does being around people like this affect your stress level?*

Read Father's Love Letter. <https://images.app.goo.gl/HwPDK7Q72NMyYLSp6>

*What can we say about our Father's love for us based on these Scriptures?*

*With all this information, what are some of your thoughts about the importance of knowing God accurately and how it can affect us seeing Him as a source of comfort to help reduce stress in our lives?*

### INTO THE WORD

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Read John 17:13-26 together. Jesus is praying to the Father with great love for His disciples and all believers. Jesus even included us in His prayer over 2000 years ago.

*How does it feel to be thought of, loved, and prayed for by Jesus before you were ever born?*

Read Philippians 2:1-11 together.

*How does this show that Jesus loves us and we can trust Him?*

Now continue with Philippians 2:12-16.

*How do we "shine as lights in the world"?*

Read 1 John 1:1-4.

*How does John's testimony of witnessing the reality of Jesus's power allow our "joy to be full"?*

Continue reading 1 John 1:5-9.

*What is the connection to walking in the light and the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus? How does Bonnke's testimony tie into this scripture?*

*In verse 9, what is the action that we are called to take with the sin we become aware of in our own lives? What does God do in response? What does it do for you to know that?*

Read Psalm 55:22, Matthew 11:28-30, and 1 Peter 5:6-7 together. Also recall Philippians 4:6-7...worth a reread!

*What are we to do with our stresses?*

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## “CAST MY BURDEN” PRAYER

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Dear Heavenly Father,

You love me with an everlasting love and You demonstrated that when You, Jesus my Lord and Savior, laid down your life for me on that cross. You paid for my salvation and the price of \_\_\_\_\_.  
Forgive me for thinking \_\_\_\_\_ was bigger and more powerful than You. Thank You for forgiving me through Your blood, Jesus. I give You \_\_\_\_\_ because You are ALL mighty, powerful, and loving, and desire for me to have a peace that only You can give. \_\_\_\_\_, you will no longer be welcome with me. \_\_\_\_\_, I renounce you and disown you and I cast you off in the name of Jesus Christ. Thank You, Jesus, for the peace that passes all understanding, that guards my heart and mind through You. In your mighty and loving name, Jesus, I pray. Amen.

## HEAD AND HEART

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Take a few minutes to answer these questions then please share with the group.

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***Truths spoken in the Word today:***