

## **CCC LIGHTENING YOUR LOAD P2**

### **When You're Running On Empty Part 2**

We're continuing in our series of "When You're Running on Empty." A number of years ago I borrowed a vacation trailer and decided to take my family on a family vacation. I hooked this rather large vacation trailer up to my car – I had never done this before – and off we went. I didn't stop to consider that the more weight I was carrying actually the fewer miles per gallon I was going to get. So as I was driving through Waldorf and the gas tank said half empty I thought that's no big deal. As we were going along and got on Rt13 heading south and we had this big heavy headwind coming against us. I started watching my gas gauge drop. Of course once you get on Hwy 13 heading to the Outer Banks there is nothing but farms and more farms until you

get down to about the Rappahannock . There are no gas stations along the way. About twenty minutes before it happened I said, "We're going to run out of gas." I could see it going down. And sure enough we did. I pulled over to the side of the road and hitchhiked my way, got some gas, came back up filled the tank and on we went.

The point here is... the heavier the load you're carrying the faster you run out of gas. Today in part 2 of this series "Running on Empty" I want us to look at this issue of lightening your load.

My normal week is a busy... But last week, being Easter, was an even busier load for me. What I am saying is last weeks overload drained me – physically and emotionally. Just like an overload in your car drains you of gas very quickly, last week drained me. Some of you here today are on overload. You're overloaded physically, you're

overloaded emotionally. Some of you are overloaded relationally, maybe with work or kids or health issues, finances.

In the Bible there was a guy who really understood overload. His name was Job. Job said this about his life *“If my misery could be weighed, [my load, the burden that I’m carrying] and if you could pile the whole bitter load on the scales, it would be heavier than all the sand of the sea! Is it any wonder I’m screaming like a caged cat?”* That guy is on overload. That guy is burning out.

Jesus summarizes the secrets of stress management to us in three simple sentences. We’re going to look at those sentences today. I’m so glad many of you came back today for part two of this series because if you get what we’re going to be talking about today, it’s going to change your life. When I say, change your life, I don’t mean that the

amount of stress in your life is going to go down. What I mean is... *it’s not going to bother you.* I can’t control the circumstances that are going to happen in your life this week. I have no control over them. These are just stresses of life. But what I am saying is you don’t have to be stressed out by them. You don’t have to be overloaded by it so as to always be running on empty.

Here’s what Jesus says *“Come to Me all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me because I’m gentle and humble in spirit and you will find rest for your souls. For the yoke I will give you is easy and the load I will put on you is light.”* Matthew 11:28-30

There are three important words, I want you to circle: come, take, and learn. These are the three principles of stress management that will change your life if you

understand them and you apply them in your life – come, take, and learn. We're going to look at them closer. The first one, Jesus says, is this: Come to Me. Jesus is saying, If you want to lower the stress in your life, if you want to reduce the overload...

### **1. Come to Jesus.**

That's the starting point. Turn to Him. That's the very first step. In the Bible people come to Jesus for lots of different reasons. People come to Jesus to ask Him a question. People come to Jesus in the Bible to be healed. People come to Jesus because they're upset, they're got a conflict, they have a problem, they want advice, they want eternal life. But Jesus says did you know that you could come to Me for rest? Have you ever thought about that... See like most of us you've probably come to Jesus for answers to your prayers.

You come to Jesus for encouragement. You come to Jesus for a lot of things. But when it comes to stress Jesus says, Come to Me for rest. It's a special kind of rest; this is rest for your soul. It's soul rest. This is much, much deeper than physical rest. The biggest source of your stress is not because of worn out muscles; it's not tired muscles that cause your stress. It's a tired mind. It's tension. It's worry. It's fear. It's anxiety. It's guilt. It's resentment. It's problems that you're thinking about over and over in your mind and that's what you need relief from.

You can take all the naps in the world, take all the vacations in the world, you could live on a mountain side in Montana and watch the sun rise and set everyday but it's not going to de-stress you in the soul region. It'll rest your body. But it won't rest your spirit, your soul. None of those can rest your soul. There's only one thing that can

rest your soul – God. God can rest your soul. He can give you that inner peace that de-stresses you. The Bible says this in Isaiah 40 *“He gives power to those who are tired and worn out; He offers strength to the weak. Those who wait on the Lord will find new strength.”* Circle “wait on the Lord.” The antidote to your overloaded soul is to wait on the Lord.

What does that mean? The antidote to your stress is not a plan for time management. The antidote to your stress is not a program for stress relief. The antidote to your stress is not a pill for anxiety. It’s not a philosophy. It is a person. Jesus says, *“Come to Me.”* It’s a person.

Now I want to make sure I am clear here... He doesn’t even say, come to church. He doesn’t say come to Bible study. He doesn’t say come to small group. When you are overloaded the starting point... there’s only one person in

the universe who understands soul rest. It’s God. He says you come to Me. What you really need more than anything else when you are overloaded is you need more time with God ***alone***. Let me ask you a question, have you ever spent time with God alone. I’m not talking about reading the bible; I’m not talking about praying. I’m talking about just being alone with God. God word says, *“Those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength.”* What does it mean to wait on the Lord? It means you just be quiet and sit there alone with God. You’re not reading the Bible. You’re not letting God talk to you through the Bible, you’re not talking to God through prayer. You’re just sitting there. How do you do that? Jesus says this *“Find a quiet, secluded place so you won’t be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and as honest as you can*

*manage. And the focus will shift from you to God and you will begin to sense His grace.”*

Some of you have never done this; some of you haven't done it in months or years. When you're overloaded Jesus says the most important thing you can do is to “Come to Him and He will give you rest. Just sit be still and let Him talk to you through His Spirit that lives in you.

If you're running on empty this weekend the first thing you need to do the very first thing, is cry out to God. Not a pill, not a program, not a plan. It's a person. “*Come to Me when you're heavy laden, you're burdened down, and I will give you rest.*” The second step is a little harder.

## **2. Give up control.**

Come to Jesus, step one. And give up control, step two. That's so important because the reason why you're on overload is you are trying to control too much yourself.

You think it all depends on you. If it's to be, it's up to me. You think, I've got to hold it all together. I've got to make it all work. The greater your need to control the more stressed you're going to be in life. Now let me share something with you we are all controllers. Some are just out-front with it others are sneakier, but we all are controls. Here's Jesus' second solution. First He says come to Me, those of you with heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Then He says... “*Take my yoke upon you.*” You say wait a minute. That doesn't sound too relaxing, *take my yoke.* That sounds like a burden. I don't need to take any more on, bill, I need to take it off. This does not sound like a good solution here. I'm already carrying way too much and now Jesus says “*Take My yoke upon you.*” What is a yoke? It's not the yellow part of an egg. Most of you did not grow up on farms so you've never even seen a yoke.

But, a yoke is a single piece of wood that brings two farm animals together, so the load is shared, so the load is lighter. A yoke is not a harness. With a yoke you team up two or more together so the load is lightened. The purpose is to make it easier on the animal not harder. It is sharing the load together. Jesus says to you and I today, take My yoke upon you. Jesus is saying, *“Take My yoke,”* “I never meant for you to carry all your problems by yourself let Me help you. I never meant for you to carry all that stress, all that burden, all those difficulties, all those worries by yourself. Yoke up with Me, team up with Me, partner with Me and I will help you carry the load.”

See, God doesn't have a load. He doesn't get tired; He doesn't get stressed out, worried, fearful. He doesn't have a load. The yoking we're talking about is you sharing with Him so He can help you pull what you're planning to pull.

Here's the fact: if you feel stressed right now, if you feel overloaded right now, it means at this very moment you are not yoked to Jesus Christ in that area. Stress is a warning light. It's like a yellow light that, “Flashes! Danger, you're carrying this on your own.”

You may be a believer. You may be a follower of Jesus Christ. But if you're stressed out and overloaded at that very moment you are not connected to Christ. You are not yoked up to Him. You are not in partnership. You are not teamed up. The proof of that is you're stressed out. Jesus says *“My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”* If your yoke is not easy and your burden is not light it means you're pulling it by yourself. That's the proof.

Every time you get detached, every time you get disconnected from Jesus Christ, the stress is going to go up in your life and every time you get reattached, yoked up

and He's helping you pull the load, the stress goes down.

It's a symbol of partnership.

Another thing about being yoked, when I'm yoked with

Christ we move together in the same direction and at the

same pace. Next week we're going to talk about pace. I'm

going to do a message on slowing down. You need to be

back for that one too.

The truth is you're going to be yoked to something in your

life and god has given us all a choice what to be yoked to.

You're already yoked to something. You may be yoked to

your job. You maybe yoked to the expectations of

somebody else, your parents, your husband, your

boyfriend, your girlfriend, whatever, a teacher. You may

be yoked to making money. You may be yoked to I've got

to do whatever it takes to succeed. You may be yoked to

your ego. But you are tied to something. Jesus is telling

each of us this morning. Pile your troubles on my

shoulders, For My yoke is easy and My burden is light and

My yoke fits perfectly on to you....

### **3. Learn to trust.**

The third thing Jesus says in stress management sentence is

*“Learn from Me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and*

*you will find rest for your souls.”* He says learn from me.

Why? Because Jesus modeled peace. He modeled how to

live with purpose and peace.

The third step in lowering the stress in your life is to follow

Jesus' model. Watch how He did it and then do it.

Replicate it. Do what He did. Watch how He lived. If you

want to be balanced and healthy in life, nobody lived a

more balanced and healthy life than Jesus Christ. He says

study Me. Watch Me how I do it. He says “learn.” Circle

“learn.” Learn is not something that happens overnight.

It's something that takes a process. It takes time. You learn to reduce stress in your life. What am I saying, It's not going to leave you instantly. Why? Because you didn't get in the mess you're in instantly. The stress that's built up in your life, the overload, the habits, the work habits, the play habits. All of those things. Over years, over time you've been building to this plateau.

Those things don't just fall off overnight. It's like an onion. You peel it a little bit at a time. Just like you learn how to be under pressure you're going to have to unlearn a certain number of things. And it won't happen overnight. That's why we're doing a five-week series on this. That's why these are habits you need to practice for the rest of your life. It takes time. That means you've got to be willing to learn.

What am I supposed to learn? What can I learn from Jesus Christ that will lower the stress in my life? He says, *"Learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble."* Gentle and humble. You say, Wait a minute! That's not exactly what I want to learn. Gentleness and humility. I think that if I'm under stress why didn't Jesus say, "Learn from Me. I'll teach you endurance and stamina." He doesn't say that. Jesus doesn't say, "Learn from Me. I'll teach you confidence and courage." Jesus doesn't say, "When you're stressed out come to Me and I will teach you time management and goal setting." The bottom line is He says what I want you to learn is if you watch My life you'll learn gentleness and you'll learn humility. Why? The two biggest causes of stress in your life, you don't realize this but they are, the two biggest stresses in your life are arrogance and aggression. You say, these aren't

words I attribute to myself. No, you don't. But they show up in your life.

First, it shows up in the whole idea of aggression. What is aggression? Aggression happens when we do things too quickly. We don't wait. We don't ponder. We don't delay. We don't think about it. We just jump right in with both feet. You just jump in and in America we are taught to be aggressive. The early bird gets the worm. You've got to go it with gusto. You only go around once in life. You've got to get out there and make it happen. That aggression of not waiting, not thinking through, not pausing, not pacing yourself, that sense of let's just move forward, you get over committed.

I'm sure none of you have ever done this but there are people who get themselves in to more things than you could possibly get out of. It's always easier to get in than it

is to get out. Would you all agree with me that it's always easier to commit than to fulfill. It's always easier to fill your schedule than fulfill your schedule. Everybody agree with that? That is aggression. Not waiting but moving ahead and filling up your life with a lot of things that it maybe shouldn't be filled with.

The other thing is arrogance. What is arrogance? Arrogance is the whole idea of trying to control everything. I call them KIA's I know it all and I know what's best. I know what's best for me so I'm going to control my life. And I know what's best for you and your life would be a whole lot easier if you'd just get with my program. When a woman walks down the aisle to get married there's a procession. You walk down the aisle, you come to the altar and then you sing the hymn. I'll-alter-him.

That progression is, you were good enough to marry but you're not good enough to stay married to so I will alter him, now. That is that sense of control.

Ladies, guys do the same thing. They're just sneakier.

They're not as overt as you are.

The truth is when you try to do it all, have it all, be it all, experience it all that is aggression and arrogance. You're acting like superman or super woman. The antidote is gentleness and humility.

The two things we don't think we need in life are the two things that cause stress to go down.

You need to remind yourself every day that you're not everybody's savior. That God is God and you're not. You do what God wants you to do and you don't have to worry about the rest.

The reason why Jesus wasn't stressed out is He only did what God, the Father, told Him to do. He didn't worry about what other people thought. He didn't even have His own preferences. He just said I just do what God tells me to do. In fact, He says it twelve times in the book of John. "I just say what the Father tells Me to say... I go where He tells Me to go... I do what He wants Me to do..." as a result there's a sense of peace in His life.

The Bible says this in Galatians 5:25 "*Since we live by the Spirit let us keep in step with the Spirit. Our lives get in step with God by letting Him set the pace.*" We're going to talk about that next week.

How do I learn to trust? How can my faith grow so that I have more faith in God, so that my stress goes down?

There's one way that faith grows. It's by the Bible. God's word. The more you get God's word into your life the more your faith will grow. The Bible says, "*Faith comes from hearing the word of God.*" You need to hear the word, read the word of God, think about the word of God on a daily basis. If you do that your faith will go up.

We all get invitations in life. You've had wedding invitations, birthday invitations, graduation invitations. You're never going to get an invitation like this. No one will ever offer you. This is the greatest invitation you will ever be offered in your life. Come to Me. "*Come to Me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in spirit and you will find rest for your soul. For the yoke I will give you is easy, and the load I will put on you is light.*"

What's weighing you down? Health? Children? Job? Anxiety? What's weighing you down? Finances? Aging parents? What's weighing you down? Indecision about the future?

The greatest thing that weighs you down is your separation from God. Trying to live without God. Jesus even took that load on the cross. "*Jesus personally carried the load of our sins in His own body when He died on the cross so that we can be finished with sin and live a good life from now on.*"

### **Let us Pray:**

Have you ever come to Jesus with one hundred percent of your life? It doesn't say come to a seminar or therapy or even church. But come to Me. The starting point of the unloading is to talk to Jesus about it and tell Him exactly how you feel. What's frustrating you? Sometimes even

your best friends don't want to listen to your burdens. But Jesus will never ignore you. Why don't you pray this prayer right now in your heart. I'm going to pray it and you just follow along in it in your mind. "Dear God, I'm tired of being tired all the time. I'm tired of trying to control everything. I'm tired of life without rest and peace. Forgive me for all the times I've turned to other things for relief instead of turning to You. Today I come back to You. I want to stop trying to control the things I never could control in the first place. Forgive me. Forgive me for allowing my insecurities and my ego for taking on more activities than I could possibly manage. Forgive me for overloading my schedule, for filling my life with less important things so that I have no time for what matters most. Having no time just to sit and be quiet with You. I want to learn from Your model, Jesus. I want to get into

Your word on a daily basis so I can learn to be gentle and humble and I can have the peace that You offer." If you've never invited Christ into your life say "Jesus Christ, come into my life right now. Forgive me and change me." In Your name I pray. Amen.