

## CREW Bible Study

### Youth XP3 Message – WORRY NOT

- **BOTTOM LINE:** Cast your cares on Him because He cares for you.
- **GOAL:** To help students understand that God can help them deal with their stress in a healthy way.
- **SCRIPTURE:**
  - *Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately, Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" – Matthew 14:22-31*
  - *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." - 1 Peter 5:7*

### MESSAGE

Here's a question for you – Life is all about choices, so what's a tough choice you've had to make recently? Yes, choosing what to wear, what to eat for breakfast, or what to post on Instagram can sometimes be tough choices. But dig a little deeper and what comes to mind? Did you choose to face a difficult situation with a friend instead of hiding from it? Did you choose to tell your parents the truth instead of holding onto a lie? How about school this year? Was it a tough choice to decide whether to go with virtual learning or in-person? How about what classes to take this year, or whether or not to continue playing your sport?

Each and every day there are choices we make. Some choices are fairly easy, and some are really difficult. But no matter what they are, there is something we all tend to do that's related to our choices. We worry. We worry that we're making the wrong choice. We worry about the outcome. We worry about how people will react. We worry that someone will be disappointed, or that we ourselves will be disappointed.

It all adds up after a while and takes a toll on us. It affects our attitude and the way we treat others. Think about it...when you're worried, how many of these things are true for you?

- You're constantly irritated.
- You don't sleep well, or you just want to sleep all the time.
- You don't feel like eating, or you eat way too much.
- You feel like you can't enjoy what's happening right now because you don't know what's going to happen next.
- You feel panicked, like you can't handle it any more.
- You feel like a big disappointment because you should be able to handle it, but you can't.
- You wish you could escape from it.

Whatever it looks like for you, worry definitely affects our quality of life. Maybe one of the worst things about living in all of this worry, is the feeling that you're in it alone. Like it's all on you. And that makes you worry even more.

But here's some good news. It's *not* all on you. It doesn't have to be. You have a choice in that, and we can look to a story in the Bible to help. It's a story about Peter, one of the 12 disciples of Jesus who eventually became one of the most influential Christian leaders of the early church. In this story, Peter and the disciples are with Jesus as he has been teaching to a crowd of people. Hear what happens in Matthew chapter 14, verses 22-31:

*Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately, Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"*

Peter made the choice to step out onto the water. He initially chose to trust that Jesus would keep him safe. That's what gave him the courage to step out of the boat. But he gets distracted by the wind, and loses focus. Worry sets in and he begins to sink. And how does Jesus respond? He grabs Peter's hand and says, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" Peter learned an important lesson that day. Don't doubt, don't worry. Trust instead.

After Jesus died, Peter spent his life sharing what Jesus taught him with others. He wrote letters to followers of Jesus, some who were suffering from religious persecution for what they believed. It was a stressful time for them, surely filled with worry over what to think, what to say and what to do. And to help them, Peter tells them this in 1 Peter chapter 5, verse 7:

*Cast your cares on Him because He cares for you.*

We don't use the word "cast" all that often as a verb, it means "to throw". Like when you throw a fishing line out into the water, or throw a football down the field. You throw it with force to send it away from you and towards your target. You cast it away. Peter is saying, take all of those things that you are worried or anxious about, and throw them out away from you and cast them towards God. He will take them from you. Don't be of little faith and worry. Be of big faith and let God take your hand and guide you through.

So how do you do that? Here's three things you can do:

1. **Name your worries.** Make a list of all the things that make you worry or stress you out. Then, label which things you have control over and which you have *no* control over.
2. **Cast your worries to God.** Throw your worries out to Him. Agree to let go of all the worry of things you have no control over, and ask God to guide you through the things you *can* control. Keep your focus on Him to help you.
3. **Make it a habit.** Casting your worries out to God isn't meant to be a one-time thing. Doing it over and over again will make you better at handling stress and anxiety when it comes your way. And that allows you to live with less worry and more joy.

Imagine if this worked. Imagine if this became something you could do naturally. How could that change your life now? What would it mean for your life in the future? Cast your worries to God. Don't doubt, don't worry. Trust instead.

### **FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What are some things you worry about?
2. What's the difference between good stress and being negatively stressed out from worry?
3. When you're worried, how many of these things are true for you?
  - a. You're constantly irritated.
  - b. You don't sleep well, or you just want to sleep all the time.
  - c. You don't feel like eating, or you eat way too much.
  - d. You feel like you can't enjoy what's happening right now because you don't know what's going to happen next.
  - e. You feel panicked, like you can't handle it any more.

- f. You feel like a big disappointment because you should be able to handle it, but you can't.
    - g. You wish you could escape from it.
- 4. No right or wrong answer here: What do you think it means to "throw" your anxieties on God?
- 5. What's one stress-managing thing you can do to help you with stress? Have you tried these?
  - a. Writing
  - b. Journaling
  - c. Art
  - d. Music
  - e. Exercise
  - f. Deep breaths
- 6. Make a list of all the things that make you worry or stress you out. Then, label which things you have control over and which you have no control over. Throw these out to God, asking Him to take the ones you can't control, and guide you through the things you can control.
- 7. Name one person you can talk to when you are worried and stressed out.