

Under Pressure

Small Group Lesson

John 16:33 - 33 “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

INTRO

Have you ever been playing basketball in the street or in your driveway by yourself and imagined an imaginary shot clock winding down “5, 4, 3, 2....1”, all in an attempt to create the pressure of a last second shot? No matter how many times you do it, with no one standing around you’re able to reset the clock in your mind until you’re the hero of the imaginary championship you’re playing in your head. This type of pressure is fun and it makes for a good workout in the driveway, but what happens when the pressure is on when people are around? What happens when it’s not about making a shot in front of an imaginary crowd or even a real one, but it’s making the right decision about where you’re going to go to college with your parents or friends watching? Or making the right decision to study for that test? Or choosing not to fall into the peer-pressure of making a destructive choice? The problem with real life pressure is there is no reset button or always the ability to getaway and reset yourself. Since this is the case, where do we run, what do we do, and who are we when the pressure is on? Today we will unpack how to live “under pressure”.

Watch where you run

Where you run when things aren’t going well shows where your trust is.

“Where” you run is not just a place, but many times it can be a person. Who you run to or who you talk to first determines where you’ve placed your trust.

Jesus invites us to run to him first!

28 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” **Matthew 11:28-29**

Watch what you do

Is your reaction to pressure one of complaining or anger?

Many times we become self-destructive when life begins to spiral. We turn to different things to either make us feel better or numb the pains of life.

The danger of needing more, whether that's more accomplishments, relationships, money, substances, or anything else is that you will become a slave to them because they will never satisfy, but they will give you enough to stick around.

Jesus invites us to not allow our worries to dominate our lives, but rather allow life's worries to push us to prayer.

6 'Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. **7** Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.' **Philippians 4:6-7**

See who you are

Where you run to and what you do there will determine how you live your life.

Pressure reveals who we really are, but the good news is that when pressure comes and we've chosen to run to Jesus and put our faith in Him, what will come out of our lives will be Him.

Instead of fits of rage, complaining, or cursing, what if worship, prayer, thankfulness, and blessings came out of your life?

"8 Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. **9** Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." **Galatians 6:8-9**

CONCLUSION

Paul said this to the Corinthian church while they were under immense pressure from persecution for their faith, " **8** We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. **9** We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed. **10** Through suffering, our bodies continue to share in the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies." **2 Corinthians 4:8-10** We may not be under the same type of pressure as the early church was, but we are under pressure nonetheless. What you may be feeling right now might be overwhelming and it may weigh heavily on you, but you can trust that if you place your faith in God that He will not allow anything in your life to crush or destroy you. Why? Because He has already overcome the thing that is attempting to overcome you. "...because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." **1 John 4:4**

Group Questions

1. When things get tough, who do you turn to first? Why is it hard for people to turn to God before turning to a friend, parent, social media, etc.?
2. What are some things you do to get your mind off pressure that aren't good for you? What are some things you can replace those things with?
3. What are some practical ways you can be reminded to pray first while you're in the middle of the pressures of life?

TAKE ACTION: Write down some practical ways you can keep God top of mind when you're going through the struggles of life. Share these with a friend from your Squad as well as your Squad leader.

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