

adult

real life
DOWNLOADED
Sunday School That Clicks

Lesson 8 / January 24, 2010

Laying Down Your Burdens

for use as

STEP 1 

Lesson 8
Focus:

Share your burdens
with Jesus.

Lesson 8
Bible Basis:

Matthew 11:25-30

Students will discuss what Jesus meant when He said to bring your burdens to Him and how His “stress relief” is different from what the world offers.

OPENING ACTIVITY Stress Relievers

We are all dealing with some sort of stress or burden in our lives, whether it is over our health, job, a personal relationship, or finances. We can become preoccupied with these burdens and worries and not know how to release them. If we’re constantly worried about our problems, not only will we fail to enjoy our lives, we won’t be much help to others. We have to learn to balance life’s challenges with the joys of life.

Ask the class to discuss ways they currently try to find release from their daily stress and problems. Some examples are laughter, reading a book, quiet time with God, dancing, listening to soothing music, etc. Write these ideas on a board or sheet of newsprint before reading the opening story; you will discuss these ideas more later.

OPENING STORY [read it aloud to your class, or make copies and pass it around]:

SCIENTOLOGY TEST CLAIMS YOU CAN DISCOVER YOUR TRUE SELF

“Are you curious about yourself?”

That’s the cover question of a “free personality test”—the “Oxford Capacity Analysis”—that the Church of Scientology paid to insert into copies of The (Nashville) Tennessean newspaper earlier this month.

According to Baptist Press, the news organization for the Southern Baptist Convention (which is headquartered in Nashville), the “Oxford Capacity Analysis” was not developed by Oxford University and has nothing to do with the university. The 200-question test is widely used as a recruitment tool at Scientology websites, in Scientology churches, and in public settings such as fairs and festivals. The test “has also has been criticized by psychologists as not a bonafide personality test,” BP says.

Lesson 8
Memory Verse

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

—Matthew 11:28

Beyond the cover page, the insert says, “Find out how your personality determines your ability to handle relationships. Discover the factors about yourself that cause you stress. Just fill out this questionnaire and send it in. You will receive in person an in-depth, accurate analysis of the results of your test from an expert evaluator, obligation-free.”

Tal Davis, who studies cult groups for the SBC, says the test is “sort of a ‘bait and switch’ method. They ask people to take the free test, then use it to tell them that Scientology can help them overcome the problems that the test supposedly revealed. It is a tool simply to get people to buy into the strange, unscientific, and unChristian system designed by L. Ron Hubbard. I would recommend that Christians stay away from it.”

One Internet blogger who took the test at a Scientology center says that it focuses heavily on relationships and includes questions such as, “Can you see the other fellow’s point when you wish to?” and “Can you get enthusiastic over ‘some simple little thing’”? The blogger’s Scientology evaluator told him the test proved the blogger was “trying to convince the world” he was more “composed” than he really was and that the blogger had taken on “more than he could handle” in life—not exactly well-founded statements.

Scientology was developed by science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard and based on his 1950 book Dianetics, which is the “Bible” of Scientologists. Hubbard claimed to have discovered that all people have lived several lifetimes and that the stress and problems you have in your present life come from unresolved issues in your past, or past lives. Only through extensive (and expensive) counseling from a Scientologist “auditor” can you become “clear” of your past pain and so live life to the fullest now and even control the world around you.

A Scientology spokesperson claims that the group over the last four years has purchased more than 80 new buildings and that there are more than 7,900 Scientology churches, offices, and missions in 164 countries. The group claims to have millions of members worldwide and be one of the fastest-growing religions.

Most orthodox Christians consider Scientology (which includes actors Tom Cruise, John Travolta, and Isaac Hayes among its followers) to be a cult—even a dangerous one. Late last year, French judges ordered the group to pay almost a million dollars to former followers who claimed they had been “manipulated” into paying for tests and “counseling courses” they did not want. Officials in Germany, Greece, Russia, and elsewhere also have accused the group of tricking vulnerable members out of large sums of money.

[Now form small groups and have your class discuss the following questions.]

- ▶ **Would you recommend the Oxford Capacity Analysis to your friend? Why or why not?**
- ▶ **Does our list include some responses or strategies that might also not be really effective or beneficial?**
- ▶ **Look again at the ways of relieving your burdens and stress that you listed earlier. Why is giving your burdens to Jesus the only way you can ever find real help and release?**

When discussion subsides, move into Step 2 in your Adult Teacher's Guide where you can study Scripture's teaching on what to do about problems and burdens. Your Step 4 appears below.

News Sources:

"Scientology 'Free Personality Test' Is Newspaper Insert," by Art Toalston, Jan. 7, 2010

<http://www.bpnews.net/BPnews.asp?ID=31995>

Scientology Personality Stress Test:

blog.wfmu.org/freedom/2009/03/my-church-of-scientology-free-personality-stress-test-story-plus-scientology-jazz.html

"Scientists Convicted of Fraud in France," by Dorothee Moisan, Oct. 29, 2009,

google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iB4zZrgJt9_M4ltYiwOwQxcAnMmQ

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STEP 4 

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FINDING BALANCE IN OUR LIVES

The stresses of life are guaranteed to come, but we can know how to handle them. Because we have our limits as human beings, God wants us to find a balance so that we are not consumed with the burdens of schedules, obligations, and responsibilities. If we don't find a balance, we will neglect the important things in life, such as our physical and mental health and our families.

In order to find this balance we seek, we should start by asking God what He wants us to take off our list of commitments, and more importantly, what things He wants us to have on our list. He said He would give us rest as we make sure our commitments are His commitments for us.

If there is an obligation that is overwhelming you, maybe it's something you accepted on your own and is not what God wants for you to be doing. If you ask Him for the wisdom and courage to get rid of something causing you anxiety or stress, He can reveal to you what it is. It may not be a physical commitment—it could just be a thought that is weighing heavy on you. If we pray about it, He will respond.

[Activity]

Return to the groups you had in Step 1 and discuss the following questions:

- ▶ **What worldly yokes often take hold of us and keep us from being the followers of Jesus that we need to be?** *[Examples: the pressures of job advancement, making more money, trying to keep up with the material wants of the world, etc.]*
- ▶ **What are some areas in your life where you can make adjustments and find balance?**
- ▶ **How will you give these burdens to God? How can we encourage or help you let them go?** *Be prepared next week to share with your fellow students if the burdens in your life were lessened this past week.*

End the class in prayer, reminding your students that our commitments should be the ones that God wants us to have. He wants us to be yoked with Him, as He cares for us and guides and directs us through the troubles of this life.

(David C. Cook is not affiliated with and does not endorse any Website listed on these pages.)