

Mini Lesson #7 – Stress, Challenges, Anxiety...GOOD OR BAD?

Every day we hear others around us, hear it on tv, or maybe it's you that says something like, "I'm so stressed." Especially right now, when we're thrown into this isolation situation that we did not ask for. Think about all the times you hear phrases:

"I just can't even with life right now."

"I can't handle this."

"I hate Mondays, where did the weekend go."

"If I can just finish this task and it's over, I won't be stressed"

"I just need a vacation."

"I'm so overwhelmed."

One thing we never stop and think about when we are stressed, overwhelmed or challenged, is the fact that sometimes we are allowing it to take control of us. We allow it to paralyze us, to the point where we are unable to complete other simple tasks because we are solely focused on that one thing.

Stress can be a great motivator at times, it can help us focus. It can be the fire that gets us through something difficult. Yet if we allow it to conquer us, this is when the demons can set in and keep us from being productive.

If you think about it, how boring would our lives be without stress? There really is no such thing as "living a stressful life". That phrase should simply read, "living life." If you were given everything, never had to work for anything, were never challenged, were never let down, never lost, never hurt...how would you even know to appreciate the good things that come out of your hardships. What would be the point of trying?

Questions to ask yourself:

1. Do you approach stressful situations head on and unafraid, knowing you might fail?
2. Do you try to avoid stressful situations at all cost, never wanting to challenge yourself, knowing it could make you a stronger person, knowing that it could mean helping yourself and even others around you?
3. When bad things, stressful things happen to you, do you immediately feel powerless and defeated? Do I have a "woe is me" attitude?
4. When bad things, stressful things happen to you, do you feel discouraged but then take a second to see how you are going to handle the situation before you? Do you engage stress as a challenge?
5. Where do you find your strength when faced with anxiety and stress?

**Maybe the places and people you are relying on are the reason your stress is a never-ending circle. Example:

- Stressful Situation occurs, you talk to someone who is comfortable to talk to because they handle stressful situations the same way you do. Society says, "don't tackle that it's too hard, just take a break, get away from it, out of sight out of mind, someone else's problem." You both commiserate with each other and feel sorry for one another, never solving the issue. You never really feel better about it and then...next stressful situation arises, FULL CIRCLE OF STRESS.

**If you realize that you're not in these stressful situations alone, you have nothing to fear. Read Psalm 23...

6. Are you surrounding yourself with others who are helpful and are also willing to handle their stressful situations head on?

Most of these questions and points are aligned with the video below from Father Mike. Please take a few minutes to listen and hear his message.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVSNU56pAyg>

For the Family:

Your challenge this week was to take 1 hour away from screen time each day. So, to help with that I am not sending extra YouTube videos this week. **I'm asking you all to open your Bibles.** If you have not done this in a while, that's ok! Even more of a reason to take the time to do so! Read the following from scripture and talk about it as a family. Which ones are your favorite?

- James 1:2-4
- Joshua 1:9
- Matthew 6:25-34
- Jeremiah 17:7-8
- Philippians 4:6-7

Saint of the Day: Saint John Baptist de La Salle

Saint of the Day for April 7

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-john-baptist-de-la-salle/>

Saint John Baptist de La Salle is the Patron Saint of: Teachers

Saint John Baptist de La Salle's Story

Complete dedication to what he saw as God's will for him dominated the life of John Baptist de La Salle. In 1950, Pope Pius XII named him patron of schoolteachers for his efforts in upgrading school instruction. As a young 17th-century Frenchman, John had everything going for him: scholarly bent, good looks, noble family background, money, refined upbringing. At the early age of 11, he received the tonsure and started preparation for the priesthood, to which he was ordained at 27. He seemed assured then of a life of dignified ease and a high position in the Church.

But God had other plans for John, which were gradually revealed to him in the next several years. During a chance meeting with Monsieur Adrien Nyel, he became interested in the creation of schools for poor boys in Rheims, where he was stationed. Though the work was extremely distasteful to him at first, he became more involved in working with the deprived youths.

Once convinced that this was his divinely appointed mission, John threw himself wholeheartedly into the work, left home and family, abandoned his position as canon at Rheims, gave away his fortune, and reduced himself to the level of the poor to whom he devoted his entire life.

The remainder of his life was closely entwined with the community of religious men he founded, the Brothers of the Christian School (also called Christian Brothers or De La Salle Brothers). This community grew rapidly

and was successful in educating boys of poor families, using methods designed by John. It prepared teachers in the first training college for teachers and also set up homes and schools for young delinquents of wealthy families. The motivating element in all these endeavors was the desire to become a good Christian. Yet even in his success, John did not escape experiencing many trials: heart-rending disappointment and defections among his disciples, bitter opposition from the secular schoolmasters who resented his new and fruitful methods, and persistent opposition from the Jansenists of his time, whose moral rigidity and pessimism about the human condition John resisted vehemently all his life. Afflicted with asthma and rheumatism in his last years, he died at age 68 on Good Friday, and was canonized in 1900.

Reflection

Complete dedication to one's calling by God, whatever it may be, is a rare quality. Jesus asks us to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30b, emphasis added). Paul gives similar advice: "Whatever you do, do from the heart..." (Colossians 3:23).