



SYSTEM RESET: WEEK 5

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SYSTEM RESET

WEEK 5: Rethink

Bible: Philippians 4:6-7; Psalm 18:1-3; Matthew 11:28-30

Bottom Line: Let go of worry, trust God and enjoy God's peace regardless of your circumstances.

SUPPLIES

- Kiddie pool
- Large empty bowl or container
- Big piece of plastic sheeting (if playing indoors)
- Oatmeal or whipped cream
- Water (if using oatmeal)
- Gummy worms
- Paper towels
- Nerf gun with bullets
- Sunglasses or goggles for eye protection
- Heavy objects
- Permanent marker
- Upbeat background music
- Random objects, such as: tennis ball, sunglasses, water bottle, iPhone, etc.

OPENING GAME: THE HUNT FOR GUMMY WORMS

GAME PREP

If playing indoors, place a large sheet of plastic sheeting on the ground.

Keep the kiddie pool and players within the plastic sheeting.

Fill up the kiddie pool with oatmeal (add water) or lots of whipped cream.

Add gummy worms to the oatmeal or whipped cream (at least one per student).

Mix the gummy worms in the oatmeal or whipped cream and make sure they are not easily seen from the top.

Place the large empty bowl or container near the kiddie pool.

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

Break the group up into teams of ten students.

Teams line up relay style about 10-15 feet away from the kiddie pool.

If playing indoors, keep all players on top of the plastic sheeting throughout the game. Students take off their shoes and socks.

On GO, the first player in each team runs to the kiddie pool and searches for a gummy worm using only their feet.

Once a gummy worm is found, they place it in the empty container (using only their feet) near the kiddie pool.

Once complete, the next player in line repeats the same process.

After players are done with their turn, have leaders nearby giving them paper towels to clean off their feet.

Play the game as a competition, with the first team to finish winning or just for fun with no competitive element.

GAME TIPS

- Some students might choose not to play this game because it's messy. Allow them to sit out and watch the fun from the sidelines.
- If you can play the game outdoors in the grass, then you won't need plastic sheeting. Also, clean up is easier when playing outside.

After the game, say: The goal of the game was to find the gummy worms.

Ask: Why were the gummy worms hard to find?

Allow a few responses from students.

Say: Right, because they were mixed in with the oatmeal (or whipped cream).

Today's topic is finding God's peace in a situation where we're filled with worry.

Worry is a lot like the oatmeal (or whipped cream).

It is messy, gets all over us and won't seem to go away.

God's peace is like the gummy worms. It's sweet and yummy to our souls.

Often, when we search for God's peace, we get muddled with worry and can't seem to get rid of it.

Just like in our game.

Today we're going to talk about how we can let go of worry and find God's peace regardless of the circumstance.

We're going to learn how to rethink how we think.

TEACH

Ask: Have you ever experienced a situation that caused you to worry or be anxious? Tell me about it.

Allow a few responses from students.

Those are some great examples.

Thanks for sharing.

Well, the truth is that worry is a part of life.

Stressful situations are going to come up and worry is a natural response.

So, when a stressful situation arises, what's the best way to respond? Let's look at a verse in the Bible that helps us with this.

Read Philippians 4:6. (NLT)

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.

Ask: Instead of worrying, God tells us to do what?

Allow a few responses from students.

Pray! Now that sounds too easy, doesn't it?

The kind of prayer written here is much more than a simple prayer to God.

It is much deeper than that.

It requires us to let go of our worry and trust God.

Read Matthew 11:28-30. (NCV)

Come to me, all of you who are tired and have heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Accept my teachings and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit, and you will find rest for your lives. The burden that I ask you to accept is easy; the load I give you to carry is light.

Say: Those are Jesus' words.

He is saying that we can come to him with our "heavy loads" and he will give us rest.

In other words, we can go to Him with our troubles and he will give us rest for our souls, otherwise known as peace.

This requires us letting go of our worries and trusting God with the situation.

In the next verse of Philippians, we see what happens when we let go of worry, trusting God with the situation.

Read Philippians 4:7.

And God's peace, which is so great we cannot understand it, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

The Bible says that we experience God's peace as a result of giving up control of the situation to Jesus.

We can't understand how the process works, but peace will rule our hearts and minds instead of worry.

It's God's supernatural work within us. Wow, very cool!

I need two volunteers to come up front and help me with an illustration.

Choose two volunteers from the group.

Give one student the loaded Nerf gun.

The other volunteer is the target and stands 15-20 feet away from the one with the Nerf gun.

Place sunglasses or goggles on the target volunteer to protect the eyes.

Explain to the Nerf gun volunteer that her goal is to shoot the target volunteer as many times as possible until running out of ammo.

While being shot, the target volunteer has to stay in one place and cannot move around. Encourage the audience to cheer on the volunteers.

Play upbeat music in the background during the illustration.

When done, congratulate both volunteers on a job well done.

Ask them to stay up front for a few more minutes.

You will need them again soon.

While you begin to illustrate the next point, have an adult leader gather all the Nerf darts and reload the gun.

Say: Raise your hand if you agree that _____ (Nerf gun volunteer) had the advantage.

Somebody help me and explain why she had the advantage.

Allow a few responses from students.

That's right, because she had the Nerf gun and _____ (target volunteer) had no protection from the bullets.

This is a picture of what happens when we worry.

Let's say you have the Standardized Tests coming up.

It's a big deal and very important that you do well.

You start to worry about the situation, becoming more and more fearful as the first day of the test approaches.

Your thoughts are like darts coming at you.

You have a hard time controlling them and are filled with worry and fear about the situation.

You feel like _____ (target volunteer), being attacked by your thoughts.

Ask: What do you do?

Allow a few responses from students.

Great ideas!

I need four more volunteers to come up front.

We are going to do it again, but this time these four volunteers will offer protection.

Explain to the four volunteers that their job is to create a circle around the target volunteer, blocking the Nerf darts from hitting the volunteer.

Have the Nerf gun volunteer attempts to hit the target volunteer with as many darts as possible.

Encourage the audience to cheer on the volunteers.

Play upbeat music in the background

Great job everyone!

You can now go back to your seats.

As you can see, the second time around _____ (target volunteer) didn't get hit as much (or even at all).

Ask: If the darts represent our worrisome/fearful thoughts, what do you think the shield of volunteers represents?

Allow a few responses from students.

That's right, the shield represents God.

When we let go of worry and ask God for help, he will protect us from thoughts of worry and fear.

He will replace worry with peace, which is a supernatural process.

What do we mean by God's peace?

God's peace is when we feel calm, cool and relaxed about life.

We feel at peace with the world around us – no more stress, worry, anxiety or fear.

We experience a sense of God's peace, which supernaturally surrounds us.

The cool thing about God's peace is that your situation doesn't have to change for you to experience it.

The darts are still flying your way.

You might do horrible on the test and have to repeat a grade.

But no matter what happens, you are giving God control, trusting that He will take care of the situation.

Let's take a look at someone in the Bible who had to trust God in a difficult situation.

He could have chosen to be filled with fear, stress, worry and anxiety.

When he did experience those emotions, he cried out to God for help.

David was chosen to be the next King, which was God's plan for his life.

But it would be many years before that would happen.

For now, he was a mighty warrior in Saul's army.

As David grew in popularity, Saul (the current King) became jealous.

He spent years chasing David attempting to kill him.

These were tough times for David.

There were many days and nights where worry got the best of him.

When that happened, he would cry out to God.

David wrote down many of his thoughts and prayers during this period of his life in the book of Psalms.

Let's look take a look at one of them now.

Read Psalm 18:1-3.

I love you, Lord. You are my strength. The Lord is my rock, my protection, my Savior. My God is my rock.

*I can run to him for safety. **He is my shield and my saving strength, my defender.** I will call to the Lord, who is worthy of praise, and I will be saved from my enemies.*

David wrote these words when God had once again saved him from Saul.

Over and over again David went to God with his worry and fear.

And over and over again God gave him peace.

For years, the situation didn't change—Saul chased after David attempting to kill him.

David ran for his life, hiding in caves and waiting for God's plan to become a reality.

After years of running, finally that day became a reality—Saul died in battle and David became King.

What does this story have to do with you and me?

Whenever we worry about a situation, we can go to God for help.

As we let go of worry and trust God, He will protect us by giving us His supernatural peace.

The situation might change for the better or it might not.

Regardless of the circumstances, God will give us His supernatural peace.

Today's bottom line - Let go of worry, trust God and enjoy God's peace regardless of your circumstances.

We're now done with today's message.

It's time for us to take what we talked about and apply it in our lives.

What situation are you worried, anxious or stressed out about right now?

Close your eyes. Pause, think, and reflect about the answer to that question.

We're going to invite God to speak to us, bringing up the situation in our hearts and minds.

Then we're going to pray that God would give us His peace.

Wrap up by doing a big group prayer, asking God to give students peace with their specific situations.

As an alternative, you could give students an opportunity to go to their small group leaders for individual prayer.

Either way, the goal is to create space for Junior High Students to pause for a moment, reflect on a situation they are worried about, and go to God for help.

Close in prayer.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some common issues you and your friends worry about?
2. What are some emotions you experience when worrying?
3. How can God help you with worry?

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Give each small group at least one random object (more if you like).

Each small group comes up with a skit about worry involving the object(s) given.

The goal is for the group members to come up a situation that involves someone worrying.

Small group leaders help guide Junior High Students through the process of thinking of an appropriate situation and coming up with a skit to illustrate it.

The situation should somehow be resolved by giving up control to God and experiencing His peace.

Each skit should be limited to 2-3 minutes (depending on how many small groups and how much time you have).

All group members should participate in the skit.

You might want to have small group leaders be prepared to offer some easy roles for shy students.

Allow 10-15 minutes for each small group to come up with a skit.

Next, have each small group to perform the skit in front of everyone.

After the skits, take a few minutes to connect the skits to the main point of the lesson.

Also, take a minute or two and connect today's lesson with the System Reset theme.