



NAVIGATE LIFE

We all face various pressures and feelings from living in the complexity of our modern world. Consider some guidance from the Bible to help navigate various aspects of life.

NAVIGATE BUSYNESS



1. Ask people how their week has been, and nine times out of ten their answer will be, "It's been busy!" Why do we feel the need to be busy? Or for others to know that we're busy?

2. Select the positive and negative experiences of busyness that you can relate to. Can you add anything?

Dangers of busyness	Benefits of busyness
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhaustion	<input type="checkbox"/> Energising and exciting
<input type="checkbox"/> Superficial engagement with people	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfaction at achieving targets and completing tasks
<input type="checkbox"/> Loss of joy	<input type="checkbox"/> Making the most of your time
<input type="checkbox"/> Loss of connection with God	<input type="checkbox"/> Greater creativity
<input type="checkbox"/> Restlessness, trouble sleeping	<input type="checkbox"/> Self confidence
<input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety	<input type="checkbox"/> The positive end product or result
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Sometimes our busyness is unavoidable. But often, it's a choice. It comes from a deeper problem of heart-desires - placing too much weight on other's opinions of us, or the importance of success or power or control or completion or excellence. Examine your heart. Which of these motives resonate with you? Anything else you can identify?

4. **Read Psalm 131.** What antidotes to busyness has David learned?

5. **Read Mark 1:32-39.** What can we learn from Jesus about dealing with busyness?

6. **Read Luke 10:38-42.** What do you think are the differences between the attitudes of Mary and Martha?

What will it look like for you to follow Jesus' advice to Martha?

7. **Read Matthew 11:28-30.** What is Jesus' yoke that we take upon ourselves?

How does this enable us to find rest for our souls?

How does coming to Jesus help address our internal pressure to feel worthy and deserving?

God has designed creation with an inbuilt treatment for busyness. It's called Sabbath. He rested on the seventh day of creation and enjoyed what he'd made. He blesses the seventh day and makes it holy (Gen 2:2-3). He commands us to rest on the seventh day and keep it holy (Exodus 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15). Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath (Luke 6:1-10), reclaiming it for our benefit, refreshing and worship. He rose on the first day of the week, beginning new creation, and Christians now celebrate that by resting, refreshing and worshipping together on Sunday (John 20:19, 26; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2).

8. Read the excerpt from the Westminster Confession of Faith, Ch 21, about Sabbath. What might "ordering of their common affairs beforehand" look like?

Westminster Confession of Faith (1647)
Ch21. VII. As it is the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in His Word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment binding all men in all ages, He has particularly appointed one day in seven, for a Sabbath, to be kept holy unto him: which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week: and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which, in Scripture, is called the Lord's Day, and is to be continued to the end of the world, as the Christian Sabbath.
VIII. This Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their common affairs beforehand, do not only observe an holy rest, all the day, from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations, but also are taken up, the whole time, in the public and private exercises of His worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.

What about "duties of necessity and worship"?

Is this still a reasonable expectation for Christians to follow?

9. Part of our vision is to be a church where God is loved and worshipped as king, and where we devote ourselves to fellowship, prayer and hospitality. How might you devoting yourself to gathering with God's people help you to move from busyness to rest?

OUR VISION

Under God, we desire to be **a church through which God is transforming his people and his world** (Ephesians 2).

This will mean (Acts 2:42-47);

1. We are a church where God is loved and worshipped as King.
2. We are warm and inviting and connect newcomers into our community.
3. We joyfully give up what we have for others in the church.
4. We devote ourselves to fellowship, prayer and hospitality.
5. We are deliberately and daily shaped by God's Word.
6. All members are engaged and serving within the church.
7. We have an impact on the world around us and are growing through conversion.

Prayer Points:

NAVIGATE LONELINESS

The lockdowns and isolation of COVID-19 increased the feelings of loneliness and disconnection of many. Our increasing dependence on communication technology only makes this worse. We're all prone to feeling alone. We were made to be in relationships with people – to know and be known.



1. How do you experience loneliness? Which words capture your experience? Isolated? Vulnerable? Alone? Invisible? Worthless? Discarded? Empty?

What is it you're wanting? To be understood? Known? Appreciated? Connected?

2. When we feel lonely we're prone to believe false things about God – he doesn't care, he's forgotten me, if he really loved me he'd give me a husband/ wife/ good friend. **Read Psalm 139.** What truths about God does David affirm?

How does David respond to these?

How do you respond to David's requests in vv19-24.

How does this Psalm address our loneliness?

3. **Read Matthew 28:18-20.** We often focus, rightly, on Jesus' command to go and make disciples. But Jesus also makes a statement (v18) and gives a promise (v20b). How do these help us with loneliness?
4. **Read Romans 8:35-39.** It is often in difficulties that we feel most alone. What does God promise us in the midst of difficulties?

How does this make you feel?

5. **Read Hebrews 13:1-6.** God meets us in our loneliness. But he also gives us his family, the church. How can we help one another with loneliness?
6. Which aspects of our church vision will be important to focus on if we want to help people with loneliness?

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Prayer Points:

Tell God about being lonely. Read, prayerfully, Psalm 25:15-21. Praise God that he sees, and cares for, you.

NAVIGATE WORRY

Prescriptions for anxiety medication are at record levels. More people than ever are taking stress leave from work. Financial pressure, busyness, trauma, health concerns, relationship difficulties and more contribute to many people regularly feeling stressed, anxious or worried. But God's Word is full of good advice.



1. What are some of the things you worry about? How do you deal with feeling anxious?
2. **Read Psalm 94.** What are the circumstances that cause anxiety for the writer?

PSALM 94:18-19

¹⁸ When I said, "My foot is slipping," your unfailing love, LORD, supported me. ¹⁹ When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy.

What truths about God give the writer confidence to face the future?

3. **Read Luke 12:22-34.** On what basis does Jesus command his hearers not to worry? (v22) (What does the 'therefore' in v22 refer back to?)

Verses 23-28 depend on the contrast in v22. "Life is **greater** than food, and the body is **greater** than clothes." The thought is that if God has already given you life, then for him to give you food to sustain that life is easier. And if God has already made your body, then for him to provide clothes for that body is easier.

4. Jesus calls us to consider the ravens and the lilies, whom God provides for. What other things might you consider to help you trust God's provision?
5. In v25-26 Jesus says that we can't, by worrying, even add a single hour to the day. Anxiety can grow from pride that you are in control. How might letting go of control reduce anxiety?
6. What is the connection between worry and a lack of faith (v28)?

7. Verses 29-34 encourage us to consider the things we set our hearts on. How does setting our heart on earthly things contribute to worry?

What earthly things are you tempted to set your heart on?

And how does setting our heart on heavenly things help us not to worry?

8. What does “where you treasure is, there your heart will be also” (v34) mean?
9. **Read Philippians 4:4-7.** What advice does this give to avoid anxiety?

What promise does it give?

Prayer Points:

NAVIGATE ANGER

Many of us struggle with anger. Sometimes it's the quick loss of temper. Other times it's the slow build of resentment that fumes. Anger has the power to destroy. We see and experience its effects regularly: child abuse, road rage, sporting violence, divorce.



1. Anger says "what just happened is wrong." Agree/ Disagree?
2. Anger at the right things, expressed in the right way, is good. (Exo 34:6; Eph 4:26) Agree/Disagree?

Can you think of an example of good anger?

3. **Read Psalm 37:1-24.** What advice does the Psalmist give to help with anger?

What perspective does he give on God?

...on the wicked who anger us?

What things does the writer's heart desire?

PSALM 37:7-9

⁷ Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes. ⁸ Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret--it leads only to evil.⁹ For evil men will be cut off, but those who hope in the Lord will inherit the land.

4. **Read Ephesians 4:25-32.** What advice does the Paul give for reducing the impact of anger?

What does "in your anger do not sin" mean? Can you think of some practical examples?

5. Anger can destroy relationships. **Read Luke 17:3-5.** The priority here is restored relationship – even if conversations are difficult. It also takes humility on the part of the sinner – to hear the offended party, admit the sin and confess it. How good are you at initiating this type of conversation?

How good are you at receiving it?

6. **Read Romans 12:14-21.** What alternatives are offered rather than responding with anger?

Which command do you particularly need to hear?

7. **Read Matthew 5:43-47.** What alternatives are offered rather than getting angry or even?

How might praying for your persecutors help (v44)?

How does recognising God's grace (v45) help you to be gracious?

Just trying to control our anger isn't effective. Anger is only the symptom of a deeper problem. Sinful anger begins in the heart. **Read Prov 4:23; Luke 6:43-45; James 4:1-3.**

We get angry when we fail to receive the things our hearts desire. These may even be good things – justice, safety, respect from others, control and order, rest, comfort – but we can make them idols and put them before God, we can covet what others have, and we can selfishly think we deserve them more than others.

8. Think about the last time you lost your temper or got angry. What did your heart want that you failed to receive?

Prayer Points

NAVIGATE BROKENNESS



One in seven Australians will experience depression in their lifetime.¹ We can feel depressed as a result of stressful or sad situations (stress response syndrome, or adjustment disorder), or due to chemical changes in the brain. Symptoms include persistent deep sadness, loss of interest in activities, trouble sleeping, anxiety, lethargy, lack of concentration, thoughts of suicide.

Christians who experience depression are not more sinful or disobedient than those who don't – they are sick. The Bible has wonderful guidance and encouragement for us when we struggle with feelings of depression.

1. **Read Psalm 13.** It begins with lament – “how long?” (v1-2). David's complaint is threefold – to do with God, his own thoughts, and his enemies. Are they connected? If so, how? What type of situation might lead us to make this complaint?

The Psalm ends with an expression of trust (v5-6). Why does David trust, rejoice and sing? Has God answered his prayer?

The middle of the Psalm (v3-4) is the hinge between “how long” and “but I trust”. V3 is the request - that God would *enlighten David's eyes*. What might this mean? (Look also at Psalm 19:8; 38:10; Ezra 9:8). Think especially how it might combine with v2 – that David wrestles with his thoughts and has sorrow in his heart.

How might this Psalm be helpful to someone experiencing depression?

2. **Read 2 Peter 1:3-11.** We are tempted, in our low moments, to feel hopeless and helpless, and to wallow in self-pity. How does this passage correct that misunderstanding? Notice especially how the commands to “make every effort” begin with “for this reason” (v5). A description of who God is, and what he's given us, provides the foundation for our obedience.

What resources do we have available to us?

Through whom do we receive them?

What purpose are we living for?

¹ https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/1-facts_figures.pdf

What future are we aiming for?

3. In John 13-17 (sometimes called the Upper Room Discourse) Jesus prepares his disciples for life without him. Life will be difficult, filled with grief, but Jesus will send his Holy Spirit to be with them, to teach and strengthen them (16:5-15). **Read John 16:33**. How can the disciples have peace despite the trouble?

What does it mean that Jesus has overcome the world?

How might this verse help us to take heart, or have courage?

Prayer Points