

# Session 02

## ACTIVITY SHEET



How a person typically reacts to adversity has less to do with the actual adversity and more to do with their pre-programmed mindset. Mental programs are developed via 'repeat exposure' to information. For this reason, the apostle Paul cautions; 'faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God' (Roman 10:17 NKJV). In simple terms, what a person listens to will not only influence WHAT they believe and HOW they respond, but also WHO they become. In a day and age where there are many agenda driven voices competing for people's hearts and minds, it's important to preference God's word over popular opinions, trending slogans and political idealism. This session examines practical ways to help restore a person's mindset to the manufacturer's originally intended operating-system. Both scripture and science contend, 'lives are transformed when minds are renewed'.



### TRAINING OBJECTIVES

**This online Pastoral Care training session is designed to help you:**

- (a)** discover God's blueprint for transformation.
- (b)** understand the human mind and learn how a person's philosophy is formed
- (c)** use faith and focus to positively influence a person's outlook

# 4 Essential Things Every Ministry Leader Must Know About STRESS

## 01

### 1. THERE ARE THREE LEVELS OF STRESS

Everyone from time to time will experience stress, pressure and frustration. Depending on the type, nature and volume of stress we experience, stress can either be helpful or hurtful. Stress falls into three distinct categories of severity.

CRITICAL	COMPOUNDED	CHRONIC
A natural response to circumstances and specific situations. Critical stress may be helpful. However, if the incident and stress response is severe, it may become hurtful.	Occurs when a person is in crisis. A critical stress response is most often triggered when adverse life events occur too frequently (or in rapid succession), and your emotions meltdown.	When adverse life events are not resolved, pervasive stress can lead to negative physical, mental, emotional, behavioural, relational and spiritual health consequences.

Identify what type of stress is being described in the following common experiences:

1. My performance improved Critical / Compounded / Chronic	4. Makes me sick to remember Critical / Compounded / Chronic	7. In the end, I finished the job Critical / Compounded / Chronic
2. My heart was racing Critical / Compounded / Chronic	5. Was one thing after another Critical / Compounded / Chronic	8. Couldn't keep going. I quit!!! Critical / Compounded / Chronic
3. Can't think straight anymore Critical / Compounded / Chronic	6. It was too close for comfort Critical / Compounded / Chronic	9. I totally freaked out Critical / Compounded / Chronic

Answer Key: Critical = 1, 6, 7, 9; Compounded = 2, 5, 9; Chronic = 3, 4, 8

**IF STRESS IS TOO MUCH, TOO SEVERE OR OCCURS TOO OFTEN, A PERSON'S MOTOR AND IMMUNE SYSTEM WILL BECOME COMPROMISED. IF NOT DEALT WITH, THEIR ENTIRE SYSTEM WILL BREAK DOWN. WHICH SYSTEM?**

**THE NERVOUS SYSTEM**  
(that's why it's called a 'nervous breakdown')

## 02. STRESS IS SUBJECTIVE

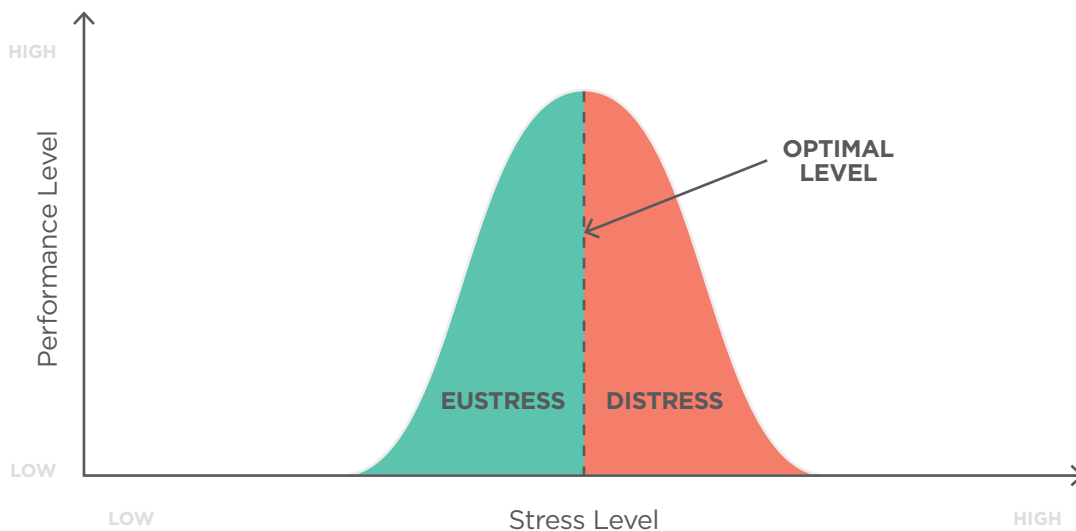
Two people can encounter the exact same circumstance (significant or insignificant) and yet have different reactions to it (high or low stress response). A person's response is not based solely on the **EXTERNAL** circumstance. Rather, a person's **INTERNAL** programming (mindset) helps determine how they respond.

Consider using the following stress subjectivity scale to guide your line of inquiry:

STRESS SUBJECTIVITY SCALE	SIGNIFICANT CIRCUMSTANCE	INSIGNIFICANT CIRCUMSTANCE
HIGH STRESS RESPONSE	Identify any unhelpful thought patterns that may exacerbate current stress	Identify possible underlying beliefs or predisposing mindset vulnerabilities
LOW STRESS RESPONSE	Identify and capitalise on possible underlying beliefs or protective mindset	Identify any helpful thought patterns that may negate current stress

## 03. CONSTRUCTIVE AND DESTRUCTIVE

Stress can either enhance or hinder your performance. Rather than avoid stress, encourage people to use stress to their advantage. As stress levels increase, so does a person's interest and attention (resulting in peak performance at optimum levels). Healthy stress (stress that is good for you) is called **EUSTRESS**. However, if stress becomes too much, too severe or occurs too often, it can lead to **DISTRESS**.



## 04 4. STRESS IS TIMELINE ORIENTED

When you think about the most common reasons why you get stressed, you'll notice all situations and circumstances are positioned on a timeline (historical, current or future):

HISTORICAL	CURRENT	FUTURE
Events encountered in the past that still have a residual effect on our life	Events you may be enduring or going through right now	Anticipating events that have not yet happened, but that may be imminent



# Attending the University of Adversity

If a person has been fighting certain storms in their life over an extended period, they may be mentally, emotionally and physically exhausted. It's hard to think optimistically and constructively when feeling depleted. As such, people often wait for the storm to cease before considering how to make a change for good? However, whatever a person goes through, they can grow through.

**FUN FACT:** The electrical energy from lightning in a thunderstorm separates the nitrogen atoms in the air. When they fall to the earth with rain, they become infused with minerals in the soil to form nitrates. Nitrate serves as a fertiliser for growth. In the same way when the storm clouds gather and the lightning crashes over a person's life, it presents an opportunity for growth.

**“CONSIDER IT PURE JOY, MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS, WHENEVER YOU FACE TRIALS OF MANY KINDS, BECAUSE YOU KNOW THAT THE TESTING OF YOUR FAITH PRODUCES PERSEVERANCE. LET PERSEVERANCE FINISH ITS WORK SO THAT YOU MAY BE MATURE AND COMPLETE, NOT LACKING ANYTHING.”**

(James 1:2-4 NIV)

**It's okay to live  
through a storm;  
you just don't  
want the storm  
to live in you.**

# Programming ALERT!

If the human brain were a computer, the **SUBCONSCIOUS** mind would represent software and the **CONSCIOUS** mind would represent the inputting and processing of data. The programs people have running in the background of their mind will control up to 95% of everything they do (including how they respond to personal hardship, financial pressure, and relationship challenges), begging the question: who is doing the programming?

Researchers from Dartmouth College built a database of COVID news coverage and found that regardless of what experts knew and the data actually showed, 87% of major news network coverage in the U.S. (e.g., CNN, Fox News, Politico, The New York Times) was negatively skewed. Moreover, it was found the kinds of news stories most frequently shared on Facebook were also negative. For example, when Covid cases were rising, news coverage accentuated the upsurge. Yet when cases fell, instead of reporting this good news, mainstream news media sought to only report on outlying places where cases were still rising. Furthermore, they also downplayed or avoided reporting on medical progress in combatting COVID<sup>1</sup>. It's no surprise, therefore, that surveys from the Gallup Institute<sup>2</sup> found likely consumers of mainstream news media to have greatly exaggerated views of the dangers associated with COVID. Examining the influence of 12 leading network television, print and social media news sources, researchers from Stanford and Harvard Universities not only found major differences in belief, but also behaviour.<sup>3</sup>

**THE TERM MEDIA IS A PLURAL FORM OF THE LATIN WORD 'MEDIUM' WHICH MEANS THE ONE IN THE MIDDLE. IT'S THE MEDIATOR (THE ONE WHO MEDIATES) BETWEEN THE ORIGINAL SOURCE AND THE SUBJECT.**

**“For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus.”**

**(1 TIMOTHY 2:5 NIV)**

<sup>1</sup> Leonhardt, D. (2021). Covid coverage by the U.S. national media is an outlier, a study finds. New York Times (published March 24): <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/24/world/covid-coverage-by-the-us-national-media-is-an-outlier-a-study-finds.html>

<sup>2</sup> Brenan, M. (2021). Roundup of Gallup COVID-19 Coverage. Gallup Institute (published April 6): <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/gallup/308126/roundup-gallup-covid-coverage.aspx>

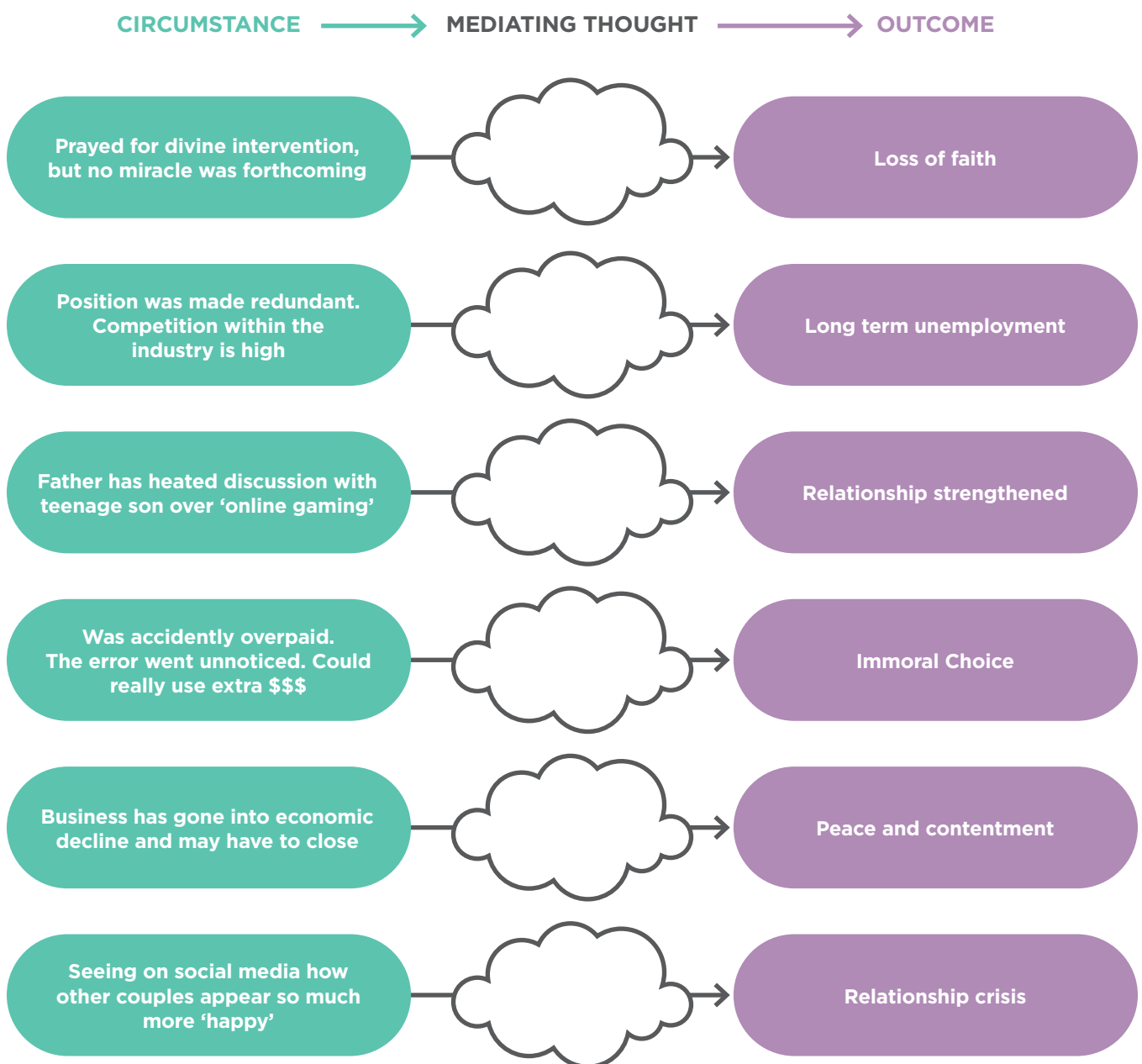
<sup>3</sup> Allcott, H., Boxell, L., Conway, J., Gentzkow, M., Thaler, M., & Yang, D. (2020). Polarization and Public Health: Partisan Differences in Social Distancing during the Coronavirus Pandemic. *Journal of Public Economics*, 191: 104254

# Faulty Thinking = Flawed Choices

Thoughts can also serve as a type of 'mediator' between a person's circumstance and future outcome. If a person is not mindful of the information being fed to their soul and they fail to guard their heart, faulty thinking may influence their personal choices (yielding unfavourable outcomes). However, putting on the mind of Christ and activating the fruits of the Spirit leads a person to make wise choices (yielding favourable outcomes).



Using the examples given below, see if you can identify the likely 'mediating thought' between a person's circumstance and their eventual outcome:



# Counterfeit Voices

The voices people listen to can trigger the direction of their thoughts, feelings and actions. Despite hearing God's voice, scripture records the story of those who chose to listen to a counterfeit voice.



**If a person gets on the wrong train-of-thought, they may end up at the wrong destination:**

**Q: What happened when Eve listened to the serpent in the garden of Eden?**

**TRAIN OF THOUGHT:**

**DESTINATION:**

*HINT: Genesis 3*

**Q: What happened when Sampson listened to Delilah?**

**TRAIN OF THOUGHT:**

**DESTINATION:**

*HINT: Judges 16*

**Q: What happened when Jonah listened to himself instead of God's instruction?**

**TRAIN OF THOUGHT:**

**DESTINATION:**

*HINT: Jonah 1*

**Q: What happened when Solomon listened to his foreign wives?**

**TRAIN OF THOUGHT:**

**DESTINATION:**

*HINT: 1 Kings 11*



**Q: What happened when Saul listened to the medium of Endor?**

**TRAIN OF THOUGHT:**

**DESTINATION:**

*HINT: 1 Samuel 28*

**Q: What happened when Judas listened to the chief priest (Sanhedrin)?**

**TRAIN OF THOUGHT:**

**DESTINATION:**

*HINT: Matthew 27*



# “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

(ROMANS 10:17 NKJV)

01

## SAMUEL

As a \_\_\_\_\_, Samuel heard the voice of God in the night  
(1 Samuel 3:8)

02

## MOSES

Moses heard the voice of God from the burning \_\_\_\_\_  
(Exodus 3:2)

03

## ELIJAH

Standing on the mountain edge, Elijah heard God's gentle \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 Kings 19:11-12)

04

## JESUS

Jesus says, “his \_\_\_\_\_ know the shepherds voice”  
(John 10:3)

05

## PAUL

On the way to \_\_\_\_\_ Saul, being blinded, heard the voice of the Jesus  
(Acts 9:3-5)

06

## PETER

Simon-Peter and Andrew heard Jesus say “Come, \_\_\_\_\_”  
(Matthew 4:18-19)

**THE VOICE OF JESUS IS  
ALSO CALLING OUR NAME.  
THE QUESTION IS, WHO ARE  
WE LISTENING TO?**

# God Uses Problems To Develop People

No one is immune to adversity. Yet even though we all may have been victimised at some point in our life, as Christians, we have no right to stay victims. When a person puts on the mind of Christ (a kingdom mindset), the spirit of victimhood must flee. A victim mentality has no place in the life of a believer because Jesus has ransomed, redeemed, rescued and restored us. Having a Kingdom mindset, therefore, is to adopt the right attitude towards problems. As a person learns to give God room to move in their life, they discover God isn't just for them, but also wants to work in them. The benefit of God's grace is that we get to see problems as a precursor to growth.

**“AND WE KNOW THAT GOD CAUSES EVERYTHING TO WORK TOGETHER FOR THE GOOD OF THOSE WHO LOVE GOD AND ARE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE FOR THEM.”**

*(1 Thessalonians 5:18 NLT)*

JUSTIFICATION / BLAME	AUTONOMY / RESPONSIBILITY
<p>“I have a right to be angry because they’re not doing what they are supposed to. They make me so mad.”</p>	<p><b>EXAMPLE:</b> “No one makes me mad, rather I allow myself to get mad. I’m responsible for the emotions I express.”</p>
<p>“They’re so demanding. If they don’t get what they want, all hell breaks loose. It’s easier to give in than to fight it”</p>	
<p>“My Father was like this, and his father before him. If it’s genetic, there’s not much I can do about it.”</p>	
<p>“I need alcohol to help take ‘the edge’ off my stress or medication to help me sleep.”</p>	
<p>“They are so unloving. Their priorities are always elsewhere. They’re not very kind. So, I won’t love them either.”</p>	

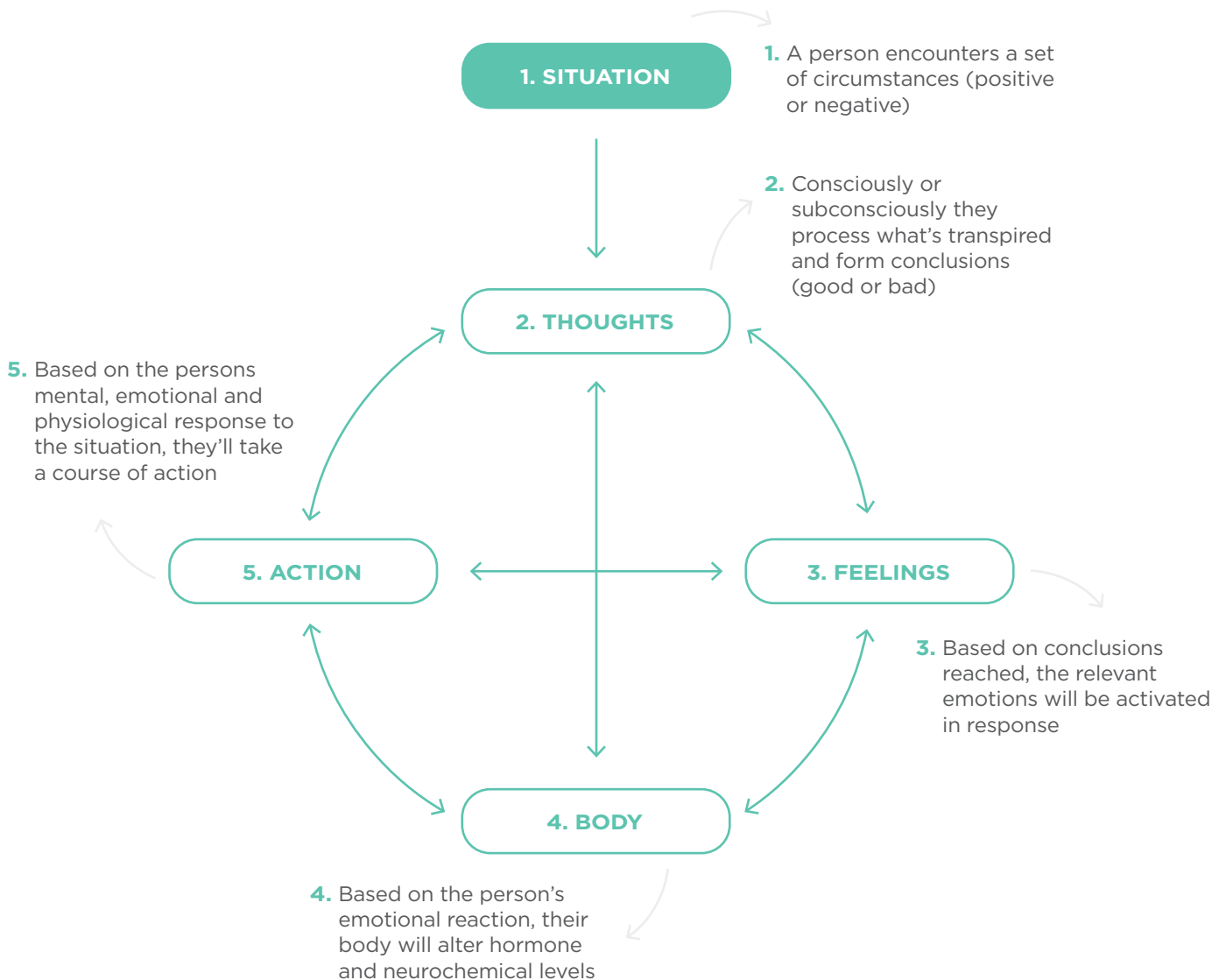
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וְשִׁפְנוֹב רַעֲשׁ  
אִנְהָ יֶאֱכֹל

**For as he  
thinks in  
his heart  
(bə-nap̄-šōw)  
so is he.**

(Proverbs 23:7)

# “Your Focus Needs More FOCUS”

Whatever a person thinks about and focuses their attention on, their reticular activating system will show them more evidence of such things. For this reason, the apostle Paul commissions us to meditate on ‘whatever is true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtue and anything praiseworthy’ (Phil. 4:8).



When a person practices being grateful, they end up attracting more good things into their life to be grateful for (forming a feedback loop).

# Contagious Faith

Your own emotionally driven belief system (faith) is both influential and infectious. Through a process called “emotional contagion”, your faith can positively influence those whose faith and philosophy has been negatively influenced by agenda-driven voices and faulty thinking. By sharing your own testimony of God’s goodness in your life, you can help positively influence the future outlook of others.

**Q:** Describe a time when you were highly anxious about something:  
How did you activate God’s peace in your life to quell your nerves and restore calm?

**Q:** Describe a time when you were in a financial tight spot:  
How did the Holy Spirit lead and guide you? What was the outcome?

**Q:** Describe a time when you were having relationship difficulties:  
What principles from God’s word helped guide the choices you made?

**“THEY TRIUMPHED OVER HIM  
BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB AND  
BY THE WORD OF THEIR TESTIMONY”**

*(Revelation 12:11 NIV)*