

# I GOT IT.

April 2 & 3

## STRESS

John Fuller, Senior Pastor

### INTRODUCTION

Pastor John begins a new message series this week called *I Got It* where he explores the first of three topics that have the potential to really mess up our lives - stress! Stress takes its toll on our physical and mental health, relationships and spiritual walk with God. But, it doesn't have to! As unavoidable as stress is, the Bible is clear God is in control, has promised to walk with us through tough times, and His Word [the Bible] provides a path toward obedience that leads to perseverance, peace and trust in Him.

### DISCUSSION

1. Talk about a behavior or habit that you typically fall back on during periods of high stress in your life. Does this behavior tend to relieve stress or cause it to build up even more?
2. Discuss the meaning of this flow diagram: stress ➔ sinful reactions ➔ personal hardship. Read **Hebrews 12:4-12**. What do these verses say about how we should respond to personal hardship? What is God's purpose in allowing us to experience hardship, even hardship brought about by our struggle with sin?
3. What part of Pastor John's message do you feel spoke to you most directly? Was there anything that didn't make sense or you wanted more information about? Discuss your ideas with the group or a friend.

### THINK ABOUT IT

In geology, the theory of plate tectonics describes how the surface of earth is divided into just over a dozen large moving pieces. Sometimes, these plates run into each other, and something has to give. Typically, one plate is forced to "subduct" under another plate, building up extreme stress. In March 2011, the subduction stress of the Pacific plate was instantly relieved under the coast of Japan, releasing a magnitude 9 earthquake that moved the coast of Japan eight feet, unleashed a devastating tsunami and literally shifted the earth on its axis. The long-term effects from the damage is still unfolding. Will you accept Pastor John's challenge to identify the sources of stress in your life and contemplate the damage it may cause in you and those you love? Do something [see below] to get honest with God for times when stress *will* challenge you physically, relationally, emotionally and spiritually.

### DO SOMETHING

1. *Retreat*: Find a quiet place, and ask God for help and a clear mind. Then, take time to identify areas in your life where you have not put God first: perhaps you have mismanaged relationships with other people or things or over-valued earthly things that come before God in your life. Write these down and share them with someone.
2. *Relationship*: Read **Philippians 4:12**. Be honest with yourself about your view of God's control over the circumstances in your life. What holds you back from trusting in His goodness, being content with His promise to be with you or trusting He is in control – even during the most stressful times?
3. *Repent*: Read **Matthew 10:28-31**. Tell God what you discovered in steps 1 and 2. Now Read **1 John 1:8-9**. Admit where you have sinned in response to stress, trust God forgives you through Christ and ask Him to help clean your heart and ready you to respond in obedience to Him.