

L.I.F.T.

P.O.D. STUDY GUIDE

WEEK FIVE - LOSE THE WEIGHT



INTRODUCTION

Not Everything That Weighs You Down is Sin

Hebrews 12:1–3

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Over the last four weeks, L.I.F.T. has challenged us to **LOVE** God, **IMITATE** Christ, **FIGHT** the good fight of faith, and **TRUST** God when we cannot see the way. But there is another part of the flight we need to understand: even when an aircraft is producing lift, there are forces working against it. One of those forces is **weight**.

In flight, lift acts upward while weight acts downward. An aircraft must generate sufficient lift to overcome the downward force of gravity. Spiritually, Scripture repeatedly acknowledges that life can become heavy. There are burdens we carry, pressures we endure, responsibilities we manage, wounds we remember, and anxieties that accumulate.

Hebrews 12 uses remarkably similar imagery.



The writer tells believers to “**lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us**” and then to run with endurance the race before us.

Notice that Scripture distinguishes between **sin** and **encumbrance**, or weight. That distinction is important.

Every sin is a weight, but **not every weight is necessarily a sin**. Some things are clearly sinful and must be repented of.

But other things may be legitimate and still become spiritually heavy. A responsibility can become overwhelming. A disappointment can occupy our thoughts.

An offense can become something we continually rehearse. A good ambition can become consuming. Entertainment can become distraction. Busyness can leave no room for God.

The question of spiritual maturity therefore cannot always be merely, “**Is this wrong?**” Sometimes we need to ask, “**Is this weighing me down?**”

Hebrews gives us the answer to both sin and unnecessary weight: **lay it aside and fix your eyes on Jesus**.

We were never meant to carry everything we have accumulated.



GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Hebrews distinguishes between “sin” and “encumbrance.” What are some things that may not be sinful but can nevertheless become spiritual weight in a person's life?

2. Why do you think we sometimes become reluctant to lay something down simply because we cannot identify it as sinful?



I. SOME WEIGHT MUST BE LAID ASIDE

Luke 21:34

Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap

Hebrews says, “**Let us also lay aside every encumbrance.**” That phrase places responsibility upon us. There are burdens God carries for us, but there are also weights God tells us to put down.

Luke 21:34 contains an interesting warning from Jesus: “**Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down.**” Jesus identifies several things that can make the heart heavy, including the “**worries of life.**”

That means it is possible to become so occupied with living life that our hearts become spiritually burdened by life.

The issue may not be rebellion. It may simply be accumulation.



One responsibility becomes five. One disappointment is followed by another.

We absorb another person's problem, add another commitment, carry another concern, replay another conversation, and worry about another possible future.

Eventually we are carrying emotional and spiritual weight God never intended us to carry indefinitely.

This is why Hebrews does not merely say, “**Try harder to run.**” It says to remove unnecessary weight.

Imagine a runner preparing for a race while wearing a backpack filled with things he refuses to remove. Training harder will help only so much. At some point the question becomes obvious:

Why are you still carrying that?

The same question can become deeply spiritual.

Some believers are asking God for more strength to carry something God may actually be asking them to lay down.



GROUP DISCUSSION

1. How do we know when God wants us to carry something and when He wants us to let it go?

2. If you honestly asked, “What is making my heart unnecessarily heavy right now?” what would immediately come to mind?



LIFE APPLICATION

Prayerfully consider your responsibilities, worries, relationships, disappointments, commitments, and expectations. Some responsibilities are genuinely yours and require faithfulness. Others may be burdens you have assumed that God never assigned to you.

Ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom to know the difference.
Faithfulness does not mean carrying everything. Sometimes faithfulness means knowing what to put down.

Mine to Carry

Mine to Release



2. SOME WEIGHT MUST BE GIVEN TO GOD

Psalm 55:22

Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.

1 Peter 5:6-7

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

The picture is not merely of God giving us greater endurance while we continue carrying every burden ourselves. Scripture invites us to actually transfer the weight.

Peter's instruction becomes even more powerful when we read the preceding verse: “**Humble yourselves...under the mighty hand of God.**” Then comes, “**casting all your anxiety on Him.**” Apparently, surrendering anxiety requires *humility*. Why?



Because worry often contains an assumption that we must somehow control what happens next. We replay the problem because we believe continued mental attention will eventually produce control. We imagine every possibility because we hope preparation will eliminate uncertainty.

But trust eventually admits, “There are things I cannot control, people I cannot change, outcomes I cannot guarantee, and futures I cannot see.” Then faith places those things into the hands of Someone who can carry what we cannot.

This does not mean we become irresponsible. We still pray, plan, work, apologize, seek counsel, make decisions, and take whatever action obedience requires.

But after doing what God has actually given us to do, we refuse to carry God's responsibilities as though they were ours.

There is a difference between **concern** and **control**.

Concern can lead us to prayer and wise action.

Control keeps us mentally carrying something long after we have done everything God has asked us to do.



GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Why might casting our anxieties upon God require *humility*? What are we admitting about ourselves—and about God—when we truly release something to Him?

2. Is there something you have prayed about but are still mentally carrying as though the final outcome depends entirely upon you? What would surrender look like?



LIFE APPLICATION

Choose one burden you have been carrying and deliberately turn it into prayer every time it returns to your mind.

Instead of rehearsing the problem, pray: **“Father, I have done what You have asked me to do. What I cannot control, I place into Your hands.”**

You may have to surrender the same burden repeatedly. That does not mean you failed the first time. Sometimes surrender is not a single moment but a repeated decision to return the weight to God whenever we pick it back up.



3. JESUS DOES NOT PROMISE A WEIGHTLESS LIFE

Matthew 11:28-30

Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and **YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS**. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light

Jesus gives one of Scripture's most beautiful invitations:

“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.”

But notice what Jesus says next. He does not say, “Come to Me and you will never carry anything again.”

He says, **“Take My yoke upon you.”**

Jesus replaces one kind of weight with another.

A yoke was designed to enable work. Jesus therefore is not offering a life without responsibility, obedience, sacrifice, or effort. He is inviting us to stop living beneath the crushing weight of life apart from Him and to learn how to carry life **with Him**.



That distinction changes everything.

There are burdens that crush us because we were never designed to carry them. But there are also responsibilities that become possible because Christ carries them with us.

Jesus describes Himself as “**gentle and humble in heart**” and says, “**My yoke is easy and My burden is light.**”

The word “easy” carries the sense of something kind or well-fitting. His yoke fits the life He calls us to live because we are not pulling alone.

This means spiritual freedom is not the absence of responsibility. It is the discovery of **rightly ordered responsibility under the leadership of Jesus.**

Some weight needs to be laid aside.

Some weight needs to be cast upon God.

And some weight is ours to faithfully carry...

but never without Christ.



GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Jesus promises rest but then immediately gives His followers a yoke. What does this teach us about the difference between biblical rest and simply escaping responsibility?

2. How might a responsibility you currently find exhausting change if you approached it as something you are carrying with Christ rather than something you must carry alone?



LIFE APPLICATION

Return to the two columns you created earlier. Add a third:
“Mine to Carry With Jesus.”

There may be a responsibility you cannot abandon—a family responsibility, ministry assignment, difficult season, work obligation, or person God has genuinely called you to love.

Instead of asking only for God to remove it, pray for Him to teach you how to carry it under His yoke.



BRINGING IT HOME

CHECK THE WEIGHT

Aircraft have weight limits for a reason. What an aircraft carries affects how it performs.

So does what we carry.

Some things need repentance because they are **sin**.
Some need removal because they have become unnecessary **weight**.

Some need surrender because they belong in **God's hands**. And some responsibilities remain ours, but Jesus invites us to carry them **with Him**.

Personal Reflection

- What have I been carrying that God never asked me to carry?
- What worry am I attempting to control instead of surrendering?
- What responsibility has God genuinely entrusted to me that I need to learn to carry with Christ rather than alone?



L.I.F.T. has taught us to **LOVE, IMITATE, FIGHT**, and **TRUST**.

Sometimes loving God means releasing what has competed for our hearts. Imitating Jesus means learning His unhurried dependence upon the Father. Fighting the good fight means refusing to become entangled again. Trusting God means putting into His hands what we cannot control.

You were never promised a weightless life.

But **you were never meant to carry the whole weight of life alone.**

Closing Prayer

Father, show us what we are carrying. Reveal the sin that must be confessed, the unnecessary weight that must be removed, the anxiety that must be surrendered, and the responsibilities You have genuinely entrusted to us. Forgive us for trying to control what belongs in Your hands.

Teach us to come to Jesus when we are weary and to live beneath His yoke rather than beneath burdens He never gave us. Help us lay aside every weight and run faithfully the race You have placed before us.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

