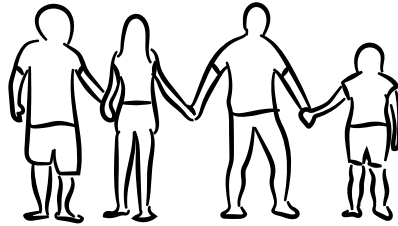
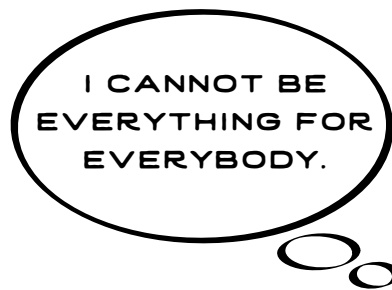


THE STRESS TRIFECTA

One helpful exercise is to identify where your stress is coming from. While many things may cause you stress, much of it can be boiled down to three primary culprits: relationships, time, and money.



RELATIONSHIPS: People, especially during Advent, pull us in many different directions. To make others happy, many, including myself, find it easy to say “yes” to everybody else’s requests. So, here’s what you need to tell yourself:



Only God can satisfy someone’s deepest needs and longings. So, this may sound harsh initially, but you need to decide ahead of time who gets to be in a relationship with you and at what level. This pre-decision will help eliminate so much unnecessary stress. Modern-day research shows a person can only maintain 5-10 deep relationships. Who are those people for you?

Indeed, we don’t need to be rude to others who may not fall into that category, but even Jesus prioritized relationships. He had a group of 72 dedicated followers with

whom he spent much time. But, his most commonly known group was the twelve disciples. They got more access than the 72. Of the twelve, he had a group of three: Peter, James, and John. And, of course, he would often get away and spend time with his clear #1, God the Father.



TIME: If your life is like mine, then there is no busier season filled with more options of things to do than the Advent season. Between all of the people who need my time to uphold the many traditions that come alongside the season, it’s too much. By the time I get to Christmas Eve, I’m exhausted. This sprint to get through the season reminds me that something isn’t right. So, just like we had a declaration with relationships, we have one with time. Say this to yourself:



Again, similar to relationships, you need to decide what you will do with your time ahead of time. If you don’t, other people’s priorities will quickly become yours. I’ve noticed that nobody genuinely asks me to care for my needs or priorities. The emails, texts, messages, or phone calls I receive are to help take care of other people’s issues. As a follower of Jesus, I want to help others, but I can only be the best help if I’m healthy.