



# RESILIENCE:

FINDING WHOLENESS IN MINISTRY  
BY WAY OF THE CROSS

**STUDY:**

Preparing for Resilient Ministry

*Small Group Participant's Workbook*

@2020 by Grand Rapids Theological Seminary of Cornerstone University

This study guide may be downloaded, printed, and reproduced by churches, ministry organizations, and educational institutions.

Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. [www.zondervan.com](http://www.zondervan.com) The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

Scripture quotations marked MSG are taken from THE MESSAGE, copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by Eugene H. Peterson. Used by permission of NavPress. All rights reserved. Represented by Tyndale House Publishers, a Division of Tyndale House Ministries.

Curriculum Development: The GoodWorks Group, LLC

Videography: Eric Schrotenboer

Video Editing: Owen Longjohn and Joey Hidalgo

Graphic Design: Cornerstone University Marketing and Communications Office



# Preparing for Resilient Ministry

## OVERVIEW

The goal of this study is to prepare students for resilient ministry by helping them set healthy expectations and create good habits while in training. Instructors could integrate this study into a ministry formation class or established co-curricular program.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this study, participants will be able to

- + Compare their perceptions of ministry with pastors' lived experiences of ministry;
- + Identify what some pastors describe to be the challenges of ministry;
- + Explain how their relationship with God affects their resilience in ministry; and
- + Make a plan for sustaining a resilient ministry.

### LESSONS

- + Being a Pastor
- + Joys and Challenges in Ministry
- + Time Management
- + Heart Management
- + Resilient Ministry
- + Wholeness by Way of the Cross

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- + Internet access for videos
- + Computer, projector, and/or speakers to show videos
- + Whiteboard, poster board, or large sticky notes
- + Dry erase or bold markers

# Being a Pastor

### LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, you will reflect on your perceptions of pastoral ministry by comparing them with pastors' lived experiences.

### SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: EPHESIANS 4:11-12

### INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Reflect on this question: How would you describe the work of a pastor to someone unfamiliar with ministry? Try to describe the work of a pastor using an image that is completely unrelated to the tasks and responsibilities of ministry.

+ Being a pastor is like \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

### SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Divide into small groups of three to four individuals.

Share with your group what you wrote about the work of a pastor. Then, respond to the following questions as a group.

+ What are some common themes that you noticed in your descriptions?

- + What do these common themes indicate about your perceptions of pastoral work?

## VIDEO

Watch the video, “Being a Pastor.”

After watching the video, write down what stood out to you as the pastors described their ministries.

+

+

+

## SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Compare what you heard in the video with how you described the work of a pastor on the previous page. Respond to the questions below in your small group.

- + In what ways do your perceptions of ministry align with what you heard?

- + In what ways do your perceptions of ministry differ from what you heard?



# Preparing for Resilient Ministry

## LEARNING LOG

Answer the following questions to reflect on and apply what you learned in this lesson.

- + In what ways does Ephesians 4:11-12 relate to being a pastor or ministry leader?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- + What questions about being a pastor or ministry leader emerged for you during this lesson?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- + What in this lesson encouraged you?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- + Why do you want to be a pastor or ministry leader?



# Joys and Challenges in Ministry

## LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, you will consider the joys and challenges of ministry so that you can develop healthy expectations about what you might encounter in the future.

## SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: 1 TIMOTHY 4:1-10

## LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

### Part 1

Respond to the following questions as a large group.

- + What most excites you about working in ministry?
- + Where do you think you will discover the most joy in your work?

Reflect on the responses. What common themes or categories do you observe? Share your ideas with the group.

### Part 2

Respond to the following questions as a large group.

- + What do you think will be some of the biggest challenges in ministry?
- + What activities could zap your energy or drain you?

Reflect on the responses. What common themes or categories do you observe? Share your ideas with the group.



# Preparing for Resilient Ministry

## VIDEO

Watch the videos, “Joys of Ministry” and “Challenges of Ministry.”

As you watch this video, take notes in the table below on what the pastors say brings them joy and zaps their energy in ministry. You may be asked to share what you observed with the large group.

Brings Joy	Zaps Energy

## LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Compare your notes from the video to the lists on the board.

- + What are the similarities?



✚ What are the differences?



Answer the following questions to reflect on and apply what you learned in this lesson.

- + What surprised you as you reflected on the joys and challenges of ministry?
- + To what extent do you think personality type or temperament shape what brings joy versus what zaps energy in ministry?
- + Based on what you know to be true of yourself, what do you think will bring you joy in ministry?
- + Based on what you know to be true of yourself, what do you think will zap your energy in ministry?

# Time Management

## LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, you will reflect on your perceptions of how pastors and ministry leaders allocate their time.

## SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: PSALM 90

## INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY

It's five years from now, and you work in full-time ministry as a pastor or ministry leader (senior or solo pastor, discipleship pastor, children's ministry director, worship arts pastor, or executive pastor, for example). What does your weekly schedule look like? Using the planner below, illustrate how you believe you will allocate your time.

Time	S	M	T	W	R	F	S
Morning							
Midday							
Afternoon							
Evening							

## INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Examine your weekly schedule. What might your schedule indicate about your values, priorities, and preferences in your future ministry work?

+ Values:

+ Priorities:

+ Preferences:

## EXPLORATION

Interview two full-time pastors or ministry leaders you know. Ask them to describe what their schedule looks like in a typical week. Some prompts have been provided below, but you can add your own questions. You may record notes from your interviews on the following page.

**Prompt 1:** Let's say I were to shadow you for seven days. What activities might I find you doing during a typical week? About how much time do you allot to these activities?

**Prompt 2:** If you had to make a pie chart to depict the amount of time you give to work activities during the week, how would you divide the time?

## INTERVIEW #1

Interview with: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

## INTERVIEW #2

Interview with: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

## INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

- + What did you learn from the two people you interviewed?
- + How would you compare their weekly schedules with the one you created at the beginning of this lesson?

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Divide into small groups of three to four individuals. Then, respond to the following questions.

- + As you reflect on the interviews you conducted, what surprised you about how those pastors or ministry leaders described their schedules and activities?
- + As you reflect on the interviews, what did you confirm about what you already thought to be true about time management in ministry?
- + What do you think will be some of the biggest time management challenges for you in ministry? Why?



# Preparing for Resilient Ministry

## LEARNING LOG

Answer the following questions to reflect on and apply what you learned in this lesson.

- + In what ways has this activity challenged your perceptions about how pastors and ministry leaders spend their time?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- + How might Psalm 90 offer us wisdom for allocating our time?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- + What are some habits or skills you can begin cultivating now that will help you steward your time well when you are in ministry?



# Heart Management

## LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, you will discover the importance of paying attention to your heart as preparation for ministry.

## SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: 1 TIMOTHY 4:11-16

## LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

Respond to the following questions as a large group.

- + What do you think will be the most important knowledge, skills, and attitudes you will need for your future ministry work? Make a list for each category (knowledge, skills, and attitudes).

## SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Divide into small groups of three to four individuals. As a small group, come to a consensus about the three most important types of knowledge, three most important skills, and three most important attitudes needed for effective ministry. You will share your rankings with the large group.

	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
1			
2			
3			

## LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

Invite one member from each small group to share their rankings. Listen for common themes or patterns as the groups share.

Next, respond to the following question:

- + What aspects of your ministry training do you think will equip you to be most effective in your work? Why?

## VIDEO

Watch the video, “Discerning My Own Heart.” In this video, Pastor Mark Shaw offers advice for seminary students and describes the training he wishes he had in preparation for ministry.

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Divide into small groups of three to four individuals. Consider the following questions:

- + How would you summarize, in your own words, what Mark Shaw said?
- + How did his comments compare to what we have listed in terms of the most important knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for ministry?
- + How did his comments relate to the aspects of ministry training we identified as helping us be most effective?
- + Why do you think it is important to focus on your personal walk with God while in ministry?
- + Mark Shaw said he wished he had more training on discerning his own heart and addressing his own wounds. Why do you think this sort of training is important?
- + What are some resources available to you for cultivating your personal walk with God or learning how to discern your heart and address your wounds?



# Preparing for Resilient Ministry

## LEARNING LOG

Answer the following questions to reflect on and apply what you learned in this lesson.

- + What steps are you currently taking to develop your personal walk with God?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- + What practices or activities will help you cultivate your walk with God when you are working in ministry?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- + How well are you doing when it comes to examining your own heart?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- + Who are the people who could help you examine your heart and your wounds as you prepare for ministry?

# Resilient Ministry

## LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, participants will discover what resilience is, why it's important to ministry, and how to pursue it.

## SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

## INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Which of the following images makes you think of resilience? Why?



## DISCUSSION IN PAIRS

Turn to a neighbor. Share which picture you chose and why.

## VIDEO

Watch the video, “How Pastors Define Resilience.”

## DISCUSSION IN PAIRS

Turn to your neighbor and share what the video added to your understanding of resilience and the importance of resilience in ministry.

## SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

When asked to describe resilience, Pastor Joy Bonnema quoted Paul’s prayer from Colossians 1:11-12. Spend a few minutes meditating on this passage. You might copy it onto a notecard and reflect on it as you take a walk. You might attempt to memorize it. Or you might use an ancient practice like *Lectio Divina* to read it slowly and prayerfully.

“We pray that you’ll have the strength to stick it out over the long haul—not the grim strength of gritting your teeth but the glory-strength God gives. It is strength that endures the unendurable and spills over into joy, thanking the Father who makes us strong enough to take part in everything bright and beautiful that he has for us.” (Colossians 1:11-12, *The Message*)



# Preparing for Resilient Ministry

---

## DISCUSSION IN PAIRS

With a partner, respond to the following questions.

- + What were some of your thoughts or impressions as you meditated on Colossians 1:11-12?
- + How do you see Colossians 1:11-12 as relating to resilient ministry?





# Preparing for Resilient Ministry

---

## LEARNING LOG

Complete the following activity to reflect on and apply what you learned in this lesson.

Turn your thoughts, imprecisions, and the words of Colossians 1:11-12 into a prayer for your resilience in ministry. Write your prayer in the space below.

# Wholeness in Ministry

## LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, participants will explore the connection between wellbeing, resilience, and the way of the cross.

## SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: 2 CORINTHIANS 4

## LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Respond to the following questions as a group.

- + Based on what you know of Paul's ministry, what sorts of challenges did he and his colleagues face?
- + What events and circumstances threatened their wellbeing? (Hint: Consider Acts 16:16-40, 17:1-9, 21:1-16, 22:30-11, 27:27-44, and 28:17-31.)
- + What are some threats to ministers' wellbeing today?

## SCRIPTURE STUDY

Read 2 Corinthians 4. Note any words or phrases that relate to resilience as well as any words or phrases that relate to threats to wellbeing. You may make notes in the space provided on the following page.

+ Resilience:

+ Threats to wellbeing:

Paul begins and ends this passage with the phrase “we do not lose heart.” How does that phrase relate to the idea of resilience in ministry? What reasons does Paul give for their resilience?

## VIDEO

Watch the video, “Pursuing Wholeness by Way of the Cross.” Listen as these pastors describe how they understand the connection between resilience and finding wholeness by way of the cross.

## LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

As a group, respond to the following questions.

- + What resonated with you as these pastors talked about finding wholeness by way of the cross?
- + In what ways does what they shared relate to Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 4?
- + What gets in the way of our pursuing union with Christ?
- + How can we pursue union with Christ?
- + What is the relationship between resilience in ministry and the way of the cross?

## LEARNING LOG

Complete the following activities to reflect on and apply what you learned in this lesson.

- + In the space below, draw a picture that represents your experience of union with Christ. (Use words sparingly, if at all.)

- + What do you desire in terms of experiencing union with Christ?



- + What threatens your experience of union with Christ?
- + In what ways can your experience of union with Christ equip you for resilient ministry?
- + What practices or people could help you move toward a deeper experience of union with Christ?