

RESILIENCE:

FINDING WHOLENESS IN MINISTRY
BY WAY OF THE CROSS

STUDY:

Wellbeing for Leadership Teams

Small Group Participant's Workbook

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Grand Rapids
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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Wellbeing for Leadership Teams

OVERVIEW

The goal of this study is to help ministry leadership teams understand what wellbeing is, why it is important, and how to cultivate it. During this study, leaders will reflect on their level of wellbeing and experiment with self-care practices. Leaders will also have an opportunity to reflect on the health of their teams.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

- + Reflect on the appropriateness of self-care for lay leaders;
- + Examine their self-care practices;
- + List new practices that may enhance their wellbeing;
- + Begin to cultivate two new self-care practices;
- + Make a plan for continued engagement in self-care;
- + Reflect on the health of their teams.

LESSONS

- + What Is Wellbeing?
- + Pursuing Wellbeing: Four Steps
- + Rest
- + Play
- + Prayer
- + Leadership Teams: Learning from Scripture

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



What Is Wellbeing?

LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, you will compare your understanding of wellbeing to what researchers have discovered about it. You will also reflect on your sense of wellbeing.

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: PROVERBS 2:1-11

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Divide into small groups of 3-4 people. With your small group, try to come up with a definition 'wellbeing'. Write your definition on a large sticky-note or poster to share with the group.

Wellbeing is _____
_____.

- + What common themes do you observe among the definitions?

- + What do you think contributes to a person's sense of wellbeing?



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VIDEO

Watch the video, “Four Components of Wellbeing.” Dr. Matt Bloom offers a research-based framework for understanding wellbeing. You may take notes in the space provided below.

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

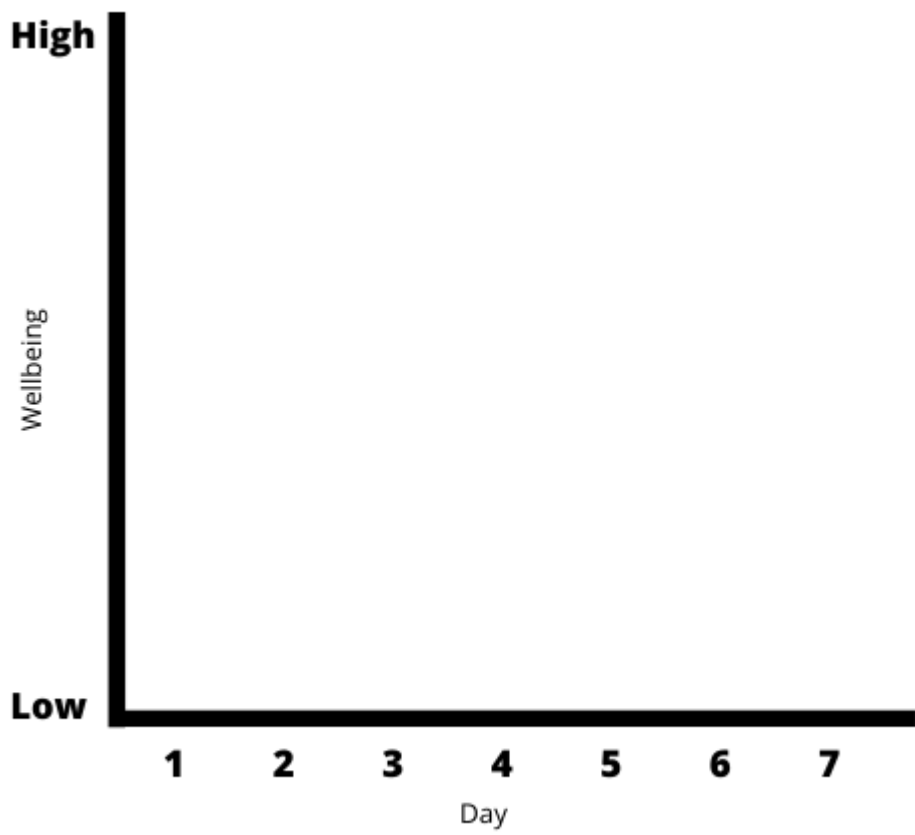
- + In the video, Dr. Bloom described four components of wellbeing. What were they?
- + In what ways do these four components of wellbeing relate to the definitions and lists we generated earlier?
- + What resonated for you in how Dr. Bloom described wellbeing?
- + What did his framework add to your understanding of wellbeing?



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SELF-ASSESSMENT

Dr. Bloom challenges leaders to “step back” in order to assess their level of wellbeing. On the chart below, plot your daily wellbeing from the last week, indicating if it was high or low.

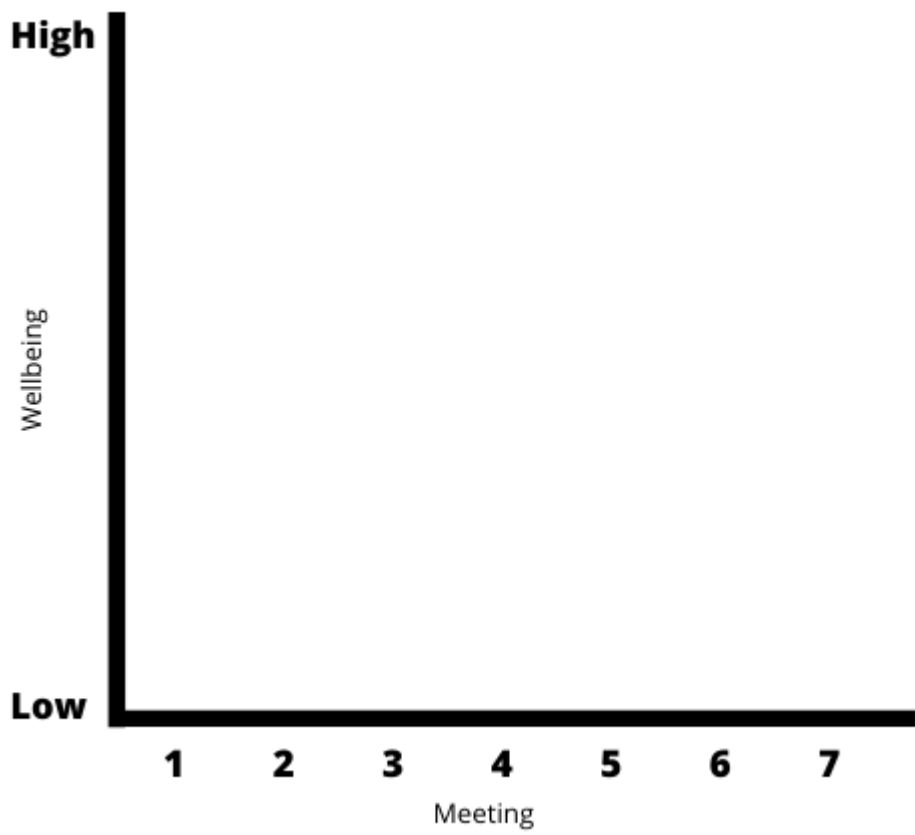




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TEAM ASSESSMENT

How would you assess your leadership team's wellbeing. Reflect on your last few meetings. Then, indicating if your team wellbeing was high or low.





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LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Share your chart of your team's wellbeing with the group. Then, discuss your assessments using the following questions.

- + To what extent do team members agree on the team's level of wellbeing?
- + What sorts of activities/events/relationships seem to enhance the wellbeing of the team?
- + What sorts of activities/events/relationships seem to erode the wellbeing of the team?
- + What could be the relationship between an individual's wellbeing and the wellbeing of the team?



Pursuing Wellbeing

LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, you will discover four ways to enhance your wellbeing and then assess your wellbeing practices.

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: PROVERBS 4:1-9

LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

Imagine a friend comes to you and confesses that they feel absolutely exhausted, nearly burned out from serving in ministry. What advice would you offer to your friend in terms of ways to pursue wellbeing?

VIDEO

Watch the video, “Four Simple Steps” in which Dr. Matt Bloom describes four steps you can take to enhance your wellbeing. While many of Dr. Bloom’s examples pertain to pastors, these steps are relevant for lay leaders as well. Take notes in the space provided below.

+ Step 1:

+ Step 2:

+ Step 3:



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- + Step 4:

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Review the four steps Dr. Bloom shared. Then, consider what is going well and which steps you might need to take. You can use the chart below to organize your thoughts.

Step	What is going well?	What else might you do?
1		
2		
3		
4		

- + Of the four steps Dr. Bloom described, which is a growth area for you?

- + What do you discern to be some of the small steps God is calling you to take to enhance your wellbeing?



Rest

LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, you will consider the role of rest in enhancing your wellbeing.

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: PSALM 91

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

One of the small steps Dr. Matt Bloom mentioned that helps with resilience specifically and wellbeing generally is getting adequate rest. Answer the following questions.

- + When do you tend to rest?

- + What do you do when you rest? (Circle all that apply.)
 - + Sleep/nap
 - + Read a book
 - + Watch TV
 - + Listen to music/podcasts
 - + Hobby (gardening, models, painting, photography, cooking)
 - + Exercise

- + Place a mark on each of the continuums below to describe the quality of your rest.

Inadequate-----Adequate

Not Restorative-----Restorative



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VIDEO

Watch the video, “Making Time for Rest,” in which Pastor Joy Bonnema shares a strategy she learned for establishing healthy rhythms of rest. Take notes in the space provided.

- + _____ daily,
- + _____ weekly,
- + _____ monthly, and
- + _____ annually.¹

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Divide into small groups of 3-4 individuals. Reflect on what Joy Bonnema shared in the video.

- + Which is the easiest or most natural for you?
- + Which is the most challenging? Why do you think that is?
- + What sorts of conversations or changes need to take place in order to make all four a reality for you?

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Discuss your team’s practice of rest as a large group. Use the questions below as a conversation guide.

- + How might any one team member’s practice of rest affect the wellbeing of the team?
- + How would you evaluate your team’s rhythms of work and rest?
- + How can you practice rest as a team?

¹ On August 17, 2009, Rick Warren tweeted this framework as a strategy to avoid burnout. The strategy has been widely attributed to him.



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PRACTICE

Read Mark 2:27. Ask God to show you what he wants you to learn about rest.

If you are comfortable, meditate on the verse by repeating it silently as you breathe.

- + *(Inhale)* “The Sabbath was made for man,
- + *(Exhale)* not man for the Sabbath.”

Try to continue this form of Scripture meditation for at least five minutes.

- + What do you believe God wants to say to you about rest?



Play

LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, you will consider the role of play in enhancing your wellbeing and your team's wellbeing.

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: ECCLESIASTES 11:7-10

LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

Write down the first five words or phrases that come to mind when you hear the word “play.” You will be asked to share with the group.

- + Reflect on what you wrote. How many of those words or phrases relate to activities you do on a regular basis?

DISCUSSION IN PAIRS

Turn to a neighbor and share your answer to the following questions.

- + Should leaders engage in play? Why or why not?



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VIDEO

For his doctoral dissertation, Dr. Danjuma Gibson studied Frederick Douglass's autobiographies to understand, from a psychological perspective, Douglass's resilience. In this video, "Time for Play," Dr. Gibson shares about one of three themes that emerged from his research.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Divide into small groups of 3-4 individuals. Then, discuss the video by responding to the questions below.

- + How did Dr. Gibson define "play" in the video?
- + In what ways could that sort of play be beneficial to leaders?
- + In what ways do you engage in the sort of play Dr. Gibson described?
- + If you don't engage in this sort of play, what imaginative or creative activity would you like to incorporate into your wellbeing practices? What resources or support do you need to get started?
- + To what extent does your leadership team play together?
- + In what ways might play enhance your team's work and leadership?

LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

Make a plan for a time of play as a team. Some ideas are provided below.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| + Movie night | + Cooking class |
| + Game night | + Improv class |
| + Sports league | + Sporting event |
| + Escape room | + Scavenger hunt |
| + Ropes course | + Art show or museum visit |
| + Group hike | + City tour |
| + Beach day | + Offsite retreat |
| + Pottery or painting class | + Karaoke |



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INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE

Set aside at least 30 minutes this week to engage in the sort of play Dr. Gibson described in his video. Then, reflect on your practice by answering the questions below.

- + What sort of imaginative or creative activity did you do?

- + How did you feel while doing the activity?

- + How did you feel after the activity?

- + What benefits, if any, did you notice?

- + What is your plan for continuing to incorporate play into your wellbeing practices?



Prayer

LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, you will consider the role of prayer in enhancing your wellbeing.

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: PSALM 102:1-2

DISCUSSION IN PAIRS

The youth minister asked you to teach the high school class about spiritual disciplines, and you chose to focus on prayer. At the end of your presentation, Susie Jones raises her hand and asks you how you pray and what you pray for. How do you respond?

Turn to a neighbor and share your response.

LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

Based on what you know about different spiritual disciplines, Christian practices, and traditions, make a list of different types or forms of prayer.



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VIDEO

Watch the video, “Rethinking Spiritual Practices,” in which Dr. Matt Bloom describes how spiritual practices, such as prayer, can impact a leader’s wellbeing.

DISCUSSION IN PAIRS

Turn to a neighbor and share your responses to the following questions.

- + How do you respond to what Dr. Bloom said about intercessory prayer and Scripture study?
- + In what ways might you need to shape your prayer practices so that they’re more likely to support your wellbeing?
- + Dr. Bloom mentioned several prayer practices such as centering prayer and the Prayer of Examine. What prayer practices have you tried and found to be life-enriching?

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

As a large group, reflect on your team’s prayer practices by responding to the questions below.

- + How much time does your team spend praying together?
- + How do you pray and what do you pray for?



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INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE

If you are comfortable, spend 10-20 minutes practicing centering prayer.

- + Find a quiet, comfortable space to sit.
- + Consider choosing a word or phrase to remind you to focus on God and being in his presence. Examples: Father, God Who Sees, Faithfulness, God with Us, Peace, Be Still.
- + As thoughts enter your mind, return to your word or phrase and again focus on being in the presence of God.

If you are new to centering prayer, you may wish to start with 10 minutes. Try to practice centering prayer every day for one week. At the end of the week, respond to the following questions.

- + How was your experience with centering prayer?
- + In what ways did centering prayer contribute to your wellbeing this week?
- + What are some of the challenges you face in making centering prayer part of your regular rhythm?
- + What could be the benefits of practicing centering prayer regularly?



Leadership Teams: Learning from Scripture

LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, you will examine Scripture for lessons on team leadership and consider them in light of the topic of wellbeing.

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: PSALM 133

GROUP PRACTICE

Begin this lesson with 10 minutes of centering prayer.

- + Find a quiet, comfortable space to sit.
- + Consider choosing a word or phrase to remind you to focus on God and being in his presence. Examples: Father, God Who Sees, Faithfulness, God with Us, Peace, Be Still.
- + As thoughts enter your mind, return to your word or phrase and again focus on being in the presence of God.
- + At the conclusion of the prayer time, invite participants to share any thoughts or impressions they had.



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LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

As a group, brainstorm examples of leadership teams in the Bible. Then, decide whether each team tended towards health or unhealth in the way they worked together.

Team	Health or Unhealth

SCRIPTURE STUDY: PART 1

Complete the Scripture study individually or as a group.

Ministry leadership teams are part of a larger team, the church; therefore, this study begins with a brief exploration of Peter’s teaching on the church. Peter wrote to Christians who had been scattered throughout the Roman world because of persecution. In 1 Peter 1, he reminds them of their call to holiness and exhorts them to faithful obedience. In chapter 2, Peter reminds them of their identity as the people of God.

Read 1 Peter 2:9-12. Then, answer the questions that follow.

- + What words does Peter use to describe the church?



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- + What is the purpose of the church?
- + What are to be some of the defining characteristics of the church?
- + What do you think is the role of ministry leadership teams when it comes to the purpose and defining characteristics of the church?

SCRIPTURE STUDY: PART 2

Complete the following Scripture study individual or in small groups of 3-4 people. For small groups, assign each group one passage to study. Each group will present what they learned to the whole group.

Read the following passages:

- + Numbers 13:1-25
- + Titus 1:5-9
- + 1 Peter 5:1-4

For each of the passages, try to answer the following questions:

- + Who are the leaders described in the passage?
- + In what ways do they work together as a team?
- + What purpose(s) does the leadership team serve?
- + In what ways does the purpose of the leadership team align with the purpose of the church?



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LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Each group will share what they discovered. Then, discuss what you learned in the Scripture studies using the following questions as a guide.

- + What key themes or ideas did you notice in the different passages?
- + For each of the teams we studied, what might have enhanced or eroded their wellbeing?
- + What else are you thinking about individual and team wellbeing in light of this Scripture study?
- + What are some takeaways for your leadership team?



NEXT STEPS

If you would like to continue to develop as a team, here are some excellent resources:

- + *Pursuing God's Will Together: A Discernment Practice for Leadership Groups* by Ruth Haley Barton
- + *Teams that Thrive: Five Practices of Collaborative Church Leadership* by Ryan T. Hartwig and Warren Bird
- + *Sticky Teams: Keeping Your Leadership Team and Staff on the Same Page* by Larry Osborne
- + *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable* by Patrick Lencioni