

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

BIBLICAL LEADERS: KEY PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPTS  
IN OVERCOMING AND MANAGING STRESS, DISTRESS, AND ANGUISH

A Thesis Project Submitted to  
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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

By

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LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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## ABSTRACT

### BIBLICAL LEADERS: KEY PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPTS IN OVERCOMING AND MANAGING STRESS, DISTRESS, AND ANGUISH.

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Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013

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The high turnover rate among clergy within the local church evidences the mismanagement of personal stress and distress associated with ministry. The purpose of this thesis project is to increase the effectiveness and longevity of ministers by offering them five principles for managing and overcoming their stress, distress, and anguish. If followed, these principles will successfully reduce the personal strain associated with ministry, thus encouraging clergy to remain where God has planted them to build long successful tenures. Based on surveys, personal perspectives, relevant literature, and biblical study, this project establishes essential principles and concepts for managing ministerial anguish, and offers advice regarding their implementation.

Abstract length: 105 words.

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## INTRODUCTION

According to H.B. London, Jr. and Neil B. Wiseman in their book *Pastors at Greater Risk*, the typical minister reaches his peak success and influence in years 5 through 14 of his ministry.<sup>1</sup> However, the average tenure for a pastor is only five years.<sup>2</sup> The turnover rate for clergy is extremely high. In a study through Fuller Theological Seminary, statistics demonstrated the following signs of trouble for clergy: 90 percent of pastors work more than 46 hours per week; 80 percent believe that pastoral ministry is affecting their families negatively; 33 percent say, “Being in ministry is clearly a hazard to my family;” 75 percent have reported a significant crisis due to stress at least once in their ministry; 50 percent felt unable to meet the needs of the ministry; 90 percent felt they were not adequately trained to cope with the ministry demands placed upon them; 40 percent reported at least one serious conflict with at least one parishioner at least once a month; 70 percent of pastors do not have someone they would consider a close friend; and 70 percent have a lower self-image after they have been in pastoral ministry than when they started.<sup>3</sup>

The author believes these troublesome statistics are indicators of the need for better stress management among clergy. First, pastors should see their calling as beneficial to their families. Ministry should not be a family hazard. Second, clergy should feel confident about meeting the demands of ministry. God will give them all of the necessary resources to fulfill their calling. Feeling unable to cope with the ministry demands placed upon them can lead to discouragement

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<sup>1</sup> H.B. London, Jr. and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1993), 34.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Fred Lehr, *Clergy Burnout* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2006), 4.

and the desire to give up and quit.<sup>4</sup> Third, the privilege of vocational ministry and the awareness of pleasing Christ should lead to a higher self-image instead of a lower one, “We do not know all of the contingencies [problems related to clergy burnout ], but let us not allow those difficulties to rid us of divine sense of calling that gives us our courage and authority.”

### **The Statement of the Problem**

John Bisagno, in his *Pastor's Handbook*, states, “For the young pastor, not yet battle hardened by the realities of life in ministry, the first reaction to problems may be to run. Opposition, criticism, misunderstanding, and conflict will be part of your daily fare.”<sup>5</sup> The author having served in full time vocational ministry as a pastor for eighteen years, and befriending many pastors along the way, believes this longing for escape found within stressed-out ministers, leads to short tenure pastorates. Consequently, short tenures produce instability within churches and clergy households, lack of trust surrounding the pastor/congregation relationship, and long-term ineffectiveness in areas of evangelism and discipleship.<sup>6</sup> Pastors burn out and their families suffer mentally, physically, financially, and spiritually.<sup>7</sup> Short tenure is a growing phenomenon that evidences the mismanagement of personal distress among ministers.<sup>8</sup> The definition of distress is anxiety, suffering, acute physical discomfort, and strain resulting from exhaustion or an accident.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Erwin W. Lutzer, *Pastor to Pastor* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1987), 13.

<sup>5</sup> John Bisagno, *Pastor's Handbook* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 86.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 101.

<sup>7</sup> Lutzer, 67-72.

<sup>8</sup> London and Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk*, 36-39.

<sup>9</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. “Distress.”

### **The Statement of Limitations**

Many books and commentaries have explored the biblical narratives concerning stress, distress, and anguish. Stress is a mentally or emotionally disruptive or disquieting influence.<sup>10</sup> Distress means to cause strain, anxiety, or suffering, to constrain by harassment, or severe strain resulting from exhaustion or an accident.<sup>11</sup> Anguish means an agonizing physical or mental torment.<sup>12</sup> According to their definitions, stress disrupts, distress harasses, and anguish torments. The author believes all three conditions affect clergy spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically with each condition building upon the other in terms of frequency and intensity with anguish being the final state. However, this project will only focus on four Old Testament leaders (Jeremiah, Asaph, Elijah, and Job) and research from ministerial surveys in the East Tennessee region.

This narrow approach poses a number of limitations. First, this project will not include an exhaustive commentary on every aspect of distress pertaining to the biblical characters. The purpose is to concentrate on distress management from relevant situations that are applicable for today's ministers. Second, the survey within the project is exclusive to the Baptist denomination and geographical area of eastern Tennessee. Moreover, the surveys contain confines based upon the amount of information and honesty provided by the participants.

Third, this project will employ an anonymous survey approach, which inhibits long-term analysis and evaluations. However, the author thinks the lack of extended observation will not limit the effectiveness of its principles because the strong biblical exposition and analysis secures the foundation and long-term effectiveness of the project.

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<sup>10</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. "Stress."

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, s.v. "Distress."

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, s.v. "Anguish."

### The Theoretical Basis for the Project

Vocational ministry is a calling with troubles many lay people cannot understand.<sup>13</sup> According to the data from the *Ministerial Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish*, clergy struggle with anguish (see figure 1). Only leaders engaged in the unique challenges of ministry can relate to this anguish: working with demanding deacons, equipping volunteer staff, meeting all the organizational challenges of pastoral ministry, holding staff accountable, and maintaining a positive attitude amidst unrealistic expectations.<sup>14</sup> Anguish has been a part of human history since the Fall of Adam and Eve.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, God's Word is the only lasting remedy for dealing with the problem of stress, distress, and anguish.<sup>16</sup>

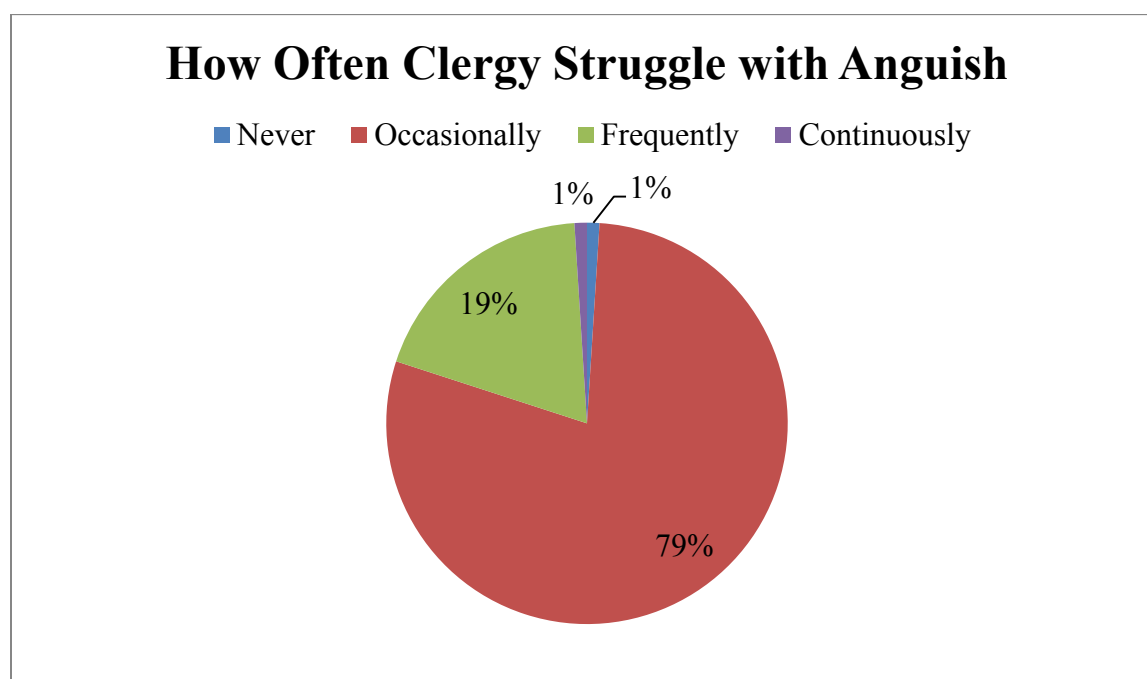


Figure 1. How often clergy struggle with anguish, surveyed in 2012

<sup>13</sup> Wilson and Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure*, 16.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Gen. 3 (New King James Version).

<sup>16</sup> 2 Tim. 3:16-17.

Ministers surveyed revealed several key factors that contribute to clergy anguish (see figure 2). The biblical narratives of Jeremiah, Asaph, Elijah, and Job contain similar causes of anguish and provide an abundance of information on the reasons for and the principles needed to manage stress, distress, and anguish. The author believes their narratives reveal their godliness, transparency, and leadership.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, they are ideal subjects for this Thesis project.

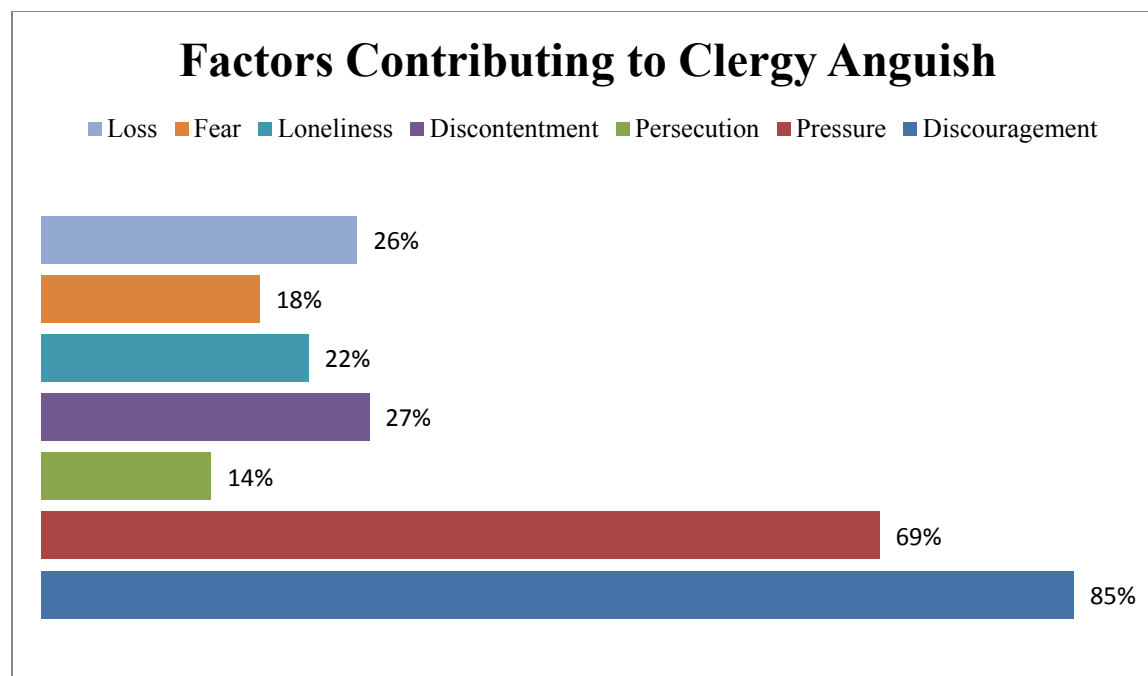


Figure 2. Factors contributing to clergy anguish, *Ministerial Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish*, surveyed in 2012

### The Statement of Methodology

The methodology for this project includes an analysis of the survey results, a comprehensive literature review, and a thorough study of the narratives of Jeremiah, Asaph, Elijah, and Job as they relate to managing, and overcoming stress, distress, and anguish. Understanding the causes of stress will aid in its management.<sup>18</sup> Chapter 1 will define and analyze the historical problem of anguish by discovering the factors that led to each biblical

<sup>17</sup> Jer. 11, 15:10-21; Ps. 73; 1 Kings 19; The Book of Job.

<sup>18</sup> Wilson and Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure*, 100-101.

leader's distress. A comparative analysis of Jeremiah, Asaph, Elijah, and Job will provide significant factors that contribute to the anguish of today's minister.

Chapter 2 will compile data from surveys received from 100 Southern Baptist clergy in the East Tennessee region to help aid in the purpose of the project, increasing the effectiveness and longevity of ministers by offering principles to manage stress, distress, and anguish. Too much stress leads to decreased effectiveness.<sup>19</sup> The research findings from the surveys will result in creating relative, tables, charts, and graphs that deal with stress, distress, and anguish.

Chapter 3 will explore key principles for managing distress. Lack of good stress management skills causes burnout and anguish.<sup>20</sup> The narratives of Jeremiah, Asaph, Elijah, and Job; the research data collected from the surveys; and a variety of literary sources related to the topic of ministerial anguish will form the basis of these stress management principles.<sup>21</sup>

Chapter 4 will evaluate the biblical leaders' (Jeremiah, Asaph, Elijah, and Job) recovery, and thankful responses to God's grace. This chapter will encourage recovering clergy, who experienced anguish, to respond in the same manner. Finally, a summary of the importance of the key principles for managing and overcoming stress, distress, and anguish will be presented.

### **Review of Literature**

This project incorporates a variety of literary sources related to the topic. Fred Lehr highlights the issues related to the topic of ministerial anguish in his book *Clergy Burnout*.<sup>22</sup> He explains the root causes of distress for clergy and the negative effects of codependence from the

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<sup>19</sup> Wilson and Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure*, 101.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Jer. 11, 15:10-21; Ps. 73; 1 Kings 19; The Book of Job.

<sup>22</sup> Lehr, *Clergy Burnout*.



perspective of both clergy and the church. He encourages ministers to move from codependence to independence, and he stresses the importance of regaining balance, establishing proper boundaries, and recovering power and purpose.<sup>23</sup>

*Preventing Ministry Failure* handles the concept of managing ministerial distress extremely well.<sup>24</sup> The authors examine the issues related to ministering steadfastness over the long haul. The authors supply the exercises and self-reflections for clergy to better equip themselves in the struggle to remain effective in ministry. Moreover, Wilson and Hoffman study the problems contributing to clergy burnout and moral failure and offer principles of prevention. They build their principles around seven foundation stones: Intimacy--Connecting to the Heart of Successful Pastoring; Calling--The Power For Effectiveness in Ministry; Stress Management--Avoiding Ineffectiveness and Burnout; Boundaries--Protecting What Matters Most; Re-Creation--The Fuel to Re-energize Ministry; People Skills--Managing Our Most Valuable Resource; and Leadership Skills--Setting Ministers Apart from The Rest of the Sheep.<sup>25</sup>

*The Emotionally Healthy Church* describes the nuances and challenges facing clergy who do not understand the connection of the spiritual life with the emotional life. The author addresses the hypocrisy and utter futility of ministering within the context of a local church or mission without an understanding or application of the principles of emotional maturity.<sup>26</sup> The book is about getting in touch with one's emotional side in order to change the superficial, shallow, spiritual climate that exists in many churches today. Scazzero takes the reader behind the scenes of the ministry and exposes the hurt, anger, disappointment, and conflict associated

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<sup>23</sup> Lehr, *Clergy Burnout*, 83-89.

<sup>24</sup> Wilson and Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure*.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 26-31.

<sup>26</sup> Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003).

with emotionally unhealthy people. First, the book paints a tremendous word picture concerning the current demands placed upon a pastor. One of the word pictures “How to Best Help People Who Jump off Bridges” describes the overwhelming burden of ministry as it relates to helping people in crisis situations who seem to only end up in other worse crisis situations later.<sup>27</sup>

Richard A. Swenson writes about the importance of ministers incorporating margin into their busy schedules in *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial and Time Reserve to Overloaded Lives*.<sup>28</sup> He examines the adverse effects that twentieth century progress has made upon the human condition and how the only solution to those detrimental consequences is margin. First, the premise of the book hinges on the current condition of so many people living in the United States: stress, anxiety, and disease. Second, the author explains the reasons for so many ailments in American culture. He ascribes this trend to margin-less living or overload.<sup>29</sup> Third, Swenson gives some very practical steps to creating margin. These practical steps for creating margin consist of, but are not limited to, the following: creating a budget, setting appropriate boundaries, laughing, crying, resting, dieting, practicing contentment, and following God’s vision for success instead of society’s.

*The Life You’ve Always Wanted* is about keeping Christ as the center of one’s life and not substituting information for transformation.<sup>30</sup> First, the author explains the difference between trying harder and training harder to achieve spiritual transformation by describing in detail the spiritual disciplines needed for authentic change. Ortberg identifies these spiritual disciplines as the practice of celebration, the practice of slowing, the practice of prayer, the practice of servant-

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<sup>27</sup> Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, 135.

<sup>28</sup> Richard A. Swenson, *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial and Time Reserve to Overloaded Lives* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2004).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>30</sup> John Ortberg, *The Life You’ve Always Wanted* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002).

hood, the practice of confession, the practice of secrecy, and the practice of reflection on Scripture.<sup>31</sup> Second, he gives an analysis and exposition of a transformed life working in guidance by the Holy Spirit and tested by suffering. The writer concludes with an exhortation for endurance in times of trials and suffering by pointing to Abraham's life, and more specifically the episode on Mt. Moriah as the ultimate example of perseverance and endurance.<sup>32</sup>

Reggie McNeal, in *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders* does an excellent job at illuminating and articulating the struggles faced by ministerial leaders.<sup>33</sup> He provides an assortment of leadership principles related to conflict in ministry. The conflict strategies located within this book strengthen the minister and provide key principles for dealing with anguish over conflict. He analyzes eight of them: (1) get over it, (2) choose your pain, (3) examine your critics, (4) look in the mirror, (5) get good advice, (6) be kind and honest, (7) forgive, and (8) make a decision.<sup>34</sup>

*Pastors at Greater Risk*, covers sensitive topics such as job stress, congregational turnover, immorality, and spiritual burnout.<sup>35</sup> The authors focus on recognizing, conquering, and overcoming the risks of ministry. *Defying Gravity: How to Survive the Storms of Pastoral Ministry* utilizes the analogy of a plane in flight to help pastors maintain a successful leadership altitude.<sup>36</sup> Henderson develops the analogy by describing a leader's dependence upon his instrument panel during the storms of ministry. He describes the nine gauges of successful

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<sup>31</sup> Ortberg, *The Life You've Always Wanted*, 41-173.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 208-222.

<sup>33</sup> Reggie McNeal, *A Work of Heart* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000).

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 154-174.

<sup>35</sup> London and Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk*.

<sup>36</sup> Daniel Henderson, *Defying Gravity: How to Survive the Storms of Pastoral Ministry* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2010).

ministry that must be trusted: (1) applied truth, (2) spiritual intimacy, (3) personal integrity, (4) biblical identity, (5) genuine accountability, (6) eternal significance, (7) healthy family life, (8) indispensable pain, and (9) a captivating call.

*The Pastor's Handbook* contains an abundance of information on the subject of pastoral ministry.<sup>37</sup> He provides the clergy with practical tools for leading people in spite of difficult circumstances. Bisagno expounds upon the minister's role and responsibility in leading the church. He describes the many different facets of pastoral ministry and provides key insights to managing the affairs of the church. His heart and experience as a pastor provides a wealth of wisdom.

*Well-Driven Nails* covers several aspects of a minister's role in preaching.<sup>38</sup> Yawn writes, "We must declare what God has said regardless of which group of people stand before us. Ironically to do that, we must preach with a sanctified disregard for their opinions."<sup>39</sup> The author elaborates upon the importance of preaching and the challenges facing clergy from the critics in the pews.

*Connecting: Healing for Ourselves and Our Relationships*, expounds upon the aspect of connecting with a community of believers.<sup>40</sup> He states the premise of the book, "Releasing the power of God through our lives into the hearts and souls of others requires that we both understand and enter into a kind of relating that only the gospel makes possible, a kind of

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<sup>37</sup> Bisagno, *Pastor's Handbook*.

<sup>38</sup> Byron Forrest Yawn, *Well-Driven Nails* (Greenville, SC: Ambassador International, 2010).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>40</sup> Larry Crabb, *Connecting: Healing for Ourselves and Our Relationships* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997).

relating that I call connecting.”<sup>41</sup> Crabb elaborates upon the idea that for pastors to overcome anguish, they must leave their caves and reconnect with other followers of Christ. Furthermore, he develops the concept that God intended the community of faith, not psychotherapists, trained counselors, or highly trained clergy, to connect with hurting people in order to bring about healing and change.

*Eat This Book* contains a surplus of material relating to spending time with God in His Word.<sup>42</sup> Peterson’s work helps clergy formulate a disciplined approach to Bible study, devotions, and prayer. He elaborates upon the metaphor of eating, chewing, savoring, and digesting the words from Scripture. He states, “Contemplation means living what we read, not wasting any of it or hoarding any of it, but using it up in living. It is a life formed by God’s revealing word, God’s word read and heard, meditated and prayed.”<sup>43</sup>

*Boundaries* provide some of the foundational elements of creating and maintaining boundaries and relationships.<sup>44</sup> The authors describe the principles associated with boundaries and the correlation between anguish and unhealthy relationships. The book contains key concepts related to maintaining proper emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual boundaries.

*Rest in the Storm* offers self-care strategies for ministers and clergy facing burnout.<sup>45</sup> The author submits biblical and practical advice beneficial to clergy facing the stress of ministry. The book contains several stories and testimonials from the trenches of pastoral ministry. *Becoming a Healthier Pastor* helps pastors to understand themselves better by helping them reconnect with

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<sup>41</sup> Crabb, *Connecting: Healing for Ourselves and Our Relationships*, 5.

<sup>42</sup> Eugene H. Peterson, *Eat This Book* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006).

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>44</sup> Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *Boundaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992).

<sup>45</sup> Kirk Byron Jones, *Rest in the Storm* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2001).

their family.<sup>46</sup>

*Ministry Nuts and Bolts: What They Don't Teach Pastors in Seminary*, offers practical advice on acquiring and improving a mission strategy.<sup>47</sup> *A Pastor's Guide to Interpersonal Communication: The Other Six Days*, focuses on helping pastors demonstrate love to people that are unlovable.<sup>48</sup> Neff covers relevant topics related to this project such as listening, forgiving, communicating, and managing church conflict.

Gary L. Harbaugh's book, *Pastor as Person: Maintaining Personal Integrity in the Choices and Challenges of Ministry* focuses on sensitive issues ministers face such as stress, dependency, anger, feelings, and faith.<sup>49</sup> William H. Willimon's book, *Calling and Character*, is about ministerial ethics.<sup>50</sup> He centers on the clergy's character and calling and offers insights and steps into preventing moral failure among clergy. Kevin W. Mannoia and Larry Walkemeyer's book, *15 Characteristics of Effective Pastors*, supplies insights and information about effective pastoral leadership.<sup>51</sup> The authors tackle the question, "What makes an effective pastor?" The authors expound on the connection between anguish and ineffective leadership.

David Hansen's book, *The Art of Pastoring: Ministry without all the Answers*, provides insights into the day-to-day messy world of ministers.<sup>52</sup> He provides guidance on when and how

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<sup>46</sup> Ronald W. Richardson, *Becoming a Healthier Pastor* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005).

<sup>47</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Ministry Nuts and Bolts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1997).

<sup>48</sup> Blake J. Neff, *A Pastor's Guide to Interpersonal Communication: The Other Six Days* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006).

<sup>49</sup> Gary L. Harbaugh, *Pastor as Person: Maintaining Personal Integrity in the Choices and Challenges of Ministry* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984).

<sup>50</sup> William H. Willimon, *Calling and Character* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000).

<sup>51</sup> Kevin W. Mannoia and Larry Walkemeyer, *15 Characteristics of Effective Pastors* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2007).

<sup>52</sup> David Hansen, *The Art of Pastoring Ministry Without All the Answers* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994).

to leave a ministry. John W. Frye's book, *Jesus the Pastor*, supplies information about rediscovering the ability to shepherd through the eyes of Jesus.<sup>53</sup> Frye explains how the Great Shepherd can equip and empower every pastor to handle spiritual disciplines, conflicts, and vision. Frye's approach benefits the dissertation because he explains the need for mentoring among pastors.

John Stott's book, *The Living Church: Convictions of a Lifelong Pastor*, helps pastors understand and apply the essential values of the early church to the pastoral ministry today.<sup>54</sup> He delivers encouragement and insight to clergy facing the temptation to leave or compromise their ministry. Stott's work encourages ministers to develop the church's mission around the core principles of Acts 2: teaching, fellowship, worship, and evangelism.

The principles for managing stress, distress, and anguish portrayed within this thesis project will have a strong Biblical foundation. Therefore, Biblical exposition derived from commentaries, Bible dictionaries, and biblical encyclopedias is essential. These resources provide insight, background, context, and theological understanding on Jeremiah's dejection in Jeremiah 15:10-21, Asaph's slippery steps in Psalm 73, Elijah's fleeing in 1 Kings 19:1-18, and Job's despair in Job 1-42.

Marvin E. Tate's commentary, *Psalms 51-100*, volume 20 of the *Word Biblical Commentary*, provides the form, structure, and setting of Psalm 73.<sup>55</sup> He supplies information and explanation regarding key phrases and rhetorical questions raised by Asaph: "And they say, 'How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?'"<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, he writes

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<sup>53</sup> John W. Frye, *Jesus the Pastor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000).

<sup>54</sup> John Stott, *The Living Church: Convictions of a Lifelong Pastor* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007).

<sup>55</sup> Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, vol. 20 of *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990).

<sup>56</sup> Ps. 73:11.

about staying on course and avoiding the pitfalls of ministry: “The power of the wicked is in large measure their ability to evoke jealous coveting in the hearts of the righteous.”<sup>57</sup>

The *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary* electronic database sets forth background information about Asaph as referenced in Psalm 73.<sup>58</sup> The Bible dictionary states that when the Ark of the Covenant was moved from Obed-Edom's house, under the direction of King David, to Jerusalem, Asaph sounded cymbals.<sup>59</sup> His family was one out of three who had the responsibility of preparing music and songs for Temple worship.<sup>60</sup>

*Barnes' Notes* found within the PC Study Bible electronic database offers a unique insight into the mindset of Asaph.<sup>61</sup> “For there are no pangs in their death, but their strength is firm.”<sup>62</sup> The word *pangs* refers to a band or cord drawn tight causing torture with pain when twisted.<sup>63</sup> Asaph did not believe the wicked appeared to suffer in proportion to their evil.<sup>64</sup>

C.H. Spurgeon's *The Treasury of David, Volume II* furnishes more insight into the psalmist's description of the wicked.<sup>65</sup> The psalmist describes the wicked oppressor's outward appearance by explaining their pangs in death.<sup>66</sup> *Pangs* is a Hebrew word for ropes or bonds.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, vol. 20 of *Word Biblical Commentary*, 237.

<sup>58</sup> *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, CD-ROM, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986).

<sup>59</sup> 1 Chron. 15:16-19.

<sup>60</sup> 1 Chron. 25:1-9.

<sup>61</sup> *Barnes' Notes, PC Study Bible*, CD-ROM, version 4.0 (Seattle, WA: Biblesoft Inc., 2003).

<sup>62</sup> Ps. 73:4.

<sup>63</sup> *Barnes' Notes*.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>65</sup> C.H. Surgeon, *The Treasury of David*, vol. II (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988), 258-259.

<sup>66</sup> Ps. 73:4.

<sup>67</sup> Surgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 258.



They have nothing binding them unto death such as sickness and disease. Their bodies are strong even until the end.<sup>68</sup>

The *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary* found within the PC Study Bible electronic database supplies more understanding into Asaph's perplexity.<sup>69</sup> "Their eyes bulge with abundance; they have more than heart could wish."<sup>70</sup> The rich, pampered, lifestyles of the wicked distracted Asaph.<sup>71</sup>

The *Adam Clark Commentary* electronic database presents a key component to clergy anguish: the practice of the wicked being overly critical and judgmental.<sup>72</sup> The commentary explains Asaph's perception of the wicked as continuously judging and finding fault with God and His people.<sup>73</sup>

George Arthur Buttrick's Commentary, *Psalms, Proverbs*, which is volume 4 of *The Interpreter's Bible*, offers another insight into Asaph's anguish.<sup>74</sup> The author believes Asaph was perplexed over the wicked's prosperity and disturbed over their confident denial of God's knowledge of humanity.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Surgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 259.

<sup>69</sup> *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, PC Study Bible Electronic Database*, CD-ROM, version 4.0 (Seattle, WA: BibleSoft Inc., 2003).

<sup>70</sup> Ps. 73:7.

<sup>71</sup> *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary*.

<sup>72</sup> *Adam Clark's Commentary*, CD-ROM (Seattle, WA: BibleSoft, Inc., 2003).

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> George Arthur Buttrick, *Psalms, Proverbs*, vol. 4 of *The Interpreter's Bible* (New York, NY: Abingdon Press, 1955).

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 385-392.

Clifton J. Allen's Commentary, *Esther-Psalms*, which is volume IV of *The Broadman Bible Commentary*, supplies more information about Asaph's distress and disillusionment over the prosperity of the wicked.<sup>76</sup> Allen's commentary offers the solution to Asaph's despair: "It distressed him until he came to the holy temple of God"<sup>77</sup>

*A Handbook on Psalms* supplies more awareness into Asaph's mindset.<sup>78</sup> The Bible states, "Thus my heart was grieved, and I was vexed in my mind."<sup>79</sup> The psalmist understands how deeply affected he was by his observation of the wicked. His heart grieved and he was "pierced in his kidneys."<sup>80</sup>

*Psalms*, volume 5 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* describes the concept of the heart.<sup>81</sup> David McKenna's commentary supplies rich resources regarding the historical setting of the book of Job.<sup>82</sup> He combines the textual interpretation with practical application. He devotes four chapters to Job's friends and the different speeches given by each one.

Robert L. Alden's, *Job*, volume 11 of *The New American Commentary* catalogues Job's distress in great detail.<sup>83</sup> His commentary describes Job's losses throughout the book of Job. He reflects upon Job's loss of health, wealth, and loved ones. The *International Standard Bible*

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<sup>76</sup> Clifton J. Allen, *Esther-Psalms*, vol. 4 of *The Broadman Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1971).

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 320.

<sup>78</sup> Robert G. Bratcher and William Reyburn, *A Handbook on Psalms* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991).

<sup>79</sup> Ps. 73:21.

<sup>80</sup> Bratcher and Reyburn, *A Handbook on Psalms*, 642.

<sup>81</sup> Frank E. Gaebelein, *Psalms*, vol. 5 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1971), 476.

<sup>82</sup> David McKenna, *Job*, vol. 12 of *Mastering the Old Testament*, (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1986), 29-34.

<sup>83</sup> Robert L. Alden, *Job*, vol. 11 of *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993).

*Encyclopedia* electronic database describes Job's door of restoration.<sup>84</sup> The Bible encyclopedia adds background information about Elihu, the young man who overhears the arguments from Job's and his three friends.

John Phillips' *Job Sermon* analyzes the remarks of Job's three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, "For they had made an appointment together to come and mourn with him, and to comfort him."<sup>85</sup> Phillips explores the background and content of each speech and gives key insights into Job's response. He also handles the speeches of Elihu in Job Chapters 32-37.

David J.A. Clines' commentary, *Job 1-20* which is volume 17 of the *Word Biblical Commentary*, furnishes an overview and orientation to the book of Job.<sup>86</sup> In the introduction, Clines provides the framework for the narrative by establishing the argument, the problem of suffering, and the moral order of the world.

*Fausset's Bible Dictionary* electronic database furnishes some historical background information on Zophar, one of Job's three friends.<sup>87</sup> Zophar was a Naamathite from the tribe of Naamah located somewhere in the region of the Arabian Desert.<sup>88</sup> He spoke to Job twice, and he was the most rash and rigid of the three friends.<sup>89</sup>

*The MacArthur Study Bible* (NKJV) provides important information about Job and Elijah.<sup>90</sup> The most helpful thing Elihu said to Job was that God used suffering to draw man to

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<sup>84</sup> *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, CD-ROM, Seattle, WA: Biblesoft, Inc., 2003.

<sup>85</sup> Job 2:11

<sup>86</sup> David J.A. Clines, *Job 1-20*, vol. 17 of *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1989).

<sup>87</sup> *Fausset's Bible Dictionary*, CD-ROM, Seattle, WA: Biblesoft, Inc., 2003.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible New King James Version* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1997).

Himself.<sup>91</sup> Therefore, Job should not turn his complaining into iniquity; however, he should draw near to God in his anguish.<sup>92</sup> The lesson from the Lord to the Elijah was that God is quietly, gradually, and unnoticeably at work accomplishing His plan.<sup>93</sup>

J. Vernon McGee's commentary, *Joshua-Psalms*, volume 2 of *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, contains pertinent background, geographical information, and textual exposition on Psalm 73 and the book of Job.<sup>94</sup> McGee's biblical exposition and practical insights regarding Job and Asaph present perspective on each man's anguish.

Norman C. Habel's commentary, *The Book of Job*, provides a chapter-by-chapter analysis of the translation, textual notes, and historical context of the book of Job.<sup>95</sup> The author expounds upon Job's appeal for a redeemer in Job 19:21-29.<sup>96</sup> This section supplied the thesis with an awareness and understanding into the mindset of many clergy involved in situations of extreme distress.

Have pity on me, have pity on me, O you my friends, For the hand of God has struck me! Why do you persecute me as God does, And are not satisfied with my flesh? Oh, that my words were written! Oh, that they were inscribed in a book! That they were engraved on a rock with an iron pen and lead, forever! For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, 733.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 508.

<sup>94</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua-Psalms*, vol. II of *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1982).

<sup>95</sup> Norman C. Habel, *The Book of Job* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1985).

<sup>96</sup> Habel, *The Book of Job*, 302-309.

<sup>97</sup> Job 19:21-26.

Simon J. DeVries' commentary, *1 Kings*, volume 12 of the *Word Biblical Commentary* presents an overview and outline of the book of 1 Kings.<sup>98</sup> The commentary contains information regarding the geographical, cultural, political, and religious situation of Israel during the ministry of Elijah.<sup>99</sup> DeVries researches the text and adds respected insight to the narrative related to the prophet.

*Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition* electronic database presents information about God's response to Elijah's anguish.<sup>100</sup> Henry expounds upon Elijah's wilderness experience. Henry furnishes commentary regarding the call of God on men in difficult circumstances.

Paul R. House's, *1, 2 Kings*, volume 8 of *The New American Commentary* provides information about Elijah's weariness from ministry.<sup>101</sup> House gives a unique insight into the encounter between Elijah and God. He implies that maybe God attempted to teach the prophet not to always expect deliverance by Him in the form of the miraculous by speaking to him in a gentle whisper.<sup>102</sup>

George Arthur Buttrick's commentary, *Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job*, volume 3 of *The Interpreter's Bible*, provides information regarding Elijah's steps to overcome his anguish and despair.<sup>103</sup> The author states, "First of all, he was to get up. The body and the

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<sup>98</sup> Simon J. DeVries, *1 Kings*, vol. 12 of *Word Biblical Commentary* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985), 234.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 235-240.

<sup>100</sup> *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition*, CD-ROM, (Nashville, TN: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1991).

<sup>101</sup> Paul R. House, *1, 2 Kings*, vol. 8 of *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publisher, 1995), 222.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 223.

<sup>103</sup> George Arthur Buttrick, *Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job*, vol. III of *The Interpreter's Bible* (New York, NY: Abingdon Press, 1954).

will have their part to play in mastering mental depression. God does not spoon-feed minds lying on their backs”<sup>104</sup>

John H. Traylor’s commentary, *1 and 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles*, volume 6 of *Layman’s Bible Book Commentary*, describes the encounter of Elijah with Jezebel and the joy that turned to fear, flight, and despair.<sup>105</sup> Peter C. Craigie, Page H. Kelley, and Joel F. Drinkard, Jr.’s commentary, *Jeremiah 1-25*, volume 26 of the *Word Biblical Commentary* contributes an excellent overview and outline of the book of Jeremiah.<sup>106</sup> Craigie provides historical background, chronological framework, and theological explanations regarding the book of Jeremiah.<sup>107</sup>

George Arthur Buttrick’s commentary, *Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah*, volume 5 of *The Interpreter’s Bible*, provides awareness regarding Jeremiah’s personality and the struggles the prophet faced from a lifetime of rejection.<sup>108</sup> This resource provides insight and exposition regarding Jeremiah’s call and conflict. The author comments about Jeremiah’s response, “Alone for the people; but alone before the people: alone for God (because of thine hand); but alone also before God!”<sup>109</sup> This resource will assist in helping clergy discover how to manage the distress of loneliness.

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<sup>104</sup> Buttrick, *Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job*, 162.

<sup>105</sup> John H. Traylor, *1 & 2 Kings 2 Chronicles*, vol. 6 of *The Layman’s Bible Book Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1981), 41-43.

<sup>106</sup> Peter C. Craigie, Page H. Kelley, and Joel F. Drinkard, Jr. *Jeremiah 1-25*, vol. 26 of *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1991).

<sup>107</sup> Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25*, vol. 26 of *Word Biblical Commentary*, 1-6.

<sup>108</sup> George Arthur Buttrick, *Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah*, vol. 5 of *The Interpreter’s Bible* (New York, NY: Abingdon Press, 1956).

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 943.

F.B. Huey Jr.'s, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, volume 16 of *The New American Commentary*, furnishes background information about Jeremiah.<sup>110</sup> The author explains how Jeremiah responded to God with self-pity, received strength from God, and then returned to his prophetic ministry until the fall of Jerusalem and beyond.<sup>111</sup>

J. Vernon McGee's commentary, *Proverbs-Malachi*, volume 3 of *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, offers insight into Jeremiah's distress.<sup>112</sup> He states, "Jeremiah says, 'Nobody likes me, I don't lend money on interest and I don't borrow money on interest, yet everyone curses me.' We still have an adage today that says if we want to lose a friend, lend him money"<sup>113</sup> Jeremiah lost all his friends and found comfort from God's Word.<sup>114</sup>

Frank E. Gaebelein's commentary, *Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel*, volume 6 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, supplies a description of Jeremiah's background, public ministry, and prophetic profile.<sup>115</sup> The author provides sound exposition, detailed outlines of the book of Jeremiah, historical background, and Hebrew word helps. All of those elements will assist in deriving concepts and principles from the text.

Houghton Mifflin's, *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition helps with grasping some of the important words in understanding and applying the key principles for managing ministerial stress, distress, and anguish. For example, *discourage* means "to deprive of

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<sup>110</sup> F.B. Huey Jr., *Jeremiah Lamentations*, The New American Commentary, vol. 16. (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1993).

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 162-167.

<sup>112</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Proverbs-Malachi*, vol. 3 of *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1982), 379-380.

<sup>113</sup> McGee, *Proverbs-Malachi*, vol. 3 of *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, 379-380.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 380.

<sup>115</sup> Frank E. Gaebelein, *Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel*, vol. 6 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986).

confidence, hope, or spirit.”<sup>116</sup> *Envy* means “a feeling of discontent and resentment aroused by another’s desirable possessions or qualities, accompanied by a strong desire to have them for oneself.”<sup>117</sup> Likewise, *woe* means “deep sorrow, grief, misfortune, or calamity.”<sup>118</sup> These definitions are crucial to this project’s subject matter.

The lecture outline entitled “Lesson 6: Book of Jeremiah,” provided for OBST 592 at Liberty University, provides the historical background and locale for the book of Jeremiah. It assesses the desperate issues related to the composition of Jeremiah and offers an overview of the theme while explaining Jeremiah’s theological perspective on Judah’s exile to Babylon.

E. LeBron Matthews’ article, “Rise above the Tide,” in *Explore the Bible: Adult Leader Guide*, discusses Jeremiah and Asaph’s pain that reached the point of spiritual doubt.<sup>119</sup> The article by Tullian Tchividjian, “Blessed Self-Forgetfulness,” provides insight and awareness into how people become narcissistic by focusing too much upon themselves and their personal holiness.<sup>120</sup> He expounds upon the concept that the gospel never tells people to focus on themselves, but on Christ alone.<sup>121</sup>

Gordon MacDonald’s article, “When Things Get Ugly,” delivers practical steps for ministers facing conflict and distress.<sup>122</sup> He writes about ministering to people today who are similar to the Israelites of Moses’ day. He writes about the Hebrews’ shallow spirituality and

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<sup>116</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. “Discourage.”

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, s.v. “Envy.”

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, s.v. “Woe.”

<sup>119</sup> E. LeBron Matthews, “Rise above the Tide,” *Explore the Bible: Adult Leader Guide*, Summer 2011, 47.

<sup>120</sup> Tullian Tchividjian, “Blessed Self-Forgetfulness,” *Christianity Today*, Summer 2012, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2012/summer/selfforgetfulness.html> (accessed August 7, 2012).

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> Gordon MacDonald, “When Things Get Ugly,” *Christianity Today*, Spring 2007, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2007/spring/23.51.html> (accessed August 7, 2012).



Moses' ability to lead them. MacDonald encourages ministers to establish their own tent of meeting and go there to wait for God's power, purpose, and instruction.

Stuart Pierson's article, "Keys to a Long Pastorate," offers practical wisdom for ministers desiring to remain in the field of ministry for the long haul.<sup>123</sup> He reflects upon his own ministry and shares his own story of personal struggles with enticement to move onto greener pastures or pastorates.

An article written by Michael McCormack entitled, "Study Updates Stats on Health of Southern Baptist Churches" reveals critical statistics regarding church growth and pastor tenure.<sup>124</sup> He writes, "Churches are experiencing healthy church growth in all types of communities. The length of a pastor's tenure, though, was found to have a direct correlation to the health of a church. A church's likelihood to be healthy was much greater when the pastor had served there between five and 20 years."<sup>125</sup> This statistic reinforces the author's premise: Ministers who manage distress have longer tenures; hence, ministries that are more successful.

Thom Rainer's article, "Two Big Distractions for Pastors," discusses pertinent issues related to clergy stress.<sup>126</sup> He points out that critics and conflict among staff and key leaders primarily distract pastors. He states the following: "79 percent of pastors say critics distract them from their ministries. Nearly 40 percent of them agree that they do. Though pastors of all church sizes felt this way, pastors of churches with over 250 in worship attendance were more likely to struggle with the critics. 48 percent of pastors say conflict among staff and/or key lay leaders is a

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<sup>123</sup> Stuart Pierson, "Keys to a Long Pastorate," *Christianity Today*, Spring 2004, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/1984/spring/8412135.html?paging=off> (accessed August 7, 2012).

<sup>124</sup> Michael McCormack, "Study Updates Stats on Health of Southern Baptist Churches," <http://www.nobts.edu/publications/News/LeavellCenterStudy2004.html> (accessed August 5, 2012).

<sup>125</sup> McCormack, "Study Updates Stats on Health of Southern Baptist Churches."

<sup>126</sup> Thom Rainer, "Two Big Distractions for Pastors," <http://www.thomrainer.com/2012/08/two-big-distractions-for-pastors.php> (accessed August 1, 2012).

significant distraction.”<sup>127</sup> This article provides the student with supporting statistics related to clergy distress.

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<sup>127</sup> Rainer, “Two Big Distractions for Pastors.”

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE HISTORICAL PROBLEM OF ANGUISH AMONG LEADERS

#### Introduction

According to the research data collected from the *Ministerial Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish*, 99% of ministers surveyed struggled with stress, distress, or anguish (see figure 3). Stress is a mentally or emotionally disruptive or disquieting influence.<sup>1</sup> Distress means to cause strain, anxiety, or suffering, to constrain by harassment, or severe strain resulting from exhaustion or an accident.<sup>2</sup> Anguish means an agonizing physical or mental torment.<sup>3</sup> The distress ministers encounter today correlates with the Old Testament word *tsarah*, which occurs over 70 times in poetical, prophetic, and wisdom literature.<sup>4</sup> The Hebrew words *tsar* and *tsarah* mean straits, distress, scarcity, or dismay in a psychological or spiritual sense.<sup>5</sup> The Bible states, “Therefore I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish (*tsar*) of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.”<sup>6</sup>

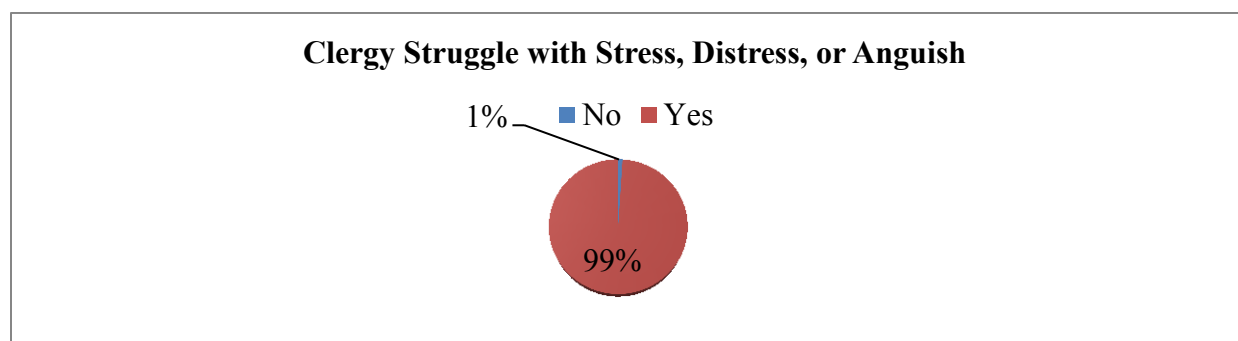


Figure 3. Clergy struggle with stress, distress, or anguish, surveyed in 2012

<sup>1</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. “Stress.”

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, s.v. “Distress.”

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, s.v. “Anguish.”

<sup>4</sup> *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, CD-ROM (Seattle, WA: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Job 7:11.

The importance of discovering the historical problem of ministerial anguish enables clergy to better identify the key factors that contribute to distress. Moreover, determining the underlying causes of anguish provides clergy with the necessary information to formulate a plan of action for managing distress. Not understanding the underlying causes for distress can lead to doubt, low self-confidence, frustration, burnout, and depression. A study conducted by Fuller Theological Seminary discovered that 75% of clergy reported a major crisis due to anxiety at least once in their ministry, and 70% of pastors reported having a lower self-image after entering the ministry than before entering.<sup>7</sup>

Distress in ministry is a way of life for clergy. In the book *Preventing Ministry Failure*, Michael Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffmann, offer insight regarding stress in ministry:

Stress is a reality of life in the modern world. We can't make it go away, nor would we really want to. Stress is actually the impetus that motivates humans toward accomplishment. It's not the amount of stress we're under that causes problems in our lives. Rather, it's the inability to manage stress that will cause us to call it quits on ministry. Therefore, the goal isn't to find a stress-free job but to learn to manage the stress we will confront in an effective manner.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, discovering the causes of anguish is vital to its management. Since distress today among clergy similarly parallels that of Old Testament leaders, a comparative analysis of Jeremiah, Asaph, Elijah, and Job will provide significant factors that contribute to pastoral angst. Ninety-five percent of the ministers surveyed revealed having similar causes of anguish that correspond with these four biblical leaders.

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<sup>7</sup> Fred Lehr, *Clergy Burnout* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2006), 4.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 28.

### **Persecution, Pressure, and Discouragement**

Jeremiah began his prophetic ministry in 626 B.C., in the 13<sup>th</sup> year of Josiah's reign.<sup>9</sup> He lived in Anathoth, which was three miles northeast of Jerusalem.<sup>10</sup> He was the son of a priest named Hilkiah.<sup>11</sup> Jeremiah probably did not serve as a priest; however, at a young age he was called into the prophetic ministry by God.<sup>12</sup> His ministry from God centered on preaching a message of judgment against Judah. This judgment consisted of the Babylonian Empire destroying the southern kingdom of Judah as a punishment for their covenant unfaithfulness, continuous sin, and blatant disobedience against God.<sup>13</sup> Delivering this message from God was a difficult task. Personally, he was not supposed to marry nor have children because of the eminent destruction that awaited Judah.<sup>14</sup> Jeremiah's first message recorded in Jeremiah 2:1-3:5 blends God's grace and compassion with solemn warnings of dreadful days to come if hearts did not turn back toward the Lord.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, the prophet experienced extreme anguish.<sup>16</sup>

When Jeremiah began his preaching ministry in the midst of Josiah's reign, the people of Judah had already become ungodly and unresponsive to the call of God to repent.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, Jeremiah never wavered from his position and message that Judah and Jerusalem were going to

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<sup>9</sup> "Lesson 6: Book of Jeremiah," Lecture outline for OBST 592, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Jer. 1:6 (New King James Version).

<sup>13</sup> Jer. 1-25.

<sup>14</sup> "Lesson 6: Book of Jeremiah," Lecture outline for OBST 592, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA, 2009.

<sup>15</sup> McGee, *Proverbs-Malachi*, vol. 3 of *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, 368.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Frank E. Gaebelein, *Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel*, vol. 6 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), 359.

be destroyed by a nation from the north and the people carried away into captivity.<sup>18</sup> Jeremiah gave his famous temple address in Jeremiah chapter 7. The location of the sermon is described as “the gate in the Lord’s house”<sup>19</sup>. Large crowds of worshippers would pass through the gate on the way to the Temple.<sup>20</sup>

This prophecy occurred after the Law of the Lord was discovered in the Temple by Jeremiah’s father Hilkiah the priest, during the reign of Josiah.<sup>21</sup> Jeremiah told the leaders in Jerusalem that only faithfulness to God would preserve the Temple. He revealed the depth of their sin by stating that God concluded that they were beyond intercessory prayer.<sup>22</sup> Also, Jeremiah pronounced judgment upon the people for their evil practices in Jeremiah 7:20, “Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Behold, My anger and My fury will be poured out on this place — on man and on beast, on the trees of the field and on the fruit of the ground. And it will burn and not be quenched.’”<sup>23</sup> As a result, Jeremiah’s powerful and bold preaching elicited three responses from the contemporaries of his day.

First, Jeremiah’s message aroused bitter persecution from all sectors of the nation, including his own family.<sup>24</sup> God revealed to Jeremiah that the people of Anathoth, from his own town, plotted against his life.<sup>25</sup> “Like a docile lamb brought to the slaughter” in Jeremiah 11:18-

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<sup>18</sup> Gaebelein, *Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel*, 359.

<sup>19</sup> Jer. 7:2.

<sup>20</sup> Peter C. Craigie, Page H. Kelley, and Joel F. Drinkard, Jr. *Jeremiah 1-25*, vol. 26 of *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1991), 120.

<sup>21</sup> McGhee, *Proverbs-Malachi*, 368.

<sup>22</sup> Jer. 7:16.

<sup>23</sup> MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible New King James Version*, 1073.

<sup>24</sup> Gaebelein, *Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel*, 359.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

19a refers to baby pet lamb.<sup>26</sup> Children, in that day, would often have lambs as pets; they were familiar friends with the kids. Jeremiah's own hometown friends plotted to kill him.<sup>27</sup> Their reaction was probably a response to Jeremiah's criticism of the people's sin. The people already viewed him as a traitor because he appealed to them to surrender to the Babylonians.<sup>28</sup>

In Jeremiah, the people said, "Let us destroy the tree with its fruit."<sup>29</sup> They wanted to destroy the prophet with his prophecies that deeply offended them by threatening the destruction of their nation.<sup>30</sup> Jeremiah was the tree; his teaching was the fruit.<sup>31</sup> Preaching the whole counsel of God's Word can become a major source of persecution within the church. According to the *Ministerial Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish*, 14% of clergy attributes persecution as one of the contributing factors that caused anguish or distress (see figure 4).

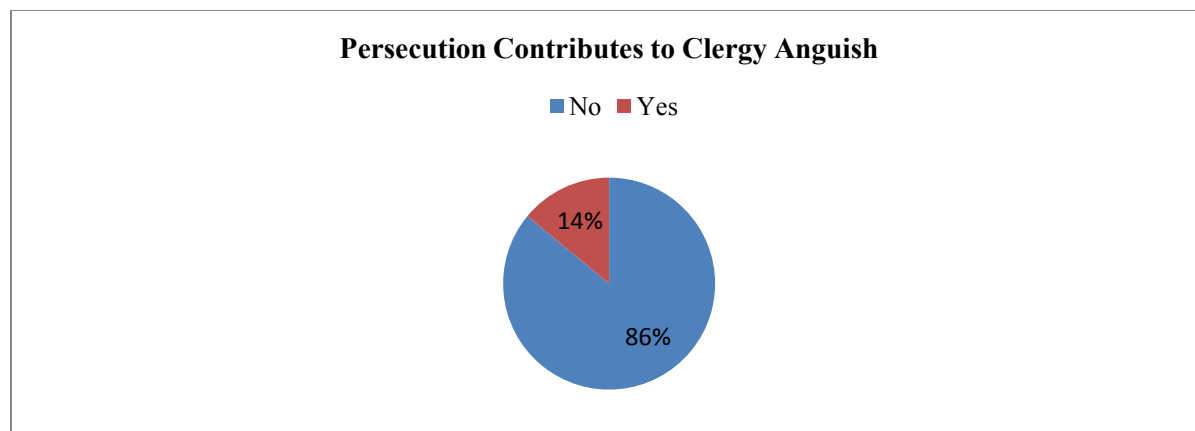


Figure 4. Persecution contributes to clergy anguish, surveyed in 2012

<sup>26</sup> Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, *PC Study Bible Electronic Database*, CD-ROM, version 4.0 (Seattle, WA: BibleSoft Inc., 2003).

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> F.B. Huey Jr., *Jeremiah Lamentations*, The New American Commentary, vol. 16. (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1993), 137.

<sup>29</sup> Jer. 11:19b

<sup>30</sup> Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

Undoubtedly, pastoral ministry is harder than ever before. Phillip B. Jones writes in *Southern Baptist Congregations Today*, “The typical tenure for pastors (excluding interims) is 4 years.”<sup>32</sup> The changing circumstances and deteriorating values of congregations contribute to this current trend. According to Barna research, 64% of adults and 83% of teenagers believe truth is always relative to the person and their situation. Only 6% of those surveyed believe moral truth is absolute.<sup>33</sup> “Substantial numbers of Christians believe that activities such as abortion, gay sex, sexual fantasies, cohabitation, drunkenness, and viewing pornography are morally acceptable.”<sup>34</sup> Consequently, based upon the author’s experience, some people within the church and community label pastors as insensitive and close-minded for preaching moral absolutes. Furthermore, the author believes this paradigm shift in beliefs and attitudes only compounds the common persecutions associated with disagreements over ministerial leadership styles, decision-making, and personality.

Second, pressure mounted for Jeremiah. The Bible states, “For even your brothers, the house of your father, even they have dealt treacherously with you; yes, they have called a multitude after you.”<sup>35</sup> His own family had been part of raising a mob to put a muzzle on Jeremiah or destroy him. They rendered him appalling or detestable behind his back; while in front of his face, they pretended to have no intent to hand him over for persecution or death.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Phillip B. Jones, “Southern Baptist Congregations Today,” *Research Today, A Publication of Research*, North American Mission Board, SBC (February 2001), [www.namb.net/WorkArea](http://www.namb.net/WorkArea) (accessed August 7, 2012).

<sup>33</sup> H.B. London, Jr. and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1993), 35.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-36.

<sup>35</sup> Jer. 12:6.

<sup>36</sup> *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition*, CD-ROM, (Nashville, TN: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1991).



The Bible states, “A man’s enemies will be those of his own household.”<sup>37</sup> God’s faithful servants will not be strangers to friends or family becoming their enemies.<sup>38</sup>

Similar to Jeremiah’s circumstance, many pastors face tremendous pressure from their own families. According to the research data collected from the *Ministerial Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish*, 69% of ministers surveyed struggled with pressure (see figure 5). Typically, ministers find themselves in the “holy crossfire,” as they attempt to manage the pressures from self, family, church, and denomination.<sup>39</sup> Data collected from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America indicates that 75% of clergy work more than 50 hours per week.<sup>40</sup> The author believes the lack of family time together, eats away family identity and unity.

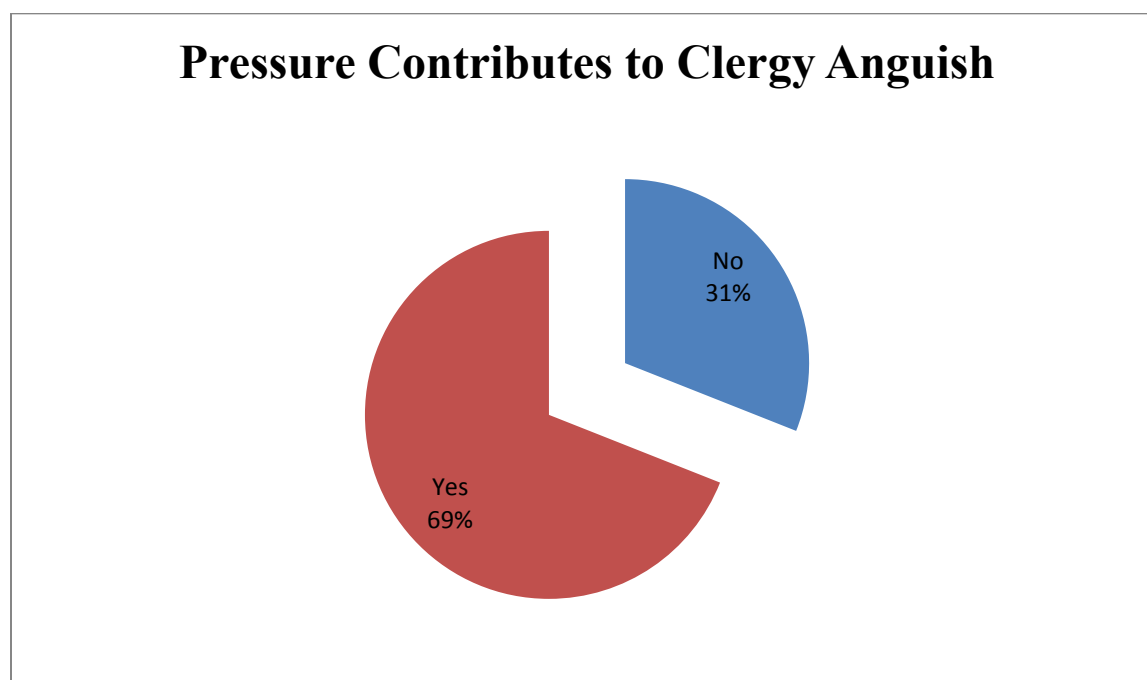


Figure 5. Pressure contributes to clergy anguish, surveyed in 2012

<sup>37</sup> Matthew 10:36.

<sup>38</sup> *Matthew Henry’s Commentary*.

<sup>39</sup> Lehr, *Clergy Burnout*, 5.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*.

According to the author's experience ministerial pressure arises from church members who think they know more about how to lead the church than the one called, equipped, and trained to do so. According to Thom Rainer's article, *Two Big Distractions for Pastors*, "79% of pastors say critics distract them from their ministries. Nearly 40% strongly agree that they do. Though pastors of all church sizes felt this way, pastors of churches with over 250 in worship attendance were more likely to struggle with the critics."<sup>41</sup>

Criticism may be the reason that according to research data from the *Ministerial Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish* 18 % of ministers seek no encouragement from anyone during stressful times (see figure 6) Unfortunately, the student's experience as a pastor reflects upon the assumption that deacons can be a major source of conflict in this area by promoting and enforcing their own agendas. Instead of focusing on their biblical roles and responsibilities of serving the church, some deacons consume themselves with trying to lead the church through the auspices of a deacon board. Consequently, the data results prove this theory, ministers in eastern Tennessee only seek encouragement from deacons during stressful times 1% of the time (see figure 7).

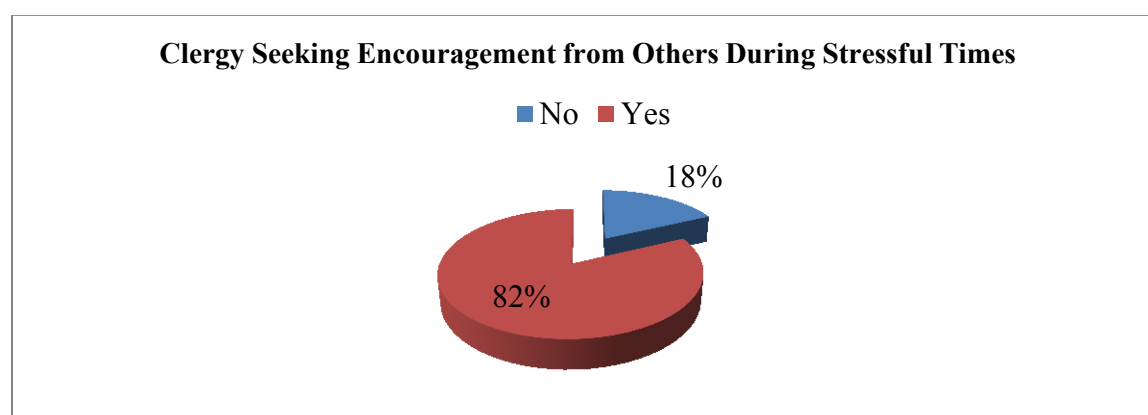


Figure 6. Clergy seeking encouragement from others during stressful times, surveyed in 2012

<sup>41</sup> Thom Rainer, "Two Big Distractions for Pastors," <http://www.thomrainer.com/2012/08/two-big-distractions-for-pastors.php> (accessed August 1, 2012).

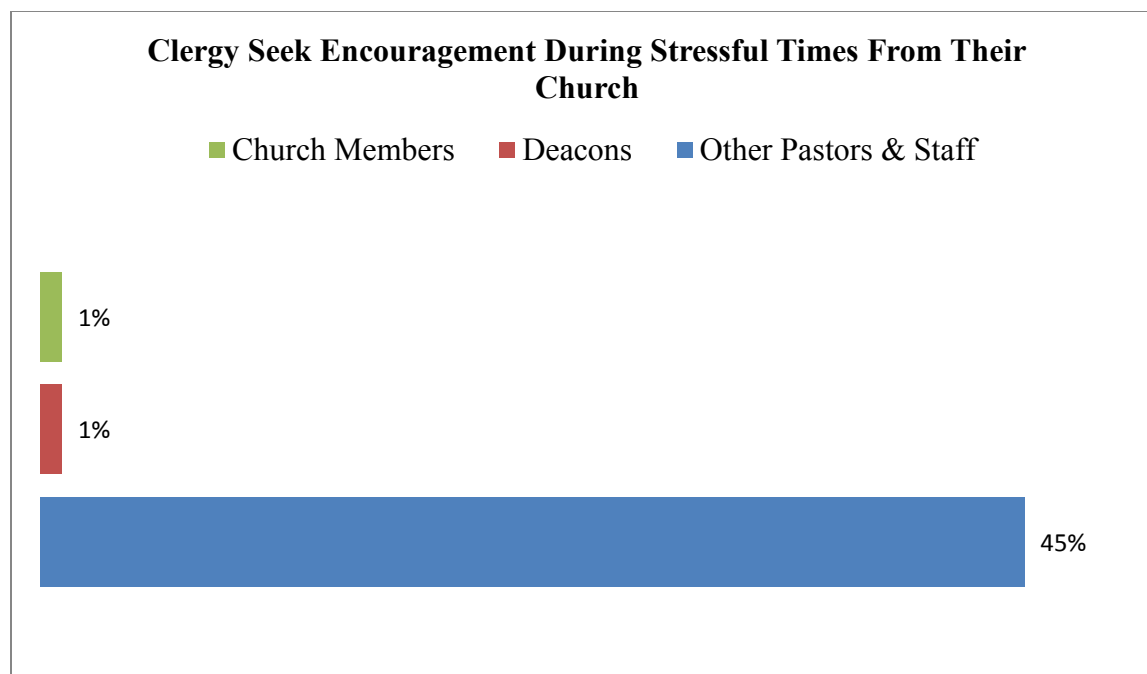


Figure 7. Clergy seek encouragement during stressful times from their church, surveyed 2012

Financial pressure occurs frequently among clergy: “Clergy rank in the top 10% of the population in terms of education, but rank 325<sup>th</sup> out of 432 occupations in terms of salary.”<sup>42</sup> Clergy salaries may not be able to sustain an average family’s needs.<sup>43</sup> Hence, the lack of funding causes enormous stress within the home.<sup>44</sup>

Third, Jeremiah became discouraged. *Discourage* means “to deprive of confidence, hope, or spirit.”<sup>45</sup> Jeremiah says, “O Lord of hosts, You who judge righteously, let me see Your vengeance on them.”<sup>46</sup> He was disheartened because of the judgment of God approaching his nation and the persecution he felt from family and friends. “Jeremiah wept because he knew that the people not only would return to idolatry but they would sink even farther into immorality.

<sup>42</sup> Lehr, *Clergy Burnout*, 4.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. “Discourage.”

<sup>46</sup> Jer. 11:20.

They rejected his message and were plotting to kill him.”<sup>47</sup> Jeremiah did not ask God to forgive them but reacted out of his fallen human nature by demanding vengeance on his enemies.<sup>48</sup>

Jeremiah’s human frailty and zeal for the Lord led to his pious and prophetic indignation against desperately wicked men who wanted to destroy God’s messenger who did them no harm, merely for his service to God. This petition was a prediction that God would allow Jeremiah to see His judgment.<sup>49</sup> Discouragement was Jeremiah’s cause for anguish.

According to the research data collected from the *Ministerial Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish*, 85% of ministers surveyed struggled with discouragement (see figure 8). Pastors have incredibly important and challenging jobs with responsibilities that produce implications and consequences. They carry heavy responsibilities of developing healthy churches by equipping families to be spiritually healthy which results in stable communities within the society. In addition to carrying this responsibility, clergy also must concern themselves with the spiritual health of their own families.<sup>50</sup> Consequently, pastors find themselves burdened by working against difficulties, idealistic expectations, and stresses that come with their positions as under-shepherds.<sup>51</sup> These burdens along with persecutions and pressures oftentimes results in discouragement.

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<sup>47</sup> McGee, *Proverbs-Malachi*, 375.

<sup>48</sup> Huey, *Jeremiah Lamentations*, 137.

<sup>49</sup> *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*.

<sup>50</sup> London and Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk*, 9.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*.

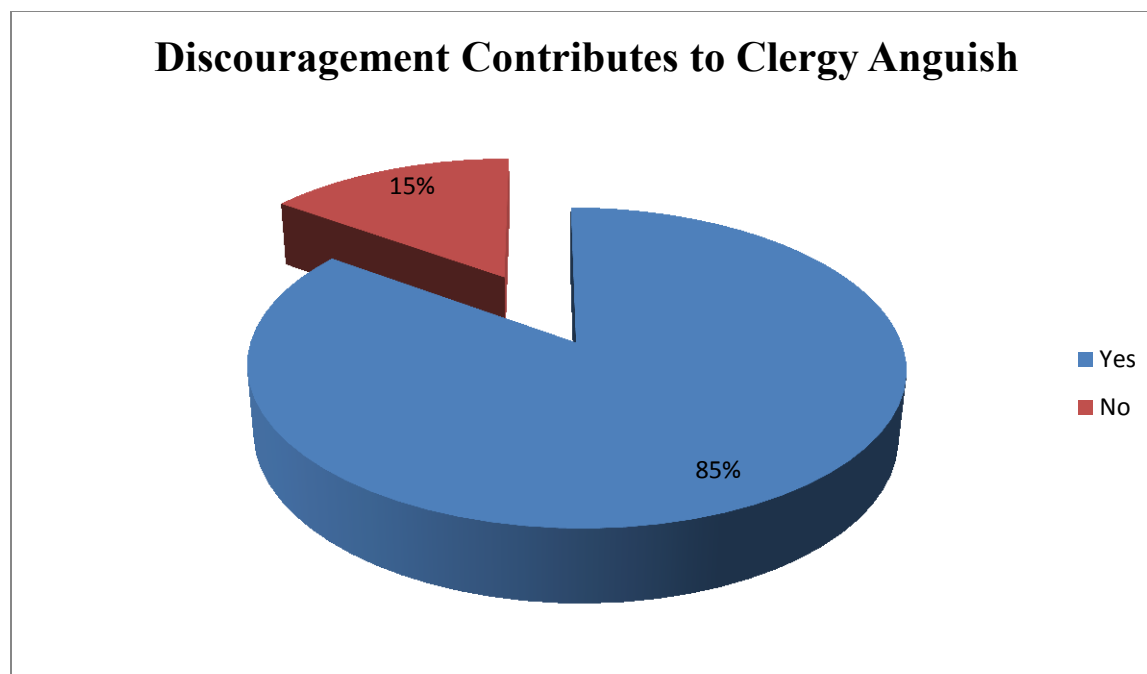


Figure 8. Discouragement contributes to clergy anguish, surveyed in 2012

### Discontentment and Envy

Asaph was a Levite.<sup>52</sup> When the Ark of the Covenant moved from Obed-Edom's house, under the direction of King David, to Jerusalem, Asaph sounded cymbals.<sup>53</sup> His family was one out of three who had the responsibility of preparing music and songs for Temple worship.<sup>54</sup> He and his family wrote Psalms 50; 73:1-83:18.<sup>55</sup> After the Babylonian captivity prophesied by Jeremiah, 128 singers from Asaph's family returned from Babylon and conducted the music during the laying of the foundations of Zerubbabel's temple.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> 2 Chron. 20:14.

<sup>53</sup> 1 Chron. 15:16-19.

<sup>54</sup> 1 Chron. 25:1-9.

<sup>55</sup> *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, CD-ROM, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986).

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

When writing Psalm 73, Asaph analyzed the world around him and drew some conclusions about the wicked's prosperity that ultimately produced an uprising of discontentment and envy in his life.<sup>57</sup> The Bible states, "For I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked."<sup>58</sup> Asaph became depressed when he compared the prosperity of the wicked with the difficulties of the righteous.<sup>59</sup>

Throughout Psalm 73, the word *heart* is mentioned six times: "pure in heart" in vs. 1, "more than heart could wish" in vs. 7, "cleansed my heart" in vs. 13, "my heart was grieved" in vs. 21, "my heart fail" in vs. 26a, and "God is the strength of my heart" in vs. 26b.<sup>60</sup> The heart is central to understanding the psalm, "The state of the heart determines whether a man lives in the truth, in which God's goodness is experienced or in the [outward, token appearance] of truth."<sup>61</sup> The heart is most important when determining the underlying cause of anguish.<sup>62</sup>

First, the Bible states that after Asaph's examination of the prosperity of the wicked, he experienced discontentment.<sup>63</sup> *Discontent* means a sense of resentment, grievance, not being satisfied, or restlessly unhappy.<sup>64</sup> The Bible states, "Truly God is good to Israel, to such as are

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<sup>57</sup> George Arthur Buttrick, *Psalms, Proverbs*, vol. 5 of *The Interpreter's Bible* (New York, NY: Abingdon Press, 1955), 386-389.

<sup>58</sup> Ps. 73:3.

<sup>59</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible New King James Version* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1997), 806.

<sup>60</sup> Ps. 73:1, 7, 13, 21, 26.

<sup>61</sup> Frank E. Gaebelein, *Psalms*, vol. 5 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1971), 476.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ps. 73:4-15.

<sup>64</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. "Discontent."

pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; my steps had nearly slipped.”<sup>65</sup> Asaph began the Psalm by referring to God as a real friend of the righteous not the wicked.<sup>66</sup> After Asaph shared his confident trust in God’s goodness, he discussed his former state of mind, one troubled, doubtful, and unconfident in God as a just moral governor because the wicked prospered while he experienced difficulty.<sup>67</sup> His faith and confidence in God began to waver like a man standing in a slippery place; therefore, he was barely able to stay upright.<sup>68</sup> He no longer had a solid and firm faith; nothing could keep it from slipping or pouring out. Without strength to walk in his faith, he was falling into a pit of grievance, dissatisfaction, and self-pity.<sup>69</sup>

According to the results from the *Ministerial Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish*, 27% of clergymen experience discontentment associated with anguish (see figure 9). Clergy can identify five indications to determine whether or not discontentment is dragging them down spiritually: (1) Envy; the inability to rejoice at the success of others, (2) Uncontrolled ambition; the desire to win or succeed at all costs, no matter what it takes or who is trampled in the process, (3) A critical spirit; the tendency to make negative, hurtful, cutting remarks about others, (4) A complaining spirit; the disposition to make excuses and blame others or bad circumstances for problems. This type of spirit results in a refusal to take personal responsibility and inability to be thankful for God’s blessings. (5) Outbursts of anger occur when people speak angry words because of unmet expectations.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Ps. 73:1-2.

<sup>66</sup> Buttrick, *Psalms, Proverbs*, 387.

<sup>67</sup> *Barnes’ Notes, PC Study Bible*, CD-ROM, version 4.0 (Seattle, WA: Biblsoft Inc., 2003).

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ray Pritchard, “Overcoming Discontentment,” [www.sermoncentral.com](http://www.sermoncentral.com) (accessed February 2013).

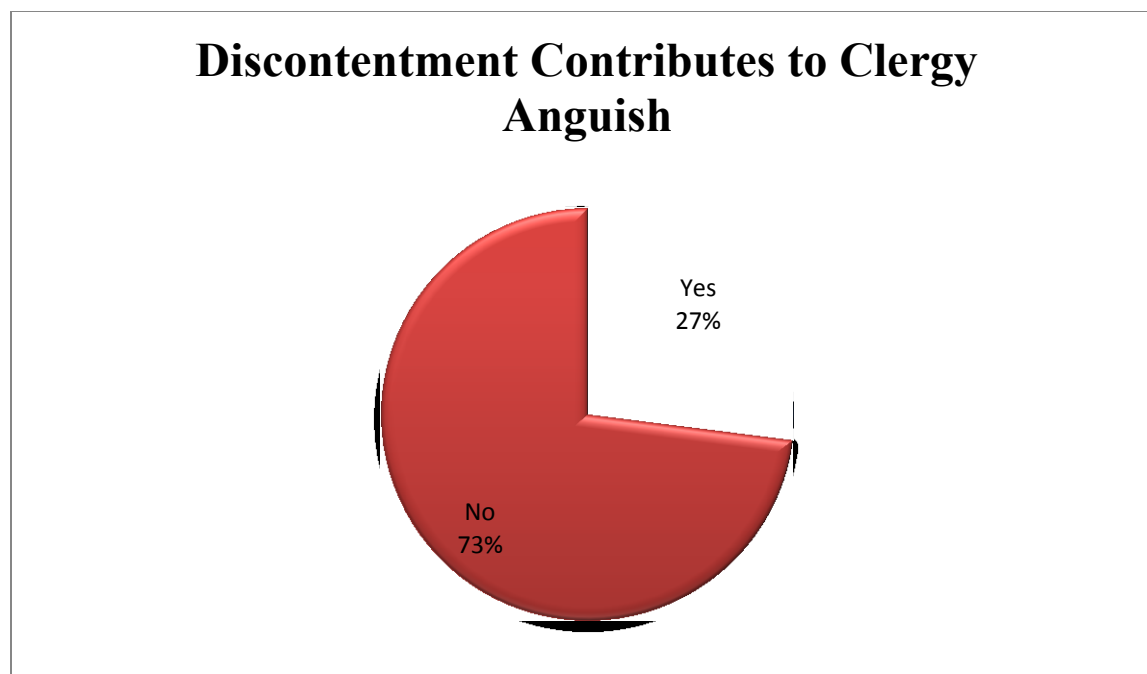


Figure 9. Discontentment contributes to clergy anguish, surveyed in 2012

The discontented person analyzes his life and says, “I deserve something better than this.”<sup>71</sup> According to the results from the *Ministerial Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish*, 74% of ministers occasionally, frequently, or continuously think about leaving their current church position (see figure 10). Ray Pritchard states, “Discontentment eats away joy, corrodes happiness, and destroys our outlook on life, and produces a terminal jaundice of the soul so that everything looks negative to us.”<sup>72</sup> Having dreams about what the future might hold is not wrong. The hope of something better can motivate a minister forward and keep them working, inventing, striving, creating, and innovating.<sup>73</sup> However, the author thinks a minister should be careful that his dreams and goals are realistic and in accordance with God’s will.

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<sup>71</sup> Pritchard, “Overcoming Discontentment,” [www.sermoncentral.com](http://www.sermoncentral.com).

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.



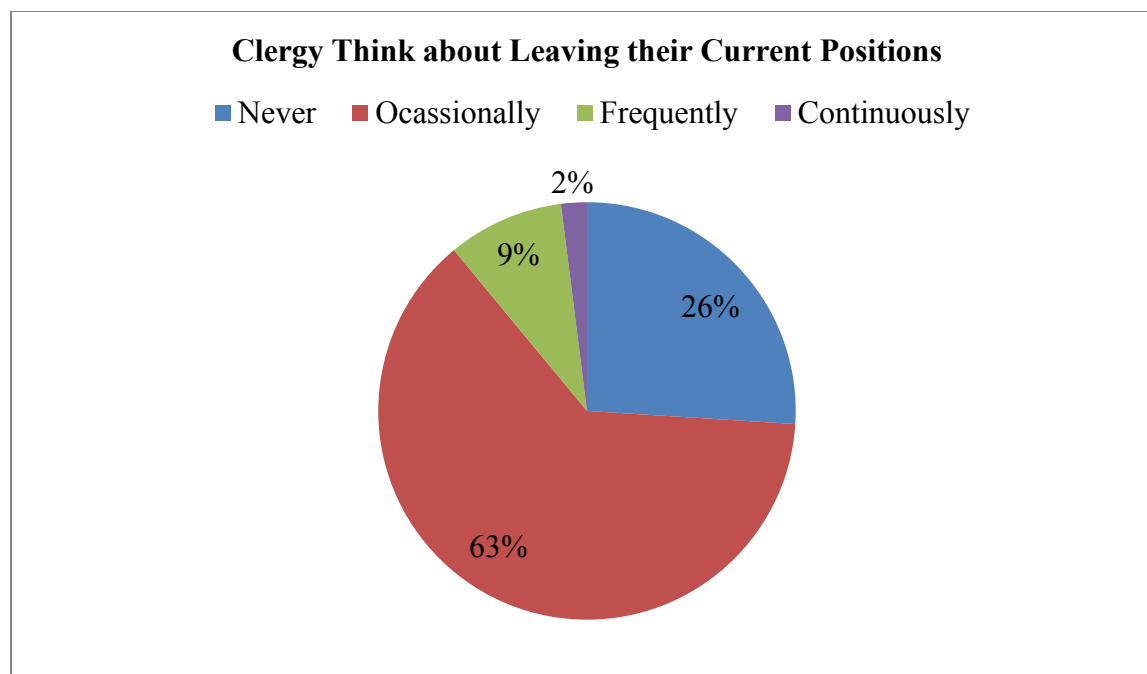


Figure 10. Clergy think about leaving their current positions, surveyed in 2012

Second, Asaph described what he envisioned as it relates to the prosperity of the wicked: “For there are no pangs in their death, but their strength is firm.”<sup>74</sup> The word *pangs* refers to a band or cord drawn tight causing torture with pain when twisted.<sup>75</sup> Asaph believed that when the wicked died they did not appear to suffer in proportion to their evil. They seemed to suffer no divine displeasure; they gave the impression of dying in peace.<sup>76</sup> “Their strength is firm” indicates that the wicked seemed to be fat and healthy, not diseased.<sup>77</sup> They have nothing coercing them unto death such as sickness and disease. Their bodies are strong even until the end.<sup>78</sup> “They are

<sup>74</sup> Ps. 73:4.

<sup>75</sup> Barnes’ Notes.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> C.H. Surgeon, *The Treasury of David*, vol. II (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988), 259.

not in trouble as other men, nor are they plagued like other men. Therefore, pride serves as their necklace; violence covers them like a garment.”<sup>79</sup>

Furthermore, Asaph saw the wicked as exempt from common burdens and calamities, wearing pride as their ornamentation, and clothed with unfairness and ruthlessness.<sup>80</sup> The Psalmist describes the wicked as having the “pride that serves as a necklace, and violence that covers them like a garment.”<sup>81</sup> The emphasis is upon the fact the wicked do not try to hide their pride or their violence; they display them openly and shamelessly.<sup>82</sup>

The Bible states, “Their eyes bulge with abundance; they have more than heart could wish.”<sup>83</sup> Asaph believed the wicked were extremely pampered with their rich lifestyles that the fatness of their self-indulging seemed to protrude through their eyes. In contrast, small-sunken eyes came from depression and trouble.<sup>84</sup>

Moreover, Asaph states, “They scoff and speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walks through the earth.”<sup>85</sup> Out of their arrogant pride, Asaph saw the wicked using their mouths to speak oppression that appeared to lift them up high. Their prideful mouths spoke blasphemies by

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<sup>79</sup> Ps. 73:5-6.

<sup>80</sup> *Barnes' Notes*.

<sup>81</sup> Ps. 73:6.

<sup>82</sup> Robert G. Bratcher and William Reyburn, *A Handbook on Psalms* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 635.

<sup>83</sup> Ps. 73:7.

<sup>84</sup> *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary*.

<sup>85</sup> Ps. 73:8-9.

envying God.<sup>86</sup> Their tongues found fault and judged everything. They criticized God and His people on earth.<sup>87</sup>

Therefore, Asaph became envious. The Bible states, “For I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.”<sup>88</sup> *Envy* means “a feeling of discontent and resentment aroused by another’s desirable possessions or qualities, accompanied by a strong desire to have them for oneself.”<sup>89</sup> Asaph became perplexed over the prosperity of the wicked and disturbed over their confident denial of God’s knowledge of humankind. Thus, his envy began pushing him over into the abyss of despair.<sup>90</sup>

Today’s ministers can also experience envy. They may envy other pastors’ church sizes or salaries. A recent survey, *Ministerial Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish*, revealed that 54% of ministers compare their salaries to others occasionally and 3% do so frequently (see figure 11). When ministers lust after large, high-status, strategic pulpits in influential areas, they subject themselves to becoming “ladder-climbing pastors.”<sup>91</sup> Historically, “ladder-climbing” pastors destroy their families, small churches, and large churches.<sup>92</sup> They struggle with loving others; hence, they use people to move up the ladder to obtain what they believe is “bigger and better.”<sup>93</sup> These pastors fail to learn how to grow a church; therefore, they buckle under the pressures and

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<sup>86</sup> Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary.

<sup>87</sup> Adam Clark’s Commentary, CD-ROM (Seattle, WA: BibleSoft, Inc., 2003).

<sup>88</sup> Ps. 73:3.

<sup>89</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. “Envy.”

<sup>90</sup> George Arthur Buttrick, *Psalms, Proverbs*, vol. 4 of *The Interpreter’s Bible* (New York, NY: Abingdon Press, 1955), 386.

<sup>91</sup> David Hansen, *The Art of Pastoring Ministry Without All the Answers* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 68.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 69.

fall back into depression.<sup>94</sup> Consequently, they may envy other people's occupations, ones not as stressful and demanding.<sup>95</sup> The author thinks envy can lead a minister to resent or doubt his calling from God.

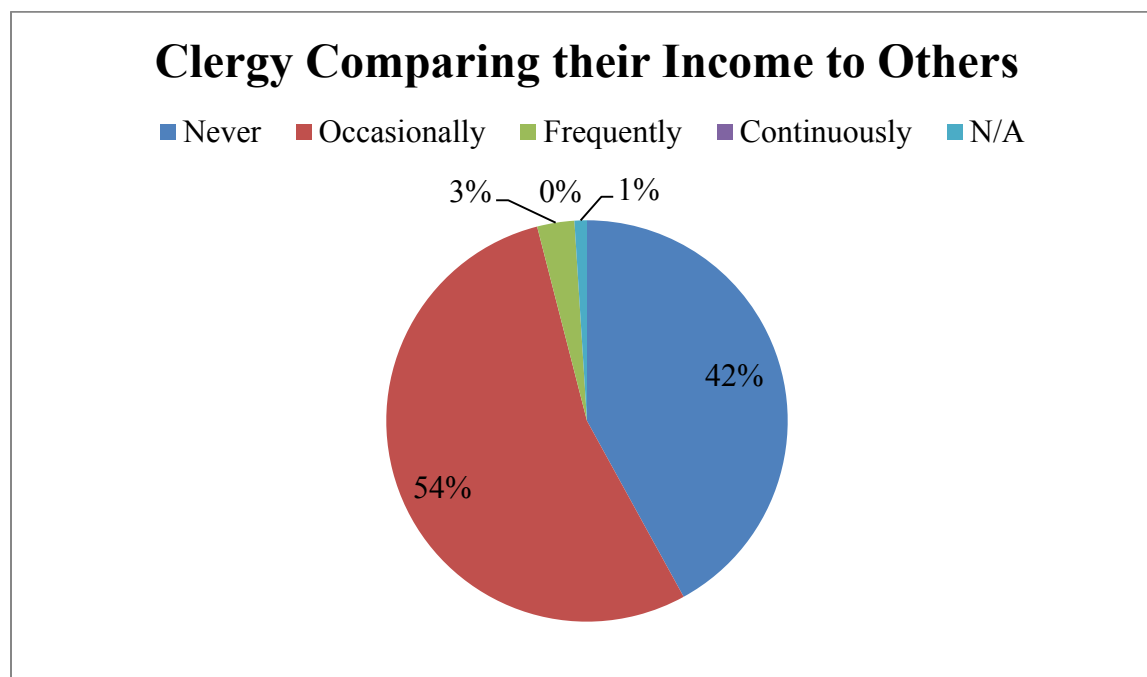


Figure 11. Clergy comparing their income to others, surveyed in 2012

### Fear and Loneliness

Elijah was a prophet of God sent to confront the idolatry of Baal worship in Israel and proclaim the Lord alone as God.<sup>96</sup> Israel sought to combine the worship of God and the Baals.<sup>97</sup> Baal worshippers believed that their god controlled thunder, lightning, and storms. Elijah gathered the people together on Mount Carmel to choose whom they would worship by way of a test or competition. The winner would gain the favor of the people. Therefore, the competition

<sup>94</sup> Hansen, *The Art of Pastoring Ministry Without All the Answers*, 68-70.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 69-70.

<sup>96</sup> MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible New King James Version*, 503.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

tested the ability of Baal or God to send fire down from heaven to consume a bull sacrifice. Eventually, fire fell from the sky and consumed the offering after Elijah prayed. The Lord Jehovah triumphed and the people fell on their faces and worshipped God.<sup>98</sup> Four hundred fifty prophets of Baal were executed that day.<sup>99</sup>

Shortly after this great victory, Jezebel sought to take Elijah's life. The Bible states, "And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword."<sup>100</sup> Ahab informed Jezebel of Elijah's actions instead of God's miracle through Elijah, as if, by Elijah's own hand, he conjured fire down from heaven to win the victory. Also, Ahab notified her that Elijah killed the prophets of Baal.<sup>101</sup> "Then, Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, 'So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.'"<sup>102</sup> Jezebel, being a priest's daughter, sought to avenge the dead priests of Baal. That night, she sent a messenger to declare to Elijah of her determination to kill the prophet by the next day. Her expression was a common oath at the time, emphasizing the forcibility of the vow.<sup>103</sup> This threat led to some astounding consequences.

First, Jezebel's powerful intimidation and evil threat caused Elijah such anguish that his faith began to waver; Elijah fearfully fled for his life and found himself all alone and in despair.<sup>104</sup> The Bible states, "And when he [Elijah] saw that, he arose and ran for his life, and

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<sup>98</sup> 1 Kings 18:20-40.

<sup>99</sup> 1 Kings 18:20-40.

<sup>100</sup> 1 Kings 19:1.

<sup>101</sup> *Matthew Henry's Commentary*.

<sup>102</sup> 1 Kings 19:2.

<sup>103</sup> *Barnes' Notes*.

<sup>104</sup> 1 Kings 19:2.

went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.”<sup>105</sup> Elijah knew of Jezebel’s killing of prophets in the past.<sup>106</sup> Therefore, he did not doubt her threats against his life that they were her true intentions.<sup>107</sup> Full of fear, he fled for his life to the southernmost part of Judah. Eventually, he sought refuge at the recesses of Mount Sinai.<sup>108</sup> *Fear* is an emotion of alarm and agitation caused by the expectation of danger or a ground for dread; it means to be afraid, frightened, anxious, apprehensive, or terrified.<sup>109</sup>

Similar to Elijah, ministers may want to flee their current ministries. Fear of failure or persecution cause them to want out of either their current positions or the ministry all together. The *Ministerial Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish*, discovered 18% of ministers struggle with distress caused from fear (see figure 12), and 28% of clergy desire to flee from their current positions because of anguish (see figure 13).

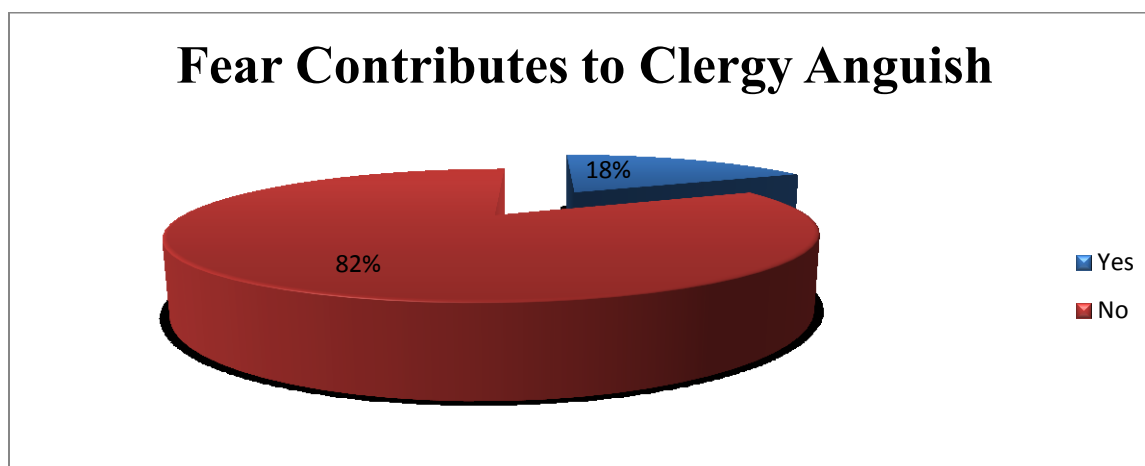


Figure 12. Fear contributes to clergy anguish, surveyed in 2012

<sup>105</sup> 1 Kings 19:3.

<sup>106</sup> 1 Kings 18:4, 13.

<sup>107</sup> Paul R. House, *1, 2 Kings*, vol. 8 of *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman& Holman Publisher, 1995), 221.

<sup>108</sup> *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary*.

<sup>109</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. “Fear.”

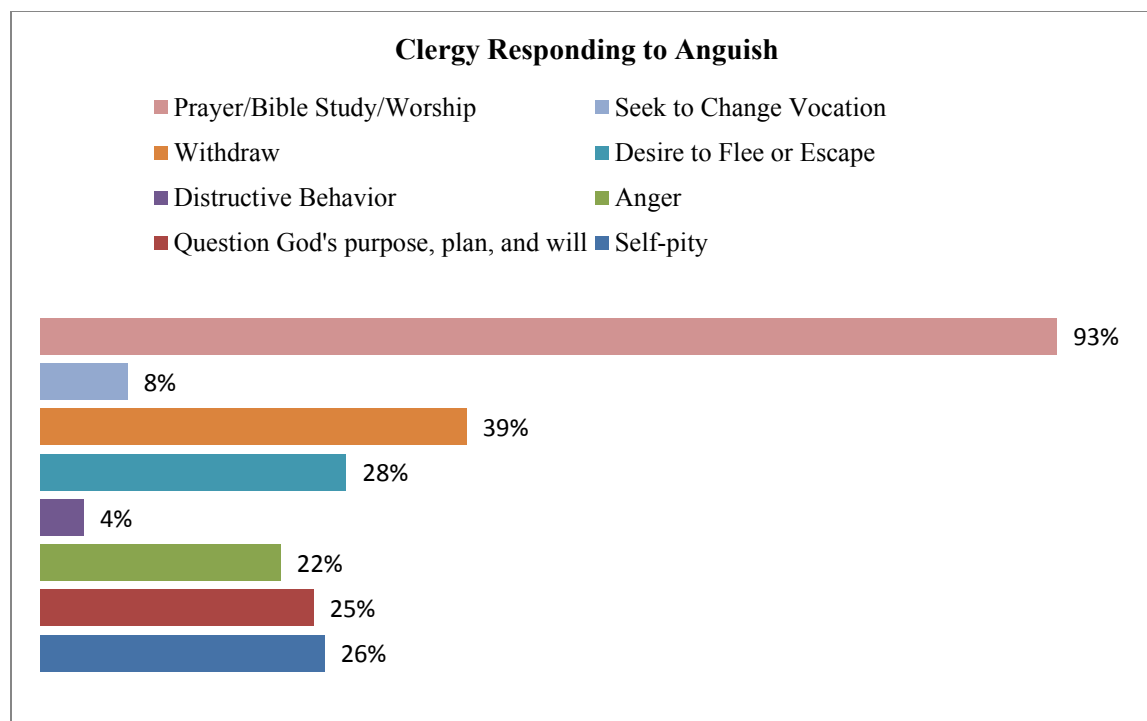


Figure 13. Clergy responding to anguish, surveyed in 2012

Fear should not be the deciding motivator for fleeing or leaving a church. Over the past generation, legitimate reasons for considering a move might include a lack of sustaining support by the church, when personal or spiritual health or the family is in jeopardy by staying, vision incompatibility between leader and the church, an inability to fulfill God's calling in the current ministry, and when organizational expectations prevent a minister from being the person God called them to be.<sup>110</sup> Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffmann suggest the following questions to help ministers discover whether God is directing them toward a new place of service: (1) Are we spiritually discontent? (2) What has God been speaking to us about? (3) Do we possess a consuming new passion? (4) Is there an open door?<sup>111</sup>

<sup>110</sup> Wilson and Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure*, 91.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 92-93.

Second, Elijah did not take his servant with him when he fled; he went alone.<sup>112</sup> Therefore, loneliness caused him some depression.<sup>113</sup> *Lonely* means to be without companions, solitary, desolate, and dejected by the awareness of being alone.<sup>114</sup> Not only was Jezebel's threats a cause for his lonely state, but also the people of Israel left Elijah feeling all alone. The Bible states, "For the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your alters, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."<sup>115</sup> Elijah drew a picture of apostate Israel: They forsook God's covenant by worshipping other gods, endeavored to abolish and destroy the worship of God from the remembrance of the people and the land, and murdered the prophets so there would be no one to reprove their sin and proclaim the truth.<sup>116</sup> Sorrowfully, Elijah responded by implying he was the only prophet left alive.<sup>117</sup>

In the prophet's mind arose an extraordinary sense of loneliness. Confidently, he overestimated the king's reaction to the miracles at Carmel and the substantiation of the people. Elijah was exalted above measure; alone in the cave, the great prophet wallowed in self-pity instead of demonstrating his faith in God.<sup>118</sup> He saw no real reason to continue.<sup>119</sup>

Not many people suffer from loneliness or lack of community more than ministers. A minister confided to a friend, "My pastor tells me I can't have friends in the church because that will make me too vulnerable. So tell me, since I spend all my time with church people, what am I

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<sup>112</sup> 1 Kings 19:3-4.

<sup>113</sup> *Adam Clark's Commentary*.

<sup>114</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. "Lonely."

<sup>115</sup> 1 Kings 19:10b.

<sup>116</sup> *Adam Clark's Commentary*.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary*.

<sup>119</sup> House, *1, 2 Kings*, 223.



supposed to do for friends? We certainly don't do things together as a staff.”<sup>120</sup>

Unfortunately, this situation is common in ministry. The research findings from the *Ministerial Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish* showed that 22% of ministers suffer from loneliness directly related to distress (see figure 14). Isolation or loneliness leads to impoverished ministries, stress, and burnout; as a rule, lone rangers do not make successful ministers.<sup>121</sup> Community is a major tool God uses to shape many spiritual leaders; isolation does not shape leaders.<sup>122</sup> God never leaves believers nor forsakes them.<sup>123</sup>

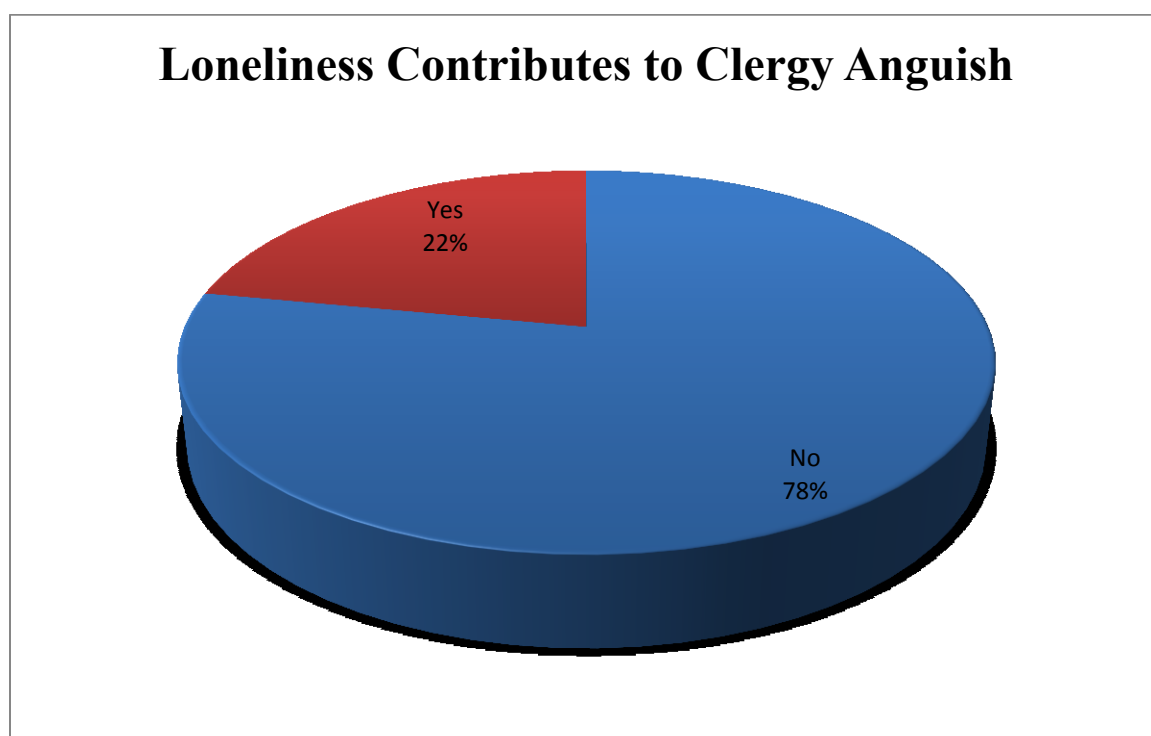


Figure 14. Loneliness contributes to clergy anguish, surveyed in 2012

<sup>120</sup> Reggie McNeal, *A Work of Heart* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 115.

<sup>121</sup> London, Jr. and Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk*, 183.

<sup>122</sup> McNeal, *A Work of Heart*, 115.

<sup>123</sup> Heb. 13:5.

## Loss

Job was an ancient patriarch of the Old Testament.<sup>124</sup> Job was a godly, loving, priestly, giving, wealthy, influential, prominent, and wise man, husband, and father.<sup>125</sup> He had seven sons and three daughters. He owned many herds, grew a variety of crops, and had a large number of servants.<sup>126</sup> He was the definition of prosperity in every way.<sup>127</sup>

God raised the subject of Job's good character and faithfulness to Satan.<sup>128</sup> Satan linked Job's piety directly to his prosperity and challenged the Lord to withdraw Job's blessings.<sup>129</sup> Satan dared God to stretch out His hand against Job; God agreed to the test by allowing Satan to strike.<sup>130</sup> This test consisted of many losses to Job that caused him unbearable anguish. *Loss* means harm or suffering cause by losing which can include casualties, setbacks, or destruction.<sup>131</sup> Job experienced loss of his wealth, the lives of his loved ones, and his health.

First, Job lost his wealth.<sup>132</sup> The Sabeans known as the people of Sheba were nomadic marauders or pirates who descended from a grandson of Abraham. They invaded and stole Job's oxen and donkeys.<sup>133</sup> Lightning fell from the heaven and destroyed the all seven thousand

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<sup>124</sup> Robert L. Alden, *Job*, vol. 11 of *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman& Holman Publishers, 1993), 56.

<sup>125</sup> Job 1:1, 3, 5, 8; 2:3, 9; 29: 7-11, 12-17, 21-24; 31:32.

<sup>126</sup> Job 1:3; 42:12; 31:38-40.

<sup>127</sup> Alden, *Job*, 56.

<sup>128</sup> Job 1:8.

<sup>129</sup> Job 1:11-12.

<sup>130</sup> Alden, 56.

<sup>131</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. "Loss."

<sup>132</sup> Job 1:14-17.

<sup>133</sup> Alden, 58-59.

sheep.<sup>134</sup> Then the Chaldeans, semi-nomadic people, from Mesopotamia organized three bands to raid Job of his camels.<sup>135</sup>

Second, Job lost his workers, friends, and loved ones.<sup>136</sup> The Sabeans and Chaldeans killed some of workers with the sword.<sup>137</sup> The same fire that destroyed the sheep also destroyed some servants.<sup>138</sup> A mighty wind or tornado struck the four corners of the oldest brother's house causing the house to fall upon Job's children, killing them.<sup>139</sup>

Third, Job lost his health.<sup>140</sup> He became diseased with throbbing puss, oozing boils, extreme itching irritations, gangrene rotting skin, and offensive halitosis.<sup>141</sup> The effects from severe grief, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, and hallucinations tormented his mind, body, and soul.<sup>142</sup> Consequently, Job withered up with extreme weight loss, high fever, and loss of teeth.<sup>143</sup>

Job, more than any other biblical character, faced extreme despair. He lost everything a person could lose besides his life. The author notes that if anyone had a reason to feel sorry for himself, Job definitely did. The most tragic loss for Job was the deaths of his children. Any kind of loss can cause grief and sorrow in our lives but losing a loved one exceeds them all.

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<sup>134</sup> Alden, *Job*, 50.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Job 1:15-19.

<sup>137</sup> Alden, 60.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>140</sup> Job 2:7-8, 13; 3:24; 6:6-7; 7:4-5; 13:28; 16:8; 17:7; 19:20a; 30:30, 33:21.

<sup>141</sup> MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, 704.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

The research findings from the *Ministerial Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish* discovered 26% of ministers have distress due to loss pertaining to sickness, death, finances, and family/friends support (see figure 15). One reaction to loss is stress. When a loss is significant, ministers may experience a crisis.<sup>144</sup> Typically, these devastating losses may include disgruntled church members leaving the church, the death of loved ones, a disability, divorce, rape, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, cancer, infertility, a lifelong dream shattered, and a suicide, betrayal by loved ones, health problems, and debt. Unattended losses can prevent ministers from walking freely and honestly with God and others. All people experience sorrow and grief. Through God's grace, believers can grow through them.<sup>145</sup> As a result of making a comparative analysis from the lives of contemporary ministers and historical leaders such as Jeremiah, Asaph, Elijah, and Job, this thesis project will enable clergy to manage anguish successfully. By assessing the research and applying key principles for managing distress, ministers will have the benefit of longer and more fruitful ministries.

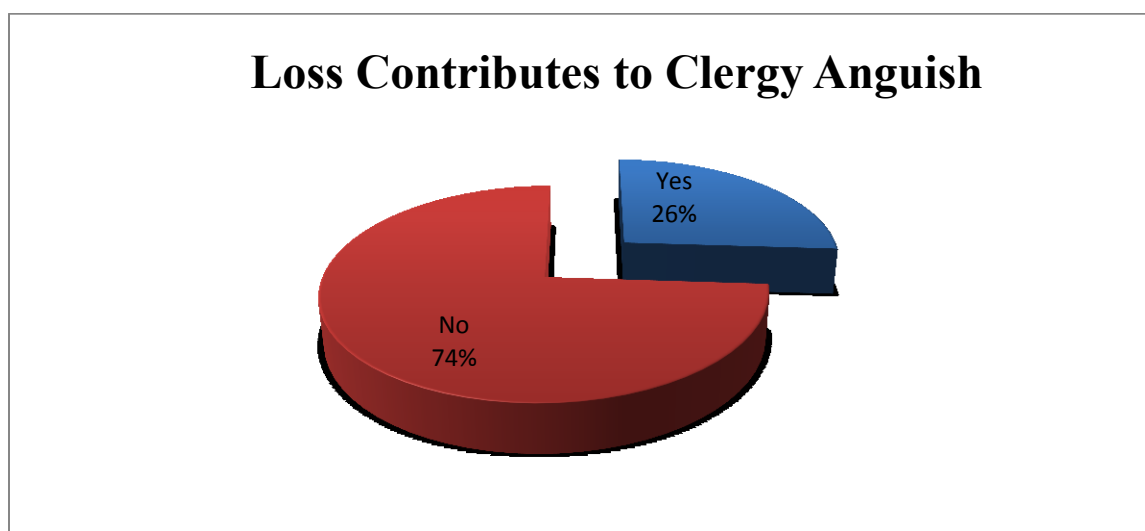


Figure 15. Loss of health, loved ones, finances, and support contributes to clergy anguish, surveyed in 2012

<sup>144</sup> Gary L. Harbaugh, *Pastor as Person: Maintaining Personal Integrity in the Choices and Challenges of Ministry* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 47.

<sup>145</sup> Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 154-155.

## CHAPTER TWO RESEARCH FINDINGS

### Introduction

The high turnover rate among clergy within the local church evidences the mismanagement of personal distress associated with ministry. This data helped establish essential principles for managing distress. The results collected from the surveys identified areas of concern related to ministerial stresses that may lead to anguish, burnout, and abandonment. Also, the questionnaire's results determined the basis, need, and importance for establishing principles for overcoming the mismanagement of personal distress within the ministry.

The data was collected from clergy ministering within the state of Tennessee. The ages ranged from 18 and above with Southern Baptist Convention affiliation. The student chose this demographic while excluding others because of proximity, accessibility, and vocation of the participants. The maximum number of participants was 100. The recruitment of participants included the following:

**Table 1. Plan for recruiting research participants**

<b>Steps</b>	<b>Details</b>
Contacting Participants	Contacting participants included sending a letter to local associations of churches, Directors of Missions, and ministers.
Location of Recruitment	The location of recruitment was the eastern Tennessee region.
Screening Procedures	Participants were currently serving in a ministerial capacity
Safeguarding for Conflicts of Interest	All participants would remain anonymous

Participating ministers were required to fill out the *Ministerial Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish* and mail them to the student in a prepaid envelope. They filled out the surveys individually at the location of their choosing. Participants delivered their individual surveys to

local associations or directly mailed them to the student with a prepaid self-addressed stamped envelope. Participants did not provide their names.

The participant risks were minimal. The questionnaire may have caused psychological recollections related to ministerial anguish. Participants received no direct benefits from filling out the surveys. However, society will benefit from this data because ministers will handle anguish more effectively; thus, resulting in stronger churches, families, and communities.

### Questionnaire Results

The research phase of the Thesis Project took place during the winter months of 2012-2013. Three hundred sixty-six Southern Baptist pastors in the Jefferson County, McMinn County, Knox County, and Nolichucky Baptist Associations in eastern Tennessee received by mail a *Ministerial Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish*. Each questionnaire contained a letter with instructions and a self-addressed stamped envelope to return the completed survey in. Out of the 366 surveys mailed out, 100 were completed and returned within the designated time period.

**Table 2. Results of Ministerial Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish**

<b>What is your current ministerial position?</b>	<b>%Percentage of Response</b>
Senior pastor	98
Ministerial staff	2
Chaplain	0
<b>What is your tenure at current position?</b>	<b>%Percentage of Response</b>
Under 3 years	27
4-6 years	19
6-10 years	13
10-20 years	22
20+ years	18
NA	1

(Table 2 continued )

<b>How often do you think about leaving your current position?</b>	<b>%Percentage of Response</b>
Never	26
Occasionally	63
Frequently	9
Continuously	2
<b>How many times have you relocated in your ministerial vocation?</b>	<b>%Percentage of Response</b>
0 Times	16
1 Time	9
2 Times	13
3 Times	26
4 Times	14
5 Times	10
6 Times	2
7 Times	6
8 Times	4
<b>How often do you struggle with anguish or distress?</b>	<b>%Percentage of Response</b>
Never	1
Occasionally	79
Frequently	19
Continuously	1
<b>What factors contribute to your anguish or distress?</b>	<b>%Percentage of Response</b>
Discouragement	85
Pressure (family, church, budget)	69
Persecution	14
Discontentment	27
Loneliness	22
Fear	18
Loss (sickness, death, finances, family/friends support)	26
<b>How do you respond to anguish or distress?</b>	<b>%Percentage of Response</b>
Self-pity	26
Question God's purpose, plan, and will	25
Anger	22
Engage in destructive behavior	4
Desire to flee or escape current position	28
Withdraw (Reclusive behavior)	39
Seek to change vocation	8
Prayer/Bible Study/Worship	93

(Table 2 continued)

<b>How often do you compare your income to others?</b>	<b>%Percentage of Response</b>
Never	42
Occasionally	54
Continuously	0
N/A	1
<b>Do you seek encouragement from others during stressful times?</b>	<b>%Percentage of Response</b>
No	18
Yes	82
<b>If so, who?</b>	<b>%Percentage of Response</b>
Other Pastors & Staff	45
Wife or Spouse	36
Friends	30
Family	7
Father	5
Mentor	5
Mom	2
Brother	2
Deacons	1
Directors of Missions	1
Church Members	1
<b>How well do you think you manage stress?</b>	<b>%Percentage of Response</b>
Excellent	11
Good	56
Satisfactory	28
Poorly	4
N/A	1



## CHAPTER THREE

### KEY PRINCIPLES FOR MANAGING DISTRESS

#### Principle One: Refuse Unsupportive Help

According to recent research data from the *Ministerial Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish*, 18% of ministers indicated they do not seek encouragement from anyone during stressful times (see figure 16). However, 82% of ministers surveyed indicated that they seek encouragement and support from family 52% of the time (see figure 17). A key component to managing anguish associated with ministry is developing a strong support group and avoiding unsupportive help. *Support* means to keep from failing or yielding during stress.<sup>1</sup> Unsupportive help during times of distress could very well be more detrimental than not seeking any help at all. Job's narrative is a perfect example of unsupportive help from family, friends, and foes.

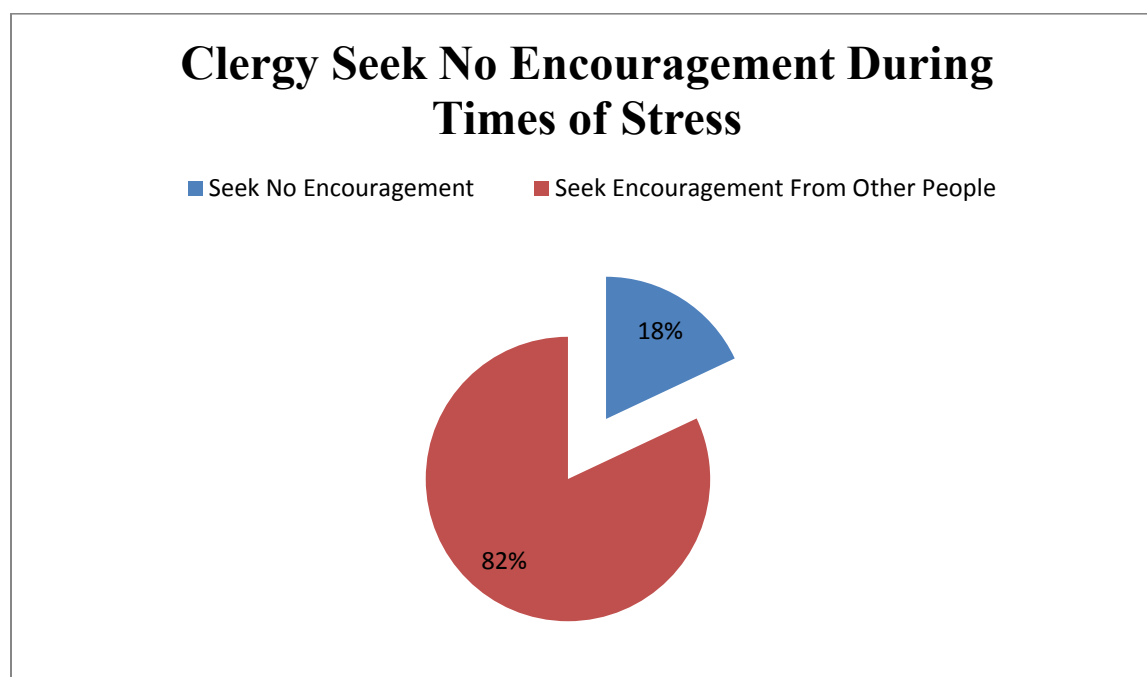


Figure 16. Clergy seek no encouragement from others during times of stress, surveyed in 2012

<sup>1</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. “Support.”

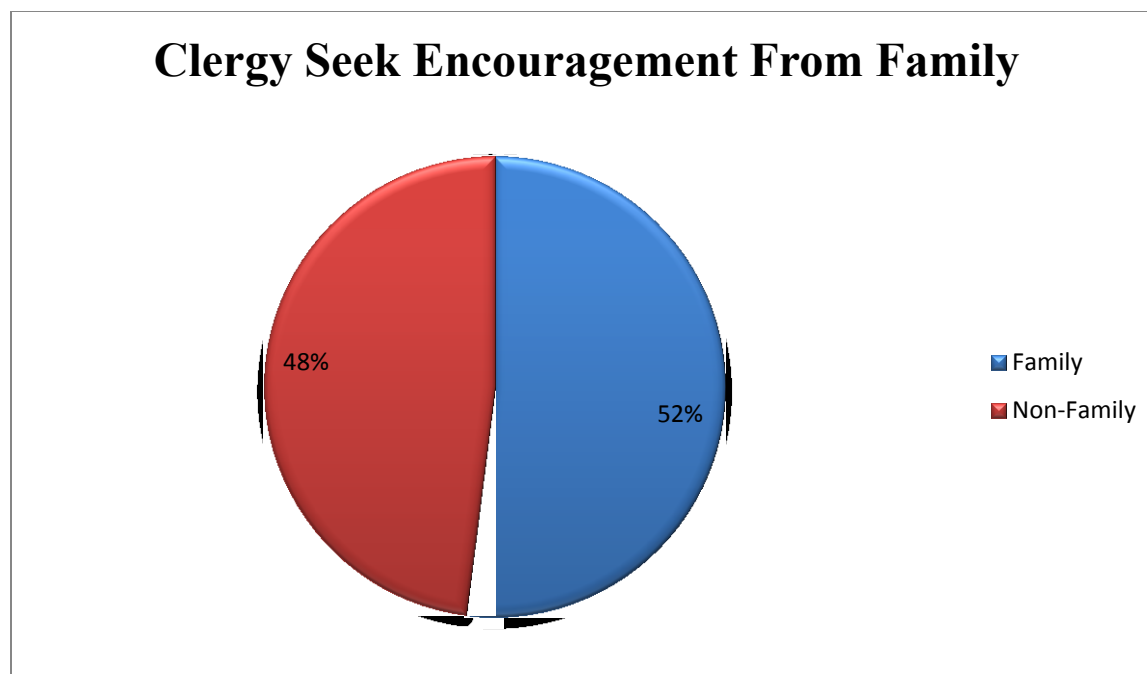


Figure 17. Clergy seek encouragement from family during times of anguish, surveyed in 2012

A wife vows to stand by her husband for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, and until death do they part. She is his lifelong companion and should be his best supporter and help mate. The advice from Job's wife in Job 2:9 illustrates the unsupportive aspect of facing anguish without sympathy. During Job's affliction, his wife said, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!"<sup>2</sup> Her advice was for Job to blame God and commit suicide. Many theologians cast her in the role of the devil's supporter. Augustine labeled her *diabolic adjutrix* "devil's assistant," while Calvin referred to her as "Satan's tool."<sup>3</sup> Thomas Aquinas believed Satan spared her in the calamities recorded in Job 1 for the purpose of tempting Job. She is the "earthly mouthpiece for the hidden Satan."<sup>4</sup> Although Job does not heed her advice, her influence is evident from this point onward in the narrative and shown in Job's sobjecting,

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<sup>2</sup> Job 2:9.

<sup>3</sup> David J.A. Clines, *Job 1-20*, vol. 17 of *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1989), 51.

<sup>4</sup> Norman C. Habel, *The Book of Job* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1985), 96.

taunting, complaining, and requesting for a judicial hearing with the Almighty.<sup>5</sup> During times of intense stress, some of the toughest tests come from within the home.

From the research data collected from the *Ministerial Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish*, 82% of the clergy who seek encouragement during stressful times, 36% said they seek out encouragement from their wives; 16% indicated they seek out encouragement from their family (see figure 18). Spousal and family support is extremely important in ministry. The only other people sought out more for support during times of anguish other than a spouse or family member was another minister at 45% of the time (see figure 18).

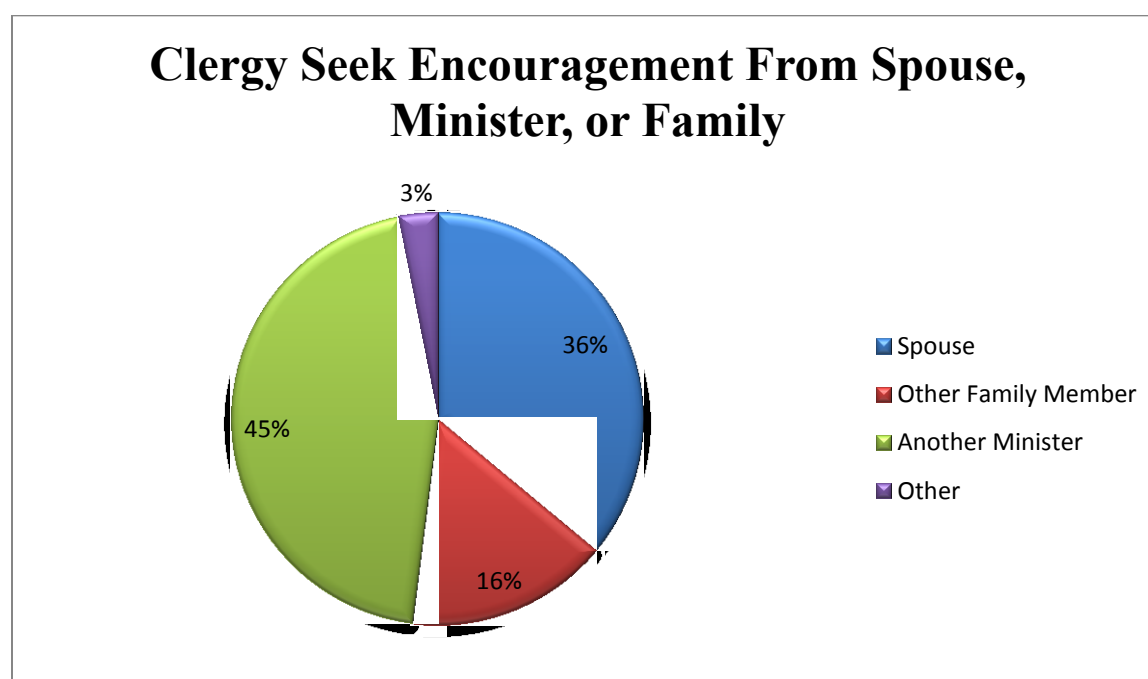


Figure 18. Clergy seek encouragement from spouse, family, or minister during stressful times, surveyed in 2012

Many leadership calamities correspond directly with an unhealthy, dysfunctional, and unsupportive family. In contrast, a wholesome marriage and loving family relationships can

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<sup>5</sup> Clines, *Job 1-20*, 51-52.

bring support to ministerial leadership.<sup>6</sup> Family can validate or discount the activities of a leader based upon their helpfulness or lack of support.<sup>7</sup>

Another form of unsupportive help to refuse can come from friends. Job's three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, offered him advice during his time of distress. Job's friends heard about his adversity and came over to mourn and comfort him.<sup>8</sup> When they saw the condition and grief Job was experiencing, they wept, tore their robes, sprinkled dust on their heads, and watched him for seven days and nights speaking not a word to him. Then, Job cursed the day he was born. His friends then responded with advice.<sup>9</sup>

Eliphaz, Job's most prominent friend, seemed to be the leader or spokesperson. He was a wise sage from Teman in Idumaea; his wisdom came from passed down knowledge, experience, study, and visions.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, Eliphaz based his advice on his exotic experiences, visions, dreams, and chills.<sup>11</sup> In Eliphaz's first speech to Job, he presumed that Job's reaping of affliction must have resulted from some iniquity he had sown, which came from his innate impurity and depravity being revealed to Eliphaz through a vision he experienced.<sup>12</sup> He also criticized Job's condition by calling him a simple fool and promising restoration if Job would seek God.<sup>13</sup> In Eliphaz's second speech, Job's response irritated him; therefore, he attributed Job's words to his

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<sup>6</sup> Daniel Henderson, *Defying Gravity: How to Survive the Storms of Pastoral Ministry* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2010), 117.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>8</sup> Job 2:11.

<sup>9</sup> Job 2:12-13.

<sup>10</sup> *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, CD-ROM, Seattle, WA: Biblesoft, Inc., 2003.

<sup>11</sup> John Phillips, "Job," sermon on CD.

<sup>12</sup> Job 4:7-19; *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.

<sup>13</sup> Job 5:2-3, 8; *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.

iniquity, reiterated Job's depravity, and described the fate of a wicked man.<sup>14</sup> In Eliphaz's final speech, he attributed actual sins to Job, iniquities committed because God was too far away to know them; however, the door of penitence, repentance, and restoration was opened to Job.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, Eliphaz suggested that Job must be a sinner.<sup>16</sup>

Bildad was the second of Job's three friends. He came from an unknown place, East and Southeast of Palestine called Shuah.<sup>17</sup> He was a man with clever clichés, pet proverbs, and pat answers.<sup>18</sup> Bildad's speeches had increased intensity. In Bildad's first speech, he accused Job's children of sinning and being the ultimate cause of Job's affliction; he appealed to the principles found from tradition, which verified that if suffering is present then sin caused it.<sup>19</sup>

In Bildad's second speech, he exaggerated a description of the wicked man's anguish, relating it to Job's own account of his anguish; thus, Bildad identifies Job with the degenerate wicked.<sup>20</sup> His third speech presented God as magnificent and glorious while man, depraved, impure, and sinful.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, Bildad did not just suggest that Job was a sinner but supposed it.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Job 15:4-6, 14-16, 20-35; *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.

<sup>15</sup> Job 22:5-15; 21-30; *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.

<sup>16</sup> Phillips, "Job."

<sup>17</sup> *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.

<sup>18</sup> Phillips.

<sup>19</sup> Job 8:4, 8:8-10; *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.

<sup>20</sup> Job 18:5-21, 16:6-22; *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.

<sup>21</sup> Job 25:2-6; MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, 722.

<sup>22</sup> Phillips.

Job's last friend was Zophar. He was a Naamathite from the tribe of Naamah located somewhere in the region of the Arabia Desert.<sup>23</sup> He seemed to have his mind made up about Job before he began to speak.<sup>24</sup> Zophar presented two speeches to Job. He was the most rash and rigid of the three friends; his words were brutal, reckless, and exaggerated with intensity.<sup>25</sup> He directly accused Job of iniquity and concluded that Job's punishment was less than he deserved.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, he admonished Job for impiously presuming and trying to find out the unsearchable secrets of God.<sup>27</sup> If Job would only put away his iniquities and repent, then Zophar promised peace and restoration.<sup>28</sup> However, Zophar followed up on this promise by telling Job that his sin would cause him to lose his life.<sup>29</sup>

In Zophar's second speech, he also provided another description of the wicked man's woes.<sup>30</sup> He aimed his words at Job accusing him of being a wicked, hypocritical, and haughty person.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, the wicked are under the fury of God.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, Zophar did not just say Job must be a sinner or supposed Job to be a sinner; but he said Job was definitely a sinner.<sup>33</sup> If Job received what he deserved, he would be burning in Hell.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Fausset's Bible Dictionary*, CD-ROM, Seattle, WA: Biblesoft, Inc., 2003.

<sup>24</sup> Phillips, "Job."

<sup>25</sup> *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.

<sup>26</sup> Job 11:6.

<sup>27</sup> Job 11:7-12.

<sup>28</sup> Job 11:13-19; *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.

<sup>29</sup> Job 11:20; *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.

<sup>30</sup> Job 20:5-29; *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.

<sup>31</sup> Job 20:5, 6; *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.

<sup>32</sup> Job 20:23.

<sup>33</sup> Phillips.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*.

Research data collected from the *Ministerial Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish* indicates that of the 82% of clergy who seek encouragement during stressful times, 30% seek support from friends (see figure 19). According to an article by Thom Rainer, 79% of pastors, say critics distract them from their ministries.<sup>35</sup> Critics who also claim friendship pose problems with trust and loyalty. Friends can sometimes be a minister's mainsupporters or worst critics. Ministers should understand an important concept about friendship: "Dual relationships between pastor and parishioner carry risks. Know the risks and respond accordingly."<sup>36</sup> Healthy and mature parishioners make the best friends and lower the risk of hurt and betrayal.<sup>37</sup> Attachment should be the foundation for all friendships or they will have an unstable base. Love is the only attachment that bonds true friendship.<sup>38</sup>

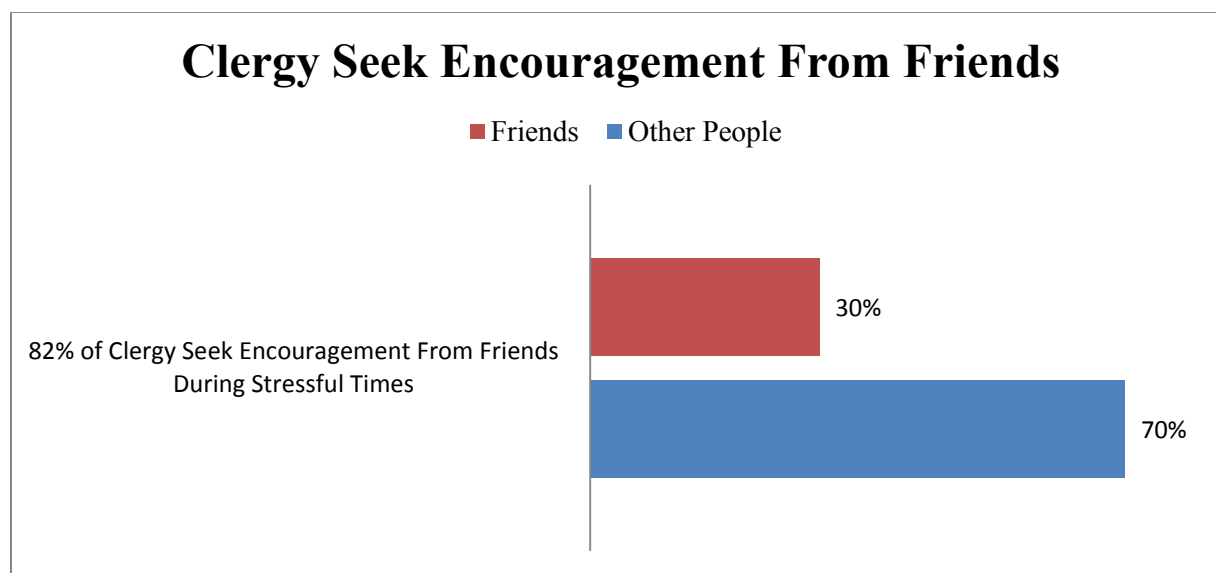


Figure 19. Clergy seek encouragement from friends during stressful times, surveyed in 2012

<sup>35</sup> Thom Rainer, "Two Big Distractions for Pastors," <http://www.thomrainer.com/2012/08/two-big-distractions-for-pastors.php> (accessed August 1, 2012).

<sup>36</sup> William H. Willimon, *Calling and Character* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000), 79.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *Boundaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 145-146.

Finally, Elihu was not one of Job's friends but a young man who overheard the arguments from Job and his friends. He was an Aramaean from the family of Ram and tribe of Buz, a brother tribe to that of Uz.<sup>39</sup> After Job and his friends finished debating, Elihu came on the scene to set both parties right.<sup>40</sup>

Elihu thought he was a God-inspired mediator. He presented four speeches to Job.<sup>41</sup> He felt that he could represent the causes of Job's friends better than they could because he was younger and had fresh new ideas. Elihu agreed with Job's friends but felt that their arguments were inconclusive; therefore, he finished their unreached goals.<sup>42</sup>

In Elihu's first speech, he boasted about his inspiration from God and suggested Job listen to his opinions; he was proud, egotistical, and sure of his ideas.<sup>43</sup> In his second speech, Elihu answered Job's complaint by saying that God sent him as a mediator specifically for Job; moreover, he declared God might send revelation by dreams, visions, or the interpreting of an intercessory friend.<sup>44</sup> He continued by stating that God brings chastening as a disciplinarian act to bring submission and repentance; consequently, Elihu was there to justify Job.<sup>45</sup>

In Elihu's third speech, he misinterpreted Job's remarks and put words into his mouth; filled with pride, he reminded Job that God was holy, fair, powerful, just, impartial, omniscient, and sovereign.<sup>46</sup> Finally, Elihu proclaimed that he was perfect in knowledge.<sup>47</sup> The most helpful

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<sup>39</sup> *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Job 32-37.

<sup>42</sup> *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.

<sup>43</sup> Job 32:6-22; *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.

<sup>44</sup> Job 33:13-28; *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.

<sup>45</sup> Job 33:19-28, 32; *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.



thing he said was that God used suffering to open men's ears to draw them to Himself; Job should not turn his complaining into iniquity; however, he should draw near to God in his anguish.<sup>48</sup>

Clergy should avoid unsupportive help from all foes.<sup>49</sup> Clergy encounter two groups of antagonists within the church, people with a critical spirit who displace their self-hatred onto others and people with a narcissistic self-absorption who exclude others' needs.<sup>50</sup> Other foes include people who judge the preaching based on the sermon's immediate connection to their own lives and people who analyze the sermon's grammar with Greek and Hebrew lexicons.<sup>51</sup> Finally, the most intimidating adversary is the minister himself. Pastors are an insecure sort; many have an unhealthy level of self-consciousness that is worse than a congregation full of antagonists.<sup>52</sup>

Consequently, Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend in their book *Boundaries* write, "Say, 'No!' to the Bad."<sup>53</sup> When clergy are recovering from hurtful situations, they need to avoid family, friends, or foes that have abused and controlled them in the past.<sup>54</sup> According to John Philips, he categorizes these unsupportive people into five groups.

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<sup>46</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible New King James Version* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1997), 730.

<sup>47</sup> Job 36:4.

<sup>48</sup> MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible New King James Version*, 733.

<sup>49</sup> Cloud, *Boundaries*, 58.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Byron Forrest Yawn, *Well-Driven Nails* (Greenville, SC: Ambassador International, 2010), 35.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Cloud, *Well-Driven Nails*, 134.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

**Table 3. Five types of unsupportive people**

Description	Definition
<b>The God Blamer</b>	He wants others to blame God and encourages them to commit suicide.
<b>The Exotic Experience Led</b>	He thinks that if the person he is advising had his experiences he would not be in his predicament.
<b>The Heartless Clever-Answer Provider</b>	No matter what trial others are facing, he always has a verse of Scripture to stab them with instead of helping them.
<b>The Know-It-All Boaster</b>	He thinks he knows everything and believes he knows exactly what God is going to do in every situation like he has a monopoly on God.
<b>The Holy Spirit Role-Player</b>	He tries to play the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of others, the “Holier-than-Thou Syndrome.” He believes he has a direct word from God about what He wants others to learn from their afflictions.

Source: Data from John Phillips, “Job” sermon on CD

After Jezebel’s threats drove Elijah away from other believers, he ended up disconnected, alone, and in a cave.<sup>55</sup> Today’s ministers do the same thing after fearful threats or undeserved criticism. They become reclusive, protective, and avoid risk taking. Research data from the *Ministerial Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish* indicates 39% of clergy respond to anguish or distress by withdrawing or reclusive behavior (see figure 20). Larry Crabb describes this unhealthy behavior with a metaphor known as “wall whitewashing.”<sup>56</sup> He explains the metaphor as, “The concept of minimizing risk to protect one’s self, a commitment to safety.”<sup>57</sup>

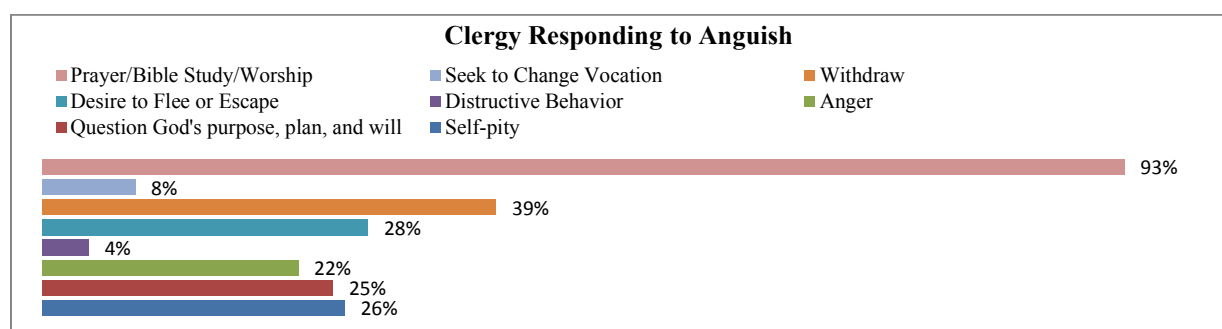


Figure 20. Clergy responding to anguish, surveyed in 2012

<sup>55</sup> 1 Kings 19:4, 9.

<sup>56</sup> Larry Crabb, *Connecting: Healing for Ourselves and Our Relationships* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 104.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

Love and compassion are the number one traits to look for in finding support. Pastors experiencing anguish do not want people staring, watching, or poorly advising them. However, caring and supportive friends can help bring healing and comfort. God blesses pastors with friends to help them bear their burdens.<sup>58</sup> Ministers should choose them wisely.

God sometimes utilizes supportive family or friends in clergy's lives to help provide emotional stability during troublesome times. The presupposition is that God places supernatural resources within each believer to encourage, exhort, or equip hurting souls. Larry Crabb states,

Releasing the power of God through our lives into the hearts and souls of others requires that we both understand and enter into a kind of relating that only the gospel makes possible, a kind of relating that I call connecting. I have come to believe that the root of all our personal and emotional difficulties is a lack of togetherness, a failure to connect that keeps us from receiving life and prevents the life from spilling over onto others.<sup>59</sup>

The concept of connecting is God revealing himself through Christians, to hurting people, not merely repairing them or pressuring them with moral control or therapy, but speaking to them with grace and exposing them to the depths of God's kindness. Acts of kindness help diminish some of the stresses associated with trials. The apostle Paul encouraged believers to assist any brother or sister who needs help, "Bear one another's burdens" and "Be kind to one another."<sup>60</sup>

As God-called ministers of the gospel, clergy should declare the word of God regardless of which group of unsupportive people stand before them. "A preacher rightly said, '...when you are free from your people's smiles and frowns, you are at liberty to be an instrument of blessing

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<sup>58</sup> Gal. 6:2.

<sup>59</sup> Larry Crabb, *Connecting*, 32.

<sup>60</sup> Gal. 6:2; Eph. 4:32a.

to them. I submit that if there is to be increased power in the pulpit, there must be a return to the purity of motivation comprised of a fear of God.”<sup>61</sup>

Clergy should be aware of their insecurities and inconsistencies but never allow them to diminish assertive leadership. Christ is the example to follow. The Bible states, “Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.”<sup>62</sup> Jesus was able to comfort the weak and confront the hypocrites, and rebuke his disciples without compromise, “Assertiveness is behavior that allows a person to exercise his or her own rights without diminishing the rights of another.”<sup>63</sup>

### **Principle Two: Avoid the “Why Me Malaise”**

Ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has many challenges, from a culture shifting more to the left morally and politically to churches changing from traditional to contemporary in worship and philosophy. Clergy face difficult challenges and extreme pressures as never before. American culture and churches are changing faster and expecting more from their leaders. Nevertheless, today’s clergy still face the same pressures and stresses associated with ministering to a fallen world of humanity as the biblical leaders faced within the Old Testament.

Jeremiah, Asaph, Elijah, and Job struggled with the “Why Me Malaise.” Malaise means a vague feeling of depression.<sup>64</sup> Self-pity, grief, anger, and despair are some of the internal struggles facing pastors today and throughout history. In a recent survey, *Ministerial*

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<sup>61</sup> Yawn, *Well-Driven Nails*, 35.

<sup>62</sup> 1 Pet. 2:22-23.

<sup>63</sup> Blake J. Neff, *A Pastor’s Guide to Interpersonal Communication: The Other Six Days* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 128.

<sup>64</sup> *American Heritage Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. “Malaise.”

*Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish*, data indicates 26% of ministers respond to anguish with self-pity (see figure 21). Self-pity tempts ministers to move God out of the center of their lives. The temptation is to believe no other person's pain is as severe as the minister's sorrow.<sup>65</sup> Also, the ministerial survey revealed that 22% of ministers respond to distress with anger. Pressures from ministry can make clergy become anxious; thus, their frustrations may produce angry feelings from fear or hurt.<sup>66</sup> The "Why Me Malaise" is the condition of attempting to cope with these internal toils by trying to convince God to remove the undeserved suffering and affliction by reminding Him of one's service, sacrifice, or integrity.

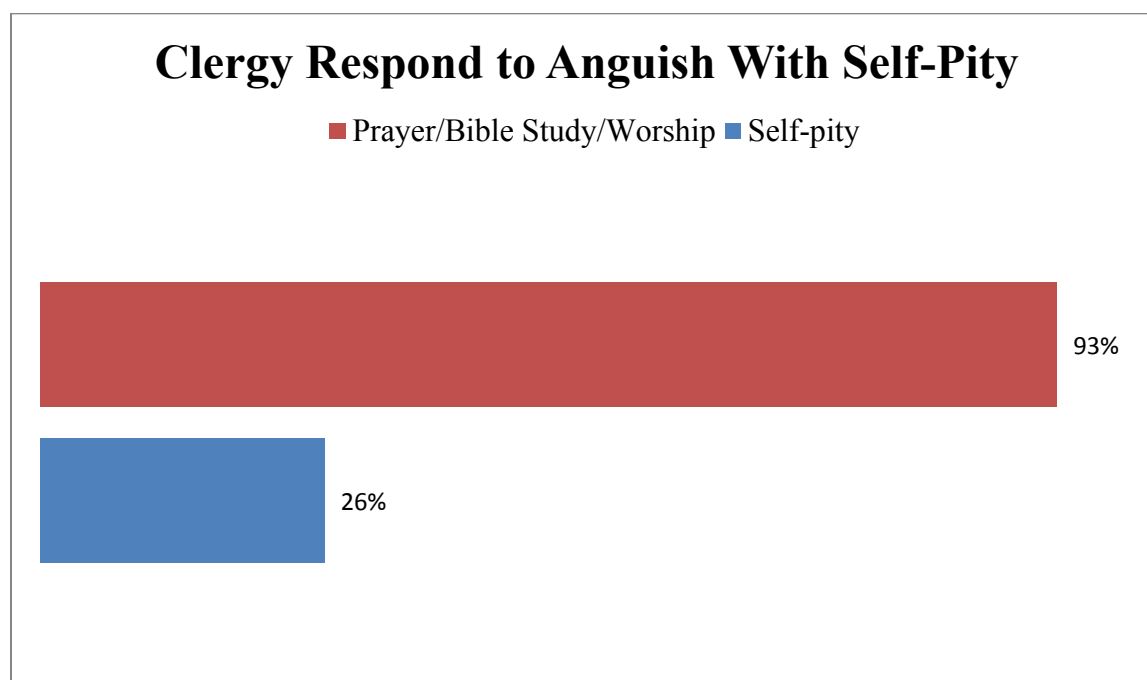


Figure 21. Clergy respond to anguish with self-pity, surveyed in 2012

<sup>65</sup> Paul David Tripp, *Suffering: Eternity Makes a Difference* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2001), 11.

<sup>66</sup> Gary L. Harbaugh, *Pastor as Person: Maintaining Personal Integrity in the Choices and Challenges of Ministry* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 103, 108.

First, Jeremiah was disheartened because of the judgment of God approaching his nation and the persecution he felt from family and friends. In his extremely agitated and emotional state, Jeremiah pleaded with God to remember, care for, and avenge him.<sup>67</sup> Bitter, full of grief, and not willing to submit to the will of God, Jeremiah offered up a prayer for justice and deliverance from God. God's long-suffering toward the wicked seemed to the prophet as an abandonment unto his death.<sup>68</sup>

Jeremiah asked God to be mindful of him and consider his case, "Remember me and visit me, and take vengeance for me on my persecutors. In Your enduring patience, do not take me away."<sup>69</sup> Earlier, Jeremiah wished he had not been born, yet here, he desired life. He desired for God to remove his persecutors but not remove him. The prophet reminded God that His honor was interested in Jeremiah's case: "Know that for Your sake I have suffered rebuke."<sup>70</sup> Jeremiah hoped that God would vindicate his honor with God's own honorable justice because the prophet's suffering was for righteousness sake. After all, Jeremiah's enemies hated him because he was a prophet of God; therefore, God should stand by him.<sup>71</sup>

Jeremiah states, "Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your name."<sup>72</sup> He recollected to God his

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<sup>67</sup> F.B. Huey Jr., *Jeremiah Lamentations*, vol. 16 of *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1993), 161.

<sup>68</sup> *Barnes' Notes, PC Study Bible*, CD-ROM, version 4.0 (Seattle, WA: Biblesoft Inc., 2003).

<sup>69</sup> Jer. 15:15.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition*, CD-ROM, (Nashville, TN: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1991).

<sup>72</sup> Jer. 15:16.

prophetic call.<sup>73</sup> Jeremiah did not seek nor expect this calling; however, he received God's words with joy. This eating of the divine words conveyed the close bond between that which came from God and the prophet's own being. Thus, Jeremiah was consecrated to God's service and ordained to be His prophet.<sup>74</sup>

In verse 17, Jeremiah reflected upon the cost he paid in serving as God's prophet. In time the honor and joy he felt upon receiving his call was replaced by self-pity: "I did not sit in the assembly of the mockers, nor did I rejoice; I sat alone because of Your hand."<sup>75</sup> He told the Lord that he proved his devotion by not sitting with the revelers or indulging in their celebrations or parties; he had exemplary behavior.<sup>76</sup> As a result and directly related to God's hand, he experienced seclusion and separation from his people.<sup>77</sup> Consequently, Jeremiah reminded God of how he suffered for His sake, embraced His calling, rejoiced at His Word, and did not sit nor rejoice with mockers, but sat alone.

Second, Asaph's words conjure up the "Why Me Malaise." He states, "Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence."<sup>78</sup> Asaph became angered over the prosperity of the wicked and disturbed over their confident denial of God's knowledge of humankind.<sup>79</sup> He "was a like a beast" before God.<sup>80</sup> Thus, his envy began pushing him over into

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<sup>73</sup> *Barnes Notes*.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>75</sup> Jer. 15:17.

<sup>76</sup> Huey Jr., *Jeremiah Lamentations*, 162.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>78</sup> Ps. 73:13.

<sup>79</sup> George Arthur Buttrick, *Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah*, vol. 5 of *The Interpreter's Bible* (New York, NY: Abingdon Press, 1956), 386.

<sup>80</sup> Ps. 73:22b.

the abyss of despair.<sup>81</sup> In his time of sorrow and lack of understanding, he stated that there was no advantage in worshipping the true God, walking in accordance to the law of righteousness, and keeping the ordinances of the Lord.<sup>82</sup>

Asaph saw his faithful lifestyle as futility; he put forth the effort to become pure and holy.<sup>83</sup> However, from his viewpoint, this did not obtain him any favor with God. Asaph seemed to gain nothing by his painful endeavors to become righteous by self-discipline. He washed his hands in purity, living an innocent lifestyle. It appeared his efforts brought fewer blessings from God than the wicked, less happiness and prosperity, but more trouble and sorrow.<sup>84</sup> Consequently, Asaph reminded God of how he had a clean heart and pure hands.

Third, Elijah states the “Why Me Malaise” in 1 Kings 19:10a. “I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your alters, and killed Your prophets with the sword.”<sup>85</sup> Confidently, he over-estimated the king’s reaction to his attempt of turning the people’s heart back to God.<sup>86</sup> Elijah reminded the Lord of his zeal for reformation which seemed to have led to failure and despair.<sup>87</sup> The cry in this verse was an excuse for his retreat. As long as there was hope of doing some good, Elijah had been zealous for God. However, the prophet felt his labors were in vain and his endeavors availed without purpose; he gave up and mourned for what he could not fix.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Buttrick, *Psalms, Proverbs*, vol. 4 of *The Interpreter’s Bible*, 386.

<sup>82</sup> *Adam Clark’s Commentary*, CD-ROM (Seattle, WA: BibleSoft, Inc., 2003).

<sup>83</sup> *Barnes’ Notes*.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> 1 Kings 19:10a.

<sup>86</sup> *Matthew Henry’s Commentary*.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*



Finally, Job's loss of wealth, loved ones, and his health sent him into the pit of despair. Puzzled by these afflictions, he defended himself before God and man. In Job 19:23-29, he expressed his bewilderment, affirmed God as his Redeemer, and had confidence that if the deeds of his life were recorded in a book that his sufferings would outweigh his sins; therefore, God would vindicate him.<sup>89</sup> In Near Eastern culture, people took curses very seriously.<sup>90</sup> Someone calling down curses upon himself was extremely daring. Job was convinced of his innocence and integrity. Thus, he listed seven categories of sin or crimes whose consequences he would gladly suffer. By listing these sins, he took a serious risk to prove his blamelessness because he believed God would take action on these curses; he would receive the curses if he earned them.<sup>91</sup> Job presents his defense in Job 31.

**Table 4. Job's defense before God**

Job's Claim	Explanation	Reference from Job
<b>Job was innocent of lust</b>	Job solemnly resolved that he would not improperly contemplate a woman with his eyes or thoughts.	31:1-4
<b>Job was not dishonest</b>	Job was true and honest. He had not defrauded, misrepresented, misspoken, nor deceived anyone.	31:5-6
<b>Job did not covet</b>	Job said he had not coveted with his eyes the things that he saw nor dirtied his hands by depriving or defrauding others of their property.	31:7-8
<b>Job did not commit adultery</b>	Job never watched for his neighbor to leave so he could seduce his neighbor's wife, which was a common practice for people caught up in adultery.	31:9-12
<b>Job did not abuse his authority</b>	He did not mistreat his servants by taking advantage of them through misusing his power and rank.	31:13-15
<b>Job did not neglect the poor and needy</b>	He aided widows, furnished food and clothes to the fatherless, and cared for the orphans like a father.	31:16-23
<b>Job was not greedy</b>	Job did not set his heart on an idolatrous attachment to his wealth. He did not trust in riches which most men sought and valued above all else.	31:24-25

<sup>89</sup> MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, 716-717.

<sup>90</sup> Robert L. Alden, *Job*. vol. 11 of *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman& Holman Publishers, 1993), 297.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

(Table 4 continued)

<b>Job was not an idolater</b>	<b>Job did not fall victim to Sabeism, the worship of heavenly bodies (sun, moon, stars, and planets).</b>	<b>31:26-28</b>
<b>Job did not rejoice at his enemies' misfortunes</b>	Job did not take vengeance, bore malice, hated, cursed, spoken evil of, nor wished evil upon his enemy.	31:29-30
<b>Job extended hospitality to others</b>	Job's generosity reached beyond his family to the unknown stranger or traveler. He opened his doors to them for room and board.	31:31-32
<b>Job confessed his sins</b>	He did not conceal his sin but acknowledged his wrong doings.	31:33-34
<b>Job respected the land and its owners</b>	He did not abuse the landowners. Job allowed the land rest every seventh year according to Leviticus 25:1-7. He did not break the law or wear out the soil.	31:38-40b

Source: Data from *Barnes' Notes, PC Study Bible*, CD-ROM, version 4.0., Seattle, WA: Biblesoft Inc., 2003; Adams Clark, *Adam Clark's Commentary*, CD-Rom, Seattle, WA: Biblesoft, Inc., 2003.

Jeremiah, Asaph, Elijah, and Job experienced anguish that reached the point of spiritual doubt. The author thinks their sufferings produced doubts in their minds about God's justice and mercy. Typically, questions flood leaders' minds when trials come their way. These four biblical leaders questioned why the Lord would allow their sorrowful circumstances. Their circumstances seemed undeserved based upon their devotion to God.

Sometimes ministry stress overwhelms and discourages clergy to the point of asking, "What is God's purpose behind the suffering?" According to the research data from the *Ministerial Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish*, 25% of ministers respond to anguish by questioning God's purpose, plan, and will (see figure 22). Puzzling *whys* seem to find their way into the lives of ministry leaders; hence, leading them to ask the age-old question, "Why do bad things happen to good people (ministers)?"

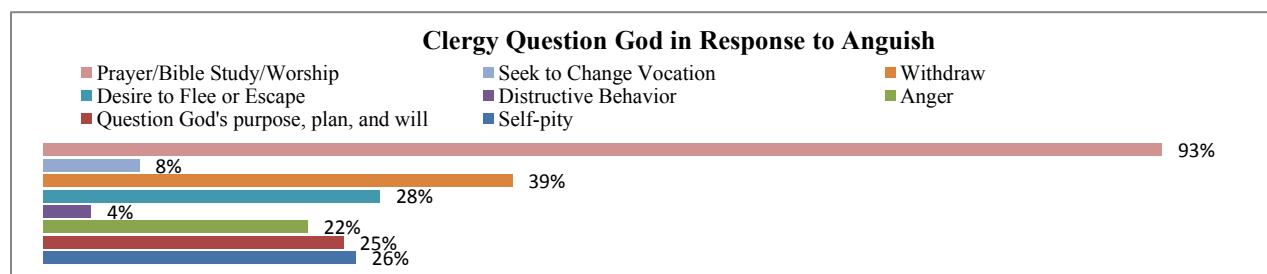


Figure 22. Clergy question God in response to anguish, surveyed in 2012

Avoiding the “Why Me Malaise” involves understanding two concepts. First, God is sovereign over the affairs of His servants. The Bible states, “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.”<sup>92</sup> Peter the apostle of Christ writes, “In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”<sup>93</sup>

Understanding the sovereignty of God regarding suffering entails grasping the relationship between Satan and sin and their effects on all creation. First, sin taints the entire world, including man and nature.<sup>94</sup> As long as sin exists in the world, it affects the righteous and unrighteous. Even Jesus, God’s sinless Son, felt its pain. He was beaten, spit upon, mocked, and crucified by sinful men. Ultimately, he bore the sins of the world upon the cross.<sup>95</sup> Jesus reminds his followers that they are not above suffering: “Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.’”<sup>96</sup> Second, the penalty for sin is death.<sup>97</sup> Therefore, the appropriate question to ask in times of suffering is, “Why do good things happen to bad people (ministers)?” Every blessing obtained from God is a gift that none deserves.<sup>98</sup> Finally, Christians are aliens in this world: “They are not of the world; just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the

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<sup>92</sup> Jer. 29:11.

<sup>93</sup> 1 Pet. 1:6-7.

<sup>94</sup> Rom. 5:12.

<sup>95</sup> 1 Pet. 2:24.

<sup>96</sup> John 15:20.

<sup>97</sup> Rom. 6:23.

<sup>98</sup> Eph. 1:3.

world, but that you should keep them from the evil one, the ruler of the world.”<sup>99</sup> Therefore, Satan is going to do everything he can to destroy believers until God takes them home to a sinless place called Heaven.<sup>100</sup>

Ministers need to keep their focus on Christ and the gospel to alleviate the role of playing Holy Spirit or reverting to spiritual narcissism.<sup>101</sup> There is a danger in watching what others are doing or not doing in regard to how it may affect the minister’s plans, activities, or vision. Watching and waiting for people in the pews to change before the minister changes is unhealthy and frustrating.<sup>102</sup> Nevertheless, focusing too much on oneself is immature and ungodly. According to an article written by Tullian Tchividjian, Senior Pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, narcissistic self-pity is the result of focusing too much on oneself instead of Christ. Moreover, he encourages believers to focus on Christ and the gospel:

The truth is, we spend way too much time thinking about ourselves, and we justify this spiritualized navel-gazing by reasoning that this is what God wants us to be doing. There is nothing in the gospel that encourages us to focus on ourselves. Nothing! It's never honoring to God when we take our eyes off of Christ. Never! In fact, the whole point of the gospel is to get us out of ourselves and to "fix our eyes on Christ" (Heb. 12:2)... The gospel turns us outward. Martin Luther argued that sin actually bends or curves us in on ourselves. Any version of "the gospel," therefore, that places you at the center is detrimental to your faith—whether it's your failures or your successes, your good works or bad works, your strengths or weaknesses, your obedience or disobedience.<sup>103</sup>

Furthermore, Gary L. Harbaugh writes, “If others can make me feel happy or sad, calm or angry, loved or unloved, acceptable or unacceptable, worthwhile or not worthwhile, then I am really

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<sup>99</sup> John 17:14-16; 12:31.

<sup>100</sup> 1 Pet. 5:8.

<sup>101</sup> Ronald W. Richardson, *Becoming a Healthier Pastor* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 77.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Tullian Tchividjian, “Blessed Self-Forgetfulness,” *Christianity Today*, Summer 2012, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2012/summer/selfforgetfulness.html> (accessed August 7, 2012).

dependent on those others. When we ‘give away’ to someone else the ability to make us feel a certain way, then we give away our personal power over our own lives.”<sup>104</sup>

### Principle Three: Stop Fostering the “Woe is Me Syndrome”

Fundamental to despairing anguish is the “Woe is Me Syndrome.” *Woe* means deep sorrow, grief, misfortune, or calamity expressed in intense distress.<sup>105</sup> *Syndrome* means a complex of symptoms indicating the existence of an undesirable condition or quality.<sup>106</sup> Recent research data from the *Ministerial Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish* indicates ministers respond to distress with multiple, emotional, physical, and mental symptoms, associated with this syndrome (see figure 23).

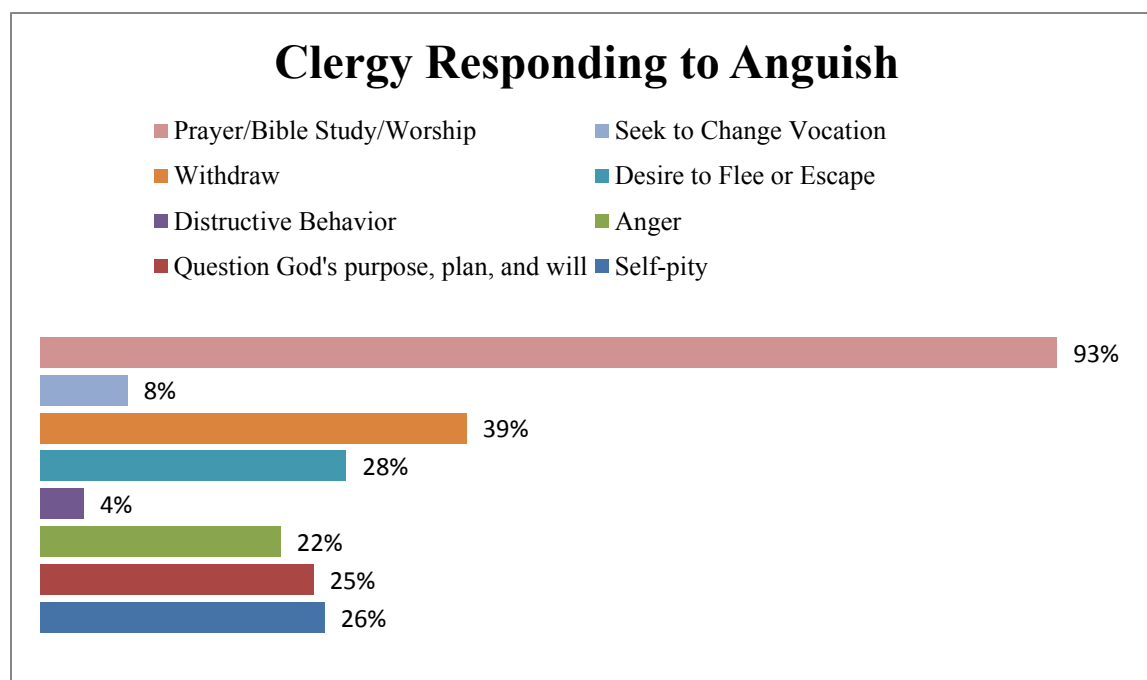


Figure 23. Clergy responding to anguish, surveyed in 2012

<sup>104</sup> Harbaugh, *Maintaining Personal Integrity*, 108.

<sup>105</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. “Woe.”

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, s.v. “Syndrome.”

The “Woe is Me Syndrome” is an exaggeration of reality. It tends to cloud the truth surrounding the agonizing situation, making clergy vulnerable to deceptive thinking. Biblical leaders were not immune to this syndrome. Jeremiah, Asaph, Elijah, and Job experienced this syndrome personally. First, Jeremiah found himself in the middle of discouragement. God’s judgment of Israel and the Babylonian captivity was inevitable.<sup>107</sup> Furthermore, his family and fellow citizens hated him for prophesying about this judgment.<sup>108</sup> At the height of Jeremiah’s sorrow, he bellowed woes. Jeremiah’s discouragement left him in profound despair. The prophet states, “Woe is me, my mother that you have borne me.”<sup>109</sup> Jeremiah’s sorrow caused him to wish that he had never been born. By denouncing his birth, he came close to renouncing his prophetic commission.<sup>110</sup> The people viewed him as a source of discord and conflict; therefore, they cursed him. They misunderstood Jeremiah’s good intentions.<sup>111</sup>

Jeremiah experienced pain from knowing about the judgment to come and the persecution received from the people. His questions were really woeful complaints. He cried, “Why is my pain perpetual and my wound incurable?”<sup>112</sup> God told Jeremiah the answer to this question: “Thy sorrow is incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity.”<sup>113</sup> Judah’s sin caused not only the nation pain, but it was also the source of Jeremiah’s incurable pain. He received

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<sup>107</sup> Jer. 15:4-6.

<sup>108</sup> Jer. 11:18-19.

<sup>109</sup> Jer. 15:10.

<sup>110</sup> Huey Jr., *Jeremiah Lamentations*, 160.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Jer. 15:18.

<sup>113</sup> Jer. 30:15.

perpetual persecution from his fellow citizens; thus, he felt God left him without consolation.<sup>114</sup> Jeremiah asked God, “Will You surely be to me like an unreliable stream, as waters that fail?”<sup>115</sup> Streams often quenched travelers’ thirst for water. Jeremiah felt as if God was a dried up stream that disappointed or failed him in his hour of need.<sup>116</sup>

Second, Asaph experienced the “Woe is Me Syndrome,” which resulted in immense distress. Asaph said, “For I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.”<sup>117</sup> His envy of the prosperity of the wicked caused him grief and nearly caused him to stumble and slip.<sup>118</sup> The Bible states Asaph’s woeful plea: “For all day long I have been plagued and chastened every morning. If I had said, ‘I will speak thus,’ Behold, I would have been untrue to the generation of Your children. When I thought how to understand this, It was too painful for me.”<sup>119</sup> Asaph felt like all of his life was full of chastening trials.<sup>120</sup> Each morning, he awoke to some new form of affliction that he thought to be a rebuke or punishment. Every day, trials came into his life; however, the wicked were not plagued by such afflictions.<sup>121</sup>

Asaph’s thoughts about the prosperity of the wicked were so painful that he kept them to himself.<sup>122</sup> He knew that his feelings might diminish others’ confidence in God; they might

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<sup>114</sup> *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, PC Study Bible Electronic Database*, CD-ROM, version 4.0 (Seattle, WA: BibleSoft Inc., 2003).

<sup>115</sup> Jer. 15:18.

<sup>116</sup> *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary*.

<sup>117</sup> Ps. 73:3.

<sup>118</sup> *Barnes’ Notes*.

<sup>119</sup> Ps. 73:14-16.

<sup>120</sup> Ps. 73:14.

<sup>121</sup> *Barnes’ Notes*.

<sup>122</sup> Ps. 73:15-16.

shake the foundations of people's faith, peace, hope, and joy.<sup>123</sup> Although, Asaph did not express his opinions to others, he dwelt on them and tried to understand them.<sup>124</sup> The word *painful* in verse 16 means labor, toil, or burden; his questions around the prosperity of the wicked were like a burden, too heavy for him to carry and conceive.<sup>125</sup>

Third, Elijah, all alone, ran for his life from Jezebel.<sup>126</sup> She sought to kill him because he executed the prophets of Baal. Maybe from lack of faith, weariness from ministry, and hopelessness of ever having peace, Elijah fled to the wilderness and Mt. Horeb.<sup>127</sup> Elijah, overwhelmed with a sense of loneliness, provided the shortest featured woeful speech of the biblical leaders. His entire woeful speech consisted of two wails, divided and presented at two different times.<sup>128</sup> The Bible states, "And he prayed that he might die, and said, 'It is enough! Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!'"<sup>129</sup> Elijah reached the pit of despair. He reacted with overstrained emotions brought on by weariness from night/day travel, faintheartedness from the sun's heat, hunger, exhaustion, and solitude.<sup>130</sup> This isolation left his soul overwhelmed, crushed, and broken; thus, he succumbed to his depressive state, prayed that he might die, and sorrowfully went to sleep.<sup>131</sup> Furthermore, when Elijah exclaimed, "I am no

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<sup>123</sup> *Barnes' Notes*.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>126</sup> 1 Kings 19:4, 8.

<sup>127</sup> Paul R. House, *1, 2 Kings*, vol. 8 of *The New American Commentary* (Broadman & Holman Publishing, 1995), 222.

<sup>128</sup> 1 Kings 19:4, 10b.

<sup>129</sup> 1 Kings 19:4.

<sup>130</sup> *Barnes' Notes*.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid*.



better than my fathers,” he wailed his weakness of being no stronger than those who had tried before him to revolutionize Israel.<sup>132</sup> Nevertheless, Elijah’s Mount Carmel victory was successful but overshadowed by Jezebel’s threat.<sup>133</sup>

Elijah stated, “I alone am left.”<sup>134</sup> He implied that he was the only prophet left alive. Clouded by his anguish, Elijah felt that he alone stood for covenant faith; therefore, the need to continue was useless.<sup>135</sup> He over exaggerated his lonely standing. Truly, he was not the only one left who stood for true, binding faith in God. If Elijah were thinking clearly, he would have remembered that God’s covenant with Israel was everlasting. The Bible states, “And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you.”<sup>136</sup> Furthermore, “For the Lord your God is a merciful God, He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.”<sup>137</sup> In summary, Elijah wailed, “I am the only faithful person left!”<sup>138</sup> However, not all was hopeless, and Elijah was not the only faithful person left.

Fourth, Job’s woes reached the pinnacle of despair. His woes encompassed exaggerated suicidal thoughts, questioning of God’s love, hopelessness, and abandonment. His woes include every aspect of ministry (see table 5).

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<sup>132</sup> *Barnes’ Notes.*

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> 1 Kings 19:10b.

<sup>135</sup> *House, 1, 2 Kings, 223.*

<sup>136</sup> Gen. 17:7.

<sup>137</sup> Deut. 4:31.

<sup>138</sup> 1 Kings 19:10b.

**Table 5. Job's woes**

<b>Job's Woeful Cries</b>	<b>Reference</b>
<b>I wish I had never been born!</b>	Job 3:3, 10, 11; 10:18; 14:1-3
<b>I wish I would die!</b>	Job 3:16, 20-22; 6:8-9; 10:20-22; 14:13; 17:1
<b>My burdens are too heavy!</b>	Job 6:2-3
<b>God is against me!</b>	Job 6:4; 7:20; 19:6-7; 16:12-14; 30:20-21
<b>I hate my life!</b>	Job 7:16; 9:21; 10:1
<b>I am disgracefully wicked!</b>	Job 10:15
<b>God has set people against me!</b>	Job 10:17; 16:11; 17:6; 30:9-10
<b>My friends are undependable!</b>	Job 6:15; 16:20
<b>My situation is hopeless!</b>	Job 17:11, 15
<b>Where is God?</b>	Job 23:1-4; 31:35
<b>I am annoying to and abandoned by all!</b>	Job 30:29
<b>I cry out for help and receive only evil!</b>	Job 30:15-17, 26-28, 30-31

*Source:* New King James Version of the Bible

To stop fostering the “Woe is Me Syndrome” ministers must begin to equate spiritual growth with emotional balance and mental stability.<sup>139</sup> Pastoral ministry must start with the presupposition of “the inseparability of the emotional health and spiritual maturity”<sup>140</sup> The foundation for this principle is stated in 2 Timothy 1:7: “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”<sup>141</sup> Clergy must incorporate into their ministries and lifestyles the theology of weakness.<sup>142</sup> Instead of fleeing, fighting, or hiding, they should face disappointment and criticism openly and honestly without exaggerating their circumstances or condition. Therefore, conflict resolution occurs through loving, open, transparent disagreement that should be practiced by listening non-defensively to criticism and complaints.<sup>143</sup>

Mental stability is crucial to ending, or at least curtailing, the woeful cries among clergy in ministry today. The peace of God is the primary ingredient necessary for mental stability. The

<sup>139</sup> Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 33.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> 2 Tim. 1:7.

<sup>142</sup> Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, 33.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 184.

Bible states, “Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another.”<sup>144</sup> Salt is symbolic of the purifying, preserving power of God; to have “salt” in a minister’s life means denying one’s self of pride, selfish ambition, and contention; to have “peace” with other people means avoiding, unfruitful arguments, quarrels, and struggles for places of honor.<sup>145</sup> Kirk Byron Jones states the following, “Namely, we stand a better chance of making peace in our world outside if we can hold peace in our world on the inside. We will become better at making peace when we become better at holding peace; in other words, when we become better at letting peace make us... We let peace make us when we are no longer unconsciously dependent on the rush of crises, and when we are more consciously thirsty for the peace of God.”<sup>146</sup>

The promise of Christ yoking himself to believers is the vital, dynamic, and authentic promise for pastoral ministry.<sup>147</sup> The Bible states, “Take My yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”<sup>148</sup> Jesus tells his followers to stay connected to Him. Jesus, the wiser and stronger, wants to help clergy find rest for their souls. “The yoke metaphor makes Jesus’ name ‘Immanuel’ (God with us) operative in our lives and ministries and makes his presence perceptible and profound in daily pastoral reality.”<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Mark 9:50.

<sup>145</sup> *Barnes’ Notes*.

<sup>146</sup> Kirk Byron Jones, *Rest in the Storm* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2001), 78.

<sup>147</sup> John W. Frye, *Jesus the Pastor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 77.

<sup>148</sup> Matt. 11:29.

<sup>149</sup> Frye, *Jesus the Pastor*, 76-77.

### Principle Four: Ingest a Healthy Diet

Sorrow and distress associated with ministry diminishes the minister's desire for a physically and spiritually nutritious diet.<sup>150</sup> Within ministerial leadership, there is a great need for responsible stewardship regarding the mind and body. The pendulum swings from eating too much to not eating enough. Ministers under duress are typically non-eaters, stress eaters, comfort/junk food eaters, or survivor eaters (consuming because they need food and out of sheer habit).<sup>151</sup> Elijah, Jeremiah, Asaph, and Job established key principles regarding what ministers should and should not ingest when facing anguish and distress.

#### *Dieting Dos*

Elijah, the exhausted prophet, tired and frightened from ministry and anguish of mind, fell asleep. The Bible states,

“Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, “Arise and eat.” Then he looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again. And the angel of the LORD came back the second time, and touched him, and said, “Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you.” So, he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God.”<sup>152</sup>

Elijah needed God's refreshment. An angel delivered him strength and nourishment in the form of cake and water. Some theologians think this was a traditional cake of the Arab nations.<sup>153</sup> Others think that this cake was similar to manna.<sup>154</sup> Whatever the case, God

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<sup>150</sup> Richard A. Swenson, *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial and Time Reserve to Overloaded Lives* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2004), 88-89.

<sup>151</sup> Paul David Tripp, *Grief: Finding Hope Again* (Canada: New Growth Press, 2004), 9; Edward T. Welch, *Self-Injury: When Pain Feels Good* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2004), 3.

<sup>152</sup> 1 Kings 19:5-8.

<sup>153</sup> *Barnes' Notes*.

supernaturally delivered the cake and water to Elijah through an angel. The angel fed the prophet twice, thereby providing him with the strength he needed to travel to Horeb, the mountain of God. Just like the people of Israel wandered in the desert for 40 years, Elijah traveled 40 days in the desert; just like Moses spent 40 days on the mountain waiting for God's new assignment, Elijah's journey took 40 days and 40 nights as he waited for his new commission.<sup>155</sup> Excessive anguish of mind and fatigue can induce sleep during times of distress. Many people find comfort in sleep and food during stressful situations.

Managing stress among ministerial leaders involves combining the ingredients of a well-balanced diet: rest, nutrition, exercise, and margin. First, part of being a minister is spending time with people, serving them. Nevertheless, to maintain a spiritually and physically healthy diet, rest and relaxation are necessary ingredients. For this to occur, clergy must get away occasionally to escape, relax, sleep in, or take a nap.<sup>156</sup> Elijah removed himself from the masses much like Christ did in order to find rest and restoration. The Bible states, "Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He [Jesus] went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed."<sup>157</sup>

The danger facing many clergy is the temptation to funnel all of their rest needs into an already crowded weekend or holiday schedule.<sup>158</sup> They should avoid this trap because weekends and holidays are typically more stressful to clergy than the week they just completed.<sup>159</sup> Sundays are not days of rest for ministers; the very opposite is true. Clergy must learn to unplug the cell

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<sup>154</sup> Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary.

<sup>155</sup> MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, 507.

<sup>156</sup> Richard A. Swenson, *Margin*, 89.

<sup>157</sup> Mark 1:35.

<sup>158</sup> Swenson, 89.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

phone, or at the very least set it to silent mode, and find uninterrupted quiet time.

In order for clergy to gain more rest, they must see the value of rest.<sup>160</sup> Many ministers have negative attitudes toward sleep. They view sleep as wasted time, much the same way they view vacations. However, sleep and rest were God's ideas.<sup>161</sup> The Bible states, "Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female servant and the stranger may be refreshed."<sup>162</sup> Sleep is a gift of God. The Bible states the vanity of sleep deprivation and the gift of a good night's sleep: "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so He gives His beloved sleep."<sup>163</sup> Nevertheless, clergy must resist the temptation to abuse rest and relaxation. Slothfulness and laziness are sins that hamper ministers and ruin God's work.

Secondly, nutrition is another key ingredient to developing and ingesting a healthy diet. It plays a major role in the consumption of a well-balanced diet. Proper nutrition consists of five lifestyle routines. First, clergy should practice decreasing fat intake, sugars, and total calories. Because fats are calorie dense and carbohydrates turn to sugars, ministers should avoid consuming large amounts of them; calories add pounds, and pounds add stress.<sup>164</sup> The author of this thesis project believes being overweight opens up the door for disgruntled members and critics to accuse the minister of gluttony and poor steward of the temple of God. Second, clergy should replace processed snack foods (cookies, chips, etc.) with fruits and raw vegetables.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Swenson, *Margin*, 99.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Exod. 23:12.

<sup>163</sup> Ps. 127:2.

<sup>164</sup> Swenson, 102.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

Third, clergy should avoid overeating.<sup>166</sup> Clergy rank among the most obese professionals in America; a national survey of more than 2,500 religious leaders conducted by *Pulpit and Pew* found that 76 % of clergy are overweight or obese, compared to 61% of the general population.<sup>167</sup> God's Word provides clergy with wisdom and warning regarding having a strong appetite. "When you sit down to eat with a ruler, consider carefully what is before you; and put a knife to your throat if you are a man given to appetite. Do not desire his delicacies, for they are deceptive food."<sup>168</sup> Fourth, ministers should buy directly from farmers or grow their own gardens whenever possible. The goal is to avoid as many chemical additives as possible. Of course, Elijah's angel food cake came directly from God's pantry, "Then he looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on coals."<sup>169</sup> Although, clergy may not have the same arrangement as Elijah, they can decrease the manufactured toxins in so much of today's food products.<sup>170</sup> Swenson states, "The ground taking its orders from God doesn't process its food the same way the factories do...Always protect the most direct connection from the Father's hand to your table."<sup>171</sup> Fifth, ministers should incorporate into their lifestyle routine the practice of drinking a lot of water. Elijah received food and a jar of water for his physical needs.<sup>172</sup> The recommended

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<sup>166</sup> Swenson, *Margin*, 103.

<sup>167</sup> Fred Lehr, *Clergy Burnout* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2006), 6.

<sup>168</sup> Prov. 23:1-3.

<sup>169</sup> 1 Kings 19:6.

<sup>170</sup> Swenson, 103.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> 1 Kings 19:6.

daily allowance is between six and eight glasses a day.<sup>173</sup> Furthermore, a glass of water before a meal is a good appetite suppressant.<sup>174</sup>

Thirdly, exercise is a critical ingredient to ingesting a healthy diet. It helps clergy control stress and maintain focus in ministry. Elijah rested, ate a meal, rested again, and then traveled (*exercised*) in the strength of that meal 40 days.<sup>175</sup> There are numerous benefits associated with consistent moderated exercise. One of the first benefits of exercise is sounder sleep, a necessary ingredient to ingesting a healthy diet.<sup>176</sup> However, clergy should avoid exercising right before bedtime; the muscle soreness may hinder the sleep cycles.<sup>177</sup> Another benefit of exercise is it is an appetite suppressant and weight reducer.<sup>178</sup> Consistent exercise increases energy, flexibility, and alertness; it benefits the body and the mind. Dr. Swenson points out, “Exercise has tranquilizing effect on the body. It helps decompress stress and is good medicine for anxiety or depression.”<sup>179</sup>

Finally, margin is one of the primary ingredients essential for ingesting a well-balanced diet. Margin, according to Dr. Swenson in his book by the same title, is “the space that once existed between ourselves and our limits...the gap between rest and exhaustion”<sup>180</sup> Clergy are notorious for living beyond their human limitations in the areas of emotional health, physical

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<sup>173</sup> Swenson, *Margin*, 103.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> 1 Kings 19:5-8.

<sup>176</sup> Swenson, 103.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 42, 69.



energy, time, and finances.<sup>181</sup> Margin-less living leads to overload whenever the requirements upon someone exceed that person's ability to shoulder them.<sup>182</sup> Consequently, overload leads to anxiety, stress, and disease. Some practical steps for pastors to generate margin are to create a budget, set appropriate boundaries among congregation and family, laugh, cry, and practice contentment.<sup>183</sup> Furthermore, ministers should create buffer zones within scheduling by removing calendar congestion and clutter. They should downsize the calendar and plan ahead for family activities.<sup>184</sup>

### *Dieting Don'ts*

The first idea related to an unhealthy spiritual diet is "savoring past experiences." Jeremiah never mentioned consuming food or drink during his times of anguish or pity. However, he does talk about eating. The Bible states, "Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts."<sup>185</sup> Jeremiah reflected on the past regarding his consumption of God's Word and his prophetic calling. He remembered receiving God's calling and prophetic words with joyful delight. This memory brought gladness and satisfaction. However, God's words went into his mouth sweet but soured in his stomach because of the spiritual, emotional, and physical stress he was under. Jeremiah states, "Why is my pain perpetual and my wound incurable, which refuses to be healed? Will You surely be to me like an unreliable stream, as waters that fail?"<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Swenson, *Margin*, 54.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 88-91.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 126-128.

<sup>185</sup> Jer. 15:16.

During times of anguish, ministers may dwell too much on positive past experiences. They become spiritually nostalgic, remembering and reflecting back on the “good old days” with escapism from the present-day demands of ministry. Instead of those savory memories leading to an attitude of joy, they bring sorrow and pain because the present may not be as joyful as the past. This savoring experience, if left to fester, only produces an unending hunger to live in the past, thus, preventing a person from moving forward. Paul states, “I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.... I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead. I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”<sup>187</sup> Remembering wonderful past experiences is not wrong; however, when the past robs a person of his future joy then a strong hold may develop in that person’s life. God wants leaders to press forward in His plans for their lives.

The second idea related to an unhealthy spiritual diet is “salivating over others’ indulgences.” Asaph did not mention food either; however, he coveted the gluttony of the wicked. The Bible states, “Their [the wicked] eyes stand out from fatness.”<sup>188</sup> Pampered with a rich gluttonous lifestyle, the wicked’s eyes stand out with the fatness of their bodies; thus, reflecting their self-indulging carnality.<sup>189</sup> Their eyes were in direct contrast with the righteous who have sunken eyes, which symbolize depression and sorrow.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Jer. 15:18.

<sup>187</sup> Phil. 3:12-14.

<sup>188</sup> Ps. 73:7.

<sup>189</sup> *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary*.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

Oftentimes during periods of grief, clergy may have a tendency to compare their circumstances and blessings to others, thus salivating for better conditions. According to the research data from the *Ministerial Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish*, 57% of clergy compare their income to other people (see figure 24). Coveting other people's resources, facilities, and accomplishments only leaves a minister with an empty stomach. Discontentment is a costly mindset because it robs people of the joy of living.<sup>191</sup> Envy leads to hunger pains that cause bewilderment. James says, "For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there."<sup>192</sup> The Bible states, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled."<sup>193</sup> The author believes God wants leaders to set their cravings on Christ who alone can satisfy their every need.

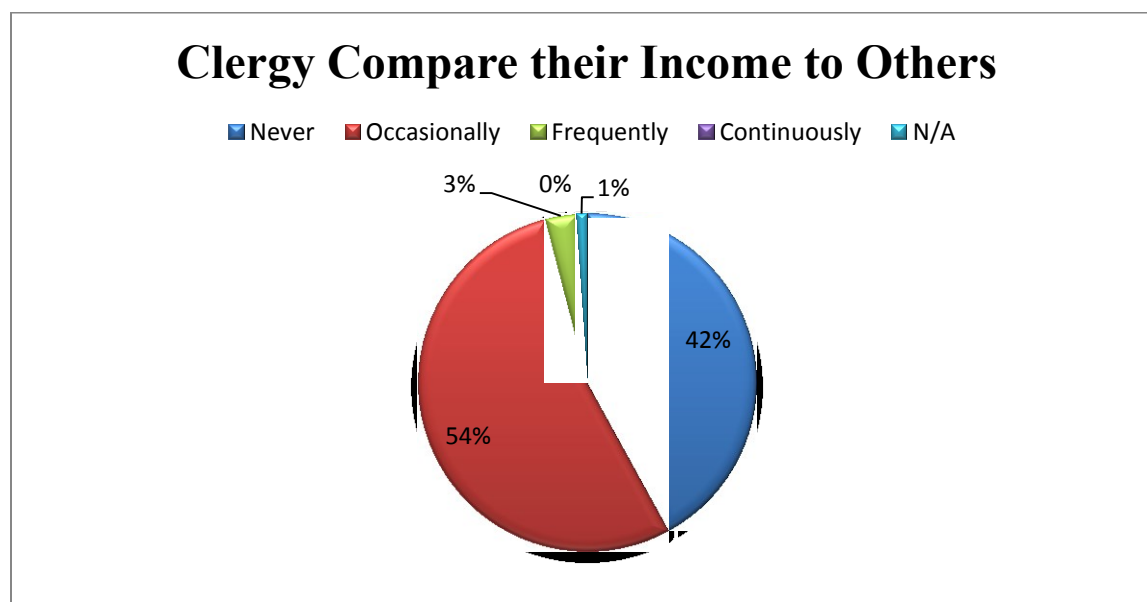


Figure 24. Clergy compare their income to others, surveyed in 2012

<sup>191</sup> H.B. London, Jr. and Neil B. Wiseman, *Pastors at Greater Risk* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1993), 298.

<sup>192</sup> James 3:16.

<sup>193</sup> Matt. 5:6.

The third idea related to an unhealthy spiritual diet is “losing one’s appetite.” Job mentioned eating as painful. The Bible states, “For my sighing comes before I eat, and my groanings pour out like water.”<sup>194</sup> Moreover, Job asks, “Can flavorless food be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg? My soul refuses to touch them; they are as loathsome food to me.”<sup>195</sup> Physically, Job’s sorrow caused him to lose his appetite. Job exclaimed that food had lost its flavor. Figuratively speaking, Job felt that the meal, the misery God served to him, was unpalatable and disgusting food; therefore, he refused to eat it.<sup>196</sup> To partake of this menu made Job sick; however, he did not have a choice in the matter.<sup>197</sup>

Some clergy do not crave food when despair sets in. Their afflictions and bereavements produce a loss of appetite. A sick feeling fills the pit of their stomach. Some even vomit or become nauseated. Their minds feed on mental anguish focusing on unanswered questions that surround their predicaments. Proper nutrition is important to clear thinking. Starving oneself merely because of distress is harmful. The Bible states, “For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”<sup>198</sup> As children of God bought with a great price by Christ, ministers should glorify God by taking care of their bodies. A healthy body makes for clear thinking and understanding.

Consequently, maintaining a spiritually and physically healthy diet means implementing a good balance of rest, nutrition, exercise, and margin. In contrast, it also means spurning the

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<sup>194</sup> Job 3:24.

<sup>195</sup> Job 6:6-7.

<sup>196</sup> Alden, *Job*, 99.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> 1 Cor. 6:20.

temptation to savor the past too much, or salivate over others' indulgences to the point of sin, or losing one's appetite to the detriment of one's health. Trials and tribulations should not prevent clergy from using their bodies to bring honor and glory to Jesus. Balancing the two extremes is difficult. "Balance has always been necessary and will always be necessary. It is just more difficult. Balance is not the goal; preeminence is the goal."<sup>199</sup> To imitate Christ is the goal.

Clergy must feast on one of the fruits of the Spirit, *self-control*, in order to accomplish this task. Mannoia in his book, *15 Characteristics of Effective Pastors*, makes an insightful observation, "Saying yes to the Spirit empowers you to say no to yourself."<sup>200</sup> In a culture that focuses on self-indulgence, self-control is an arduous attribute to develop. Effective clergy realize that self-control is a means of denying an inferior desire in order to attain a higher good; discipline is not a choice for a pastor it is an unavoidable reality.<sup>201</sup> The Bible states, "Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls."<sup>202</sup> The author believes clergy who do not have self-control are defenseless against the enemy's attacks.

### **Principle Five: Wait for Grace**

The four biblical leaders, Jeremiah, Asaph, Elijah, and Job, all reached a crossroads of faith. Although, they faced different circumstances at unique points in Biblical history, they all encountered similar degrees of anguish and stress. Therefore, God knowing exactly what each of them needed during their times of despair provided them with specific grace gifts. The Bible states, "And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in

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<sup>199</sup> Swenson, *Margin*, 185.

<sup>200</sup> Kevin W. Mannoia and Larry Walkemeyer, *15 Characteristics of Effective Pastors* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2007), 168.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>202</sup> Prov. 25:28.

weakness.’ Therefore, most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”<sup>203</sup>

God’s grace manifested among these four leaders after they waited patiently through prayer, scripture, and worship. The author thinks clergy sometimes neglect meditation and devotional reading because sermon preparation becomes the unintentional priority. Hence, the next sermon is always in the forefront and feeding the flock the present goal. However, ministers need the Word of God like the Israelites needed the manna in the wilderness.<sup>204</sup> Eugene Peterson states, “Reading is an immense gift, but only if the words are assimilated, taken into the soul-eaten, chewed, gnawed, received in unhurried delight...An interest in souls divorced from an interest in Scripture leaves us without a text that shapes these souls. In the same way, an interest in Scripture divorced from an interest in souls leaves us without any material for the text to work on.”<sup>205</sup> Meditation and prayer is receiving the grace and fellowship of God in unhurried delight.

Research data from the *Ministerial Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish* reveals clergy respond to distress and anguish with prayer, Bible study, and worship, 93% of the time (see figure 25). Gordon Macdonald writing about Moses and his leadership habits of meditation makes an interesting point about maintaining one’s spiritual equilibrium in times of stress:

But I find it significant that what we read next is about a tent Moses pitches known as “the tent of meeting.” This tent, the writer says, was located “outside the community some distance away.” Its purpose: to be a place where people could go “to inquire of the Lord.” Exodus 33:7 suggests that anyone could approach the tent, but we only hear of Moses doing so. Why does the writer place the story of the tent right after the calf incident? Perhaps the writer is saying, “This is how Moses maintained his equilibrium in stressful

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<sup>203</sup> 1 Cor. 12:9-10.

<sup>204</sup> John 6:48-50.

<sup>205</sup> Eugene H. Peterson, *Eat This Book* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), 11, 17.

moments.” When everything fell apart, when even his brother, Aaron, momentarily betrayed the cause, Moses had a place to go, where he could reinforce himself in the presence of God...A leader has to remain on his/her knees until God has spoken.<sup>206</sup>

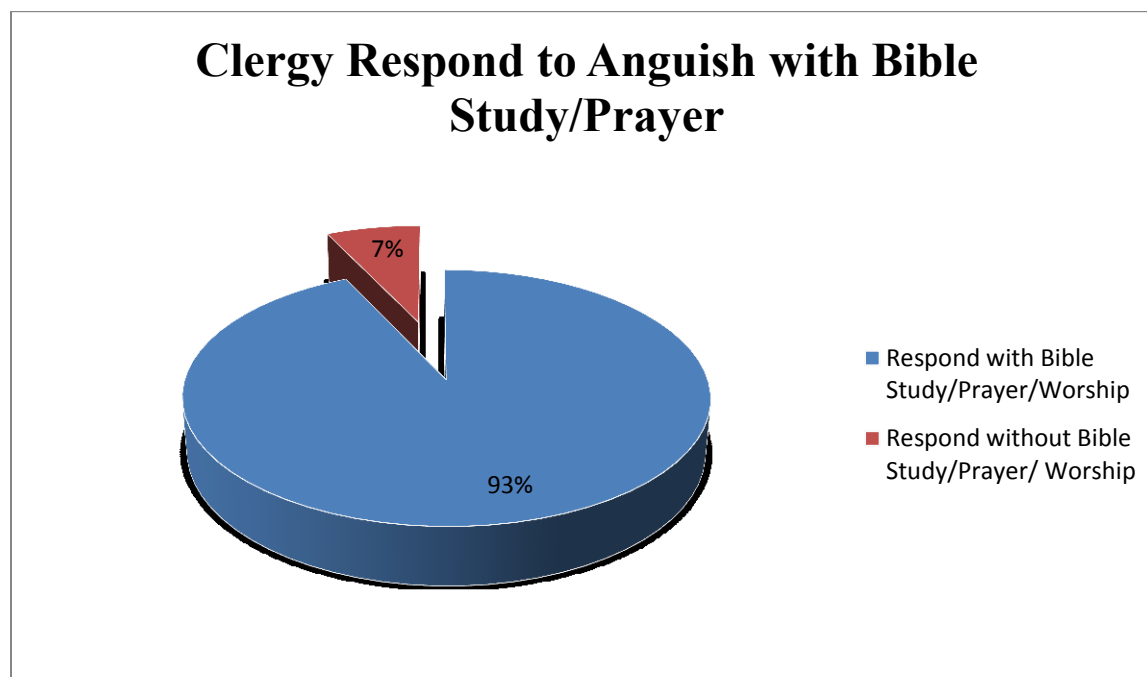


Figure 25. Clergy respond to anguish with Bible study, prayer, and worship, surveyed in 2012

Worship/Bible study and prayer creates spiritual transformation in the lives and ministries of church leaders.<sup>207</sup> Furthermore, clergy grow deeper and deeper in the love, joy, and relationship with Jesus Christ and others.<sup>208</sup> The focus becomes keeping Christ as the center of one's life and not substituting information for transformation.<sup>209</sup> According to Peterson, “Contemplation means living what we read, not wasting any of it or hoarding any of it, but using it up in living. It is life formed by God's revealing word, God's word read and heard, meditated

<sup>206</sup> Gordon MacDonald, “When Things Get Ugly,” *Christianity Today*, Spring 2007, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2007/spring/23.51.html> (accessed August 7, 2012).

<sup>207</sup> John Ortberg, *The Life You've Always Wanted* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 31.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, 31-32.

and prayed.”<sup>210</sup> The steps needed for clergy to build a strong devotional life are (1) choose a place in the home for the devotions, (2) choose a resource (a devotional study Bible), (3) Choose a time, preferably morning, (4) choose to go to bed earlier, no later than 11:30 PM, and (5) choose an accountability partner and meet weekly.

Prayer and worship transformed all four biblical leaders. Consequently, all of them received a specific and unique measure of grace. God bestowed restored strength, deliverance, just understanding, renewed calling, powerful peace, and timely blessings.

First, during Jeremiah’s anguish, the discouraged prophet accused God of deceiving and failing him in his time of need.<sup>211</sup> Jeremiah portrayed personal weakness by overstepping his boundaries with God through his allegations.<sup>212</sup> However, God responded to Jeremiah’s distress with comforting words.<sup>213</sup> If Jeremiah would repent, God would provide him with restored strength. If Jeremiah would speak God’s words to the people without compromise, he could return to serving the Lord as His spokesperson.<sup>214</sup> God promised to restore his mind and pacify the present uproar of his spirit. God would make Jeremiah like a fortified wall by providing him with courage to face difficulties and maximum strength that would not fail.<sup>215</sup>

God also promised Jeremiah deliverance. “I am with you to save you and deliver you. I will deliver you from the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem you from the grip of the

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<sup>210</sup> Eugene H. Peterson, *Eat This Book* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), 113.

<sup>211</sup> Jer. 15:18.

<sup>212</sup> Jer. 15:19-21.

<sup>213</sup> Huey, *Jeremiah Lamentations*, 163.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

<sup>215</sup> *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition*.



terrible.”<sup>216</sup> God would serve as Jeremiah’s protector and deliverer. Even if he fell into his enemies’ hands, God would rescue him; they would not be able to kill him. God would redeem Jeremiah from the grasp of his Chaldean enemies.<sup>217</sup> Jeremiah would still face hardship and rejection from his friends; however, God would be his redeeming strength and salvation. Clergy sometimes cross the boundaries with God. They question, “Where is God?” in times of conflict within the church. This questioning of God occurs while they rush haphazardly through Bible study time or approach the Bible with cold, dissecting, distant exegesis instead of with the same love, respect, and delight a lover would approach a love letter. Clergy sometimes see the Bible as a means to an end. This is sinful and drains the spiritual life out of ministry leaders.

Nevertheless, God is compassionate and long-suffering. Yahweh still delivers His servants from evil men. Although God’s love and deliverance is unjustified and undeserved, He still comes through when needed most. He may relocate a pastor to another congregation or relocate the evil person to another state. He will place people in and around His ministers to provide encouragement, resources, and safety. Paul received an encouraging word from Christ when he faced evil men: “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.”<sup>218</sup>

Secondly, Asaph waited and received an irreplaceable measure of grace.<sup>219</sup> God provided Asaph with a just understanding of the wicked. During Asaph’s anguish, the envious psalmists revealed his perplexity over the prosperity of the wicked when compared to the difficulties of righteous living. He viewed having a clean heart as vain. God spoke to Asaph through worship.

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<sup>216</sup> Jer. 19:20b-21.

<sup>217</sup> *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition.*

<sup>218</sup> Acts 18:9-11.

<sup>219</sup> Ps. 73:17-20.

The Bible states, “When I thought how to understand this, it was too painful for me — until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end.”<sup>220</sup> Asaph’s perspective changed when he entered into the presence of God. The sanctuary would usually refer to the temple; however, here it refers to a place set apart for prayer and meditation.<sup>221</sup> During the Israelites’ captivity, they set apart places, whether a house or field, as holy unto the Lord for worship of God, which included scripture study, prayer, confession of sin, supplication, and meditation.<sup>222</sup> After Asaph went into the sanctuary of God, meditated upon the Scriptures, consulted the priests, and prayed to God for understanding; then God granted him right perception and insight.

Asaph finally understood the wretched end of the wicked ripening to ruin.<sup>223</sup> The wicked man’s rich living ends in destruction; he is miserable. God sets them on slippery places.<sup>224</sup> The Psalmist became aware that the prosperity of the wicked is brief and unsure with no firm foundation.<sup>225</sup> Furthermore, Asaph comprehends that their destructive end is sure and that they go down to the grave in eternal condemnation, being forever undone.<sup>226</sup>

Asaph receives a better grasp on the wicked’s demise; he realizes that God casts them down swiftly and suddenly into desolation and surprises them with severe dread and final ruin, the misery of the everlasting condemned.<sup>227</sup> The Bible states, “Oh, how they are brought to

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<sup>220</sup> Ps. 73:16-17.

<sup>221</sup> *Adam Clark’s Commentary*.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>223</sup> *Matthew Henry’s Commentary*.

<sup>224</sup> Ps. 73:18.

<sup>225</sup> *Matthew Henry’s Commentary*.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*

desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awakes, so, Lord, when You awake, You shall despise their image.”<sup>228</sup> When the wicked awake from their graves, they rise up to the shame of everlasting torment and disdain (v. 20).<sup>229</sup> Therefore, the righteous should despise the wicked rather than envy them; they should treat them like a bad dream that one soon forgets because their riches are fleeting.<sup>230</sup>

Clergy must understand the susceptibility and sin associated with comparing one’s self to other people. The temptation to become jealous and envious of others’ success and prosperity is dangerous to one’s testimony and ministry. Begrudging other ministers or people’s success is immature and ungodly. David Hanson writes, “It’s easy to say that we want to follow Jesus in our ministry until we hear Jesus tell us about the wilderness...The pastoral ministry is a fast, and it lasts our whole life. We squirm under the pressure of it, and we become vulnerable to temptation because of it...The pastor’s wilderness fast is to continue to live on ...what is provided, to partake gladly on what comes along, and to allow the Lord to provide for all needs.”<sup>231</sup> When Asaph went into the Temple, he gained insight into the conclusion awaiting the wicked.<sup>232</sup> Pastors must stay close to God or a cynical and bitter spirit over the injustices in the world will overcome them.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> *Matthew Henry’s Commentary*.

<sup>228</sup> Ps. 73:19-20.

<sup>229</sup> *Matthew Henry’s Commentary*.

<sup>230</sup> MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, 807.

<sup>231</sup> David Hansen, *The Art of Pastoring Ministry Without All the Answers* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 61-62.

<sup>232</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua-Psalms*, vol. II of *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1982), 794.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, 794.

Thirdly, during Elijah's distress, the prophet sensed that he failed in his mission, leaving no one to complete it because soon his life would come to an end.<sup>234</sup> God's grace to Elijah was two-fold. The prophet received restored strength through nourishment and a renewed calling through rational thinking.<sup>235</sup>

The Lord delivers to Elijah some effective grace-filled learning activities. The Bible states, "Then He said, 'Go out, and stand on the mountain before the Lord.' And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice."<sup>236</sup> The Lord invited Elijah into His presence to hear from Him.<sup>237</sup>

The prophet waited for a word from the Lord through the ripping wind, trembling earthquake, and roaring fire. However, the Lord did not speak through the natural phenomena. Finally, God spoke to Elijah through a gentle little breeze or whisper.<sup>238</sup> Maybe, God attempted to teach the prophet not to always expect deliverance in the form of the miraculous.<sup>239</sup> The lesson from the Lord to the man of God was that God is quietly, indiscernibly, and always at work accomplishing His plan.<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> 1 Kings 19:10.

<sup>235</sup> 1 Kings 19:5-7.

<sup>236</sup> 1 Kings 19:11-12.

<sup>237</sup> Simon J. DeVries, *1 Kings*, vol. 12 of *Word Biblical Commentary* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985), 236.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> House, *1, 2 Kings*, 223.

<sup>240</sup> MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, 508.

The Bible states, “So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, ‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’”<sup>241</sup> The Lord asked him this on two occasions, “Is this a place for a prophet of the Lord to lodge in? Is this a time for such men to retreat, when the public has such need of them?”<sup>242</sup> The author thinks God provided food and a miraculous teaching lesson to shake some sense back into Elijah.

The Lord assured Elijah he was not alone. The Bible states:

Then the Lord said to him: “Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria. Also, you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”<sup>243</sup>

The Lord assigned Elijah a new mission objective and presented him with a renewed calling. Unknown to the prophet, God reserved others to help Elijah with his God-given mission. God called Elijah back into active service. The renewed calling had three components:(1) The Lord sent Elijah to anoint Hazael, king of Syria. This act would declare Yahweh’s lordship over that country. (2) He sent Elijah to anoint Jehu, king of Israel. This action would reestablish the Lord’s rule over the Northern Kingdom. (3) He ordered Elijah to anoint Elisha. This action would secure a successor and continue the work of the prophetic ministry.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> 1 Kings 19:13.

<sup>242</sup> *Matthew Henry’s Commentary.*

<sup>243</sup> 1 Kings 19:15-18.

<sup>244</sup> House, *1, 2 Kings*, 224.

Moreover, God said, “Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal.”<sup>245</sup> Seven thousand (rounded number) faithful Israelites remained after Ahab and Jezebel’s persecutions in order to pass down the worship of Yahweh to the next generation.<sup>246</sup> God reassured Elijah that he was definitely not alone. He provided Elijah with an abundant supply of provisions.

The Lord leads ministers differently. Sometimes a renewed calling for clergy may include a move to a new ministry position in a new church in a new city or state. Long-tenured pastors may struggle with a renewed calling if it entails leaving a long-term position. Pastor Stewart Pierson addresses this fear of leaving as he writes, “I always feel an initial sense of loss, and I have wondered if I am being put out to pasture. ... But this never seems to happen, and over time, I find that new opportunities arise in both community and denomination, which draw me into new areas of leadership and personal growth. However, the need to let go of past efforts is essential if these new opportunities are then to be opened up.”<sup>247</sup>

The research reveals that remaining in one church over a long period of time increases the likelihood that the church will grow. However, tenure is not the only factor to consider, but it is rather significant. According to Gary L. McIntosh, clergy who are considering a renewed calling to relocate should ask themselves ten important questions before leaving.

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<sup>245</sup> 1 Kings 19:18.

<sup>246</sup> *Barnes’ Notes*.

<sup>247</sup> Stuart Pierson, “Keys to a Long Pastorate,” *Christianity Today*, Spring 2004, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/1984/spring/8412135.html?paging=off> (accessed August 7, 2012).

**Table 6. Ten questions test**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Contemplation</b>	<b>Answer</b>
<b>Have I been there long enough to reach my most effective years?</b>	Our studies have found a pastor's most effective years begin in the sixth or seventh year in a church.	Yes/No
<b>Do I have a dream for my church?</b>	Healthy churches have a dream of what God wants to do through them. And the pastor is the chief dreamer.	Yes/No
<b>Do my spiritual gifts match the present needs of my position and church?</b>	Not every pastor has the gifts to lead a church through its many growth stages.	Yes/No
<b>Is my philosophy of ministry compatible with my church?</b>	Consider your church: Are its cultural patterns and expectations quite different from yours? If the friction constantly produces sparks or if adaptation demands a major portion of your energy, it may be an indication change is needed.	Yes/No
<b>Does my social and cultural background fit this church?</b>	A denominational executive recently told me of a pastor who had served a church in Wyoming for several years. He enjoyed wearing Levis during the week and often wore his cowboy boots on Sunday. He accepted a call to a church in Seattle where three-piece pinstripe suits were the norm. Two years later, he was back in the Mountain states in another church.	Yes/No
<b>Considering the opportunities facing the church, am I the right person to lead it?</b>	Most churches face great opportunities for ministry, perhaps launching a building program, developing a school, or planting a new church. Are you able to provide the leadership necessary? If so, it may be wise to stay.	Yes/No
<b>Do I have a specialized ministry my church needs?</b>	Many specialized ministries are effective for short periods of time. If the pastor stays longer than needed to accomplish the unique ministry, the church will feel stymied by a lack of leadership in other important areas.	Yes/No
<b>Is my credibility strong enough that people are willing to follow me?</b>	Credibility can be squandered or lost through poor decisions, spending too much time in activities outside the church, or through a breakdown of morality.	Yes/No
<b>Given my current situation, am I willing to pay the price of pastoral ministry?</b>	Are you able and willing to shoulder the workload of the pastorate in your current situation? If so, then you have one of the characteristics necessary to stay and minister effectively.	Yes/No
<b>Is my leadership style what the church needs at this time?</b>	Most pastors can adjust their style of leadership. Few can drastically change it.	Yes/No

(Table 6 continued)

**Scoring Count**

If the number of yeses was:	Action needed:
<b>9-10</b>	Unpack your bags. You definitely need to stay.
<b>7-8</b>	Stay in your own yard. Don't look to greener pastures.
<b>5-6</b>	Unclear. Work to improve areas represented by the statements answered no.
<b>3-4</b>	Prepare your resume. It is likely time to move on.
<b>1-2</b>	You should have sent out your resume yesterday.

Source: Gary L. McIntosh, "Is It Time to Leave," *Christianity Today*, Summer 1986, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/1986/summer/8613070.html?paging=off> (accessed August 5, 2012).

A renewed calling for other clergy may be a move or change in philosophy or an effort to implement and develop new ministries or staff within the existing church demographic. The most effective mission renewal within a prevailing congregation is when clergy and congregation work together on the new mission statement. "A mission has to be something both the leadership and the people can share."<sup>248</sup> This poses a challenge for clergy who are controllers or who are comfortable with the status quo. The temptation may be to rest or coast toward retirement on past accomplishments. In the article "Keys to a Long Pastorate," Stuart Pierson expounds upon the need for clergy to challenge themselves continually:

To survive the long pastorate, it is essential to take the long view of one's call and learn to feel at home with the changes of agendas, able to handle both success and failure... When habit patterns take control, personal growth and growth in our people is strangled. We must continually see ourselves and our members as growing and changing. ...The solution to habit patterns controlling us is to allow new influences to affect our lives. Shifts in staff, or lay assistance, are key to this process. Finding others who can share discipline with us in a structured setting will also help. Continuing education is crucial to the challenging of old habit patterns.<sup>249</sup>

Fourth, Job waited and received grace from God. God provided Job with powerful peace and timely blessings. "God asked Job a number of questions, relating to His power, to help Job

<sup>248</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Ministry Nuts and Bolts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1997), 74.

<sup>249</sup> Pierson, "Keys to a Long Pastorate," *Christianity Today*.



understand that He operates in a realm well beyond the range of mankind.”<sup>250</sup> Job lost his wealth, family, and health. Understandingly, he suffered above all others. Therefore, Job cried out to the Lord, hoping to gain comfort, relief, and answers. The Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind.<sup>251</sup> God’s response to Job is the longest documented speech by God in the whole Bible.<sup>252</sup>

God did not speak to Elijah through the whirlwind because God wanted to prove to him that He was working quietly without Elijah’s knowledge; moreover, God may have wanted to communicate to Elijah that he would not destroy Baalism with spectacular means or procedures.<sup>253</sup> Instead, he would avenge himself by the seemingly discreet progression of daily life.<sup>254</sup> However, God did speak to Job from the whirlwind.<sup>255</sup>

Job was experiencing a storm in his life; therefore, God spoke to him from a storm to display his power.<sup>256</sup> God became the inquisitor. He spoke to Job in his own way and in his own time. He approached Job as God of the universe, speaking in a storm about the mysteries of His creation.<sup>257</sup> He did not directly answer Job’s question because he did not need to defend himself.<sup>258</sup> God’s questioning demonstrated His awesome strength. God provides Job with seventeen aspects of His power:

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<sup>250</sup> Alden, *Job*, 369.

<sup>251</sup> Job 38:1.

<sup>252</sup> Jerry Vines, *Immortal Kombat: A Study of the Book of Job* by Jerry Vines, 2007.

<sup>253</sup> John H. Traylor, *1 & 2 Kings 2 Chronicles*, vol. 6 of *The Layman’s Bible Book Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1981), 43.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

<sup>255</sup> 1 Kings 19:1-17.

<sup>256</sup> David McKenna, *Job*, vol. 12 of *Mastering the Old Testament*, (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1986), 280.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

**Table 7. God's power revealed to Job**

God's Power Over	Reference
<b>Creation</b>	Job 38:4-7
<b>Sea</b>	Job 38:8-11
<b>Earth's Administration</b>	Job 38:12-15
<b>Underworld</b>	Job 38:16-18
<b>Light &amp; Darkness</b>	Job 38:19-21
<b>Storm</b>	Job 38:22-30
<b>Stars</b>	Job 38:31-33
<b>Clouds</b>	Job 38:34-38
<b>Lions &amp; Ravens</b>	Job 38:39-41
<b>Mountain Goats</b>	Job 39:1-4
<b>Donkeys</b>	Job 39:5-8
<b>Oxen</b>	Job 39:9-12
<b>Ostriches</b>	Job 39:13-18
<b>Horses</b>	Job 39:19-25
<b>Hawks</b>	Job 39:26-30
<b>Behemoth(Dinosaur or Hippopotamus)</b>	Job 40:15-24
<b>Leviathan(Sea Monster of Crocodile)</b>	Job 40:1-10

*Source:* Alden, Robert L. Job. Vol. 11 of The New American Commentary. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993.

Furthermore, God's questioning of Job furnished Job with an irreplaceable grace gift: powerful peace. By understanding God's power, Job would have peace of mind in knowing that

the Lord was in control. Furthermore, this would enable Job to realize God was aware of his circumstances because He was and is sovereign over all things. In times of severe suffering, clergy may ask the same questions that Job asked, “Why me?” “Why now?” or “Why this?” God’s treatment of Job conveys a thoughtful observation, “God was teaching Job the question isn’t *why*, but *whom*. When a person knows *who*, he or she doesn’t have to know *why*.”<sup>259</sup> The author of this project believes the same omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent God that was with Job is with ministers today.

The second grace gift bestowed upon Job by God was timely blessings. The blessings from God returned to Job after he prayed for his unsupportive, mislead, and self-righteous friends. The Bible states, “And the Lord restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.”<sup>260</sup> God lovingly doubled Job’s prosperity.

**Table 8. Job’s prosperity doubled**

Wealth-Job 42:12	Family-Job 42:13	Health-Job 42:16
7,000 sheep to 14,000 sheep	7 sons to 7 more sons	140 years, double the average lifespan
3,000 camels to 6,000 camels	3 daughters to 3 more daughters	
500 oxen to 1,000 oxen	God would reunite Job with his first set of children in Heaven; therefore, Job had a total of 14 sons and 6 daughters.	
500 donkeys to 1,000 donkeys		

Source: New King James Version

<sup>259</sup> Vines, *Immortal Kombat*, 130-131.

<sup>260</sup> Job 42:10.

The story of Job ends in victory. God has victory over Satan. Job has a victory too. His time of suffering provided Job with insight and knowledge he did not have before his time of testing.<sup>261</sup> God did not forsake his servant. However, God never told Job the reason for his suffering; it was a test of his faithfulness.<sup>262</sup> Satan hoped he could lure Job into sin; thus, causing him to deny or curse God. Unbelievably, it takes fire to refine gold.<sup>263</sup> The outcome of this test proved whether or not Job or any servant of God serves God for what they get from him, or serves God because He is God.<sup>264</sup> God blessed Job's faithfulness and patience by showering him with powerful peace and timely blessings. God often blesses His servants after they have been through the fires of persecution.

Consequently, God provided Jeremiah with restored strength and deliverance. Asaph received a just understanding. He can do the same for clergy today. When they become discouraged and fearful, He restores their strength and delivers them. The Bible states, "The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."<sup>265</sup> During those times of cloudy perception, God gives clear understanding. "For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth (the Word of God) comes knowledge and understanding; He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk uprightly; He guards the paths of justice, and preserves the way of His saints. Then you will understand righteousness and justice."<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> Vines, *Immortal Kombat*, 133.

<sup>262</sup> Alden, *Job*, 413.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.; Job 23:10

<sup>264</sup> Vines, 133-134.

<sup>265</sup> Ps. 18:2.

<sup>266</sup> Prov. 2:6-9.

God always gives enough grace to those who will receive it. He wants to restore strength for service and deliver from evil that people may be able to share His ultimate grace and receive deliverance from sin:

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.<sup>267</sup>

Just like Asaph, God's Word grants clergy a just understanding: "Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."<sup>268</sup> God provides everything ministers need on their pathway in life. Jesus says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."<sup>269</sup> Therefore, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."<sup>270</sup>

Job received peace of mind and abundant, timely blessings. God wants all clergy to have an abundant life, one not primarily filled with despair: "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."<sup>271</sup> God's Word encourages the fainthearted, "weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning."<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> Rom. 3:23-26.

<sup>268</sup> Ps. 119:104-105.

<sup>269</sup> Heb. 13:5b.

<sup>270</sup> Phil. 4:6-7.

<sup>271</sup> John 10:10.

<sup>272</sup> Ps. 30:5.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONCLUSION

Moving through the difficulties of anguish and distress associated with a calling to serve God and people requires the minister of the gospel to evaluate every aspect of life and ministry. Evaluation is needful and helpful but it is not the end. Evaluation should lead to implementation, achievement, and success. The trials of life are inevitable but so are the new beginnings that result from the refiner's fire: a new day, a new work, and a new understanding of God's grace and sovereignty. Actions speak louder than words. Jeremiah, Elijah, Asaph, and Job seemed to falter in their faith but they never succumbed to the temptation to quit. They all encountered some degree of suffering and hopelessness, yet every one of them responded with recovering thankfulness.

First, after God gave Jeremiah restored strength and deliverance, Jeremiah responded to God by returning to his prophetic ministry.<sup>1</sup> Evidently, Jeremiah repented of his sin because he continued to serve God as His spokesperson until the fall of Jerusalem and beyond.<sup>2</sup> Jeremiah remained in steadfast service to his Lord.

Second, after God handed Elijah his renewed calling, he responded to God with prompt obedience. God told him to go and anoint.<sup>3</sup> The Bible states in 1 Kings 19:19 that Elijah went. Therefore, the prophet displayed his love for God by his immediate obedience. Samuel the prophet told King Saul, "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of

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<sup>1</sup> Jer. 15:19-21; 16:1.

<sup>2</sup> F.B. Huey Jr., *Jeremiah Lamentations*, vol. 16 of *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1993), 164.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings 19:15.

rams.”<sup>4</sup> Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”<sup>5</sup>

Third, after Asaph received a just understanding, he repented in contrite praise to God. Asaph admitted he was foolish and ignorant.<sup>6</sup> He confessed to having low and imperfect views. He lacked right understanding. He was like a beast, unwise, senseless, and without proper perception.<sup>7</sup> He confessed that he had evaluated life secularly and faithlessly.<sup>8</sup> Asaph saw himself and his people as under God’s care, upheld by His right hand, and not utterly cast down.<sup>9</sup> He placed his confidence in God, and could testify to all of how good it was to draw near to God and what a satisfactory part God was to the soul of man.<sup>10</sup>

Asaph responded with thankful praise to God. He thanked God for being entirely sufficient in satisfying his needs.<sup>11</sup> He declared that his happiness was in God and no one could take God’s place because He was like no other. The Bible states, “You will guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom, have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You.”<sup>12</sup> The Psalmist recognized that the Spirit of God is the guide. He understood his reward. The reward is not heaven but rather the God who is in heaven. “Receives” is the same word used for Elijah and Enoch’s translation into heaven.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> 1 Sam. 15:22.

<sup>5</sup> John 14:15.

<sup>6</sup> Ps. 73:22.

<sup>7</sup> *Barnes’ Notes, PC Study Bible*, CD-ROM, version 4.0 (Seattle, WA: Biblesoft Inc., 2003).

<sup>8</sup> MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible New King James Version* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1997), 807.

<sup>9</sup> *Adam Clark’s Commentary*, CD-ROM (Seattle, WA: Biblesoft, Inc., 2003).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ps. 73:15.

<sup>12</sup> Ps. 73:24-25.

God was the rock on which Asaph's heart relied, his refuge, and defense.<sup>14</sup> He gained a just understanding and proclaimed God's goodness.<sup>15</sup> He regarded his own experience as one of the astonishing acts of the Lord. Asaph would gladly recount this before the congregation.<sup>16</sup>

Fourth, after receiving powerful peace and timely blessings Job responded with humble repentance. Job repented twice.<sup>17</sup> Job declared his unworthiness and submitted in silence at the thought of it; therefore, the conundrum begins to dissipate.<sup>18</sup> God spoke to Job without answering any of Job's questions because Job's questions were ethical questions related to suffering, which the human mind cannot grasp.<sup>19</sup> "We [*humans*] lack the perspective of God's view in *creating* the universe, *controlling* its forces, and *caring* about its creatures."<sup>20</sup> Job learned that the dispute was not ethical but spiritual, not *why* but *who*. The need is not understanding but trust.<sup>21</sup>

Job admitted that he could not answer any of God's questions; he had spoken one too many times. Therefore, he submitted and surrendered to God by covering his mouth.<sup>22</sup> Job acknowledged that nothing could thwart the plans of God. He agreed with God that he was guilty

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<sup>13</sup> George Arthur Buttrick, *Psalms, Proverbs*, vol. 5 of *The Interpreter's Bible* (New York, NY: Abingdon Press, 1955), 391.

<sup>14</sup> *Barnes' Notes*.

<sup>15</sup> Ps. 73:28a.

<sup>16</sup> Buttrick, *Psalms, Proverbs*, 392.

<sup>17</sup> Job 40: 4-5.

<sup>18</sup> David McKenna, *Job*, vol. 12 of *Mastering the Old Testament*, (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1986), 293.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>22</sup> Robert L. Alden, *Job*, vol. 11 of *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 392.



of diminishing His power. He had spoken things out of ignorance that he could not possibly understand.<sup>23</sup> After hearing and seeing God for who He was, Job hated and despised himself. Then, he displayed an outward demonstration of his humble repentance by sitting down in ashes and throwing them upon himself. Deeply, he regretted his foolish presumptions about God.<sup>24</sup>

Consequently, clergy should respond in the same manner after receiving God's gracious power, strength, guidance, blessings, and understanding. Thankfulness and obedience should flow from a contrite heart. Generosity should burst forth after the time of testing. The obedient Christian is a generous Christian; Christian giving promotes thanksgiving.<sup>25</sup> Prompt obedience will be the result of encountering the living Christ in daily Bible study and praise. Eugene Peterson states, "If in my Bible reading I lose touch with this livingness, if I fail to listen to this living Jesus, submit to this sovereignty, and respond to this love, I become arrogant in my knowing and impersonal in my behavior."<sup>26</sup>

Clergy, who come through despair, will want to be in prayer with God every day, apart from sermon preparation, or cross-referencing information for counseling purposes. They will want to chew upon the Word, digest its content, and submit joyfully to its precepts, principles, parameters, and purpose. Clergy who receive a word from God will want to walk by faith and not be so cautious when facing criticism and persecution. Clergy will agree with Larry Crabb, "The demand to walk a path with predictable outcome is an urge of the flesh. It needs to die."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Job 42: 1-6.

<sup>24</sup> Alden, *Job*, 408-409.

<sup>25</sup> John Stott, *The Living Church: Convictions of a Lifelong Pastor* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 126.

<sup>26</sup> Eugene H. Peterson, *Eat This Book* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), 82.

<sup>27</sup> Larry Crabb, *Connecting* (Nashville, TN: W. Publishing Group, 1997), 113.

For this attitude and outcome to become a reality, clergy must put into practice the five key principles for overcoming and managing distress.

The first principle clergy must apply to overcome or manage distress is learn to refuse unsupportive help. This is not easy to do because some of the unsupportive helpers may have been the supportive helpers in the past. Choosing friends and managing one's foes may be more difficult for clergy with approval issues. John Ortberg points out the reason so many clergy work so much and detest personal criticism so strongly; is because of a condition called "approval addiction."<sup>28</sup>

Clergy must learn to embrace their weaknesses and limitations. They should become more transparent and discover how to live freely with detractors and criticism.<sup>29</sup> Family members are the most difficult and also the most empathetic during times of anguish. Single clergy looking to find a helpmate must choose wisely. The spouse can be the best encourager or the worst critic. Job forgave his unsupportive help when he did not have to, and God rewarded him for this action.<sup>30</sup> Clergy must forgive their critics lest a root of bitterness grow up and choke out the joy of salvation and ministry. Family and friends may fail but Christ will never leave nor forsake.

The second principle clergy must employ to overcome or manage distress is avoid the "Why Me Malaise." The pain of suffering can drive anybody to the point of despair. The Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard once commented that, "One of the worst states a human being can face is to want to die and not be allowed to die."<sup>31</sup> Clergy who attempt to cope with suffering

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<sup>28</sup> John Ortberg, *The Life You've Always Wanted* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 163.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 158-160.

<sup>30</sup> Job 42:9-10.

<sup>31</sup> R.C. Sproul, *Surprised by Suffering* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1982), 83.

by becoming angry toward God or by trying to convince God to remove the suffering through a litany list of service projects only produces more pain and anger.

The Bible states, “Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil.”<sup>32</sup> The devil wants God’s servants angry over God’s sovereignty in allowing pain and suffering. Clergy who become angry toward God over their suffering and circumstances do not produce righteousness.

Suffering is often the window through which the world sees Jesus Christ in the life of a minister. Paul and Silas were in a Philippian jail, suffering for Christ, when the prisoners heard their singing. The jailer was saved because of Paul and Silas’ witness during extremely harrowing circumstances.<sup>33</sup> The world hears clergy more clearly in the valleys of life, not on the mountaintops of ease. Suffering is going to be with every person who chooses to live for Christ: “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”<sup>34</sup> Clergy should expect it, prepare for it, and grow through and from it. Painful occasions build faith and character. This strengthening of faith is evidence of God’s love and care for his servants.<sup>35</sup>

The third principle clergy must remember in order to overcome or manage distress is stop fostering the “Woe is Me Syndrome.” This syndrome occurs when clergy reach the point of anguish and begin to exaggerate the reality of their situation. They may contemplate suicide. They may feel like they are the only person experiencing a particular set of difficult circumstances. Clergy caught up in this syndrome may want to leave the ministry. They do not see their value or worth. Mental and emotional stability falters. They cocoon themselves in their

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<sup>32</sup> Eph. 4:26-27.

<sup>33</sup> Acts 16:25-34.

<sup>34</sup> 2 Tim. 3:12.

<sup>35</sup> E. LeBron Matthews, “Rise above the Tide,” *Explore the Bible: Adult Leader Guide*, Summer 2011, 47.

homes or offices fearing what may befall them around the corner.

Clergy assuaged by this syndrome must remember that the Lord is yoked with them in their struggle. He offers His' peace and strength. They also need to remain on their knees in study of God's Word. All four of the Biblical leaders examined in this Thesis Project stopped fostering the "Woe is Me Syndrome" after hearing a word from God. It is also beneficial to have an accountability partner to speak the truth in love.

The fourth principle clergy must retain in order to overcome or manage distress is practice ingesting a healthy diet. This includes a balance of rest, nutrition, exercise, and margin. Paul told Timothy, a young minister, "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you."<sup>36</sup> To overcome distress, clergy must take heed to themselves by ingesting a healthier diet, participating in moderate exercise of least 30 minutes a day 3 to 5 times a week and get adequate rest. "We need brief periods of solitude on a regular basis-preferably each day, even at intervals during the day. But we also need at great intervals extended periods of solitude-half a day, a day, or a few days."<sup>37</sup> Clergy need to be restful and unhurried in the solitude of the Savoir. "A natural, God – ordained mutuality exists between physical and emotional well-being."<sup>38</sup>

The fifth principle clergy must recall in order to overcome or manage distress is wait on God's grace. This is an essential concept for managing distress. Waiting is difficult, especially in difficult circumstances. Research data from the *Ministerial Questionnaire on Clergy Anguish* revealed 36% of the ministers in the eastern region of Tennessee relocated four or more times in

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<sup>36</sup> 1 Tim. 4:16.

<sup>37</sup> Ortberg, *The Life You've Always Wanted*, 87.

<sup>38</sup> Richard A. Swenson, *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial and Time Reserve to Overloaded Lives* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2004), 99.

their ministry vocation. Ten percent of the clergy surveyed relocated 7 times or more (see figure 26). Research at the Institute for American Church Growth has found that the average tenure for pastors in the largest churches is twenty-one years.<sup>39</sup> Only 18% of the clergy surveyed have tenure of more than twenty years (see figure 27). The Holy Spirit is the minister's ultimate guide and voice to follow. Clergy must remember God rewards those who wait on Him. He gives renewed strength and timely blessings to his ministers. Fear and anxiety diminish under the power of Christ. Clergy sometimes expect to hear from God in supernatural ways when God may choose to speak in their prayer closets.

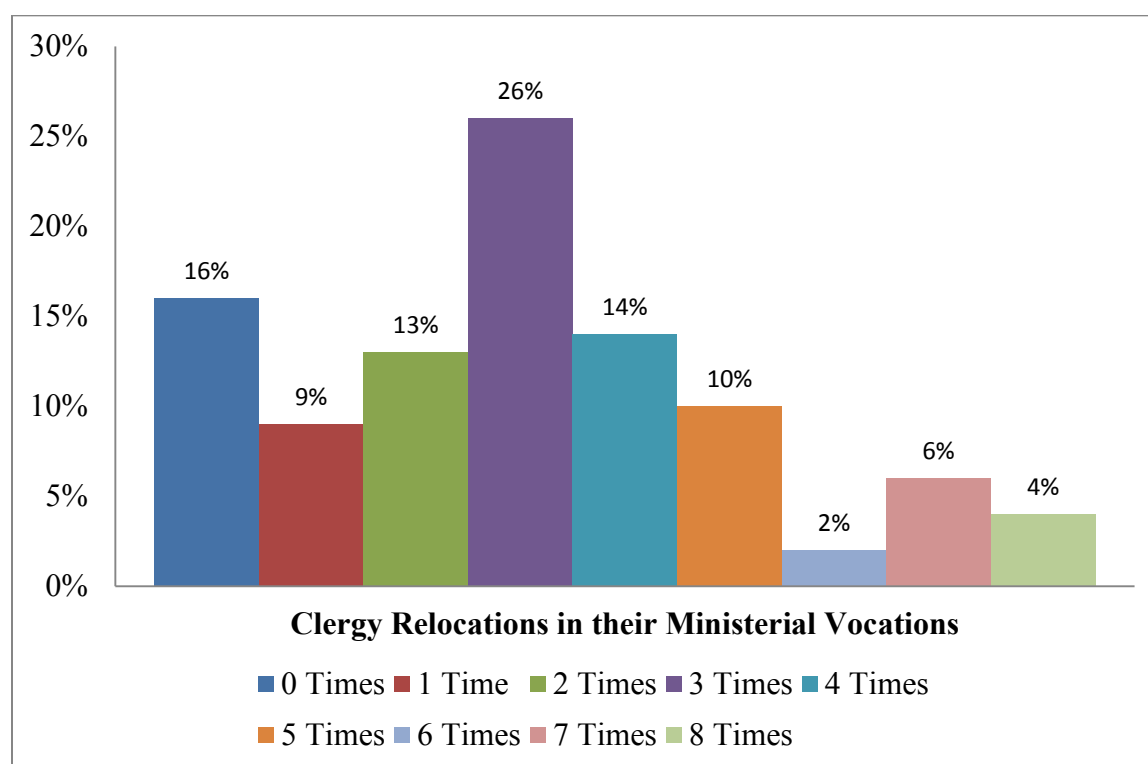


Figure 26. Clergy relocations in their ministerial vocations, surveyed in 2012

<sup>39</sup> McIntosh, "Is It Time to Leave," *Christianity Today*, Summer 1986, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/1986/summer/8613070.html?paging=off> (accessed August 5, 2012).

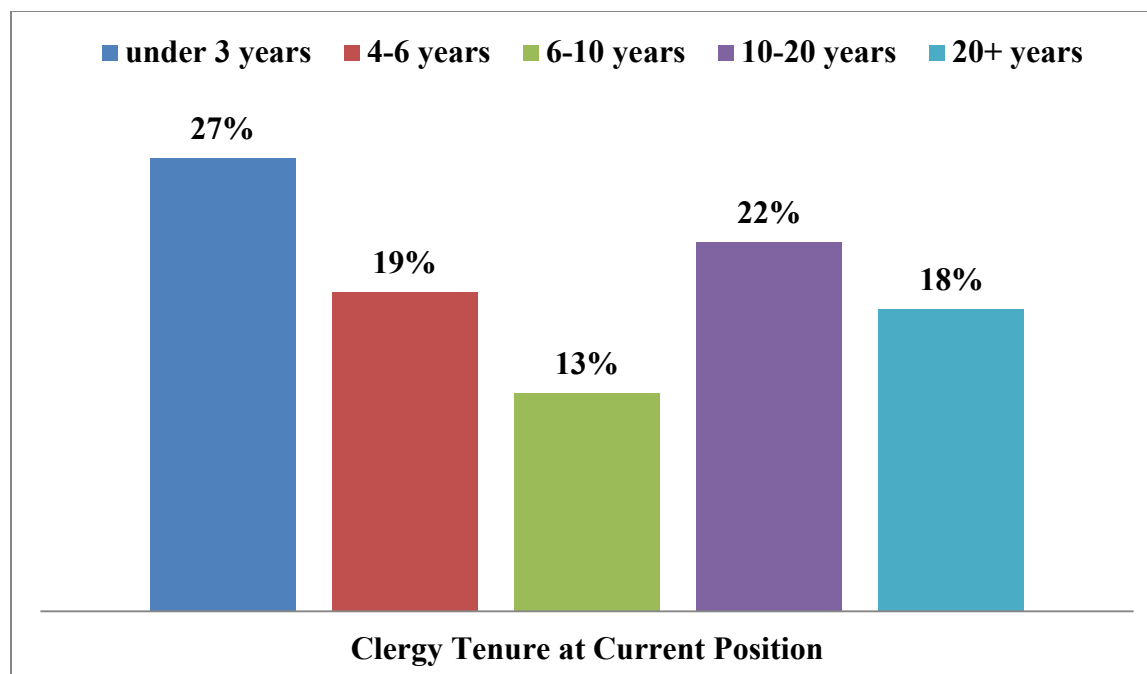


Figure 27. Clergy tenure at current position, surveyed in 2012

Anguish and distress will always be a part of the ministry. Consequently, so will the promise, presence, and power of God to manage or overcome it. God's work does not lead to the shores of safety but to the streets of suffering and sacrifice. Nevertheless, ministers should seek connection over isolation. The Bible provides the hope and courage clergy need to clutch in times of peril: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: 'For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.' Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Rom. 8:35-37.

## APPENDIX A

### MINISTERIAL QUESTIONNAIRE ON CLERGY ANGUISH

The purpose of this questionnaire is to identify and better understand the stresses that lead to anguish, burnout, and abandonment among clergy. This thesis project is going to establish principles for managing anguish and successfully reducing the personal strain associated with ministry, thus encouraging clergy to remain where God has planted them. Your honest answers will provide insightful information needed to develop these management principles.

1 What is your current ministerial position?

- ☐ Senior pastor
- ☐ Ministerial staff
- ☐ Chaplain

1. What is your tenure at current position?

- ☐ Under 3 years
- ☐ 4-6 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ 10-20 years
- ☐ 20+ years

2. How often do you think about leaving your current position?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Frequently
- ☐ Continuously

3. How many times have you relocated in your ministerial vocation? \_\_\_\_\_

4. How often do you struggle with anguish or distress?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Frequently
- ☐ Continuously

5. What factors contribute to your anguish or distress? (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ Discouragement
- ☐ Pressure (family, church, budget)
- ☐ Persecution
- ☐ Discontentment
- ☐ Loneliness
- ☐ Fear

- Loss (sickness, death, finances, family/friends support)
6. How do you respond to anguish or distress? (Check all that apply.)
- Self-pity
  - Question God's purpose, plan, and will
  - Anger
  - Engage in destructive behavior
  - Desire to flee or escape current position
  - Withdraw (Reclusive behavior)
  - Seek to change vocation
  - Prayer/Bible Study/Worship
7. How often do you compare your income to others?
- Never
  - Occasionally
  - Frequently
  - Continuously
8. Do you seek encouragement from others during stressful times?
- No
  - Yes, if so who? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How well do you think you manage stress?
- Excellent
  - Good
  - Satisfactory
  - Poorly

\*Thank you for your sincere and honest answers. I appreciate your willingness to participate in this survey. If you have any questions please contact me:

James W. Taylor  
1945 Burnette Ave.  
Jefferson City, TN 37760  
Cell Phone: (865) 254-6891



APPENDIX B  
RESEARCH SURVEY LETTER

December 18, 2012

Dear Participant:

I am a student at the Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary in Lynchburg, VA and a pastor of a local Southern Baptist Church in New Market, TN. I am conducting research for a doctoral dissertation on identifying and better understanding the stresses that lead to anguish, burnout, and abandonment among clergy. This dissertation is going to establish principles for managing anguish and successfully reducing the personal strain associated with ministry. Your honest answers will provide insightful information needed to develop these management principles.

Because you are a minister, your opinions are important to this study.

I would appreciate if you would complete the attached brief survey. Completion of the survey is expected to take about 10 minutes of your time. If you are interested in participating in this study, please read the informed consent document and complete the questionnaire and return it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope by January 15, 2013. If after receiving this letter, you have any questions about this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please feel free to contact me at 865-254-6891.

Thank you in advance for your interest in this project.

Yours sincerely,

James W. Taylor  
Student Investigator

## APPENDIX C CONSENT FORM

### BIBLICAL LEADERS: Key Principles and Concepts in Overcoming and Managing Stress, Distress, and Anguish.

By James W. Taylor

Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary

You are invited to be in a research study of developing principles for helping clergy manage anguish and distress associated with ministry. You were selected as a possible participant because of your vocational calling in ministry. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. James W. Taylor is conducting this study.

#### **Background Information:**

The purpose of this study is to identify and understand the stresses that lead to anguish, burnout, and abandonment among clergy and to establish principles for managing them.

#### **Procedures:**

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

- 1) Read over this consent form. If you have a question before you take the survey please contact me at 865-254-6891 or email [jwtaylor2@liberty.edu](mailto:jwtaylor2@liberty.edu). All information is anonymous and confidential.
- 2) Complete the attached brief survey and place it in the self-addressed stamped envelope. **Do not** write your name on the survey or the self-addressed stamped envelope. Completion of the survey is expected to take about 10 minutes of your time. You may omit any question you prefer not to answer. Please complete and mail surveys by January 15, 2013.

#### **Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:**

The participant risks are minimal. The questionnaire may cause psychological recollection related to ministerial anguish. If you experience any emotional discomfort as a result of participating in this survey, please notify me. There are no direct benefits to the participants filling out the surveys. However, society will benefit from this study because ministers will learn to handle anguish more effectively; thus, resulting in stronger churches, families, and communities.

#### **Compensation:**

You will not receive payment or compensation for your participation in this study.

#### **Confidentiality:**

The records of this study will be kept private. The identity of the participants will be referenced in the dissertations as, "Southern Baptist clergy, ministers, and pastors from the state of Tennessee." No individual names will be given in the dissertation. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. The student will store all data in his personal safety deposit box at his local bank for a period of three years. Only the student will have access to the data collected from the surveys. The student will shred the surveys personally after the three-year time period has ended.

#### **Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

**Contacts and Questions:**

The researchers conducting this study are James W. Taylor and Dr. Charles N. Davidson. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact them at Dr. Charles N. Davidson, phone #434-592-4241, or email at [cdavidson@liberty.edu](mailto:cdavidson@liberty.edu).

James W. Taylor, phone #865-254-6891, or email at [jwtaylor2@liberty.edu](mailto:jwtaylor2@liberty.edu).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Fernando Garzon, Chair, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [fgarzon@liberty.edu](mailto:fgarzon@liberty.edu).

*You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.*

**Statement of Consent:**

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study. The returned questionnaire will serve as proof of my consent.

**IRB Code Numbers:** 1432

**IRB Expiration Date:** 11/19/13

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## VITA

James W. Taylor

## PERSONAL

Born: October 18, 1969

Married: Linda G. Wolfe

Children: Hannah and Haley

## EDUCATIONAL

B.Th., Florida Baptist Theological College, 1993.

M.Div., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1998.

## MINISTERIAL

License: August 23, 1992, Cinco Baptist Church, Fort Walton  
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Ordained: May 23, 1993, Cinco Baptist Church, Fort Walton  
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## PROFESSIONAL

Minister of Youth, First Baptist Church of Parker, Parker, Florida, 1991-1992.

Associate Pastor of Youth & Education, Cinco Baptist Church, Fort Walton Beach,  
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Senior Pastor: Providence Baptist Church, Palmetto, Georgia, 1995-1998.

Senior Pastor: New Market Baptist Church, New Market, Tennessee 1998-present.

## PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES

Member, Jefferson County Baptist Association, 1998-present.

## IRB APPROVAL LETTER

**From:** IRB, IRB [[IRB@liberty.edu](mailto:IRB@liberty.edu)]

**Sent:** Monday, November 19, 2012 10:39 AM

**To:** Taylor, James W

**Cc:** IRB, IRB; Davidson, Charlie Nathan; Garzon, Fernando

**Subject:** IRB Exemption 1432.111912: Ministerial Principles for Managing Distress Derived from Key Biblical Leaders

Dear James,

The [Liberty University](#) Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and that no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101 (b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), **survey procedures**, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, **unless:**

**(i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;** and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and that any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption, or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

Sincerely,

**Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.**

*Professor, IRB Chair*

**Counseling**

**(434) 592-4054**