Liberty University School of Divinity

Pastoral Self-Care: Developing a Burnout-Resistant Approach to Life and Ministry

A Thesis Project Submitted to
The Faculty of Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
In Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry

By
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ABSTRACT

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According to a recent Lifeway survey of 1500 Southern Baptist pastors, over half surveyed struggled with discouragement. Many pastors struggle to maintain emotional health while facing the challenges of their ministry. This project will reveal how practicing a balanced Christian life, developing intimate relationships, and implementing a theology of self-care can minimize the likelihood of burnout. The project will develop a theology for resisting burnout that can be used as a tool for a pastor’s personal edification, as a study between two pastors, or as a discussion in a pastor’s fellowship. Through a review of applicable biblical passages, current scholarly literature, and fifteen interviews with pastors in small and medium size churches, the author will provide a manual with key principles for developing a resilient life and a healthy approach to pastoral ministry.
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Chapter One

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The everyday life of a pastor can drain his energy and erode resilience. As he seeks to feed and lead both flock and family, he can find himself feeling tired, spiritually hungry, and alone. Statistically, evangelical pastors across several denominations are at a high risk for burnout if they are not intentional about finding ways to regularly renew. According to recent research by Southern Baptist 48% of 1500 pastors feel the demands of ministry are greater than they can handle. Likewise, 54% of Southern Baptist pastors believe their role and responsibilities are frequently overwhelming, while 1 in 3 feel isolated.\(^1\) A recent study of Anglican clergy revealed that 58% feel drained by their ministry role. In addition, 61% indicated that fatigue and irritation are a part of their daily experience in ministry.\(^2\) In a recently published report by Barna and Pepperdine University called “The State of Pastors,” 14,000 evangelical were pastors interviewed. One of the results was that 3 out of 4 Pastors admitted to knowing one pastor that has left the ministry in the past five years because of burnout.\(^3\) Furthermore, the research revealed that one-third of pastors is at a high or medium risk of burnout.\(^4\) Researchers at The Francis A. Schaeffer Institute of Church Leadership Development also demonstrate the high stress level of pastors. They found that 43% of pastors are overstressed while 54% feel


\(^4\)Ibid., 20
overworked.

Whereas pastors should not think burnout or its symptoms avoidable altogether, there are ways to diminish and prevent its damaging effects. The support the pastor needs comes from a healthy relationship with God and other believers. God can provide a renewal from burnout for those pastors who are willing to enter into the ancient practices of spiritual disciplines, intentionally cultivate intimate relationships, and implement a holistic approach to self-care. These activities can help the pastor develop a burnout-resistant lifestyle. These three practices of renewal were selected based on personal and applied research. For example, in her article in *The Pastoral Psychology Journal*, Diane J. Chandler, surveyed some 270 pastors dealing with burnout. The results of her study were conclusive in determining the three areas the author is researching. She explored the relationship between burnout, spiritual renewal, rest taking, and support system practices. She writes that the results of her study “…identified spiritual dryness as the primary predictor of emotional exhaustion, the stress dimension of burnout. In the published literature, no other work to date has empirically substantiated a link between pastors’ spirituality and burnout. These findings expand the burnout construct and promote leader self-care practices that foster resilience, vitality, and well-being.”

There are several key words that need to be defined in order to better understand this project. The first key word is the broad and complex term of “burnout”. Burnout is broad and complex because it manifests itself in the physical, emotional, and spiritual layers of the whole person and is caused my many converging factors. In *The Dictionary of Pastoral Care* burnout is defined as “A syndrome, often occurring among individuals in helping professions, involving

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emotional and physical exhaustion, depersonalization, and a feeling of reduced personal accomplishment.” Furthermore, the causes of burnout are from external and internal stressors that press upon the whole person causing depletion of energies. These stressors are unique in the way they display themselves to clergy in the local church. While some stress is necessary for pastors to act and accomplish their God-given tasks, too much stress can cause distress and sickness. The pastor’s way of life and expectations often shape the health of his soul. In his book, Burnout, Herbert Freudenberger defines burnout in this way. He writes it is, “A state of fatigue or frustration brought about by devotion to a cause, way of life, or relationship that failed to produce the expected reward.” The way of life in ministry can be frustrating and only God can sustain a pastor through its difficulties.

Another key word that is essential to understanding the prevention and recovery from burnout is resilience. In his book, The Resilient Pastor: Ten Principles for Developing Pastoral Resilience, Mark A. Searby shares the biblical perspective on this word resilience. He writes, “The biblical term for resilience is ‘perseverance’ or ‘patient endurance’. In the active sense it refers to ‘steady persistence in well-doing’ and in the passive sense it is ‘patient endurance under difficulty.’

Emotional Health is another key term closely linked with burnout because it can lessen emotional fatigue that invokes burnout in pastors. In The Journal of Religion and Health, Paul

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8 Ibid.
E. Johnson defines emotional health, as “…a dynamic and resilient spirit, to take what comes in faith and courage, and respond to each situation creatively and responsibly.”\(^{12}\) He concludes that if one is to be emotionally healthy and avoid burnout, a cultivation of emotional intelligence and self-awareness is necessary to avoid a deficit in emotional health. In the book, *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving*, authors Bob Burns, Tasha D. Chapman, and Donald C. Guthrie define emotional intelligence as managing and responding properly to emotions. They define it further as, “…the ability to proactively manage your own emotions and to appropriately respond to the emotions of others.”\(^{13}\) The American Psychological Association gives a more in depth definition. Writing:

> Emotional Intelligence is a type of intelligence defined as the abilities to perceive, appraise, and express emotions accurately and appropriately, to use emotions to facilitate thinking, to understand and analyze emotions, to use emotional knowledge effectively, and to regulate one’s emotions to promote both emotional and intellectual growth.\(^{14}\)

Pastors who possess a regulated emotional intelligence often display a deep and abiding spiritual vitality and longevity in ministry. The link between emotional health and spiritual health is important. According to research conducted by Diane Chandler in *The Pastoral Psychology Journal*, “spiritual dryness” emerges as primary predictor of emotional exhaustion. Chandler writes, “…by virtue of their calling, pastor need to nurture an ongoing and renewing relationship with God to maintain balance, reduce stress, and avoid burnout.”\(^{15}\)

Another key term is “spiritual disciplines.” A major way to remain resistant to burnout is

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to enter into the life-giving ancient practices of spiritual disciplines. In *The Dictionary of Pastoral Care*, Rodney Hunter and Nancy J. Ramsay emphasize the relationship of the spiritual disciplines to a thriving inner being. They define discipline and its significance as “Focus on the deliberate efforts that believers make to advance in the life of faith.” They later conclude, “There is no flourishing religious life without discipline.” Likewise, in his book, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, Donald S. Whitney, describes spiritual disciplines as “…those personal and corporate disciplines that promote spiritual growth…the Spiritual Disciplines then are also like channels of transforming grace. As we place ourselves in them to seek communion with Christ, His grace flows to us and we are changed.” The change that is necessary to renew a pastor from burnout begins with their engagement with God in such disciplines. The disciplines of prayer, Bible Study, and Sabbath will be the spiritual disciplines of focus of the author.

Spiritual disciplines in the context of intimacy are vital in preventing burnout. The pastor must seek to develop diverse support systems and to engage in intimate interpersonal communication to recover and sustain health. These systems can include family, friends, and other pastors. Recent research by Lifeway reveals that 40% of Southern Baptist pastors feel lonely in ministry. In a recent survey among over 700 Presbyterian clergy, only 53% belong to a peer support group and only 26 have a mentor they can go to for counsel. The study found that those who had meaningful relationship with a mentor, experienced higher levels of satisfaction.

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16 Rodney J. Hunter and Nancy J. Ramsay, *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 1215.
17 Ibid., 1216.
and less stress.\textsuperscript{20}

It is not enough to merely have a mentor or attend a peer support group. The quality of these relationships must be defined by the key word “intimacy”. Intimacy can be defined as “any relationship where we know another fully and where we also are fully known.”\textsuperscript{21} Genuine biblical intimacy manifests itself in several ways. In their book, \textit{Preventing Ministry Failure}, Michael Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffman write, “In God’s economy there are three primary venues for genuine biblical intimacy: with God, with others, and with a spouse.”\textsuperscript{22} They further explain that an intimate relationship is marked by both empathy and compassion. Those with whom we enter these sacred relationships “…know the real us that exists below the mask we wear when we are onstage in ministry. They know our hurts, our struggles, our private victories and the things at the top of our prayer list.”\textsuperscript{23}

The final keyword to be defined is “self-care” in the context of the whole person. In his book, \textit{Going the Distance: How to Stay Fit for a Lifetime of Ministry}, Peter Brain explains self-care as “the wisdom to ensure, as far humanly possible, a wise and orderly work that conserves and lengthens a pastor’s ministry...the reason for self-care is not so that pastors can become indulgent hypochondriacs, always concerned about their own welfare. Self-care means understanding the meaning of positive health and working toward it.”\textsuperscript{24} Stress affects the whole of a person and any solution for this stress must be holistic in its approach. In his book, \textit{Surviving

\begin{footnotes}
\item[20] Leslie J. Francis “Assessing the Effectiveness of Support Strategies in Reducing professional burnout Among Clergy Serving in the Presbyterian Church (USA)” Practical Theology Journal, 6. no. 3, (2013), 319-331.
\item[22] Ibid., 26-27.
\item[23] Ibid., 34.
\item[24] Peter Brain, \textit{Going the Distance: How to Stay Fit for a Lifetime of Ministry} (Kingsford: Matthias Media, 2004), 24.
\end{footnotes}
the Stained-Glass Jungle, Williams Self further defines self-care as “…being a steward of…the human body and soul, along with the capacity to bring joy to others as well as to experience it.”25 The pastor should develop a theology of self-care that includes being a caretaker of his physical, emotional, and spiritual needs to relieve stress. It is essential to the quality and effectiveness of a pastor’s ministry that he gives care to all of these areas.26 Self-care should be looked at as a process to be maintained over a lifetime. Bob Burns writes, “…the ongoing development of the whole person, including the emotional, spiritual, relational, physical, and intellectual areas of life.”27 Pastors who plan to be in ministry for the long haul must seek to understand the condition of their heart, mind, and body on a regular basis.

**Statement of Limitations**

The project will not address professions in non-ministry context, bi-vocational ministers, or lay leaders; rather, it is directed to the office of pastor as a full-time vocation. Another limitation is that the research and findings will deal with the problem of burnout and stress in the general sense; it will not be a comprehensive look at the causes and effects of ministerial burnout. The project will also not be an in depth study of all the spiritual disciplines as they relate to burnout prevention. The author has chosen to limit these disciplines to the basics of prayer, meditation, and Sabbath Practices.

The author has also chosen, based on personal and original research and a survey of literature, to limit a principles for reducing burnout to three applications: Practicing a balanced life by implementing spiritual disciplines; Developing intimate relationships with family, friends, and pastors; and Implementing a theology of self-care in the context of holistic health.

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The interviews will be limited to evangelical male pastors of small eastern U.S. congregations of 150 people or less. The questions focus on the spiritual, emotional, and relational habits of these pastors, the daily stress they encounter, and how they cope with stress and stay vibrant in ministry.

The approach is primarily theological because the solution for burnout begins with and is sustained by the spiritual health of the inner person. There will not be as much time spent on the physical causes of burnout as a primary solution for burnout. Rather, the spiritual and emotional components will be treated as the keys to healing and wholeness, which in turn will positively affect the physical aspect of the pastor.

**Theoretical Basis**

The relationship of burnout prevention and the current best practices in ministry is best addressed by recognition that stress affects the whole person. Pastors do have a unique brand of stress, but they still possess the same three-fold frame that all humans maintain. The emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects of a person are affected by stress and burnout in ministry. Best practices in ministry conclude that although stress affects the whole person, the health of the inner spiritual man is where the priority of burnout prevention and intervention begins. The resources and best practices include a focus on spiritual disciplines, the emotional health of the pastor as is reflected in intimate flourishing relationships, and in maintaining a holistic approach to health. Pastors should not think that they can prevent burnout by themselves, nor should they exclude the powerful work of God to sustain them in difficult seasons of life.

The humanity of pastors ensures they will experience stress physically, emotionally, and spiritually. It is comforting to know that God-honoring leaders in Scriptures often experienced extreme levels of stress and found help in the Word and presence of God. Moses experienced
emotional distress when trying to judge the people (Exod. 18). Elijah experienced physical stress when running from Jezebel (I Kgs. 19). Jesus experienced stress at every level of his being when he walked the earth. He suffered emotionally through the death of Lazarus (John 11:35), physically in the wilderness (Matt. 4) and on the cross (John 19:28), and spiritually as the Father crushed the Son (Isa. 53:10, Matt. 27:47). These people exhibit several qualities that helped them find peace and hope in the midst of great stress. First, they were men of prayer who were nourished on the Word of God regularly. Moses interceded for the nation (Deut. 9:13-14, Ex. 32:30-33), delivered the Ten Commandments (Exod. 34), and spoke for God on many occasions. Elijah is praised for his powerful prayers (I Kgs. 17:22, 18:30-46, Jas. 5) and his prophetic words from God for Israel. David’s Psalms are a testimony of both passionate prayer (Pss. 28, 63) and a love for the Word of God (Pss. 19, 119). Jesus was a man in constant dialogue with his Father in heaven throughout his earthly ministry. He valued the Word of God so much that he taught it in the synagogues even as a boy (Luke 2:41-52). He also used it to combat Satan (Matt. 4:1) when tempted in the wilderness. Second, these men recognized their deep needs for intimacy with one another. Moses needed Jethro to show him the art of delegation (Ex. 18). Elijah needed Elisha to remind him that the work of God would continue beyond his death (I Kgs. 19). David needed Jonathon to help him weather the persecution of Saul (I Sam. 18:1-4). Jesus needed the Father to send the Spirit (Luke 3:22) and the Disciples needed Jesus to shepherd them. Finally, these men recognized the importance of taking care of their whole being before God. Moses wrote of this in the Shema (Deut. 6:5-7). Elijah demonstrated this as he ate the food the ravens brought him (I Kgs. 17:6) and obeyed the command of God to anoint Elisha (II Kgs 1). David hungered at the table of showbread when he was starving and, later in the New Testament, Jesus did not condemn him (I Sam. 21:6, Matt. 12:4) taking care of his body in this way. Early in Jesus’ life
he grew in wisdom, stature, and in favor with God and men (Luke 2:52). This means Jesus grew in every way physically, spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually. Later Jesus fed the five thousand out of deep compassion for their physical hunger and emotional distress (Matt. 14:13-21). Jesus also healed the sick (Matt. 12:15), and later physically died for the sin of the world (1 Pet. 2:24) and bodily resurrected. In his teaching Jesus echoed Moses’ teaching in the Shema (Deut. 6:4-9) by affirming the greatest commands to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, and strength (Mark 12).

There are also several other leaders in the Bible who dealt with stress and burnout on a spiritual, emotional, and physical level. They prioritized the inner life as the beginning for healing, but did not neglect the nurturing of their earthly relationships, and physical beings. Jesus taught of the importance of the inner life when he said, “What good does it do if a man gain the whole world and lose his soul?” (Matt. 16:26) In Luke 10:27 he says, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” In both the Shema and the words of Christ in the New Testament the nature of our beings as physical, emotional, and spiritual people are addressed in relation to God.

Any project that considers a burnout resistant approach to life and ministry must prioritize the inner life as the beginning of spiritual renewal. However, the approach must not relegate the emotional and physical aspects of our being as unimportant, nonessential, or disconnected. In the Old and New Testament the individual is charged with the responsibility to care for their inner and outer self so they can obey God continually and effectively. Proverbs 4:23 reminds readers to “keep their hearts with diligence.” Later in Luke 18:19 we are reminded from scriptures that self-care is our responsibility. He writes, “By your patience possess your
souls.”²⁸ The pastor must take responsibility for his own self-care, and that care is inclusive of the spiritual, emotion, and physical aspects of his being.

Statement of Methodology

Chapter One is an introduction to the project. It addresses an overview of the entire project. The introduction will serve as a way to show the problem of burnout and the solution from the three principles offered by the author based on personal and applied research. The author will show from research, the Scriptures, and scholarly works why stress is a holistic problem that requires a holistic solution. He will also try to convince the reader of the need to depend on the Lord and others to prevent burnout.

Chapter Two will address the key principle of practicing a balanced Christian living through the spiritual disciplines of prayer, Scripture meditation, and Sabbath practices for the purpose of combating burnout. Practicing these disciplines with the right heart can produce a positive affect in the pastor’s life by providing a source of continual renewal in the midst of stress. Several examples from the Scripture will also be used as a way of showing the priority of the inward disciplines of the heart to ensure prevention of burnout.

Chapter Three will address the role healthy support systems play in combating stress and preventing burnout among pastors. The three major categories of relationships emphasized will be the spouse, close friends, and pastor relationships. The key word applied to these relationships will be intimacy. The author will explain how research and scripture demonstrate that meaningful relationships are effective in developing a resilient life and longevity in ministry.

Chapter Four will address the importance of approaching self-care in light of the whole person. The pastor should consider the health of his entire soul, spirit, mind, and body, if he is to

²⁸ Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in English Standard Version (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016).
handle stress in such a way that it does not deplete him spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, and physically. The emphasis on self-care will be extracted from Proverbs 4:23 and Luke 18:19. Another example will be the growth of Jesus (Luke 2:52) in body, mind, and soul when growing up on earth. The author will demonstrate how holistic self-care is scriptural and beneficial for pastors.

Chapter Five is the conclusion of the project and will address the summary of the findings and ministry applications. Further developments for the project will be discussed in this chapter. Suggested ways for pastors to engage the principles more deeply will be provided by the author.

**Review of Literature**

Books, scholarly journals, academic surveys, and dissertations are the available resources for this project. References will be drawn from the scriptures, psychologists, pastors, and scholars. These references all address the subjects of burnout, spiritual disciplines, healthy relationships and support systems, and holistic self-care in the context of burnout.

There are several books that help define both the problem and solutions for burnout. The problem of burnout is prolonged stress that is not dealt with properly. In his book, *Burnout: Stress in the Ministry*, John Davey defines stress and describes its effects for pastors in their physical and spiritual lives.\(^{29}\)

John A. Sanford writes of burnout in relation to the pastorate in his book *Ministry Burnout*. He stresses burnout is not limited to the pastorate, but the way a pastor finds renewal is unique because his stress can be an unusual combination of pressure and stressors.

In his book, *Zeal Without Burnout*, Christopher Ash, shares seven keys to a lifelong

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ministry of sustainable sacrifice. Among these he mentions the importance of physical care of the minister’s body, an emphasis on pastoral Sabbath taking, the essential practices of friendships among pastors, and the importance of finding inward renewal through spiritual disciplines.

Also, Frank Minirth, Don Hawkins, Paul Meier, and Richard Flourney have written extensively about burnout in the pastorate. In their book, How to Beat Burnout, they show many ways burnout affects people emotional, physically, and spiritually. In another book, Before Burnout, Frank Minirth shares several ways to prevent burnout from happening before the effects hinder a pastor’s life and ministry.

Another book by Charles Stone, Ministry Killers and How to Defeat Them, offers insight based on new research from the Barna-Group of how pastors can grow more effective as they persevere through burnout. Pastor’s frustrations are observed in three categories of church, family, and community.

In his book, Burnout in Ministry, Brooks R. Faulkner, describes the role burnout played in the life of Elijah. Charles Stone’s book, previously mentioned, will also provide insight on Elijah’s life of service to the Lord and struggle with burnout and depression. Phillip Keller also writes of the despair of Elijah as he sat in the wilderness of Sinai. Keller shows the amazing way

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30 Christopher Ash, Zeal Without Burnout: Seven Keys to a Lifelong Ministry of Sustainable Sacrifice, (United Kingdom: Good Book Company, 2016), 49-59.


God cared for the Elijah’s whole person as he waited for God to speak.\textsuperscript{35} The books on developing a balanced Christian life describe the effects of spiritual disciplines on the one facing burnout. The book \textit{Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving}, will be used to show the importance of developing habits of spiritual formation that will lead to a resilient ministry.\textsuperscript{36} This book will also provide a foundation for pastoral self-care.

Jay Adams’ book, \textit{Shepherding God’s Flock}, will be utilized to show the priority of the inner life of the leader.\textsuperscript{37} In chapter five his “Five Vital Factors” show the importance of relationship with God as the priority for pastoral health in ministry.

The Dictionary of Pastoral Care will demonstrate the need to practice spiritual disciplines from a biblical, historical, and pastoral perspective. The emphasis for individual and corporate disciplines will be addressed.

Donald Whitney’s \textit{Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life} will reveal the need for spiritual disciplines as it relates to godliness and spiritual vitality.\textsuperscript{38} His book will further emphasize the priority of prayer, meditation, and Bible Study as primary spiritual disciplines. Richard Foster’s book, \textit{The Celebration of the Disciplines} will explain the need for solitude and quiet when praying, meditating, and studying.\textsuperscript{39} Pastors lead busy lives and need to be reminded of spending time away from the busyness of their hectic lives.

David Mathis’ book, \textit{Habits of Grace: Enjoying Jesus through Spiritual Disciplines}
focuses on three major areas of spiritual disciples. The first area focuses on hearing the Word of God in study, meditation, and memorization. The second is a focus on prayer both privately and in company with other believers. The third focus is on disciplines as they relate to fellowship in the corporate worship experience. These three focuses are essential for pastors to apply regularly to prevent burnout.

Eugene Peterson’s *Eat This Book* will be used to demonstrate the importance of showing the relationship of quiet reflective reading of the Word of God to spiritual health. The Word of God brings life for those who will chew on its truth and think deeply on God’s promises for his people. In addition to Peterson’s book will be David Saxton’s book, *God’s Battlefield for the Mind*. This book will define and give practical help for the practice of biblical meditation. The benefits of meditation and enemies of it will also be expounded upon.

The books dealing with developing meaningful relationships with an emphasis on intimacy come from several authors. Beverly Ferh’s book *Friendship Processes* defines not only the meaning of friendship in chapter one, but in chapter two she explains the process of friendship formation in the context of pastoral ministry.

Joel R. Beeke and Michael A.G. Haykin give a practical look at how biblical friendships can be developed to fulfill God’s purposes in their book *How Should We Develop Biblical Friendships*. He explains how friendship can serve the purpose of fulfilling our role of bringing

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honor to God together.

Another book that shows how friendships positively work among pastors is Gary D. Kinnaman and Alfred H. Ells book, *Leaders That Last: How Covenant Friendships Can Help Pastors Thrive*. Friendship is most effective when two people are committed to one another through difficulty. Pastors need to covenant with one another to withstand the stress of ministry and should not attempt to do this alone.

The emphasis of intimacy in relationships among pastors will be demonstrated in two books. Michael Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffman’s book *Preventing Ministry Failure* emphasize intimacy as one of seven foundation stones for long-term effective ministry. Their book further defines intimacy as it is applied to the spiritual, emotional, and physical aspects of our lives and in our relationships to God, family, and others.

In Peter Hartley’s book *Interpersonal Communication*, he explains through the use of the illustration of the “Johari Window,” that people do not naturally want intimacy; rather, it is something that requires intentionality and transparency. Jimmy Dodd also writes of several healthy relationships a pastor must have to thrive in ministry in his book *6 Relationships Every Pastor Needs*. He writes specifically of pastoral friendships and the fear pastors have of sharing and bearing themselves to another.

The books on self-care demonstrate the priority of the individual’s responsibility for their spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual health. In his book *Clergy-Self Care*, Roy M.

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Oswald of the Alban Institute discusses how to adopt a biblical theology of self-care for the spirit and body.\(^4\)

Another book, which emphasizes the importance of caring for the body as a mechanism by which ministry is accomplished, is Matthew Lee Anderson’s book *Earthen Vessels*. Anderson addresses the reluctance of evangelicals and church leaders to address the importance of physical care. He further emphasizes why our bodies matter to our faith and particularly to our calling as servants of God.\(^5\)

In his book *The Stained Glass Jungle* by William Self writes of the importance of the pastor giving himself permission to care for himself, take a Sabbath, eat with a friend, laugh, and even exercise.\(^6\) These simple practices are life-giving and burnout reducers.

The centrality of rest-taking principles as applied in a pastor’s Sabbath will also be emphasized in Sang-Yang Tan’s book *Rest: Experiencing God’s Peace in a Restless World*.\(^7\) In part one Tan explains the importance of rest and the damage of unrest. Tan explains the effect rest has upon the physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual. In the latter part of the book Tan offers a biblical approach to stress management. In his book, *Sabbath*, Dan Allender shares reasons why many do not observe the Sabbath, while giving a great definition of it.\(^8\) In addition to these books will be Peter Scazzero’s book, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*.\(^9\) In this book

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\(^{8}\) Dan B. Allender, *Sabbath* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2009), 1-34.

\(^{9}\) Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life will Deeply Transform your Church, Team, and the World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 143-176.
Scazzero shows how transforming your inner life will transform others lives too. He pays special attention to Sabbath taking principles for pastors. His reference to the “Sacred Sabbath Rhythm” is expressed in practical steps pastors can take to rest and take delight in their Sabbath so as to be reenergized and combat emotional fatigue.\footnote{Ibid., 143-176.}

The Research has come from academic studies and peer-reviewed journal articles. Lifeway research has provided insight into the lives of 1500 Southern Baptist Pastors. The research reveals feelings of both frustration and isolation in ministry.\footnote{Lisa Cannon Green, “Research Finds Few Pastors Give Up On Ministry,” Lifeway Research, accessed January 14, 2016. https://www.lifeway.com/pastors/2015/09/01/research-finds-few-pastors-give-up-on-ministry}

In his journal article “Clergy Burnout: Two Different Measures,”\footnote{Randall, Kelvin J. "Clergy Burnout: Two Different Measures," \textit{Pastoral Psychology} 62, no. 3 (06, 2013): 333-41, Accessed on September 16, 2017.} Kelvin Randall’s insight into a study about pastors revealed that over half of the 340 Anglican Clergy surveyed were fatigued and had negative feelings about accomplishing their work and were frustrated with the people in their churches.\footnote{Benjamin R. Doolittle, “Burnout and Coping Among Parish Based Clergy,” \textit{Mental Health, Religion & Culture} 10, no. 1 (01 2007): 31-38, accessed on September 16, 2017.}

In B.R. Doolittle’s article, “Burnout and Coping Among Parish Based Clergy,” a study among 1468 Roman Catholic Parish priests revealed that 36 percent felt ‘‘used up’’ at the end of the day, 20 percent felt frustrated, 19 percent felt ‘‘emotionally drained,’’ and 14 percent identified themselves as ‘‘burned out.’’ Each of these studies reveals problems of stress, isolation, and burnout is real among a diverse group of clergy.\footnote{Ibid., 143-176.}

In an article about the Presbyterian Church (USA) titled “Assessing the Effectiveness of Support Strategies in Reducing Professional Burnout Among Clergy Serving in The Presbyterian Church (USA)”, a survey was given to over 700 clergy in which only 53% were involved in any peer support group and only 26 percent had...
mentors. The study reveals how important it is for clergy to have healthy relationships among their peers. The Barna Research group’s “State of the Pastors” publication will be utilized to demonstrate the importance of self-leadership and church leadership in relation to pastoral health.

The journal articles in this project help to further define burnout and to show how developing a balanced approach to Christian living, having meaningful and intimate relationships, and implementing an approach to health that is inclusive of the whole person can prevent burnout from damaging the pastor.

The first article shows the nature of burnout and gives great imagery of a fire to explain it. The article, “Burnout: 35 Years of Research and Practice,” written by Wilmar B. Schaufeli, Michael P. Leiter, and Christian Maslach defines the nature of burnout and its effects upon from its conception in the 1960’s until the present. They discuss how an abundance of stress is not dealt with properly is often the cause of burnout.

The journal articles for a balanced Christian life involved the importance of inward spiritual disciplines. The article “Maintaining Personal Resiliency Lessons Learned From Evangelical Protestant Clergy,” written by several faculty from Wheaton College emphasizes the impact the practices spiritual disciplines has on the spiritual health of pastors.


Christy Morris’ article, “The Role of Friendship in Spiritual Formation,” shows the historical roots of friendship through the persons of Aristotle, Jesus, and Paul. She demonstrates the importance of intimacy among friends as an instrument of spiritual growth and health.

The article “Care for Pastors: Learning from Clergy and Their Spouses” by Mark R. McMinn, R. Allen Lish, Pamela D. Trice, Alicia M. Root, Nicole Gilbert, and Adelene Yap will show the importance of pastoring understanding the stress he wife is under in pastoral ministry. The article also reveals that clergy and their wives must be involved in mutual self-care to have a healthy marriage.

William R. Cutre and Robert M. Cutre’s article “A Call to Wellness Lifestyle: Some Practical Suggestions,” demonstrates the biblical connection between physical and spiritual care. He defines wellness as and the integrating of the spirit, mind, and body. The pastor’s self-care must be inclusive of his total being for him to be well.

When addressing the topics of stress and burnout, the Scriptures offer valuable insight and practical help. Several solutions for burnout are given within inspired biographies and the rich doctrine of the Old and New Testament.

In the Old Testament, Moses is a primary example of how to depend on others through delegation and in so doing avoid burnout. In Exodus 17 he had to depend upon Aaron and Hur to lift his hands up while Joshua fought the Amalekites. Later, in Exodus 18, Moses’ father-in-law Jethro taught him the importance of delegation to remove burnout. In his book, Team

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Leadership in Christian Ministry, Kenneth Gangel expounds upon the importance of Moses’ submission to his father-in-law’s wise advice in delegating responsibility so as to avoid burnout. He writes, “One basic reason we can so easily support delegation is its biblical foundation. Moses found himself strained almost to the breaking point under his responsibilities as the single leader of a wilderness nation. Such unilateral responsibility was unnecessary, however, and at the suggestions of Jethro, Moses divided the assignment of such duties.”

Elijah serves as an example of how burnout affects the emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual aspects of a leader. In I Kgs. 18:16-46 he defeated the prophets of Baal through the power of God and experiences a spiritual high. However, in I Kgs. 19:1-9a he flees to Horeb depleted of inner and outer strength and slips into a depression. In I Kings 19:9b-18 God meets him at Horeb and ministers to his physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. Ultimately, he is given hope through the promise of the Word of God (I Kgs. 19:15-18) and the training of a new successor in ministry named Elisha (I Kgs. 19:19-21).

The example of David and Jonathan reveal how a powerful friendship between leaders can be life giving when facing adversity. In I Sam. 18:1-4 David and Jonathon made a covenant friendship with one another. In I Sam. 19 1-3 Saul tried to kill David, but Jonathon defended him before his father and Saul relented in killing him. (I Sam. 19:4-6) They are an example of how a meaningful relationship based on true intimacy yields hope-giving life in the face of burnout.

In the New Testament, Jesus and Paul are primary examples of dealing with the stress in the midst of ministering to others. Jesus, the Son of God, was tired, hungry, and distressed, (Heb 2:18, 4:15) but prayer and solitude were his answer to burnout. He is the greatest example of one who felt great distress and found solace through solitude and prayer (Mark 1:35, Luke 5:16).

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Jesus also shows us of the importance of growing holistically. Luke 2:52 (NIV) says he grew in “Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.” This demonstrates spiritual, physical, and social/emotional growth in his earthly life. It is a great reminder to pastors to care for all aspects of their being, instead of focusing on one to the neglect of the others.

Later in the New Testament it was early church and the Paul who demonstrated vibrancy in the face of great persecution (Acts 8:1). The early church weathered the storms by praying together and spending time in the Word of God (Acts 1:14, 2:42). The combination of these two spiritual disciplines of prayer and hearing the Word in the context of meaningful relationships was essential to their surviving and thriving as individuals and collectively as the church. The New Testament also records the conversion of Saul to Paul in Acts 8. After he surrendered to Jesus, the Apostle Paul suffered great persecution and fatigue for following Jesus. He was beaten (II Cor. 11:25), thrown in jail, (Acts 16:16-40) and yet he was relentless to carry out his calling through his many missionary journeys (Acts 13:1-14:28, 15:36-18:22, 18:23-21:16) For Paul, his meditation on the Scriptures (Rom. 7:22, II Tim. 3:16-17) and personal worship of God renewed his soul even in the midst of torture and imprisonment (Rom. 11:33-36; 12:1-2, 9-13). The worship of God increased his zeal, sustained his Spirit, and magnified his burden for the needs of others. His example to pastors and leaders is one of great significance. For even in the end he never lost hope or heart for serving the Lord (2 Cor. 4).

Conclusion

The project will demonstrate through research, scholarly literature, scriptural evidence and examples that stress affects the whole person and needs a solution that is multilevel. It will

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67 Luke 2:52 (New International Version)
reveal the pastorate as a unique position that incurs stress spiritually, emotionally, and physically. It will reveal that in order for a pastor to thrive he must engage in life giving activities with others. These activities involve inward spiritual disciplines, finding and maintaining intimate relationships, and nurturing holistic self-care of the soul. The author will seek to demonstrate that prayer, study, and meditation are renewing activities to be done individually and corporately. The research will suggest that pastors who try to do life alone will run a greater risk of burnout. The pastor needs a strong support network to thrive. His friendships, relationships with family and other pastors are vital to his emotional health and longevity in ministry. However, his support network is not responsible for his self-care. He, alone, is the initiator of his will. He must see holistic self-care as a priority if he is to maintain a burnout resistant lifestyle.
Chapter Two

Key Principle One: Practice Balanced Living

Research indicates that pastor’s struggle with maintaining balance in their lives. Almost half of 1500 Southern Baptist Pastors in a Lifeway survey indicated that the demands of ministry are greater than they can handle. The survey further revealed that over half of these Pastors were frequently overwhelmed by their role and responsibilities. In addition to this stress is the feeling that 8 out of 10 pastors felt they must be on call 24 hours a day. Among the broader evangelical community the research also confirms the problem of imbalance. In a recent survey of some 8,150 evangelical pastors, the Francis Schaeffer Institute of Church Leadership Development found that 54% of pastors feel overworked and 43 percent are overstressed. The research also reveals that 35 are battling depression, 26 are overly fatigued, 23% feel distant from their families, and 18 work more than 70 hours a week. The author’s interview of 15 pastors also supports this research. Personal research reveals that 67 percent of pastors have experienced burnout and 60% said they struggle with loneliness and isolation.

The combined research concludes that many pastors struggle with finding balance and health while ministering to their family, church, friends, and self. In his book, Balancing the Christian Life, Charles Ryrie connects balance to spiritual health. He writes, “There is nothing more devastating to the practice of spiritual living than imbalance. An unbalanced application to biblical spirituality will result in an unbalanced Christian life. Balance is the key to a wholesome

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70 Interviews with Senior Pastors, Dec. 2016.
Pastors need to find space and balance between their work as shepherds to attain regular personal rest and renewal. In his book, Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives, Richard Swenson affirms the need for such balance. He explains that a lack of time margin in a pastor’s life can be from a lack of balance. He suggests several practical steps that a person can take in order to restore balance. The second step he offers is to place God back into the center of all things and to build your life outward. He explains that it is primarily through the spiritual element that one can find margin and regain balance. He writes, “Balance is necessary and attainable—not easy, but possible…God expects us to perform well in many areas of life. But when He gave us the limits of time and finiteness, at that moment, he also built in the necessity of balance. We work hard to please our Master, but we also rest confidently knowing that He understands our condition.”

Many pastors lack balance because they do not recognize their humanity and limited capacities as divinely called men. In their busyness, they seem to forget that God does not rest, but they were created to sleep daily and take a regular Sabbath. One solution for restoration and renewal is for pastors to enter into the ancient practices of spiritual disciples with an emphasis on developing resilience.

When applied to spiritual disciplines, resilience can correct imbalance and restore health. In her dissertation “Pastoral Peer Cohorts: Cultivating Resilient Ministers and Preventing Burnout,” Katie Navarra, indicates in her research that nearly 90 percent of pastors did not feel equipped to meet the demands in ministry. She further identified the first step in recovering balance and preventing burnout was cultivating resilience through disciplines. She writes, “The

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research shows that maintaining spiritual disciplines and cultivating one’s own spiritual life can promote resiliency and reduce burnout in pastors.”73 Her conclusion is that resilient living brings renewal and renewal is found by entering spiritual rituals and religious rhythms. A ritual, as defined by Bob Burns, Tasha D. Chapman, and Donald C. Guthrie in their book Resilient Ministry, is a “…highly purposeful habit…Rituals are precise, consciously acquired behaviors that become automatic in our lives, fueled by a deep sense of purpose. These rhythms include the mental, physical, emotional and social aspects of our unique selves.”74 These rituals and rhythms can produce resilience, balance, and increased holistic health when properly applied. In his book, Invitation to Journey, Dr. Robert M. Mulholland describes spiritual disciplines and balance they can bring to a tired soul. He writes:

Somewhere between the extremes of avoidance of discipline and the imprisonment of discipline is the holistic practice of balanced spiritual disciplines which becomes a means of God’s Grace to shape us into the image of Christ for others…Holistic Spiritual disciplines are acts of loving obedience that we offer to God steadily and consistently, to be used for whatever God purposes to do in and through our lives.75

The developing of balance and resilience through spiritual disciplines is an important connection for pastors to understand as they battle burnout.

In this chapter the key principle of “Living a Balanced Christian Life” for the purpose of preventing burnout will be addressed. The author will suggest focusing on three spiritual disciplines to restore spiritual balance and foster the kind of resilience necessary to overcome the harmful effects of stress. The positive impact of engaging spiritual disciplines to reduce burnout is significant. Recent research by Crossway Publishing reveals that 80 percent of 6,000 people

73 Katie Ahlberg Navarra, "Pastoral Peer Cohorts: Cultivating Resilient Ministers and Preventing Burnout." Master’s Theses, Saint Mary’s College of California, 48.

74 Bob Burns, Tasha D. Chapman, and Donald C. Guthrie. Resilient Ministry, 40.

75 Robert M. Mulholland, Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation (Downers Grove: IVP Press, 2016), 120.
surveyed experienced burnout. The Crossway survey defined burnout as follows: “A State of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual exhaustion caused by living at too fast a pace for too long, or by living with too many stresses in our lives.” Remarkably, the responses to the survey question, “What could have prevented your burnout?” were 46 percent of men and 45 percent of women indicated that consistent spiritual disciplines could have prevented their burnout. Crossway’s researchers write, “More consistent use of the spiritual disciplines prevents burnout, because things like prayer and Bible reading not only bring us into God’s restorative presence, but also help us see ourselves, our responsibilities, and our problems from a divine perspective, resulting in peace and wisdom.” Donald Whitney gives a deeper definition and focus of the spiritual disciplines in his book *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*. He writes, “Spiritual Disciplines are those personal and corporate disciplines that promote spiritual growth…Whatever the Discipline, its most important feature is its purpose…that purpose is godliness.” When applied directly to pastoral ministry, the result of practicing spiritual disciplines can be a reversal of spiritual and emotional fatigue through spiritual growth and increased godliness. In her article, “Pastoral Burnout and the Impact of Personal Spiritual Renewal, Rest-Taking, and Support Systems,” Diane J. Chandler writes of this connection. She writes, “Spiritual disciplines provide venues for encountering the presence of God and receiving a refueling of spiritual reserves.” The effect of the presence of God as encountered by pastors through disciplines is healing and renewing. The disciplines can provide this kind of encounter

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with God. The more a pastor positively encounters God, the greater their strength will be to overcome the harmful effects of burnout.

The spiritual disciplines of emphasis in this chapter will be prayer, Bible Study/Meditation, and Sabbath or Rest-Taking practices. According to research and the Scriptures, these three disciplines play a vital role in sustaining the pastor’s resilience and restoring balance to his life. A recent survey of 14,000 pastors by Barna and Pepperdine University revealed the top two disciplines pastors implement to develop spiritually is prayer (81 percent) and scripture reading for personal devotions (71 percent). Studies like these confirm that pastors are regularly engaging in spiritual disciplines. The studies also demonstrate a link between those who enter into regular spiritual renewal practices and the measure of their overall spiritual and emotional health.

The Discipline of Prayer

In his book, Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God, Tim Keller defines prayer as “a personal, communicative response to the knowledge of God.” Prayer is the right response to the Creator and Redeemer God. In the fullest sense, Keller defines prayer as a response to the personal “conversation that God has started through his Word and his grace, which eventually because a full encounter with him.” Pastors regularly need that kind of encounter with God’s grace to experience soul renewal. According to research, personal prayer does not seem to be a struggle for most pastors. In fact, in the Pepperdine-Barna Study some 59% of pastors said that

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prayer was their first resort when crisis occurred. Also, pastors who prayed first were considered on the lower scale of spiritual risk. The study reveals that 71 percent of pastors engage in spiritual disciplines such as prayer and Bible study every day. The Francis Schaeffer Institute of Church Leadership Development further affirms this research. These researchers found that of 8,150 pastors surveyed 29.64 percent of pastors pray at least 1 hour a day and 26.60 percent spend ½ hour a day in prayer. The authors’ research further corroborates the emphasis on prayer as it relates to renewal. Of those interviewed 93 percent of pastors said they experienced spiritual renewal as a result of disciplines. The author’s research reveals that 73 percent of interviewees had a daily quiet time and all mentioned prayer as a primary activity within this time.

In the scriptures the Apostle Paul anticipates anxieties in the Christian life. He offers the solution of prayer for this difficulty. In his letter to the Philippians he writes, “Do not be anxious about anything, 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 your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Phil 4:6-7) Paul prescribes the cure for anxiety in the form of heart-felt prayer. Paul knew that prayer alleviates anxiety and guards the heart and mind of person by strengthening faith in Jesus Christ. Gordon Fee explains that prayer is activated by “fret and worry” and ends in thanksgiving. He explains the relationship of the response of petitionary prayer to thanksgiving. He writes, in prayer, “…one acknowledges utter dependence on God, while at the same time expressing complete trust in him…Thanksgiving is an explicit acknowledgement of creatureliness and dependence, a recognition that everything

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82 Ibid.
83 Richard J. Krejcir, “Statistics on Pastors” (Pasadena: Francis A. Schaeffer Institute, 2016)
84 Interviews with senior pastors, Dec. 2010, 21-22.
comes as a gift, the verbalization before God of his goodness and generosity.”85 However, descriptions of what prayer can do for believers should not be limited in a few phrases. In The Bible Expositors Commentary, Homer A. Kent, Jr. describes the many-faceted words used to describe the type of prayer that will bring peace to believers. He writes, “Prayer’ denotes the attitude of mind as worshipful. ‘Petition’ denotes prayers as expressions of need. ‘Thanksgiving’ should accompany all Christian praying, as the supplicant knowledge that whatever God sends is for his good. It may also include remembrance of previous blessings. ‘Request’ refers to the things asked for.”86 The example of prayer, as an antidote for stress, is also demonstrated in the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament King David is a great example of a leader who endured great anxiety from enemies outside of Israel and from within his family. One of the ways he dealt with his anxiety is through prayer. In Psalm 28, David cried out to God in his distress. In these verses David addresses God out of desperation. In Psalm 28:1-2 he writes, “To you, O LORD, I call; my rock, be not deaf to me, lest, if you be silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit. Hear the voice of my pleas for mercy, when I cry to you for help, when I lift up my hands toward your most holy sanctuary.” (Psalm 28:1-2) The background of this Psalm is cause for incredible stress for David. The Kings’ Son, Absalom, is rebelling against him and the country is at a point of civil war. In his Commentary on the Psalms, John Phillips explains, “David’s world was falling apart. His own son, his beloved, handsome Absalom, had stolen the hearts of the men of Israel. David’s throne, which had seemed so strong and invincible, had been


snatched from him. The nation turned against him." After pleading his case to God in prayer about his difficulty and anxiety, he understood that God saw him and heard him. David’s disposition changed and was strengthened by God through prayer. Psalm 28:6-7 records David’s response. He says, “Blessed be the LORD! For he has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy. The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped…” David’s powerful encounter with God through prayer restored his confidence and alleviated his anxieties. Prayer, as healing experience with God, had “delivered him from the nightmare of his uncertainty and has become for him the source of strong confidence and firm trust in God.”

Under-shepherds of the flock of God face a similar struggle as David. They feel great angst from pressures within and without. They too can follow the pattern of David and petition God in faith about their stress, while waiting patiently for his reply. In her book Pray Without Ceasing: Revitalizing Pastoral Care; Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger describes the importance of pastors petitioning God for their needs. She writes, “The work of pastor care is rooted in petitionary prayer. Prayer is our daily bread: It not only sustains our efforts to provide care for others; it is also our own basic sustenance...As pastoral caregivers, we cannot give what we do not have, and all that we have depends upon our daily petition to God. Living by faith means living by prayer.” Pastors who pray often can expect to be sustained by God through his Holy Spirit. It is this Spirit that inspired holy men to write the Scriptures. Reading and meditating upon the scriptures is so central to prayer for this reason. In his book, The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives, Dallas Willard writes, “…prayer almost

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89 Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger, Pray without ceasing: Revitalizing Pastoral Care (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, 2006), 99.
always involves other disciplines and spiritual activities if it is to go well, especially study, meditation, and worship, and often solitude and fasting as well. The relationship of prayer and meditation on the Word are difficult to separate spiritually. The Puritan Thomas Manton, describes this inseparability. He writes, “The word feedeth meditation, and meditation feedeth prayer...Meditation must follow hearing and precede prayer...What we take in by the word we digest by meditation and let out by prayer.”

Practical Application for the Discipline of Prayer

It is clear from research that pastors utilize the discipline of prayer to find solace and warmth to face the harmful effects of stress. The content of these prayers is unique and yet pastors who are struggling in ministry can employ certain forms and structures to help them in their despair. There are at least two forms that can be helpful to pastors. First, pastors can utilize the lament Psalm format that David utilized in the Old Testament. In his article, “Learning to Pray as a Shepherd,” Mark McGinness offers help for pastors from this ancient prayer book. The purpose of his article is to “give pastors and Christian leaders a pattern of prayer to follow when they experience various stressful situations in leadership…the individual lament Psalms of David provide Christian leaders pattern to follow in their prayers so they can experience divine concern that David enjoyed.” Examples of lament Psalms and the issues that can be addressed in them are as follows: Psalms 55 (betrayal), Psalm 69 (loneliness), Psalm 13 (frustration). The basic system and pattern established in lament Psalm are vital to grasp. Mark McGinness defines the pattern as follows:


92 Mark McGinness, “Learning to Pray as a Shepherd,” Journal of Ministry and Theology, 10:2 (Fall 2006), 33.
The address is usually the opening verse asking God to hear the one who is complaining and in need. The lament is the explanation of the problem that has cast the psalmist into the depths. The confession of trust is a statement that although the psalmist is presently in the lament (and God has failed to intervene to eliminate the cause of the complaint as of yet), he will still trust God to work for his good. The petition is the psalmist asking God to intervene favorably on his behalf. The assurance of being heard is another statement of trust. The double wish is another petition for God to work. The vow of praise is a promise to praise God once the psalmist has had his burden lifted. The praise of God is a statement of praise once the lament has been dealt with by God and the psalmist is at peace.  

The basic pattern for a Lament Psalm as defined in detail above can be summarized in the following steps as follows: Address, Lament, Confession of Trust, Petition, Assurance of Being Heard, Double Wish, Vow of Praise, Praise of God. A lament Psalm usually arises from the midst of deep distress and results in a pleading for God to act on the Psalmist behalf. W.H. Bellinger explains the nature of these types of Psalms in his book *Psalms: Reading and Studying the Book of Praises*. He writes, “The laments reflect the experience of God’s absence…they reflect fundamental dimensions of human experience: suffering, despair, pain, hopelessness, and anguish.” McGuiness explains that the pastor, who can apply this method of prayer that David applied to his own life, can experience spiritual renewal through praying the lament Psalms. As a pastor prays, he brings his petition and lament before God and he can experience a renewed confidence in God. David is encouraged as he realizes the deep presence of God and the comforting assurance that God is with him, for him, and that he loves him greatly. A good example of personal lament is in Psalm 69; the focus is loneliness. In this Psalm David is dealing with loneliness in leadership and life. Derek Kidner describes David in this Psalm as “…a vulnerable man: who could not shrug off slander, betrayal or self-accusation as a hard or

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A pastor dealing with this same kind of issue can follow the pattern of lament laid out in the Psalms. The scriptural outline and pattern for this particular lament Psalm is as follows:

- Address (v.1a)
- Lament (vv. 1b–4)
- Confession of Trust (vv. 5–12)
- Petition (vv. 13–21)
- Assurance of Being Heard (vv. 3b)
- Double Wish (vv. 22–29)
- Vow of Praise (vv. 30–33)
- Praise of God (vv. 34–36)

In this example from Psalm 69, David is distraught but finds comfort as he cries out to God. The pastor who feels this way can also pray this Psalm like David and be encouraged that God is alive and with him and for him. The prophetic nature of this Psalm has made it the second most quoted Psalm in the New Testament. This picture of human suffering also points readers toward the suffering of the coming Messiah. The movement of the Psalm from lamentation to thanksgiving is a great pattern to follow for anyone suffering. Artur Weiser describes the movement of David from despair to hope through prayer. He writes, “The Psalmist whose mouth had desperate laments (vs. 1-29)…is now able to join the congregation in grateful praise to God (vv. 30-33) and with them is able to be revived once more.” Psalm 69 is an incredible

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97 Ibid., 495.
guide for the discouraged pastor. In it he is encouraged to engage the discipline of prayer for the purpose of spiritual renewal. It is also a reminder that even the most desperate of prayers can be transformed into doxology through the healing power of the Spirit of God working through the Word of God. It is a commentary on how important it is for pastors to praise God for his healing and renewing work in the midst of other believers. Pastors can further apply this by sharing their renewal experiences with other pastors who are struggling with discouragement. Shepherds who need to know that God sees, hears, and can heal a lamenting shepherd.

There are at least 50 Individual Lament Psalms a pastor can read and apply. The chart below is helpful as a reference for any pastor seeking to use this method of praying in the form of an individual lament.

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98 Derek Kidner, *Psalms*, 249.
The Discipline of Scripture Meditation

The second discipline pastors can engage to diminish the effects of burnout is the Discipline of Scripture Reading and Meditation. The discipline of reading the scriptures slowly and reflectively can bring warmth and fullness to a spiritual dry pastor. Thomas Watson explains of the warming effect scripture meditation has upon a person. He writes, “The reason we come away so cold from reading the Word is, because we do not warm ourselves at the fire of meditation.” 99 One of the best definitions of Christian meditation comes from Donald Whitney. He differentiates between eastern meditation, whose purpose is to empty the mind, and that of Christian meditation, whose purpose is to fill the heart with truth and hope. He writes, “…let’s define meditation as deep thinking on the truths and spiritual realities revealed in Scripture for the purpose of understanding, application, and prayer.” 100 The effect of this kind of meditation is a growing friendship with God and a deeper desire to honor him and obey His Words in the midst of trials. In another definition of meditation, Richard Foster, emphasizes the effect meditation can have in hearing God. He writes, “Christian meditation, very simply, is the ability to hear God’s voice and obey his Word…In meditation we are growing into what Thomas Kempis calls ‘a familiar friendship with Jesus.’ We are sinking down into the light and life of Christ.” 101 Meditation is vital for pastors who are struggling to feel the presence of Christ and the warmth of his union during lonely and discouraging times. Pastors experiencing burnout regularly need a reminder of their warm friendship with God through faith in Jesus Christ.

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100 Donald Whitney, Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life, 48.

Deep thinking, alone with God, in scriptures seems to be a regular priority and practice for most pastors. Research reveals that pastors are a group that reflects upon the Word of God in their weekly lives. In the Barna-Pepperdine study, some 71 percent of pastors say they read the scripture regularly.102 The Lifeway Research of 1500 pastors reports that 59 percent of pastors spend time with God seven or more times a week and an additional 10% spend six or more times alone with God.103 The Francis Schaeffer Institute of the Church Leadership Development Study reveals that many pastors spend more than an hour a day on spiritual growth practices such as prayer and Bible study. They conclude, “We see the greater number of prayer time directly impacts the greatest amount of personal satisfaction in ministry and church health.”104 The Pepperdine-Barna study also reveals that pastors who regularly practice the disciplines of prayer and study together are much more likely to be satisfied in their life and ministry. Unfortunately, the converse is also observed. They write, “By contrast, those at high spiritual or burnout risk are less prone to practice every day, and more inclined to do so only a few times a month or less.”105 The fire lit and fanned by spiritual meditation can produce an inner transformation that sparks renewal in pastors. Richard Foster writes, “Meditation is the portable sanctuary into all we are and do…Inward Fellowship of this kind transforms the inner personality. We cannot burn the eternal flame of the inner sanctuary and remain the same, for the Divine Fire will consume


105 Barna Group, 27-29.
everything that is impure.” The result of entering into the discipline of meditation is a reigniting of the heart for Christ in both holiness and ambition.

The Holy-Spirit inspired writers of the Bible knew of the importance of the Scripture meditation. In the Old and New Testament we discover several examples of the term “meditation” as it relates to scripture reading. In the Old Testament there are at least three major passages and two words used for meditation. The first key word for meditation in the Old Testament is the word “hagah”. It is a term which surfaces in Joshua 1:8 and Psalm 1:2. In their book, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Gleason Archer Jr., R. L. Harris, and B.K. Waltke, define the origins of this word. They write, “The basic meaning of *hagah* and its cognates is a low sound, characteristic of the moaning of a dove or the growling of a lion over its prey…Another positive use relates to the meditating upon the Word of God, which…goes on day and night.” The direct application for the passage in Psalms is that the blessed man is one whose “delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.” (Ps 1:2) The verse teaches that there is joy and satisfaction from meditating on God’s Word. It further reveals that it is not to be limited to one day a week, but every day and several times a day. The verse from Joshua 1:8 describes a connection between obtaining success in life and practicing meditation frequently. In a clear word to Joshua, the newly appointed leader of the nation of Israel, God spoke to this relationship between meditation and success in the context of understanding how one is to obey the Lord. God said to him in Joshua 1:8, “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way

prosperous, and then you will have good success.” The success promise is not defined by the world’s standards. Rather, it is to be defined spiritually and according to God’s purpose for his people. Donald Whitney comments:

True success is promised to those who meditate upon God’s Word, who think deeply on Scripture, not just at one time each day, but at moments throughout the day and night. They meditate so much that Scriptures saturates their conversation. The fruit of their meditation is action. They do what they find written in God’s Word and as a result, God prospers their way and grants success to them.108

The pastor who is lacking delight and struggling with defining and achieving success will find the practice of meditation both redirecting and refreshing.

The second word in Hebrew for meditation is siyach. The meaning of this word is similar hagah, but there are differences. In his book God’s Battle Plan for the Mind, David Saxton, writes “siyach means to lovingly rehearse or go over in one’s mind; but, in contrast to hagah, siyach can be either spoken out loud or said silently in one’s heart.”109 In Psalm 119 this word siyach is used at least six times. For example, in this chapter the Psalmist writes that he meditates on the precepts of God (vs. 15, 78), the statutes of God (vs. 23, 48), the works of God (vs. 27), and on the Law of God (vs. 97). Pastors who can echo the Psalmists words in Psalm 119:97, “Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day!” can increase their trust in a loving God and decrease their stress level to find direction and comfort in times of need.

In the New Testament there are at least five different words from several different passages of the Bible that explains the positive impact of meditation on the soul. The first passage is from Philippians 4:8. The Apostle Paul writes, “Finally, brothers, whatever is true,

109 David Saxton, God’s Battle Plan for the Mind: The Puritan Practice of Biblical Meditation (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2015), 26
whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” (Philippians 4:8) The word “think” is the Greek word logizmai. According to Peter T. O’Brien in his book, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, the Greek word means, “to let your mind dwell on these things...to pay close attention, namely virtues that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and admirable.”\(^{110}\) The benefit of dwelling upon the items listed in Philippians 4:8 is an optimistic approach to life and a dispelling of the negative thoughts that so often enter the mind of a minister. The second term is “consider” found in Hebrews 10, 11, and 12. Abraham “considers” God was able to raise up Isaac if he slaughtered him (Hebrews 11:19), believers are to “consider one another to provoke unto love and good works” (Hebrews 10:24-25), and in Hebrews 12:3 believers are to “consider” the sufferings of Christ”. The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* connects the word “consider” to the Greek word katanoeo. It says katanoeo means “to immerse oneself in.”\(^{111}\) It means to understand and apprehend by pondering and scrutinizing. The next term related to meditation in the New Testament is from Colossians 3:2. Paul writes, “Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.” The words “set your affection” is translated as phroneo which means “to keep on giving serious consideration to something—to ponder to let one’s mind dwell on, to keep thinking about, to fix one’s attention on.”\(^{112}\) Phroneo can also be applied more broadly as signaling an inner attitude that evaluates for the purpose of understanding one’s current


“orientation to life” and “designating the focus of one’s attention.” The other two terms related to meditation have to do with pondering (Luke 2:19) and remembering your past in light of God’s sovereign redemption in your life (Rev. 2:5).

**Practical Application for the Discipline of Scripture Meditation**

The integration of scripture meditation and prayer in a practical expression is important for the health of the pastor. The meditative pastor can find guidelines for praying scriptures from great pastors in history. For example, Martin Luther shared some guidelines for praying scripture with his barber Peter Beskendorf in 1535. His counsel can be a helpful guide for pastors today. Tim Keller writes of the preparation Luther gave before entering into prayer. He writes of Luther, “Luther counsels the cultivation of prayer as a habit through regular discipline. He proposes praying twice daily.” In the letter to his barber, Luther instructs his friend to pray through the Ten Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Apostles Creed. For example, when praying through the Ten Commandments Luther shows “how the Ten Commandments can be woven into a garland of four strands of teaching, thanksgiving, confession and petition.” In his letter he lays out 7 petitions from the Lord’s Prayer that can be converted and transformed into a practical prayer for the participant. Luther encouraged the reader to make these petition personal and flexible. He suggested the barber read and pray through each petition paraphrasing and personalizing each one. He instructs, “I do not want you to use all these words in your prayer…I do not bind myself to such words or syllables, but say my prayers in one fashion today, in another tomorrow, depending upon my mood and feeling. I stay, however as nearly as


I can, with the same general thoughts and ideas.”\textsuperscript{116} An example given by Luther is, “Give us this day our daily bread” can be changed to “I commend to thee my house and property, wife and child. Grant that I can manage them well, supporting and educating them.”\textsuperscript{117} The same approach toward scripture meditation can be made toward each of the Ten Commandments, and the Apostles Creed.

The idea of reading scripture and meditating for the renewal of the soul is simpler than one may think. In his book, Praying the Bible, Donald Whitney shares another practical method of interweaving prayer and meditation on scripture. He writes, “To pray the Bible, you simply go through the passage line by line, talking to God about whatever comes to mind as you read the text...just speak to the Lord about everything that occurs to you as you slowly read his word.”\textsuperscript{118} He suggests reading through the Psalms in this way to find ultimate encouragement. One of the benefits of praying the scripture is the felt presence and power of God in the heart of his servants. In her book, Speaking God’s Language: Using the Word of God in Your Prayers, Joni Eareckson Tada writes, “When we bring the God’s word directly into our praying, we are bringing God’s power into our praying...God’s word is living, and so it infuses our prayers with life and vitality. God’s word is also active, injecting energy and power into our prayers.”\textsuperscript{119} When God’s Word is brought directly into praying through meditation, God’s power can fill up and empty pastor and fan the flame of his soul back to health.

\textsuperscript{116} Tim Keller, Prayer, 93.

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{118} Donald Whitney, Praying the Bible (Crossway: Wheaton, 2015), 38.

\textsuperscript{119} Joni Eareckson Tada, Speaking God’s Language: Using the Word of God in your Prayers (Torrance; Rose, 2011), 81-83, Kindle.
One reason praying scripture is so necessary to the prevention of burnout is that Pastors find real answers from God when they read, meditate, and pray. In his book, *Answering God: The Psalms as Tools for Prayer*, Eugene Peterson writes that in the Psalms, “God comes and speaks—his word catches us in sin, finds us in despair, invades us by grace. The Psalms are our answer.”120 The pastor suffering burnout can find help and hope from the utilizing the Psalter as a manual for prayer. In his book, *The Songs of Jesus*, Tim Keller offers a way to read a Psalm in a devotional and meditative method. He views the Psalter as the primary book for deriving a daily prayer life. He writes, “The Psalms…give us a range of divinely inspired voices of different temperaments and experiences. No other book, even of the Bible, can compete with it as basis for daily prayer.”121 He encourages readers to read a Psalm twice and then, in meditation, ask three questions. He categorizes these questions with three words. They are as follows: Adore—What did you learn about God for which you could praise or thank him? Admit: What did you learn about yourself for which you could repent? Aspire—What did you learn about life that you could aspire to, ask for, and act on? He instructs that the answers to these three questions provide a beginning of meditation for a selected Psalm.122 The focus upon the Psalms and the practical methods given by Luther and Keller can help pastors stay warm toward God in the midst of intense burnout. Prayer and meditation are not the only disciplines that bring spiritual renewal. There is another discipline that brings peace and restoration in the form or resting.


The Discipline of Sabbath

The difficulty of Pastors taking a regular Sabbath day is apparent in research. The Lifeway study negatively revealed that 8 out of 10 pastors interviewed felt they had to be on call 24 hours a day. The positive results of the study reveal that at least 85% of pastors have a day of rest at least once a week.\textsuperscript{123} The author’s personal research affirms this with 93% of pastors taking a regular day off for rest and renewal.\textsuperscript{124} One of the premises in Diane Chandlers article, “Pastoral Burnout and the Impact of Personal Spiritual Renewal, Rest-taking, and Support System Practices”, is that rest taking is a primary activity to counter spiritual depletion, emotional and mental fatigue, and the overall reduction of burnout. In the summary of her study she writes, “…Rest taking leading to pastoral renewal has been anecdotally linked to burnout and stress resistance, resiliency, and productivity.”\textsuperscript{125} Pastors, who are trained in the Scriptures, know they are to take a Sabbath, but the weekly demands of ministry make it a difficult for regular application. In their book, Resilient Ministry, Bob Burns, Tasha D. Chapman, and Donald Guthrie write about the complex factors that prevent pastors from taking a regular Sabbath. They explain the pastor often has a hard time explaining his need for a rest day to his congregants. His rhythms are different than their weekly rhythms. This concept is foreign to parishioners who are deficient of a minister’s lifestyle. In addition to this lack of understanding is the belief from some congregants that pastors should be working when congregants are working. The authors conclude that the this kind of attitude from parishioners creates an “…expectations that push pastors toward workaholism…The result is that many pastors never


\textsuperscript{124} Interviews with senior pastors, Dec. 2010, 18-19.

\textsuperscript{125} Diane Chandler, “Pastoral Burnout”, 276.
take a break. This is both disobedient and unwise.” In the Old and New Testament the pattern of Sabbath in relation to the health and growth of God’s covenant people can be observed regularly.

The scriptural mandate for Sabbath is for all believers, including the pastors called to lead the church. The Hebrew word Shabbat, “Sabbath,” is formed from the root shabat, meaning, “to cease,” “to desist,” or “to rest.” In the Old Testament God modeled the Sabbath in the creation week (Genesis 2:2). Later, it was given as one of nine other commands that Moses shared with the children of Israel following their 400 years of working seven days a week. The Sabbath was given as a gift by God and was meant for Israel to regain weekly focus on God and not to become obsessed with the work before them.

The teaching of the Sabbath is further reinforced and transformed by Jesus in the New Testament. In their book, Holman Treasury of Key Bible Words, Eugene Carpenter and Philip Comfort summarize the New Testament application of Sabbath for believers. They write, “For believers today, this is a day of special focus on the Lord Jesus Christ, recognizing and praising God in the church. The true “Sabbath” of God, true rest in and with Him through Christ, is the goal and purpose of every believer. With joy, we strive to enter that rest (Heb. 3:10, 11; Rev. 14:13).”

The weekly Sabbath neglected by pastors will result in a lack of rest, but also can result in forgetfulness that Jesus gives them rest from their works through his great work on the

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126 Bob Burns, Tasha D. Chapman, and Donald C. Guthrie, Resilient Ministry, 54.
129 Ibid.
There are several biblical examples in New Testament Scripture of Sabbath taking practices. The gospels display Jesus as one who honored the Sabbath and often retreated to find rest and renewal in solitude. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus observed the Sabbath and declared it good (1:21). In Mark 2:23-28 Jesus healed on the Sabbath and declared that he was Lord of the Sabbath. In the following chapter of the Gospel of Mark, Jesus encouraged believers to do good works on the Sabbath (3:4). Jesus also demonstrates rest taking and renewal practices of solitude when preparing for ministry or recovering from ministering. Several examples are as follows: Jesus withdrew for 40 days before his ministry on earth began (Matt. 4:1-11); Jesus spent the night alone in preparation for the calling of the disciples (Luke 6:12); He went away by himself after hearing of John the Baptist’s death (Matt. 14:13); following the feeding of the 5,000, he went into the hills to seek solitude (Matt. 14:23); and after a long night of ministry he arose early to go to a secluded place (Mat. 1:35). Pastors should follow the example of Christ. They need a Sabbath to recover from busyness and to prepare for it each week. Richard Foster highlights the importance of solitude as it relates to rest-taking practices and Sabbath as a discipline. He writes, “Loneliness is inner emptiness. Solitude is inner fulfillment…In the midst of noise and confusion we are settled into a deep inner silence. Whether alone or among people, we always carry with us the a portable sanctuary of the heart.” 130 Jesus, as a model, made it a habit and routine of pulling away into solitude for rest and fellowship with his Father in Prayer. Jesus demonstrates ”heart solitude” like no one else in the scriptures. 131

In the book of Acts there are nine occurrences of the word “Sabbath”. For example, it is

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130 Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 97.

131 Ibid.
referred to in relation to religious gatherings and the formation of churches in Antioch (Acts 13:13-52), Philippi (16:11-51); Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9); and Corinth (Acts 18:1-4). The early church practiced Sabbath taking and they grew in great measure. In the future, the final application for Sabbath will come when Jesus returns. Eugene Carpenter explains, “The true “Sabbath” of God, true rest in and with Him through Christ, is the goal and purpose of every believer. With joy, we strive to enter that rest (Heb. 3:10, 11; Rev. 14:13).”

The rest-taking examples of the early church in relation to its incredible growth is assuring for pastors who feel the pressure to work seven days a week. They have the opportunity to be an example for those they lead each week in taking a Sabbath and participating in rest-taking practices for the purpose of renewal.

**Practical Application for the Discipline of Sabbath**

The pastor is limited in spiritual, emotional, and physical energies due to his humanity. Pastors who engage in rest taking practices through Sabbath and in other ways throughout the week should attempt to apply these efforts to every part of their being. Physical rest, though often neglected by church leaders, is essential for pastors. In his book, *Rest: Experiencing God’s Peace in a Restless World*, Siang Yan Tan defines rest as “…time for leisure and sleep, especially in taking a Sabbath day off each week and sleeping at least eight hours a night. It also involves good nutrition, regular exercise and practicing at least one good relaxation technique.”

Tan further explains that emotional rest is closely linked to spiritual rest and provides peace and contentment, while pushing back anxiety, fear, and even depression. However, he explains that

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the greatest emphasis should be placed upon spiritual rest. This kind of rest can be found when a
longing to be rid of fear, guilt, and despair are removed through faith in Jesus. Tan writes,
“God’s rest is available to those of us who believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ and receive his
rest by faith (Heb. 4:2-3). Such spiritual rest from God includes a Sabbath rest (Heb. 4:9) in
which we rest from our own work just as God did from His (Heb. 4:10).”134 This is what F.B.
Meyer called learning the secret of walking in the “Gospel of Rest.”135 It is for this reason that a
pastor who has no spiritual rest will be challenged to find emotional and physical rest.

The pastor who refuses Sabbath and Rest taking practices should remember his limited
humanity in contrast with God’s unlimited divinity. God is inexhaustible in his energies and
faculties and, although he rested from creating the earth on the seventh day, he did not cease
being God for that 24-hour period. Pastors are not God and must obey his command to take a
Sabbath. They should live with awareness that sleep and rest are necessities for maintaining
health. In his book, Zeal Without Burnout, Christopher Ash comments, “God…does not sleep
and he does not take Sabbath rests. But we must. If we neglect this, we are implicitly claiming
an affinity with God and that mortals cannot claim…we are simply foolish to behave as though
we no longer need a day off each week.”136 The tendency of some pastors is to develop what
David Olsen and William Grosch refer to as a “God Complex”. They explain that some pastors
“feel that not only must they please everyone in the congregation, but that they must also satisfy
the high expectations of God. If they had parents who were difficult to satisfy, they may feel that
it is equally difficult to satisfy God, which adds to the pressure they feel. At the same time, the

134 Siang-Yang Tan, Rest, 30-31.
135 F.B. Meyer, The Way Into the Holiest: Expositions of the Epistle to the Hebrews (Christian Literature
Crusade Publication: Fort Washington, 1982), 57.
136 Christopher Ash, Zeal Without Burnout: Seven Keys to a Lifelong Ministry of Sustainable Sacrifice
very difficulty of doing God’s work adds to the sense of grandiosity.” The result of this kind of unhealthy mindset is exhaustion. Pastors do not have the strength or wisdom to please and satisfy all men for the long-term. In his book, Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives by Richard Swenson writes, “No matter how large or small the quantum of emotional energy is at the start of the day, and no matter how fast or slow it is exchanging with the environment, one thing is certain: The amount within us is finite…When our reserves are depleted, they are depleted.” A great example of this depletion is the limits of Jesus in his humanity on earth. Jesus embraced the human limits of his earthly nature. This is especially apparent at the temptations of Christ in Matt. 4. Three times Satan tried to get Jesus to break from his human limitations. Pastor Peter Scazzero explains that Jesus lived within his human limitations during the temptations by not turning the rocks to bread, not jumping from the temple, and not bypassing his coming suffering. Scazerro comments that Jesus also embraced his limits by not healing every sick person, not going to every city in Palestine, or not calling more than twelve to be his special disciples. Scazzero applies these limits to his life as a pastor. He writes, “I did not understand the powerful principle of limits as a gift from the hand of God. My lack of understanding how boundaries and limits applied to serving Christ almost caused me to leave the pastorate.” The Pastor needs to implement regular practices of rest while embracing his limitations. Tan defines rest and explains the effects of such practices. He writes that rest produces, “…a state of peace, contentment, serenity, refreshment, stillness, tranquility, or

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138 Richard Swenson, 81.
139 Peter Scazzero, Emotionally Healthy Church, 147.
calm.” Every pastor needs this kind of rest and it will take no shortage of intention and creativity to implement such practices.

One of the most basic forms of rest a pastor can implement is to simply take a day off once a week. Of course, there are other ways to find Sabbath rest within a given day or month. Pastors have an unusual weekly schedule and must consider their day off as unique from those they lead. The pastor is not excluded from God’s command in Exodus 20:9-10. It says, “Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work.” David Murray reminds pastors who object to this day of rest that there is not an asterisk next to God’s pattern of rest that excludes them of taking a Sabbath. He writes, “No, this is a divine command for all, not an optional suggestion for some. God designed this pattern of six days of work and one day of rest for perfect people in a perfect world.” Pastors cannot afford to refuse a regular day off in the form of Sabbath rest. Another Pastor and Author, J.R. Briggs summarizes how burnout relates to a lack of regular Sabbath. In his book, *Fail: Finding Hope and Grace in the Midst of Ministry Failure*, he writes, “I have yet to meet a burned-out pastor who practiced Sabbath religiously.”

In his book, *The Living Church*, John Stott suggests a creative means of Sabbath by encouraging pastor to schedule a quiet day every month. He wrote, “…every pastor should take a quiet day once a month, to go away from church and parish, to allow God to draw him up into his heart and mind, to look at things from the divine perspective, to focus on the important and to

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adjust his priorities.”  The practice of solitude and silence for Stott was so refreshing that he later writes, “All I can say is that this little prudential arrangement saved my life and my ministry. The burden of responsibility was lifted.”  The pastor can seek rest once a month, but he should also have other restful rhythms built into his week, month, and year for rest-taking purposes. In his book *Divine Merger: What Happens When Jesus Collides with Your Community*, Mark E. Strong writes about a strategy of Sabbath practices implemented by Pastor Rick Warren. Warren suggests those looking for balance in Sabbath and rest-taking practices should Divert Daily Time for Rest, Withdrawal Weekly for Renewal, and Abandon Annually for Refreshing. The daily time is fulfilled when one takes a break from the everyday grind of life to focus attention on something life giving. The withdrawal weekly is the taking of a weekly Sabbath for rest. The abandon annually means leaving for more than a moment in the day and more than a weekly Sabbath for personal renewal and finding refreshment for a longer term.  David Murray refers to these kinds of slowing practices as speed bumps. These speed bumps are meant to slow down the pastor for the purpose of quieting his mind and heart before a life-giving God. He categorizes these speed bumps as daily, weekly, quarterly, annual, and seasonal bumps. Each of these bumps includes practical tasks that can reduce noise, slow a pastor down, and strengthen his soul. For example, when creating daily bumps Murray offers five daily speed bumps to control the deluge of media that distracts and erodes a pastor’s energies. The five practical steps he suggests are as follows: Muting the phone and computer notifications; Checking messages 4-6 times a day; Placing the phone down at home in a certain spot so as to

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144 Ibid.


146 David Murray, *Reset*, 91.
not carry throughout the house; Charging the phone in a separate place from where you sleep: and fasting from media on Sundays. The bumps of daily, weekly, quarterly, and annually follow suit in this same practical approach for other speed bumps.

Finding balance through spiritual disciplines will not come through individual effort alone. The inclusion of intimate relationships to help support and motivate the pastor to fulfill his role as a husband, father, and pastor are essential. The fruit of the disciplines is nurtured best through vibrant and life-giving relationships that are built upon the cultivation of intimacy. If the pastor is to prevent burnout, he must not attempt it alone. In the following chapter, several key relationships a pastor should have in his life will be addressed. The author will demonstrate the necessity of each of these relationships and how to grow them so as to prevent burnout and negative stress from overwhelming his call.

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147 David Murray, Reset, 94.
Chapter Three
Key Principle Two: Develop Intimate Relationships

Pastors need intimacy in their most important relationships in order to prevent burnout. *The Dictionary of Pastoral Care* assigns the origin of the term “intimate” as derived from the Latin word *intimus*. They define this term as "designating the person or thing that is innermost, most familiar, or internal. In a relationship, it marks one most closely associated or acquainted."\(^{148}\) Intimacy with another does not mean full understanding or agreement between the two on every issue. It does imply an in-depth knowledge of another's strengths and weaknesses. The person in an intimate relationship knows the private aspects of another's life. Pastors need to nurture a vertical intimacy with God first, while, secondarily, focusing on developing their horizontal closeness with others. There are at least three primary horizontal intimate connections a pastor can establish to maintain health. They are relationships with family and spouse, friends, and pastoral peers. Wilson and Hoffman explain, “All of us have the same need for intimate connections with others. Ministers are not different in terms of their need for real relationships, especially their need for both mentors and friends.”\(^{149}\) However, this kind of self-disclosure can be difficult for many pastors. Peter Hartley addresses the difficulty and need for pastors to self-disclose in his book, *A Pastors Guide to Interpersonal Communication*. He defines self-disclosure as, “The Process of deliberately revealing information about oneself that is significant and that would not normally be known by others.”\(^{150}\) He describes the level of


communication between pastors and other meaningful relationships involving effective self-disclosure. The conversation of intimate self-disclosure should follow a path from beginning to end. The goal of self-disclosure is movement to a more intimate communication. Neff calls this “Peak Communication” and describes it as the sharing of one’s inmost secrets and is reserved for relationships built on intimacy. Neff utilizes a Self-disclosure Window that is an adaptation of Joseph Luft’s and Harrington Ingham’s Johari Window. Neff explains: “The Johari Window is a four-paned window formed by the intersection of information an individual knows about the self with the information known by other person’s in the relationship.”¹⁵¹ In the first pane, upper left, is information the pastor and the congregation knows to be true about the pastor. In the second pane, the upper right quadrant is the information known to the congregation about the pastor, but unknown to the pastor. The third pane, the bottom left quadrant, is an area of information that is known to the pastor, but not known by the congregation. The final quadrant, the bottom right, is information that is unknown to the pastor and the congregation. The pastor would do well to understand what information is available in each quadrant. Neff summarizes, “The four panes in the self-disclosure window are interdependent. As one pane grows through self-realization and/or self-disclosure, another necessarily shrinks. Further, the window is unique to each individual relationship and even to particular topics within a given relationship.”¹⁵² Self-disclosure is essential to maintaining intimacy, but it is challenging for many pastors.

Pastors often struggle, like all persons, to maintain intimacy with others due to persistent stress. The effect of emotional exhaustion from burnout can leave them feeling both broken and isolated in their relationships. Crossway Publishing research of 6,000 people reveals that 23% of

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¹⁵² Ibid., 48
men and 28% of women ascribe broken relationships as a direct result of burnout.\textsuperscript{153} Likewise, in a recent Lifeway Survey, 45% of pastors indicated they feel isolated as a pastor.\textsuperscript{154} The author's research reveals that 60% of pastors struggle with loneliness.\textsuperscript{155} Some of the reasons pastors gave for feeling lonely was the incredible busyness of their lives. Many also thought that they could not trust another with their issues dealing with family and ministry. The problem of pastors and intimacy is real, but the biblical instruction and examples and practical solutions can give leaders hope.

The Bible addresses intimacy in several ways. The primary example is of Jesus and the Father in the gospels. For example, after 70 disciples returned from a short-term mission assignment, Jesus reveals his special intimate relationship with the Father in Matt. 11:27. In the greater context, Jesus prepares his disciples for an invitation to intimacy with his Father. In verse 27 of chapter 11 Jesus said, “All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.” Jesus wants the disciples to know that there is knowledge of God that cannot be known or understood apart from intimacy with the Son of God. In \textit{The Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew}, William Hendrickson offers two intimate facts the Father knows about all humanity. First, he has what the sinner needs. Jesus is the appointed mediating Spirit-filled Son of God. Hendrickson writes,

\begin{quote}
In the heart of the Mediator there is peace (John 14:27; 20:21, 26) light, life, love (John 1:4, 17, 26), and joy (John 15:11; 16:24; 17:23) All these spiritual qualities and many more have be entrusted to Jesus by the Father in order that from him as
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{154} Lisa Cannon Green “Research Finds Few Pastors Give Up On Ministry” (Lifeway Research, accessed January 14, 2016), 34.

\textsuperscript{155} Interviews with Senior Pastors, Dec. 2016, 28.
the Fountain they might flow out to others…It has become clear, therefore, that the Mediator has whatever is needed to render a human being truly blessed.\textsuperscript{156}

Second, God knows what the sinner needs. Intimacy with the Father is offered to through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The result for believers is an invitation to replenishment. God alone knows the depth of the needs (Jer. 17:9; Heb. 4:13) of men, including pastors. The Son has what it takes from the Father to help the sinner. In Matt. 11:28-30 Jesus offers his help to the disciples. Jesus says, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 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. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” The purpose of Jesus’ revelation and mediation of the Father’s love and purpose to redeem sinners is to remove their burden of sin and from living in a broken world. D.A. Carson writes, “The Son reveals the Father, not to gratify learned curiosity or to reinforce the self-sufficiency of the arrogant, but to bring “the little children” (vs. 25) to know the Father (vs. 27), to introduce the weary to eschatological rest (vs. 2.)…So Jesus can save his people from their sins (1:21).”\textsuperscript{157} The heavy yoke that pastors feel can be left with Jesus. It is only through this kind of intimacy that abiding rest for the soul is made possible.

Another gospel writer reveals the inseparability of Jesus’ intimacy with the Father. John writes of the shared knowledge of the Father with his Son (John 5:20), the oneness of the Father with the Son (John 10:30, 38), and the unified message of the Father speaking through the Son (14:10-11). Jesus desired this same type of unity to be shared with the disciples that followed him. In John 17:21 he says, “that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in


you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” Jesus desperately wanted his disciples to experience this kind of intimacy with the Father. He described it as knowing God. In John 17:3 he explains, “And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” The kind of knowledge he refers to is informational, relational, and experiential. In *The Dictionary of Bible Themes*, Martin H. Manser writes, “To ‘know’ speaks of close personal relationship rather than theoretical or academic knowledge.” The strength, healing, and peace gained from intimacy with God is transferrable to others too. This type of knowing God can be applied to many different relationships in a pastor's life, especially that of a spouse, friends, and other pastors.

**Developing Intimacy with a Spouse**

The intimacy shared with the Father and Jesus is accessible for all people through faith in Christ. It is this kind of intimacy that makes possible and fuels the intimacy between a pastor and his wife. In the scriptures, God created marriage a means to intimacy between two souls. God is ultimately the one who is the source of unity in any human relationship. In Genesis 2:22-25 God says man and women will become "one flesh" when they are given to one another in sacred marriage. Later, in the New Testament, the Apostle Paul reinforced this teaching from Genesis. In Ephesians 5:28-31 he writes, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” The oneness both the writer of Genesis and Ephesians record under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is a description of the intimacy created when marriage occurs. The unity and intimacy described in both passages are important for the Pastors and Spouse to understand. In *The Pastors Family*, Daniel L. Langford writes of the

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unique expression of intimacy and unity in pastor marriages. He writes, "Although the man and woman in a healthy marriage retain individual identities, neither functions alone: two have become one. Since the pastor and his mate are one flesh, they, as a totality, are the pastoral ministry of the church."\textsuperscript{159} The pastor and his wife can view each other as connected in their inmost parts and should protect against those who try to disconnect that intimacy.

The strength necessary does not come solely from each other, but a solid relationship and orientation to God. Wilson and Huffman emphasize this progressive connection. They write, "Intimacy with a spouse is best realized when we have a solid intimate relationship with God…Without our intimate relationship with God, we lack the power to love unconditionally…For the married minister, the biblical priorities in relationships are intimacy with God first, followed by marital intimacy…"\textsuperscript{160} Genesis 2:18 supports this notion, “Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit (suitable) for him.” The word "fit" translates as "suitable." Victor Hamilton explains the importance of this word as it relates to intimacy. He writes, “The Hebrew word for “suitable” suggests something that completes a polarity, as the North Pole is “suitable” to the South Pole. One without the other is incomplete.”\textsuperscript{161} Thus, the man and the woman in marriage need each other to complete their God-given tasks. The New Testament reinforces this truth that people need people nearby, especially during difficult times. Galatians 6:2 says, “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."\textsuperscript{162} The burden bearing between a pastor and his wife conveys the idea of helping another carry a heavy weight. In \textit{The New American Commentary}
on Galatians Timothy George further explains. He writes, “The word burden (baros) means literally “a heavy weight or stone someone is required to carry for a long distance. Figuratively, it can mean any oppressive or hardship was difficult to bear…” This burden-bearing concept is particularly needed of a Pastors Spouse relationship. They each must support one another as the weights of personal, family, work and church life grow as heavy weights. Wilson and Huffman write, "Intimacy with a spouse is best realized when we have a solid intimate relationship with God…Without our intimate relationship with God, we lack the power to love unconditionally…For the married minister, the biblical priorities in relationships are intimacy with God first, followed by marital intimacy…”

The pursuit of intimacy is not without challenges for pastors and their spouse. Lifeway research surveyed 722 American Pastor spouses. Their findings reveal positive and negative results. For example, 69% of pastor spouses feel they have few people to confide in about essential matters and 51% say they have experienced personal attacks from church members. Also, 46% said that it is difficult to establish times for marital relationships without interruptions from the church. Likewise, some 48% said that it is difficult to create times for marital intimacy because of the church schedule of events. Conversely, the survey also reveals that 80% of pastors' spouses are extremely or very satisfied in their marriage. Furthermore, 77% indicate they spend quality time alone with their spouse on a date night at least once a month. The Barna-Pepperdine Study also reveals that 70% of pastors indicate their marriage is excellent

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164 Wilson and Huffman, *Preventing Ministry Failure*, 49.


166 Ibid. 16
condition. However, the negative result is that some 26% reveal they have had significant marital problems. These surveys about clergy marriages reveal that intimacy is possible, but is a challenge for pastor marriages. However, many are willing to embrace the tension for the sake of a healthy marriage. The depth of intimacy is many layered for pastors and wives and understanding these levels can create a more in-depth and better quality relationship.

**Practical Application for Intimacy with Spouse**

Intimacy should not be limited in its application to the category of sex for the minister and his wife. Wilson and Huffman discuss at least five practical ways intimacy can be expressed on different layers of the person. First, spiritual intimacy must be considered. This is created and sustained by showing selfless love to one another. It can be practically demonstrated by praying together, worshipping together, or reading and openly discussing spiritual matters. The second aspect is emotional intimacy. This kind of intimacy increases, as the couple is able to be honest about positive and negative feelings. The more significant their vulnerability with one another the more their intimacy will grow. Third, intellectual intimacy is similar to the first two, but except for the looking ahead to planning for the future aspect. It further includes challenging one another through stimulating discussions about mutual interest. The fourth expression of intimacy given is social. This includes engaging other people with your marriage. The phrase can be applied to fellowship or service to the community or church. Finally, there is the most commonly thought of form of intimacy. Physical intimacy as expressed both sexually and non-sexual touch. The authors write it includes, “Neurotic hugs and kisses, gentle love pats, and back

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or foot massages after a long workday. It is more than just sexual intercourse."¹⁶⁸ A healthy pastoral couple can seek to apply a balance to these expressions over a lifetime in the context of friendship.

The friendship a married couple is to pursue, including a pastor and his wife, should focus on intimacy. However, one of the best ways to seek intimacy is to cultivate a deep friendship with a spouse. Tim Keller explains that Christian couples can have the best friendships because they are pursuing a shared vision of discovering and helping each other grow in their faith. In fact, he believes that the mission of marriage is developing a Christ-centered friendship. He writes, "Friendship is a deep oneness that develops as two people, speaking the truth in love to each other, journey together to the same horizon. Spiritual friendship is the greatest journey of all because the horizon is so high and far—it is nothing less than "the day of Jesus Christ" and what we will be like when we finally see him face-to-face."¹⁶⁹ In his book, *Sacred Companions: The Gift of Spiritual Friendship and Directions*, David G. Benner writes about the importance of a married couple nurturing a soul friendship. A couple seeking this high ideal of spiritual friendship should understand that it is difficult and hard to achieve. Benner suggests that a pastor and spouse seeking to have this kind of relationship must work the ground of the relationship in three ways. First, they must cultivate an environment of respect. It is not uncommon for people to affirm their love while offering little respect to their partner. The kind of respect offered mutually is the affirmation of boundaries and individualities of the other. He writes, “Even the terms “my husband” or “my wife” carries potentially dangerous connotations of possessions. Our husbands and wives are not our possessions. Nor are they extensions of us.


My wife is separate from me. And until that fact is firmly secure in my consciousness, I can never proceed to enjoy the fruits of a genuine friendship.”

The second aspect of cultivating a "soul friendship" to deepen intimacy is an absence of control. Soul Friendship calls for the surrender of one spouse’s agenda to change the other spouse. The role of the spouse should not take on the role of the Holy Spirit in this way. The abandonment of possession of the other is also a part of the absence of control. Possession mindsets can lead to a selfish agenda and the violation of the spouse’s free will to respond right to God and their spouse. Benner writes, “Genuine spiritual friendships wither under conditions of coercion and manipulation. They flourish under conditions of abandonment of such control.”

The final aspect given is dialogue. Communication in marriage is paramount to intimacy. The main feature of this talk is active listening. The couple must value this kind of conversation. The real fruit of such dialogue is a growing intimacy. Couples who practice this type of communication feel valued and want to know the other person more deeply. Benner concludes, "...soul friends talk with and listen to each other simply because they enjoy the other person's presence." Intimacy cultivated by the husband and wife in context of deep friendship is primary for pastors seeking a healthy and long-lasting marriage and ministry. However, intimacy must also be expressed in other friendships.

Developing Intimacy with Friends

The authors’ research reveals that 67% of the pastors interviewed had at least five close friends. Also, 87% of Pastors said these friendships provide support to them in the ministry. Most mention their wife and a few trusted men inside and outside of the church as friends. The


171 Benner, Sacred Companions, 1877-1879, Kindle.

172 Ibid.
research also points to some areas of improvement among pastors. Personal research interview summaries indicate that 60% of pastors said they struggle with constant loneliness.\textsuperscript{173} The Barna-Pepperdine study supports this understanding of pastors and their friendships. They found that 34% of pastors express a high level of satisfaction in their friendships. The concern is that 56% did not express that kind of high level of satisfaction in their friendships. Also, 14% of pastors report feeling frequent loneliness, and 38% indicate feeling lonely sometimes. The conclusion reached by Barna research is a connection between high friendship satisfaction and low burnout risk. They write, "The correlation between higher friendship satisfaction and lower overall risk make a compelling case for the necessity of genuine friendship among pastors."\textsuperscript{174}

The definition of friendship is deep and many-sided. Aristotle devoted time to developing and defining the importance of friendship. In his view, friendship was a “mutual liking by mutual well-wishing and well doing out of concern for another.” In other words, friends care for the good of each other. The advantage of friendship to Aristotle was the revealing of what he called “another self.”\textsuperscript{175} C.S. Lewis affirms the relationship of “another self” in friendship in his book, \textit{The Four Loves}. Lewis writes, “In each of my friends there is something that only some other friend can fully bring out. By myself I am not large enough to call the whole man into activity; I want other lights than my own to show all his facets.”\textsuperscript{176} In this way, a friend is a powerful reflection of a true self. Christy Moore explains this effect when she writes, “Having a friend provides the objectivity necessary for self-reflection. Therefore, the

\textsuperscript{173} Interviews with a senior pastors, Dec. 2016, 25.

\textsuperscript{174} Barna Group, \textit{The State of Pastors}, 40.


context of friendship provides the ability for humans to express care and concern for one another and to gain a greater self-awareness by providing a mirror to the self.”

Aristotle defined friendship according to three measures. He listed three kinds of association among friends, while emphasizes the last. First, there is the kind of friendship based on utility. In these friendships, friends depend on each other for a service. The elderly and care providers are a primary example of these types of friendships. Utility is often impersonal and the least intimate of the other two. The second type is that of friendship based on pleasure. It can be the pleasure of another’s company or that of eroticism. Overall, it is an emotion-based flighty kind of friendship. Brevity is a mark of this kind of friendship. The final and most important type of friendships is based on virtue. In his dissertation, "Aristotle on Friendship, Justice, and Human Good", John Andrew Houston explains and defines virtue in the context of friendship. He writes, "Virtue is a more enduring object of love than pleasure or utility because it constitutes a stable disposition that is neither acquired nor lost in a single action or a single day. Friends whose love is grounded in virtue and directed toward virtue love one another for their virtue, for their own sake, and not incidentally." This third kind of friendship is best modeled for us in the Scriptures and is applied through living Christ-like among brothers and sisters of the faith.

The fountainhead of virtue, as seen in biblical friendship, is the intimate bond of the holy Trinity (Genesis 1:26). In his book, The Company We Keep: In Search of Biblical Friendship, Jonathan Holmes comments on the origins of this ancient community. He writes, “Indeed, the eternal Trinity is the most fundamental expression of community and relationship. Therefore, one of the simplest yet most profound aspects of mankind made in God’s image is that we were

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God decided to create Eve for Adam, adding to the community of humanity. Adam, unlike the Triune God that made him, was not satisfied with his paradise without a helpmate. God satisfied this ache when he constructed Eve from Adam (Genesis 2). Not long after this human community was established, it fell from grace to a sinful state (Gen. 3:1-14). Sin severed the perfect fellowship of God with mankind (Gen. 3:10-12). It also severed man's friendship with each other. Sin alienates us from God and each other (Col. 1:21) and is a roadblock to virtue-oriented friendship. As a result of their sin, God gave consequences and hope (Gen. 3:15). God’s plan of salvation through Jesus Christ was audibly put into motion to restore humanity (John 3:16). These vertical and horizontal relationships can be mended partially, but there will not be a full mending until heaven. Holmes comments, "Throughout our lives, our sin nature continues to press us toward relational isolation, separation, and alienation from God, as well as from one another. Thus, our ongoing vertical problem (with God) leads to two horizontal problems (with others), problems that are motivational and missional." Any definition of biblical friendship must take into account the example of the Trinity and the salvation history of all men. Holmes provides an excellent definition of Biblical Friendship. He writes:

Biblical friendship exists when two or more people, bound together by a common faith in Jesus Christ, pursue him and his kingdom with intentionality and vulnerability. Rather than serving as an end in itself, biblical friendship serves primarily to bring glory to Christ, who brought us into friendship with the Father. It is indispensable to the work of the gospel in the earth, and an essential element of what God created us for. I hope you find that both inspiring and at least a little bit intimidating.

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The shared vision of biblical friendship is Christ-centered, and others minded. Biblical Friendship is necessary for completing the mission of the church and for the sanctification of the Pastor. Every pastor should seek to become this kind of friend and make these types of life-giving friendships. The Scriptures are full of these kinds of relationships in both the Old and New Testament

**Friendship in the Old Testament**

In the Old Testament, like Aristotle’s three kinds of friendship, there are at least three significant word meanings of friendship that come from three Hebrew root word. In *The Holman Bible Illustrated Bible*, William J. Ireland Jr. clarifies the distinction. He writes, “R’ḥ denotes an associate or companion, while ṣḥb connotes the object of one's affection or devotion—a friend. Consequently, friendship may be a simple association (Gen. 38:12; 2 Sam. 15:37) or loving companionship.¹⁸² These words are not limited to human relationships in Scriptures but can be observed in God’s relationship to mankind. Raymond C. Ortlund Jr. explains and summarizes where friendship originates and how it came to be accessible to humanity. In *The Commentary on Proverbs: Wisdom that Works*, he writes, "God is our friend through Christ. In fact, the first friendship began with God. It's who God is—Father, Son, and Spirit in eternal, powerful interactions of love. The heart of God is friendship reaching out… friendship began in heaven, not on earth, and is coming down to earth through the gospel today.”¹⁸³ Two specific examples are of God reaching out to humanity as he did with Abraham and Moses. In Exodus 33:11 God spoke with Moses face-to-face as a friend. This happening of God face-to-face with Moses implies “contact, communion, and a sharing of confidences, resulting in a melding together of

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minds goals, and direction.”

There is a natural uplifting that comes from such an encounter with God as a friend. Several times Abraham, as the first of God's covenant people, was referred to as the "friend of God" (II Chron. 20:7, Isaiah 41:8, James 2:23). To live as the friend of God is a great privilege, but it does not mean it is easy. In his book, *As Kingfishers Catch Fire*, Eugene Peterson explains the importance of Abraham’s friendly relationship with God. He writes, "Abraham was not called the friend of God because he was singled out for a special benevolent attention by God, a kind of teacher's pet. He was called the friend of God because he experienced God accurately and truly. He lived as God's friend. He responded to God's friend. He believed God was on his side, and he lived like it." The perfect touch of God on Abraham and the image of Abraham’s imperfect loving obedience to God are affirming for pastors seeking such friendship with God.

Other Old Testament examples of healthy friendships are found in the many times the word occurs in the Book of Proverbs. Proverbs 27:9 is a great summary of friendship in this book of wisdom. It says, “Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: So doth the sweetness of a man’s friend by hearty counsel (KJV).” William Ireland explains the prominence of warm friendship in Proverbs. He writes, “Proverbs features the most references to friendship, nearly all of them cautioning against dubious friendships or extolling the virtues of a true friend. (14:20; 17:17–18; 18:24; 19:4, 6; 22:11, 24; 27:6, 10, 14)"

Another Hebrew term used to describe a companion friend is *allup*. The word is used in Proverbs 2:17; 16:28; and in 17:9 in situations where intense betrayal and estrangement are

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186 Eugene Peterson, *As Kingfishers Catch Fire*, 16-17.
present. Derek Kidner instructs that this is the reason why “the closest friendships need guarding”\textsuperscript{187} Both David and Jesus experienced this kind of betrayal and estrangement of close friends. A pastor should not think he is immune to such happenings in his life and ministry. In his \textit{Commentary on Proverbs}, Derek Kidner shares four qualities of friendship that emerge from the Proverbs. Pastors should strive to find these in their friendship with others. The first is that of constancy. A true friend is one that loves all the time (Proverbs 17:17) and not one that is only around when you are going through good times (Proverbs 14:20). A true friend is one who sticks closer than a brother (Proverbs 18:24). A spiritual friend will not only be there, but they will help you shoulder the burdens (Gal. 6:1) especially in difficult circumstances (I Thess. 5:11, 14-15). The second quality is candor. Proverbs 27:5-6 says, “Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.” It should be understood that this quality is rarely appreciated in the moment of confrontation.\textsuperscript{188} Tim Keller comments, “Like a surgeon, friends cut you in order to heal you. Friends become wiser together through a healthy class of viewpoints (Prov. 27:17)\textsuperscript{189} Pastors need this kind of constant friendship that cuts to heal and restore. The third quality is counsel. The guidance is given in love and for reassuring or bracing another for better work. One way this can be accomplished is through accountability as expressed in confessing sins and personal struggles (James 5:16) to one another. A true friend may have to confront another that is in sin or entangled with the cares of the world (Gal. 6:1). The final quality given by Kidner is that of tact. This is an expression of respect for another's feelings and thoughts. Kidner writes, "The examples in Proverbs (of tact)


\textsuperscript{188}Derek Kidner, \textit{Proverbs}, 42.

\textsuperscript{189}Tim Keller, \textit{The Meaning of Marriage}, 112.
are of all-too-familiar lapses: outstaying one's welcome (or forcing one's friendship on a person) as in Proverbs 27:14, being hearty at the wrong time, when it is unwelcome (Prov. 27:14)…and not knowing when a joke has gone enough (Proverbs 26:18,19).\(^{190}\) The book of Proverbs also reminds us that human relationships will always fall short of meeting our spiritual and emotional needs. Proverbs 18:24 says, “There is a friend that sticks closer than a brother.” The friend implicitly referred to is Jesus Christ. He is the "superfriend" who offers companionship and when feeling alone. The apostle Paul felt this same way in II Tim 4:17. All abandoned him when he was on trial before Caesar. Paul demonstrated great faith when, in reply, he said, "The Lord stood by me and strengthened me." Pastors need this kind of friendship with God in the midst of the constant strain of ministry. In his book *True Friendship*, Vaughan Roberts concludes, “Only Christ can meet our deepest longings, as he is the greatest friend of all. He is the closest of all friends, who does indeed stick closer than a brother. By his Holy Spirit, he is always with us, wherever we are and whatever we are experiencing.”\(^{191}\) However, God also blesses us with lesser, but much needed earthly friendship. Even though friendship originates in God, it is evidenced powerfully in the lives of godly men and women of the scriptures.

One of the greatest examples of biblical covenant friendships in the Old Testament is that of David and Jonathon. The relationship of these two young men began in I Samuel 18:1. When David finished meeting with King Saul, It says, “…he met Jonathan, the king’s son. There was an immediate bond between them, for Jonathan loved David (NLT).” David's many exploits and military victories, not to mention his defeat of Goliath (I Sam 17:50-54), won respect and admiration of Jonathon. Saul promised his daughter to the champion David, and Jonathon and

\(^{190}\) Derek Kidner, *Proverbs*, 42.

David became friends. In *The Tyndale Old Testament Commentary on I & II Timothy*, Joyce Baldwin writes, “Jonathon, the crown prince, recognized David a kindred spirit, and struck up a deep friendship with him…” Their relationship grew, and they helped each other stay faithful to God through difficult circumstances. Their friendship was so strong that they built upon it a covenant of friendship in I Samuel 20. In this chapter, the two made a formal agreement between them and their offspring to come. Jonathon says, “Go in peace, for we have sworn loyalty to each other in the LORD's name. The LORD is the witness to a bond between us and our children forever” (I Samuel 20:42 NLT). David Benner comments on this covenant friendship. He writes, “[David]…recognized that the love he shared with Jonathan—each each loving the other as himself was a unique gift of wonder. As the story of that love unfolds, we see it expressed in acts of loyalty, enormous risk-taking, tender devotion and, ultimately, a covenant of eternal friendship sworn in the name of the Lord and binding on their descendants for all time (I Samuel 20:42).” An example of how this friendship covenant is tested comes shortly after this oath swearing. In I Samuel 23 Saul pursues David to take his life and David is downcast and in need of a friend. Verse 16 captures the expression of their covenant friendship. It says, “Jonathan went to find David and encouraged him to stay strong in his faith in God (I Sam. 23:16 NLT).” David’s faith was strengthened and his resolve hardened again because of this important covenant friendship. Baldwin writes, “It was not only the warmth of human friendship that strengthened David, much more Jonathon’s certainty as to God’s purpose for the future.”

Fourteen chapters later the friendship temporarily ended when Jonathon was killed in battle.

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193 David G. Benner, *Sacred Companions*, 567-569, Kindle

David's response to the death of his friend teaches us much about the nature of endearing covenant friendship. In II Samuel 1:26 David says, “I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant have you been to me; your love to me was extraordinary, surpassing the love of women.” The personal lament of David for Jonathon reflects the intimacy by which the two men were connected through their mutual commitment to one another. In *The New American Commentary on I and II Samuel*, Robert D. Bergen, concludes, "For David, Jonathon was a peer, friend, and confident that no wife could ever have been in that society; and his untimely death left a gaping hole in David's soul." The David and Jonathon friendship teaches pastors to invest deeply in committed covenant-style relationships with another. The friendships of these men are a reminder that strong relationships can strengthen another when burnout is near and discouragement is threatening to overwhelm a soul. These kinds of friendships are not limited to the Old Testament. There are many examples in the New Testament of life-preserving friendships that pastors can emulate in their personal relationships.

**Friendship in the New Testament**

In the New Testament Jesus calls people to a kind of friendship that is possible because of his sacrificial death and glorious resurrection, which enables a holy union with the Father and Spirit. The main word for “friend” in the New Testament is *philos*. There are many ways this word is used to explain the importance of friendship further. Jesus is a friend to sinners Matthew 11:19. Later in both Luke and John he explicitly taught that his disciples were to consider themselves his friends (Luke 12:4; John 15:13-15). In John 15:13-15 Jesus says, “Greater love

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has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.” These verses remind us that Jesus expressed his love for the disciples as his friends by selflessly dying for them on the cross. D.A. Carson explains the significance of Jesus dying for his friends. He writes, “Although there is a sense in which Jesus gives his life for the world (1:29, 34; 3:16) there is another in which he dies for his friends.”197 The question arises, who can consider himself or herself a friend of Jesus? Jesus qualifies this when he says; "You are my friends if you do what I command" (John 15:14). Carson clarifies that the obedience spoken of is not what "makes them friends; it is what characterizes it." The change from slave to a friend for the obeying disciple is significant. In The New American Commentary: John 12-21, Gerald L. Borchert explains, “The point of the passage in the bull’s eye is that servants/slaves are not expected to understand God’s will, but disciples are not regarded as mere slaves. They are being offered and understanding that comes from a different relationship—the relationship based on knowing and accepting the divine purpose in the coming of Jesus.”198 One of the ways we know Jesus is our friend is because he says in John 15:15, “…for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.” In this phrase, Jesus shares a life-giving message with us about the Father. F.F. Bruce writes of the significance of these verses for those considered friends of Jesus in the New Testament. He writes, “To his friends, then, Jesus has disclosed all that he himself has learned from the Father. True, there is much that they are not yet able to grasp (John 16:12), but the limitation lies with their capacity for comprehension, not

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Jesus exemplified this idea of friendship in the New Testament implicitly with two sets of three disciples. First, he maintained a close friendship with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus most of his earthly ministry (John 11). Jesus loved Mary and Martha and Lazarus profoundly as his friends (John 11:5). He was moved to tears when Lazarus died, and the sisters were angry with him because he did not come sooner (John 11:32-35). The miracle performed was not only because of his deep loving-friendship with them, but it was also to glorify the Father in heaven. The response of Jesus to Lazarus teaches us much about his love for his friend. Gary Burge explains, “One unique feature of this story is the way in which Jesus expresses his emotions over Lazarus's death (vv. 33, 35, 38; cf. Luke 19:41). He does not approach suffering and death dispassionately. Jesus feels the pain of his friends. He knows tragedy and has human feelings. In this case, these emerge out of his love for his friend Lazarus (11:36).”

The second group of disciples Jesus maintained a special relationship with Peter, James, and John of the 12 Apostles. These three were present at the transfiguration (Mark 9:2), the raising of the little girl to life (Mark 5:37), and in his final moments of prayer in the garden (Mark 14:33). Christy Morris comments, “This special inner circle reveals that Jesus had different relationship patterns with different people. Some more intimate and trusting than others. These brief examples implicitly reveal that Jesus cared about people and lived in the context of friendship during his earthly

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Jesus modeled friendship to his disciples as a way of life for them to follow. His example demonstrates deep humility, empathy, and a willingness to challenge them from becoming stale in their faith. David G. Benner offers a helpful list of several ways Jesus is a demonstrated friendship to his disciples.

- He spent time with them-eating, drinking, walking and discussing things that were important to both him and them (Luke 24:13-45).
- He shared the most painful depths of his experience with them (Matthew 26:38).
- He shared insights that were not disclosed to those outside the circle of friendship (Matthew 13:36-52).
- He humbled himself by offering acts of tender care (John 13:1-17).
- He related to them in ways that were loving yet challenged them to grow (John 13:1-17).

Jesus’ desire on earth was to make disciples through intentional friendship. The mechanism of friendship in discipleship is a necessity for pastors who want to effectively carry out their calling. Pastors need friendships with other men for their mutual growth in Christ. There is also another unique relationship pastors should cultivate if they are to experience the life-giving power of intimacy. In the scriptures, we observe prophets, kings, and pastors finding other leaders to

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202 David G. Benner, Sacred Companions, 584-588, Kindle.
befriend. In doing so, they demonstrated the Proverbs 27:17 principle. It reads, "Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another."

**Practical Application of Developing Intimacy with Friends**

In their book, *Preventing Ministry Failure*, Michael Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffman offer six practical steps for establishing good intimate friendships that can be applied to a pastor spouse, friend, or pastor-friend relationships.\(^{203}\) The first step is to brainstorm a list of potential friends. The only exclusions would those to whom the pastor provides direct leadership. Second, they encourage pastors to assign an intimacy level to each of those relationships. They expound upon the five levels of intimacy as developed by Gary Smalley.\(^{204}\)

**Five Levels of Intimacy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Clichés</th>
<th>A relationship of which very little is known of the others. A personal relationship is not desired.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Facts</td>
<td>The most basic level of intimacy. We feel safe enough to let others know facts about us. This can be a building block for intimacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Opinions</td>
<td>One person feels they can share beliefs without ridicule. Sports, politics, or religion but be topics of discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Feelings</td>
<td>A person feels they can share their joy, excitement, success, failure, loneliness, and hurt without judgment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>Deepest Needs</td>
<td>A person feels they can share their deepest hopes, dreams, heartaches, and fears. Pride, sexual temptations, and other realities are shared with little inhibition.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^{203}\) Michael Todd Wilson & Brad Huffman, *Preventing Ministry Failure*, 59-60.

Level five intimacy is only sustainable with a few people, and yet it vital for a pastor to develop this kind of friendships with other men. Wilson writes, "At this level, we are truly known for who we are, warts and all—and are sure of the other person's desire to still be with us."\(^{205}\) The third step is to rank the current relationship by intimacy value. This gives pastors the opportunity to see how many 1-5 levels he is investing in right now. Step four is for pastors to pray over this list. Pray for some of these men to emerge as men who desire a deeper intimacy with him. Prayer can lead to opportunities for more in-depth conversations with these friends. Step five is to take the initiative with boldness. Friendship involves risk. Sometimes a pastor must step out and make the step toward the next level with another man to test the waters. Hoffman writes, "We must be willing to suffer the disappointment of intimacy rejected in order to find those who will have a mutual desire for deeper intimacy with us. The potential benefits are worth it."\(^{206}\) The final step is to allow the intimacy that has been growing to deepen naturally. The slow sharing of deep life is what the authors recommend. One cannot force a level 3 to a 4 or a level 4 to a 5. Following these practical steps can help a pastor move toward developing friendships of the same gender. An essential type of friendship a pastor should include in his life is the friendship of a pastor to another pastor. If intimacy is about knowing another genuinely, who better knows a pastor’s soul than another pastor?

**Developing Intimacy with Other Pastors**

C.S. Lewis pointed out that friendship arises when two companions discover some common interest, insight, or taste. He writes, “The typical expression of opening friendship

\(^{205}\) Michael Todd Wilson & Brad Huffman, *Preventing Ministry Failure*, 59-60.

\(^{206}\) Wilson & Huffman, *Preventing Ministry Failure*, 62.
would be something like, “What? You too? I thought I was the only one.”\textsuperscript{207} Lewis builds upon this understanding and says there is another question that draws friends together, “Do you see the same truth?”\textsuperscript{208} Pastors should see the same truth as revealed in the Word of God, while experiencing similar sorrows and joys in ministry. Pastors face unique struggles that only pastors understand. They possess the same calling and must apply themselves to the same activities; preaching the Word, shepherding the flock, and equipping the saints to do the work of the ministry. Pastor friends are on the same journey together and should strive to help one another fulfill their unique calling as local pastor, to a local church, and serving in a local community. Jonathon Holmes writes about this shared journey in the context of Biblical Friendships. He writes, “Biblical Friendship is intended by God as an all-encompassing spiritual discipline that engages every aspect of who we are: how we think (cognition), feel (emotion), and act (volition). The biblical practice of friendship can be an embodied journey where together we progressively fulfill our calling as God’s children.”\textsuperscript{209} The encouragement is that many pastors do seek each other out for friendship.

Lifeway research reveals that 71% of pastors meet with another pastor each month to share struggles. Also, 38% met with a staff member to discuss their difficulties in life and ministry.\textsuperscript{210} The Barna-Pepperdine study reports that 68% of pastors say they receive direct support from peers or a mentor. The Barna study also reveals that pastors who have a lower

\textsuperscript{207} C.S. Lewis, \textit{The Four Loves}, 65.

\textsuperscript{208} C.S. Lewis, \textit{The Four Loves}, 65.

\textsuperscript{209} Jonathon Holmes, \textit{The Company We Keep}, 21.

percentage of support are a higher risk for burnout. The authors’ research found that 80% of pastors interviewed had regular fellowship with other pastors. The 20% who answered they did not have enough fellowship listed theological differences or just time constraints as reasons for not seeking out friendships. One evangelical pastor said, “Many of the congregations in our district are not where I am [doctrinally], and it has made it very difficult for fellowship.” The problem of finding peer support and mentoring from older pastors is a reality for many pastors. In a survey of 700 Presbyterian USA clergy, only 53% were involved in any peer support group, and just 26% had mentors. Overall, even though loneliness seems pervasive, pastors do seem to be reaching out to other pastor brothers for friendship and support. Scripturally, there are several examples of how godly leaders encouraged one another in difficult times through friendships.

**The Example of Elijah and Elisha**

One example of spiritual renewal through friendship in the Old Testament is the relationship of Elijah and Elisha. The great prophet Elijah often felt alone in his work. It is clear that Elijah believed he was the only faithful prophet in Israel (I Kings 18:22). He was shown several times that there was a faithful remnant of prophets being cared for by Obadiah, a devout believer in God in Ahab's court (I Kings 18:1-21). This knowledge did not remove his feeling of loneliness and aloneness in the work of the ministry. In I Kings 19, following a death threat from Queen Jezebel, Elijah “…was afraid and ran for his life…”(NIV). He ran to Mt. Horeb, the place where Moses had a face-to-face encounter with God earlier in Israel's history. There, in a

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212 Interviews with senior pastors, December 2016, 26.

cave, God spoke to him. God asked him the same question twice, and Elijah gave the same response. God's question was "What are you doing here Elijah?" (I Kings 19:9b; 13b). After Elijah's response to God's first question, God demonstrated his power to Elijah through wind, earthquake, and fire. God then spoke to Elijah in a low whisper (Vs. 13). God repeats the same question to Elijah, and he gave a similar depressing response. In both responses to God, Elijah said, "...even I, only, am left and they seek my life, to take it away..."(Vs. 10b; 14b). The final response of God to Elijah's faithless repetition results not in condemnation, but a deep care from the Father to his servant. It is clear, among many unanswered questions the prophet has for God, that he feels alone as a servant of God. God responds by re-engaging him into his calling to anoint two new kings: Hazael in Syria and Jehu in Israel (Vs. 15-16). God also commanded him to anoint a predecessor so that the work of the Lord could continue in Israel. Finally, God demonstrates to Elijah that he is not alone in reminding him that there will be 7,000 people faithful to the God of Israel (Vs. 18). The impact the company and friendship Elisha would have in assisting Elijah to finish his God-given tasks is important. In his book, Elijah: Remaining Steadfast Through Uncertainty, Gene Getz writes, "...God had another purpose in choosing Elisha to Serve with Elijah. Not only did he assist him in the ministry but he would become a faithful "attendant" and, most of all, a true friend...Loneliness is lethal when we’re already depressed. (Vs. 21)." The necessity of Elijah having someone attending to him and helping him carry out the calling God had placed upon him was essential. God's process of healing Elijah was giving him a friend in ministry and assuring him that there were many others to carry on the work he began. The result of the friendship and support was that Elijah took back up the work of God as prophet. He confronted the sins of Israel (II Kings 1:3-4) and once again worked

miracles in the power of God (II Kings 1:10-14). One of the most tender expressions and evidence of the friendship of these men is found at the end of Elijah's life. At the beginning of II Kings 2, Elijah is beginning his journey to leave earth in a chariot of fire. Three times he tells Elisha to stay behind, but he refuses. Three times Elisha responds, "I will not leave you" (II Kings 2:2,4,6). Their friendship as servants of God had grown deep. Gene Getz writes, "Elisha was not only Elijah's faithful attendant, but he had also become his loyal friend. Evidently, Elisha knew that Elijah was about to leave him and he was determined to stay by his side until that moment when they would be separated." In the latter part of the chapter, Elijah was taken up into heaven in a chariot of fire. The last recorded observance of the two men is recorded in I Kings 2:12b. Elisha says, "My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" And he saw him no more." The friendship between the two men was intertwined as a spiritual father to a son in the faith. Getz concludes, "The essence of the relationship that existed between Elijah and Elisha can be summarized with one major point—friendship. We all have acquaintances, and that’s important. But we all need—those we can relate to at a deeper level. It’s a God created need—and a means for helping us maintain our emotional and spiritual equilibrium."  

The Elisha Elijah relationship is a reminder to pastors that God does not desire his leaders to serve alone or with a mindset of isolation. Elijah lives with intense loneliness in the first half of his ministry. God provided for his loneliness and gave him encouragement to finish his work as a prophet of God through the company of Elisha. Statistically, Pastors have expressed feelings of loneliness and isolation. One anecdote is for Pastors to embrace relationships with other pastors and staff members as a grace from God. These are gifts that provide

216 Ibid., 165.
companionship and help to carry a load of ministry with a God-sent friend. Another example, which demonstrates the importance of God’s leaders having friendships with other leaders in the community of faith, is that of Paul and Timothy in the New Testament Church.

The Example of Paul and Timothy

In the New Testament the senior Apostle Paul and the younger Pastor Timothy teach us about the importance of church leaders and friendship. Paul called Timothy to follow him as a missionary in Acts 16:1-5. Timothy was known in Iconium and Lystra as being a disciple with a good reputation. Paul recruited him to be a part of this mission team and a fellow companion. Timothy traveled with him through cities and taught the message of the gospel and gave news of the growing church in Jerusalem. The result of Paul and Timothy working together was “…the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily (Vs. 5).” They bonded over Paul’s training Timothy in gospel ministry. In his book, Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free, F.F. Bruce writes of the nature of Timothy and Paul’s relationship. He explains, “Timothy was plainly so attracted by Paul that he counted the world well lost for the sake of accompanying such a man as his aid-de-camp…There is ample evidence that Paul wholeheartedly appreciated the selfless devotion with which Timothy supported and serve him for the rest of the older man’s life.”

Paul grew to trust and appreciate Timothy’s godliness as they aged together. Later, in writing to the Philippians about their need for Christlikeness and the importance of being like-minded, he affectionately commends his friend Timothy to them. He explains that Timothy, “…genuinely cares about your welfare. All the others care only about themselves and not for what matters to Jesus Christ. But you know how Timothy has proved

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himself. Like a son with his father, he has served with me in preaching the Good News (Phil. 2:19-22 NLT).” Joel R. Beeke comments on Paul's ministry relationship with Timothy. He writes, "We see that Paul prizes his friendship with Timothy, and we understand that it is based on the harmony of heart and mind. Without such harmony, there can be no intimate relationship." Paul’s final mention of this friendship is toward the end of his life in the epistle of II Timothy. From a prison in Rome, he wrote to his friend Timothy and referred to him affectionately as a "beloved child" (II Tim. 1:2). The strong bond between these two men who were leading the New Testament church in different ways was essential to their ability to carry out their God-given callings. Paul recalls the last time they were together, and the tears shed at their parting. He writes, "As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy.” (Vs. 4) Paul, recognizing the end is near for him, twice implores Timothy to come and see him before his impending death sentence (4:9, 21). The word used to describe this longing is a strong compound Greek verb epipotheo. It means to “long for desire” for the purpose of being filled with joy. Some of the joy Paul had known is that the gospel would continue to be passed down because of faithful men like his friend Timothy.

Paul also desired that Timothy would make disciples in the same Christ-centered friendship way that he did with Timothy. In II Timothy 2:1-2, Paul writes, “Timothy, my dear son, be strong through the grace that God gives you in Christ Jesus. You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others (NIV).” Gene A. Getz concludes, “As Paul faced the prospect of his own death, he was greatly encouraged to know that the work

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he started on earth would continue through Timothy—a faithful attendant, a loyal friend, and a true disciple.”\textsuperscript{221} One encouraging aspect of Pastor-to-Pastor Friendships, especially in older to younger relationships, is the knowledge that the people of God will continue to be shepherded, fed, and protected through the succession of generational pastor-mentoring. The pattern of discipleship must be transferred in this way for the gospel to go forward into the next generation. Jesus taught and entrusted the disciples with the gospel. Likewise, Paul taught and entrusted Timothy with the good news. Now, Paul calls Timothy to do the same. In the book, \textit{Entrusted with the Gospel}, Philip Ryken writes, “…Timothy had received something from Paul—the sound pattern and good deposit mentioned in II Tim. 2:13-14. Now he has a responsibility to pass the same core doctrines of the Christian faith along to others…we should have the same burden for the rising generation in our own day.”\textsuperscript{222}

The Paul Timothy relationship reminds pastors of the importance of having pastor friends and mentorships that are Christ-centered and gospel-focused in nature. The encouragement that comes from two pastors focused on the shared vision of leading churches to fulfill the great commission is invaluable.

Another aspect of their relationship was the emphasis of older pastors befriending younger pastor for the purpose of passing the torch of the pastoral call for the sake of the gospel being stewarded by the next generation. Alvin Reid and George G. Robinson challenge pastors to informally mentor younger men in this way. They write, “Our greatest impact comes not from the many who hear us speak but in the few with whom we share life through informal

\textsuperscript{221} Getz, \textit{Elijah}, 164.

\textsuperscript{222} Philip Ryken, \textit{Entrusted With The Gospel: Pastoral Exposition of II Timothy}, Editor D.A. Carson (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 34.
mentoring…Informal mentoring assumes the best learning comes not from simply listening to a leader, but by being with one."\textsuperscript{223} The informal mentoring process for the purpose of discipleship and with a focus on friendship benefits both mentor and mentee and is vital in combatting burnout. In \textit{The Resilient Pastor}, Mark Searby calls the relationship of Timothy and Paul part of a mentoring constellation. He suggests there are four different relationships a pastor needs to maintain health. They are as follows: Mentor, Protégé, Confidant, and Ally. The mentor is respected for maturity and life experience in a given field. The protégé is one who is being mentored by another. In other words, Pastors need mentoring while they are mentoring others. A Confidant is someone who is a peer outside of the organization or church. They speak truth into one’s life with no competing loyalties. Finally, the ally is someone trusted inside your church that one can meet with regularly.\textsuperscript{224} Paul and Timothy held the mentoring dynamic of a mentor and protégé. Searby's definition of mentoring ties the two terms together. He writes, "Mentoring is a voluntary, intensive relationship in which a mentor empowers a protégé by sharing God-given resources in an intentional manner."\textsuperscript{225}

In her book, \textit{The Mentee’s Guide: Making Mentoring Work for You}, Lois Zachary provides a practical blueprint for how a pastor can begin the mentoring journey. She offers eight steps that can help move a person toward finding a mentor.\textsuperscript{226}


\textsuperscript{224} Searby, \textit{The Resilient Pastor}, 35-36.

\textsuperscript{225} Ibid., 38

### Critical-Based Decision-Making Steps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Activity Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Step One:** Identify Your Goal                                       | • Consider why you want a mentor.  
• Define what you hope to achieve your end result.                                              |
| **Step Two:** Create a list of criteria.                              | • Identify the qualities you want in a mentor.                                                                                                         |
| **Step Three:** Determine qualities that are "must haves."            | • Select those requirements that are non-negotiable from your list.                                                                                  |
| **Step Four:** Rank the remaining criteria "wants."                  | • Rank order the remaining criteria in order of importance to you.                                                                                   |
| **Step Five:** List possible options.                                 | • Brainstorm a list of possible mentors.                                                                                                              |
| **Step Six:** Eliminate options that don't meet the "musts."         | • Evaluate each possible mentor against the "musts." If the candidate cannot fulfill them, do not consider him or her further.                |
| **Step Seven:** Rate each option against "wants."                    | • Compare how well each of the remaining options stacks up against your "wants." Assign a numeric rating (1-10) for each potential mentor to measure how well he or she measures up against each "want." |
| **Step Eight:** Make the Decision.                                   | • Tally the numeric score to identify which of the candidate's bests meets your desired end result based on the criteria you established.  |

According to Zachery, the final aspect of solidifying a lasting relationship with a mentor is to establish an agreement. There are many positives of creating such an agreement. The agreement contains the following components: Well-defined goals, Success criteria and measurement, accountability assurances, ground rules, confidential safeguards, boundaries and hot buttons, protocols for addressing stumbling blocks, consensual mentoring agreement, and a mentoring work plan. There are many positive benefits of such an intentional and focused mentor relationship. Zachary writes, “Establishing agreements will enrich and focus your mentoring experience. A mentor who isn’t experienced but eager to help you may be grateful for the
structure that this conversation provides." Intentional and strategic mentoring is essential for pastors facing burnout.

Developing Intimacy with spouse, same-gender non-pastoral friends, and with other pastors, can help to decrease the harmful effects of burnout. However, there is another aspect of reducing the stress that is less focused on one area and more on the health of the pastor as a whole. The pastor who finds success in ministry and life must develop a theology of self-care in the context of his heart, mind, and body. Stress affects the whole person, so a pastor must be diligent to understand himself, maintain his emotional intelligence, and develop a plan to care for him physically.

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Chapter Four

Key Principle Three: Implement a Theology of Self-Care

When considering the overall health of pastors, the picture is relatively positive. The Barna-Pepperdine Study reveals that 91% of pastors are satisfied with their quality of life in comparison to 62% of U.S. adults nationwide. The study also shows that pastors were higher in emotional health (85% versus 63%) than U.S. Adults. The area where pastors seemed to have the most difficulty was in their satisfaction with physical health. In this area, Pastors were 67% satisfied as compared to 75% of other Christians.228 Overall, for men and women, Crossway Research on burnout reveals the interconnected nature of burnout with emotional and physical stressors. In fact, of 6,000 who answered the survey question, “What Contributed to Your Burnout?” 42% indicate too little sleep, while 30% too little exercise and 38% home pressures. Crossway concludes, “We cannot overwork our bodies and minds and expect to thrive spiritually and relationally. Neither can we expect to neglect the soul and remain balanced and healthy in other parts of our lives.”229 The authors’ research shows that 27% of pastors struggled with feeling overworked and 33% did not have many close friendships to provide them with emotional support. Overall, some 67% have experienced burnout. These pastors describe it as “hitting the wall” through extreme physical, mental, or spiritual fatigue. Another pastor described burnout as, “…a place where you've basically gotten where you have no margin in your life, where you've used up all the margin in your life. All your boundaries are exhausted. Your reserves are exhausted; so are your spiritual reserves, your mental reserves, your relational


reserves, they've all been depleted, and they need to be refilled, but it's not just a top-off."230 It is clear than any understanding of self-care must take into account the totality of the pastor’s makeup. It cannot be an oversimplification with a one-dimensional emphasis on the inner world of the minister that neglects the body. In this chapter, the third key principle of implementing a theology of self-care will be considered. Special attention will be given to addressing a theology of self-care in the context of the soul and body. Attention will be give to the emotional, intellectual, and physical aspects of self-care. Biblical passages from the Old and New Testaments will be used to support each of these aspects.

**Theology of Self-Care**

In order to implement a theology of self-care a pastor must understand the theological significance of the multi-dimensional self in relation to God. Theology is a general term, which means the study or science of God. In his book, *Christian Theology*, Millard Erickson elaborates on this simple definition. He writes, “Theology will also seek to understand God’s creation, particularly human beings and their condition, and God’s redemptive working in relation to humankind.”231 It is in the scriptures that we discover we are souls made in the image of God. We have been marked as such with intellect, emotion, and will which are encased in a body. We can think, feel, and act according to our will or another. The redeemed self is the key to understanding the true self. J. Finley and F. Gonzalez write, “Theologically the true self is in a relationship of likeness to God (imago dei) sharing perfectly in the life of the Word…Apart from this union we are nothing (John1; Col. 1:15-20; Eph. 1:3-6).”232 The understanding that a pastor

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is created by God, recreated by faith in Jesus Christ, and is being formed through the process of sanctification is essential to the foundation of self-care. It is not enough to acknowledge creation. Pastors must revisit their salvation and calling to serve the Lord in full-time ministry to be reminded that it is God that ultimate does the work of renewal and reformation through self-care. In his book, Clergy Self-Care, Roy Oswald writes, “A sound theology of ministry also requires us to reassess the meaning of being created by God and saved by God…for us clergy this means we don’t have to save the world, and much less the people entrusted to our care. When I burn myself out in ministry, it’s usually because I subconsciously believe salvation is up to me…”233 The positive effect of self-care is receiving a grace-gift from God through faith in Jesus that is both is deeply realized and appreciated. God can powerfully transform and sustain the pastor as he takes initiative to care for his multi-faceted being. If the pastor is to care for his whole self, as God would have him, he must understand the components of his recreated being.

It is with these lenses of “theology” and the “self” that a pastor can begin to define and implement a theology of self-care. In his book, Going the Distance: How to Stay Fit for A Lifetime of Ministry, Peter Brain defines self care and its intended effects as “…the wisdom to ensure, as far as humanly possible, a wise and orderly work that conserves and lengthens a pastor’s ministry.”234 The pastor must take measures to implement self-care practices in to his life. The pastor may feel like such application is a compromise toward his time and efforts in leading the congregation. Brain counters such opinions. He writes, “An intentional self-care on the part of pastors is not a matter of selfish pampering, it is essential to maintaining an effective


234 Peter Brain, Going the Distance: How to Stay Fit for a Lifetime of Ministry (Kingsford, NSW: Matthias Media, 2004), 24.
ministry over the long term. The nature of pastoral ministry makes self-care important.”235 The scope of self-care is not to be limited to the spirit of the person. In their definition of “Soul Care” Burn, Chapman, and Guthrie describe self-care as “…the ongoing development of the whole person, including the emotional, spiritual, relational, physical and intellectual areas of life.”236 The nurturing of self-care can bring great energy and happiness to a pastor. Roy Oswald explains, “…self care is little more than being a steward of some rather special gifts—a physical body with its enormous resilience and beauty, the capacity to nurture others and be nurtured in return, the capacity to be aware of our lives as we are living them, the capacity to enjoy immense sensual pleasure through such simple things…” It is important for a pastor to have a clear understanding of the spirit and body as they relate to his personal self-care. This dichotomy of personhood is best understood when the term “soul” is defined. The definition grows in meaning as one considers the word “soul” in the Old and New Testament and in the Life of Jesus Christ.

The Soul in Self Care

The soul of the pastor is the whole of the inner man as expressed through the outer man. In the Care of Souls, David G. Benner describes it as “…referring to the whole person, including the body, but with a particular focus on the inner world of thinking, feeling, and willing…soul care nurtures the inner life and guides the expression of this inner life through the body into external behavior.”237 Another word to describe the soul is the whole self or the complete person. Benner says, that in this way, “We do not have a soul, we are a soul.”238 When a pastor

235 Brain, Going the Distance, 4.
236 Bob Burns, Tasha D. Chapman, Donald C. Guthrie, Resilient Ministry, 60.
237 Benner, Care of Souls: Revisioning Christian Nurture and Counsel, 22.
238 Ibid.
nurtures his soul, he is fostering growth to his whole being. In Soul Keeping, John Ortberg emphasizes the important of making this connection. He explains that soul is not only the totality of the inner life; it is what organizes and integrates all parts together. He says, “The soul is the capacity to integrate all parts into a single, whole life…the soul seeks harmony, connection, and integration…it is the deepest part of you and it is the whole person.” Proper Soul Care can ensure a solid connection to God and others. However, a soul that is unhealthy will experience disintegration that can result in a weak connection to God and others, a disorganized inner life, mental illness, and physical health problems. Ortberg writes, “To focus on my soul means to look at my life under the care and connection of God. To focus on myself apart from God means losing awareness of what matters most…to lose my soul means I no longer have a healthy center that organizes and guides my life.” The emphasis of inner renewal that leads to outward reform must begin in the heart. Proverbs 4:23 emphasize this aspect of care. It says, “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” The word heart is a word that usually means the mind. However, it is also used in Proverbs to represent the emotions (15:15, 30), the will (11:20; 14:14), and the whole inner being (3:5). The heart is where true life and vitality begin and are sustained. The term is used in Scripture of the inner life of God or a person. Martin Manser defines the word “heart” as, “The entire inner person, though fallen, may be changed by the Holy Spirit, in which case it should show evidence of renewal.” The pastor who heeds the counsel of Proverbs 4:23 can experience a well-cultivated heart that produces a

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239 John Ortberg, Soul Keeping: Caring for the Most Important Part of You (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 42.

240 Ortberg, Soul Keeping, 44-45


“mouth free of perversity (Vs.24)”, a God-focused undistracted life (Vs.25), discerning thoughts and decisions (Vs. 26), and a strong conscience (Vs. 27). The use of the Hebrew word “soul” in the Old Testament brings greater clarification.

**The Soul in the Old Testament**

In the Old Testament the Hebrew word for soul, *Nephesh*, demonstrates an integration of all parts of the human being. For example, in Genesis 2:7 is says, “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul [*nephesh*].” It is clear from this passage that the use of the Hebrew word for soul is a term used to describe both body and spirit. In his book, *Pastor as Person*, Gary Harbaugh comments on this verse. He writes, “…It is clear that nephesh here indicates not a part but the whole. Does one have a nephesh? That is not the biblical question. A human being is a living nephesh, gifted with life by God.”

Psalm 103:1 also demonstrates this unity of inner parts as one whole. It says, “Bless the LORD, O my soul [*nephesh*]: And all that is within me, bless his holy name.” Commenting on this unity, J.P. Moreland and Scott P. Rae write, “…even if certain passages use nephesh to refer simply to the whole person, it is the whole person a unified center of conscious thought, action and emotion, that is, as an ensouled body to which reference is being made.”

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243 Gen 2:7 (King James Version)


245 Ps 103:1 (King James Version)

Another word closely related to *nephesh* in the Old Testament, and the thing that gives it is primary strength, is the word *ruach*, which is translated spirit. Although it appears less, some 361 times compared to *nephesh*’ 754, it is equally important because of the role it plays in the soul. *Ruach* refers to the powerful moving of the Spirit of God in the conscious or unconscious soul. For example, in Genesis 2:7 the term used to describe God breathing is “neshama”, a synonym of *ruach*, which means “breath of life”. Moreland writes, “The entity God adds is that which animates and makes alive, and it is something that is added by God and is non-mergent.”

247 The *ruach* and *neshama* are so important to men that without it their body would perish. Job 34:14 says, “If he should take back his spirit [ruach] to himself, and gather to himself his *neshama*, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust” The emphasis on soul care is of utmost important in the Old Testament because, according to the scriptures, the spirit would survive the deceased body (Psalm 146:4; Eccles. 12:7) along with the *nephesh* (Psalm 49:15). However, because the body is not evil, the Jewish people believed in a future resurrection of the body (Job 19:25-27; Ps. 73:26; Is 26:14, 19; Dan. 12:2). Moreland summarizes: “It seems apparent that the most natural interpretation is to see the soul-spirit [nephesh-ruach] as the locus of the personal identity that survives death in a less than fully desirable state and to which a resurrection body will someday be added.”

248 The pastor needs the Spirit of God to move upon his soul during times of anguish and burnout for the purpose of revitalized energy in his whole being. Any pastor trying to minimize the soul to merely a spiritual essence, misses the point of the Old Testament understanding of Soul-Care. The New


248 Ibid.
Testament wording of the soul affirms the definition and usage of the Old Testament term. It confirms the complexity of the soul as it relates to whole person.

**The Soul in the New Testament**

In the New Testament the correlating OT word for *nephesh* is the Greek word *psyche*. Likewise, the correlating Hebrew word for *ruach* is the Greek word *pneuma*.\(^ {249}\) Benner defines *psyche*, much like *nepesh* in the Hebrew. He explains, “Psyche carries such meaning as the totality of a person, physical life, mind, and heart…soul is also presented as the religious center of life and as the seat of desire, emotions, and identity.”\(^ {250}\) For example, the word “psyche” is translated as “soul” in the vision of John as recorded in Revelation 6:9-11. This passage refers to once-dead saints worshipping at the altar of God with white robes. They have memory, voices, emotion, will, and bodies as they worship. Revelation 6:9 says, “When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne.” In *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, John W. Cooper describes these souls. He writes, “They are portrayed as conscious of their condition and of a redemptive history and are imagined as bodily enough to be given white robes.”\(^ {251}\) This passage not only reinforces the soul as all encompassing of the person, it further supports the teaching of the Old Testament about resurrection of the body following death. In Luke 11 Jesus teaches about resurrection that comes as a result of union with him. In verses 25-26 he speaks to Martha’s pain in losing her brother Lazarus to sickness. He says, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, \(^ {26}\) and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you

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\(^ {250}\) Benner, *Care of Souls*, 22.

believe this?” Jesus teaches that he is the one who brings resurrection of the whole person. He, thus, reinforces the anthropological Jewish views of the soul and the belief of future resurrection in the afterlife. The pastor who cares for his self is caring for body and soul. In doing so the effect is both present and eternal because his soul will never cease to enjoy the blessings incurred while using his whole being to serve God. In order to manage the whole soul the intellect, emotion, and body care must be addressed in a practical way. These aspects are all interconnected and synchronized by the soul. In order to develop a practical plan for pastors the author has chosen to divide the soul care into three parts: the intellect, the emotion, and the physical care.

**The Intellect in Self-Care**

The thought life and mental culture of a pastor is an important aspect of self-care and soul health. In his book, *Shepherding God’s Flock*, Jay Adams describes importance of a pastor cultivating his mind. He writes, “In the daily work of the pastorate, it is easy for one to dry up, unless he works at keeping the mind green.” B.H. Carroll likens the pastor’s mind to an axe that needs to be sharpened. He expounds upon the imagery in scripture from Ecclesiastes 10:10 which says, “If the axe is dull and he does not sharpen its edge, then he must exert more strength. Wisdom has the advantage of giving success.” In his article, “The Pastor in His Private Life,” Carroll writes, “Intellectual culture is to the preacher what grinding is to the axe, or what tuning is to the piano. As the axe without grinding will cut, and the piano without tuning will make

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254 Eccl 10:10 (New American Standard)
music; so the preacher can preach without intellectual culture. But...he cannot do his best.”255 In order for the pastor to understand how to best cultivate intellectual health, it is essential to look at the definitions and examples of the word “mind” in scriptures and to define mental health. In *The Dictionary of Bible Themes*, Martin H. Manser defines it as, “The seat of human consciousness, thought and desires. Scripture stresses that the minds of believers must be shaped by the knowledge and love of God, as their ways of thinking and acting become more like the pattern set out in Jesus Christ.”256 The mind in the Old Testament is not merely speaking of thoughts produced by a person’s brain. It is also referring to the inner being of a person or the central place of intellectual activity. In the New Testament Jesus encouraged his disciples throughout the gospels to “…love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind.” (Matt. 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27) Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy 6:5 in the Old Testament and added the phrase “with all your mind”. 257 Later, the apostle Paul used two words to define mind. First, he used the word *dianoia*, which meant “understanding”. The second was the word *nous*, which meant “intellect”. *Nous* is the most prominent term for mind; it occurs 24 times in the NT. According to Gerald Cowen, *Nous* represents the “seat of understanding,” the place of “knowing and reasoning.” It also includes feeling and deciding.258 Furthermore, in the apostle Paul’s view, the mind was distinct from the spirit and the heart. Eugene Carpenter explains Paul’s understanding of the term mind.


He writes, according to Paul, “The mind possesses the ability to understand and to reason; it is the seat of intelligence…a person’s actions flow from the inclinations of his or her mind; whether a person is good or evil depends on the state of that person’s mind; whether a person is good or evil depends on the state of that person’s mind…a person’s who condition depends on how that person controls his or her mind.” This is directly applicable to a pastor’s need to harness the power of their intellect to control negative thoughts that can arise from the difficulties and stress of ministry. The inability to do so will result in poor judgment and a form of mental illness. In The Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling, C.S. Aist defines Mental Health as follows:

Mental health is a condition of well-being in relation to self and others characterized by such qualities as (a) positive self-acceptance, (b) accurate perception of others and the world, (c) stability and appropriateness in mood, (d) balance and purposiveness in behavior, (e) dependable sense of identity and values, (f) adaptability to one’s environment, (g) ability to engage in productive work and fulfilling love, and (h) commitment to a source of devotion beyond oneself…mental health is an active process, not merely the absence of illness. According to research some pastors struggle with maintaining mental health and cannot engage in proper intellectual self-care. The Barna-Pepperdine study reveals that, of the 14,000 pastors interviewed, 1 in 5 pastors are not immune to mental health struggles. They explain that one in five has struggled with an addiction—most commonly, to pornography, while almost half have faced depression. According to recent Lifeway Research, 23% of pastors indicate they have personally struggled with mental illness of some kind. The question for pastors is how can

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260 Rodney J. Hunter Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling, 710.


they maintain a vibrant intellect and sustain mental health over a lifetime of ministry. While Seminary is often a place where the intellectual life thrives. It is not the case for all seminarians. In a recent survey by the Francis Schaeffer Institute, 53% of pastors said that Seminary or Bible College did not prepare them for ministry. There is a need for pastors to make an intentional effort to win the health of their mind beyond their formal Bible College training. Pastors should acknowledge that there is a battle for their mind and they can win the fight by engaging in healthy life-giving practices that nurture and ensure sound mental health over a lifetime of ministry.

The apostle Paul described the battle between the fleshy mind and the spiritual mind in II Cor. 10:3-5. He writes, “We are human, but we don’t wage war as humans do. We use God’s mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.” The solution is for the believer twofold. First, he or she must “destroy” the strongholds. Second, they must take “capture” rebellious thoughts. The end goal is obedience to Jesus. In the book, Thinking. Loving. Doing, Rick Warren suggests that a stronghold can be an errant worldview or a wrong personal attitude. He explains what it means to “take every thought captive to obey Christ.” (II Cor. 10:5). He writes, “The Greek word aichmalotizo means ‘to control, to conquer, to bring into submission.’ We take captive. We make it submit. Every thought obedient to Christ… hupakoe means ‘to bring into submission, to bring under control.’” The writer of Proverbs 28:26 warns

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264 II Cor 10:3–5 (New Living Translation)

of letting one’s natural thoughts, apart from the Spirit of God and the wisdom of God, rule the mind. He writes, “Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered.” (Prov. 28:26) Wisdom, in Proverbs, is defined as “fearing God” in all things and that only fools “despise” such divine instruction. (Prov. 1:7-8) In the New Testament the apostle Paul reinforces this concept by writing that those who are believers should “no longer walk in the futility of their minds.” (Eph. 4:17) In his first letter to the Corinthians the apostle Paul writes, “The message of the cross is foolish to those who are headed for destruction! But we who are being saved know it is the very power of God... So when we preach that Christ was crucified, the Jews are offended and the Gentiles say it’s all nonsense. But to those called by God to salvation.” The pastor must trust in the true wisdom from God’s Word to shape his intellect and sustain his mental health.

The battle for the mind is between choosing the infinite wisdom of God, which leads to life, and choosing the finite wisdom of men that leads to death. A pastor can win the battle by willfully and continually by setting his mind on the things of God. Several times this is mentioned in the scriptures. In the Old Testament Isaiah wrote that a mind “stayed on God” would experience the “perfect peace” of God and the security of God, the “everlasting rock” (Isaiah 26:3-4). In the New Testament both Jesus and Paul emphasized this same idea. Jesus, when rebuked by Peter in Matthew 16:22-25, replied, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.” Jesus taught Peter that he is to set his mind on the “things of God” if he is to avoid being a “hindrance” to the purpose and will of God. Later, in Romans 8:5-7, The Apostle Paul further expressed this as he contrasted “setting the mind on the things of the flesh’ and setting the mind

266 1 Cor 1:18 (New Living Translation)
on the “things of the Spirit.” Paul wrote of the results of setting one’s mind on both the Spirit and
the Flesh in Romans. 8:6-7. He wrote, “For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the
mind on the Spirit is life and peace. 7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it
does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.” The Greek word, phronousin, translates “set
the mind” and can be defined as, “Keep on being mindful of or aspiring for…”267. The term
“flesh” can be defined as, “human nature corrupted and weakened by sin…it is to be in an
unregenerate state…to carry out in conduct those things dictated by the flesh.”268

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul writes that evidence of a life that has been “raised with Christ” is that they
will “seek things above”. He follows with a command for the believers to “set your minds on
things above, not on things that are on the earth.” (Col. 3:1-2) The pastor is responsible for the
governance of his mind and his thoughts. He can do this by setting his mind on matters of the
Spirit for the purpose of attaining a good life and lasting inner peace.

The book of Philippians offers practical examples for what believers in Christ should
think about and what they should do with their thoughts to maintain mental health in the context
of spiritual development. In Philippians 4:8 the apostle Paul writes of what believers are to think
about, “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is
pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is
anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” In verse 9 the believers are given
application for their thoughts. Paul writes, “Keep putting into practice all you learned and
received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace


268 Everett F. Harrison, The Expositors Bible Commentary, vol. 10, Romans through Galatians, Ed. Frank
Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 88.
will be with you.”

Once a believer establishes what they are to think about, they can live out these thoughts among their brothers in Christ. This is the completion of mental health. It is thinking about good and true things and then action upon the good and true in relationship. In his book, Ordering Your Private World, Gordon Macdonald emphasizes this application. He writes, “We do not develop our intellects merely for our own personal advancement, but we put our thinking power to work for the use of others... As my mind grows, it may make possible the growth of others. There are several practical ways for a pastor to focus his mind on the Spirit, avoid the flesh, and maintain a healthy intellectual culture. Pastor Rick Warren suggests at least three principles for winning the battle of the mind. First, one must not believe everything they think. The default condition of our mind is sinful (Rom.3: 10-12; 23). The brokenness of our thoughts caused by sin is reason enough to hold to this principle. Warren writes, “We have an amazing ability to lie to ourselves...In fact, the Bible tells us that you cannot be trusted to tell yourself the truth.” For example, I John 1:8 says, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” The second principle is to “Guard Your Mind from Garbage”. What a person takes into their eyes and ears affects their thoughts and actions. Warren writes, “If you put mental garbage into your mind, you will get garbage out in your life.” The scriptures support this principle in relation to the mental diet of the wise and the foolish. Psalm 37:3 says, “Trust the Lord and do good. Live in the land and feed on truth.” (NCV) Proverbs 15:14 also reinforce this truth. It says, “A wise person is hungry for

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269 Phil 4:9 (New Living Translation)
272 1 John 1:8 (English Standard Version)
knowledge, while the fool feeds on trash.”  

Third, pastors must not let up on learning. Warren concludes, “All leaders must first be disciples. So leaders must first be learners. The moment you stop learning, you stop leading. Growing churches require growing pastors. The moment you stop learning, you stop leading. Growing churches require growing pastors. The moment you stop growing, you church stops growing.”

One of the best ways a pastor can grow is to develop and implement a learning plan.

The need for a learning plan is essential for pastors who seek to maintain their intellectual buoyancy. Burns, Chapman and Guthrie suggest a three-tiered approach of intellectual self-care planning. They emphasize deep reflection and offer at least three categories for a pastor's learning in the context of intellectual self-care. First, informal education should be considered. They define it as “…the daily, unintentional and unstructured learning and growth experienced through leisure reading, interacting with others and having new experiences that stretch us to see things differently.”

The key to unlocking the power of this kind of learning is reflecting on life experiences, readings, and relationships. One way for a pastor to practically apply informal learning is to develop a prioritized reading plan that is wide and deep in subject matter. In “The Pastors Self-Care”, Barry Shucksmith writes, “For the Christian pastor most areas of study are legitimate; wide areas of study and research will enrich and fill out his ministry, and there are, in the modern world, almost unlimited opportunities for continuing education.” A wide variety of study is important, but priority is given to the Word of God. For example, B.H. Carroll offers 12 areas of study for pastors. They are as follows: The Bible, Theology, Church History,

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274 Prov 15:14. (New Living Translation)
275 Piper and Mathis, Thinking. Loving. Doing., 32.
276 Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, Resilient Ministry, 89-90.
277 Shucksmith, “The Pastors Self-Care,” 158.
Philosophy, Civil and Political History, The Natural Sciences, poetry, fiction, biographies of great men, the lives of men, periodic literature, and nature. However, these categories of reading should enhance the pastor’s love for God and the primary attention given to his Word. In The Christian Ministry, Charles Bridges warns of an unbalanced reading diet. He writes:

“The intellectual excitement of literary or even theological study needs much watchfulness, lest it should deaden the freshness of our mind to the more spiritual study of the Scriptures. We must be careful also, that our studies draw us to the Bible, and that we draw our studies to the Bible; instead of merely drawing the Bible to our studies, in which case they will be worse than unprofitable… While continuing the study of Divine truth, it is also of vast moment to keep up the daily reading of considerable portions of the pure word of God, and so to keep Scriptural truth (as it has been observed) continually revolving in the mind. It will be the only effectual preservative against the taint and deterioration, which the mind might otherwise receive from reading human authors.”

The second category is non-formal education. This is a more structure environment with intentional learning. This can take place in a small group-learning environment, a mentoring atmosphere, or independently through an intentional outcome. In an article, “Defining Non-Formal and Community Education, Robert Tobias, defines Non-formal education. He writes, “Non-formal education refers to those purposely organized learning activities and programs which are organized and directed by community groups and voluntary organizations independently of externally prescribed or imposed curricula or of control or direction educational institutions” This kind of learning for a pastor can be applied through his attendance at a small group, attendance at a book club, or a structure mentoring program.

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278 Carroll, “The Pastor in His Private Life,” 204-206


The final category is formal education. Formal education is structured and certified plan of study that is located in an institution. Statistically, three-quarters of pastors have some form of formal education. Of those who had formal training, 22% attended a Bible College, 51% some kind of college or university, 70% earned at least a baccalaureate degree, and 49% went on to complete a masters degree. Only 1 out of 5 have received a doctoral degree of some kind. Overall, 72% rate their training as adequate, while seminary is at 50% adequacy.\footnote{Barna-Pepperdine, “State of Pastors”, 63.} Overall, there were three areas pastors felt unprepared. The response was 29% felt they were unprepared for counseling people. Likewise, 29% felt the administrative burden was overwhelming. Finally, 27% felt untrained and unprepared at handling conflict.\footnote{Ibid., 63.} While formal education is important to pastors, there does seem to be areas of improvement. Barna concludes that, “Not surprisingly, pastors who rate high on the burnout risk metric also wish they’d been better prepared for handling conflict (50%) and for “church politics” (34%)—so it is no surprise that fewer than half of these leaders rate their overall ministry preparation as excellent (15%) or at least good (29%) compared to 7 in 10 among all pastors.”\footnote{Barna-Pepperdine, “State of Pastors”, 67.}

Practically, the pastor can continue his education by steadily advancing at a pace, which does not compromise his priorities. B.H. Carroll suggests a steady progression of completion of high school, college, and finally seminary. He emphasizes the importance of taking college courses before seminary for several reasons. First, the college graduate will can be equipped to finish seminary at home if need be. Second, the college graduate will be able to gain much more understanding from seminary courses because of the training and competence from college. As
it pertains to Seminary training, Carroll writes, “There is not better place for a young preacher to learn to study the Book of Books than in Seminary where godly men, specialists in particular branches, give young ministers the benefit of their patient research and costly experiences.”

Formal education does not need to take place is a system or program. It can be divided up into smaller course style learning environments. Jay Adams suggests pastors enroll in a refresher course in Hebrew or Greek, or register for a course in English Literature, or even attend medical/psychology lectures from a local college. These courses can be varied in subject and do not always need to come from lecturers that profess a carbon copy of the pastors belief system. He writes, “Whatever resources lie at hand always out to be exploited…To attend the lectures of a man with whom one differs, or whose subject area is far removed from the scope of one’s regular study interests, provides intellectual stimulation of a sort that might not occur otherwise.” The stimulation that occurs from such courses can decrease burnout and keep a pastor mentally alert, while also providing refreshment to his congregants.

The Emotions in Self-Care

The effective emotional self-care of a pastor happens when he knows himself and is able move from the past through the present and into the future with a greater self-awareness and a growing confidence in God to lead him. Self-Awareness is essential to combatting burnout, especially in terms of prevention. In his book, Emotion Intelligence, Daniel Goleman writes about the relationship of emotional health and self-awareness. He writes that self-awareness is the “sense of an ongoing attention to one’s internal states…Such attention takes in whatever passes through awareness with impartiality, as an interested yet unreactive witness…Self

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285 Adams, Shepherding the Flock, 28.
Awareness is not an attention that gets carried away by emotions, overacting and amplifying what is perceived." There are several helpful assessments that can reveal this self-knowledge that makes one self-aware in the context of the past, present, and future.

Several practical tools that can help bring self-awareness of one’s past are engaging in a Life Map and working through a Genogram. A personal life map allows an individual to reflect upon and better understand their journey in life. Dr. Mark Searby developed an exercise that challenges individuals to look at their lives in seven-year segments. The goal of this exercise is that “…the leader will gain a clearer perspective on his or her life experiences and how God has used both positive and negative experiences to mold character or equip for leadership.”

Searby further suggest that several heart-shaping factors be considered when reflecting on these segments. These factors are adapted from Reggie McNeal’s book, A Work of Heart. McNeal suggest that heart shaping is layered and never static in a leaders life. He writes, “Heart-Shaping involves both divine and human activity. God does not unilaterally mold and sculpt passive human beings who exercise no role in scripting their life development…our choosing never renders us helpless or beyond divine intervention.” McNeal suggests that there are six major subplots of the leaders heart shaping. They are as follows: Culture, call, community, community, communion, conflict, and the common place. In culture a leader considers the environmental influences that have shaped their life and ministry both positively and negatively. The call is the conviction a leader feels of acknowledging some life mission that orders their plans and affects their decisions. The Community of a leader plays a vital role in their heart shaping.

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special friendships and faith communities he has attended should be considered. Communion is the deep heart-cultivation the leader has experienced with God over the years. There are also negative influences. Conflict also is a major heart-shaper. McNeal writes, “Spiritual leaders find themselves thrown into the thick of the fray. These conflicts, whether personal, interrelational, demonic, or organizational, are not tangential developments. Rather, they are central heart-shaping events and episodes.” The final heart-shaping influence for the spiritual leader to consider is the Commonplace. This shaping is accomplished by observing how the leader responds to everyday life. The goal of the personal life map and the reflection upon the leaders unique heart-shaping influences is revealing and affirming. Searby writes, “Through this exercise the leader will gain a clearer perspective on his or her life experiences and how God has used both positive and negative experiences to mold character or equip for leadership…ultimately you will see evidence of God’s grace and faithfulness in your life.”

The second tool a pastor can utilize to work through his past is a genogram. Searby defines a genograms as “diagrammatic method for depicting multiple generations in one’s family of origin for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of emotional processes which have shaped the individual.” In his book, Extraordinary Leadership, Robert Gilbert writes, “It is clear that our family experience during our young, dependent years shapes and sculpts who we become to a considerable degree. While many of the details of this process are known, there is much still to be learned.” The purpose of a genogram is to give the leader insight into the

289 Ibid.
290 Searby, The Resilient Pastor, 114.
291 Ibid., 117.
family shaping influences from the past 3-4 generations. It helps the leader “examine unhealthy patterns from the pastor that we bring into our present leadership as well as our relationship to Christ and others.” In their book, Resilient Ministry, Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie offer five steps to creating and exploring a genogram. The first step is to draw a family tree with three generations. The second step involves placing symbols next to relationships to indicate the relationship status; this includes marriages, divorces, cohabitations, separations, violent, abusive, harmonious, friendship, etc. The third step is to provide insight for reflection on a particular theme, such as failing or succeeding. The fourth step is to observe any patterns or contrasts across the genogram. The final step involves a deep reflection of the past in light of the present. For example, three helpful questions are as follows: How to your strengths and struggles correlate to family patterns? What can you do to strengthen healthy patterns? How can you leverage your strength to correct sinful patterns? In addition to these four steps, Peter Scazzero also offers 12 questions a leader can answer to gain a healthy understanding of a genogram. His questions consider character qualities of family members, conflict history of the past 3-4 generations, heroes and villains in recent family history, addressing traumatic family losses, and a consideration of generational patterns such as mental illness, addiction, divorce, abuse and affairs. Understanding the past is a key to unlocking present self-awareness, but emotional health is also fortified as a spiritual leader begins to understand who they are and how they should lead and not lead based on their identity.

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293 Peter Scazzero, The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How transforming your inner life will deeply transform your church, team, and the world (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2015), 72.

294 Burns, Resilient Ministry, 276.

295 Scazzero, The Emotionally Healthy Leader, 74.
In addition to the life map and genogram, the pastor can make use of burnout assessments, personality tests, and spiritual gift inventories to further develop self-awareness and increase emotional health in their present condition. One basic burnout assessment a pastor can take that can help him understand his level of burnout is Roy M. Oswald’s Clergy Burn-Out Inventory (CBI). Pastors are encouraged to answer 16 questions on a 1-6 scale. The answers to these questions can reveal a starting point for recovering emotional health. At the end of the short assessment, the pastor adds up the number totals and, according to his total, he is cautioned on the extent of his burnout. The scale is as follows: 0-32 Burnout is not an issue; 33-48 Bordering on Burnout; 49-64 Burnout is a factor; 65-80 is extreme burnout. Oswald writes of his recommendation based on a score. He writes, “If you have a score of fifty or more, I recommend that you take seriously the impact that burnout is having on your ministry and primary relationships.”

Another way to understand how stress is affecting the pastor emotional state is “The Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory”. The same format of the CBI is utilized to understand the extent of the pastor’s burnout. There are 43 Life events given on the left hand column. Each event is assigned a point value. For example, Death of a spouse is 100-point value. At the end of the assessment a point scale reflects the level of burnout. A person with 150-300 points will have a 50% chance of a major breakdown. A person with more than 300 points has an 80% chance of a major health breakdown. Once a pastor understands their level of burnout they can then move toward a better understanding of themselves.

Personality profiling is an essential to self-care of the emotions. When a pastor knows who he is, he can live within his limits and set boundaries so as not to become burnout.

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296 Oswald, Clergy Self-Care, 65.

Personality can be defined as “an individual's unique relatively consistent pattern of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.” However, personality is not as important as one may think. In his article, “Personhood of the Pastor,” G.L. Harbaugh reminds pastors, “As important as personality is, however, it is not everything. Neither research nor experience has demonstrated that any one personality type necessarily makes a more effective or faithful pastor than another.” A well-known personality assessment is “The D.I.S.C. Model of Human Behavior”. The Model, as developed and adapted by Dr. Mels Carbonelle, was built upon Hippocrates temperament classifications in 400 B.C. and Galen’s (AD 130-200) reflections on the four basic temperaments reflecting the humours. In Hippocrates view, the level of person’s four different body fluids determines temperament. The fluids are as follows: Blood, Phlegm, Black Bile, and Yellow bile. Each fluid is associated with a personality trait. Blood is associated with a sanguine or cheerful demeanor. Phlegm was associated with a calm or phlegmatic temperament. Black bile indicates a depressed or melancholic personality. Yellow bile was associated with an irritable or choleric temperament. Galen, a Greek physician, reintroduced the four basic temperaments and assigned greater detail to each category. He listed the humours and brief descriptions as follows: Sanguine—buoyant type; Phlegmatic—sluggish type; Choleric—quick-tempered type; Melancholic—dejected type. In 1928, William Marston further developed these four aspects by assigning letters to each type: D.I.S.C. Dr. John Geier utilized Marston’s work to develop a personality type profile in the business context. Dr. Mels Carbonelle then followed Geier’s work by developing a combination of personality and faith-based profiling system and assessments.

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300 Carbonell, *How to Solve the People Puzzle*, 8-10.

301 Ibid.
Dr. Carbonell describes four different temperaments of human behavior and provides an assessment called a “Uniquely You Profile”. Following the assessment a guide is offered based on the results, which can help a pastor understand his personality and how it affects him and others he leaders. The first temperament described is the “D” personality, which is an Active/Task Oriented leader. They are directing, driving, demanding, dominating, determined, decisive, and doing oriented. The “D” leaders love a challenge, enjoy freedom, stress goals, and need to learn to relax and work with others to accomplish their tasks. The second temperament is the “I” personality, which is Active/People Oriented Leader. These leaders are inspiring, influencing, impressing, interactive, and interested in people. The “I” leaders work for recognition, look for opportunities to influence and inspire others, and they must learn to manage time and details to be successful. The “C” leader type is Passive/Task Oriented. The “C” leader is cautious, competent, calculating, compliant, careful, and contemplative. The “C” leader enjoys security, lives for routine and habit, works slowly, and must understand that change can be good. Finally, the “S” leader is Passive/People oriented. These leaders are steady, stable, shy, security-oriented, servant, submissive, and a specialist. “S” Leaders focus on quality, love clearly defined tasks and explanations, do not enjoy risk, need constant reassurance, and must learn that deadlines need to be made and that thorough explanations cannot always be given for a situation. A leader who is able to understand their personality profile will be able to understand how others see them. In addition they will understand their thoughts and feelings better and can gain a greater vision for their passions in life, grasp their leadership style and following style, know where points of conflict may come in the work and with other employees, and develop ways to harness strengths while guarding against the failure their weaknesses can bring.302

302 Mels Carbonell, How to Solve the People Puzzle, 15-18.
Personality profiling is not the only way to develop the emotions in self-care. There is another aspect to be developed involving the gifting of the Spirit of God to the believer.

The Scriptures also reveal that each believer in Christ has been given a spiritual gift for the sake of the body of Christ. In I Corinthians 12:4-7 the Apostle Paul writes, “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; \(^5\) and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; \(^6\) and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. \(^7\) To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” It is important to understand that spiritual gifts are different than personality traits. In his book, *S.H.A.P.E: Finding & Fulfilling Your Unique Purpose in Life*, Erik Reese writes of this distinction. He writes, “…Your spiritual gifts are not the same as your personality traits. A personality test is not an adequate indicator of what spiritual gifts you possess. Your personality traits, however, do provide natural vehicles for expressing your gifts.” \(^303\) Personality profiles are important but they are not everything in terms of self-awareness and deepening emotional health. In his article, “Personhood of the Pastor,” G.L. Harbaugh reminds pastors, “As important as personality is, however, it is not everything. Neither research nor experience has demonstrated that any one personality type necessarily makes a more effective or faithful pastor than another.” \(^304\)

Spiritual gift lists can be identified in at least five passages of scripture that are as follows: Rom. 12:6-8, I Cor. 12:8-10, 12:28, Eph. 4:11, and I Peter 4:9-10. Rees identifies at least 20 spiritual gifts in his book. They are as follows: Administration, Apostleship, Discernment, Encouragement, Evangelism, Faith, Giving, Interpretation, Knowledge, Leadership, Mercy, Miracles, Pastoring, and Prophecy. Rees then offers a spiritual gift test, in which a pastor can discover their unique

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\(^303\) Rees, *S.H.A.P.E.*, 34.

\(^304\) Gary L. Harbaugh, *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, “Personhood of the Pastor”, 910.
gifting and apply it to their ministries. He defines a spiritual gift as “A God-given special ability, given to every believer at conversion by the Holy Spirit, to share his love and strengthen the body of Christ.” This definition is a reminder to the spiritual leader that the giving of the spiritual gift of “pastor” is for the benefit of others. This can be observe in Eph. 4:11-12. Paul writes, “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ…” The gift the pastor possesses is for the building up of the church. When a pastor understands his personality and ascertains his personal spiritual gifting he will grow strong in emotional and spiritual health. The strength he gains will help him as he battles burnout. The last area in self-care is the care of the physical body. Though not as important as the care of the spiritual and emotional areas, is also vital to the health and affectivity of the pastor’s self-care. A pastor who does not care for his body will put undue stress on the emotional and spiritual aspects of his being. Ultimately, he will be cut short in his energies and longevity for ministering.

**The Body in Self Care**

The area of body care is less important to many pastors. The Barna-Pepperdine study indicates that that while 88% of pastors indicate their spiritual well being as excellent or good, only 67 people indicate they are physically excellent. Another supporting study by Alan Taha, who did his doctoral work on Clergy physical self-care, found that 76% of clergy were overweight or obese. The statistics reveal a need for pastors to develop a “body theology” in

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order to be effective for the long-term in ministry.\textsuperscript{308} A body theology includes regular exercise, a healthy diet, and proper sleep and rest cycles. When a proper body theology is understood the pastor can address the error many clergy believe when it comes to the physical care of the person. Roy Oswald warns the church of inadvertently embracing the errant Greek philosophy of the body in his book \textit{Clergy Self-Care}. The Greeks viewed the body as weak, much less important as the mind and spirit, an opponent for contention. The Hebrew view of the body is that it is a part of the whole soul and is an ally of the soul, which is to be harnessed through discipline. Oswald explains, “One’s body, heart, soul and mind were all of a piece. The body was not something to be used and eventually disposed of like a Kleenex while the mind and soul remained immortal.”\textsuperscript{309} Christians, like Hebrews, should believe in the inseparability of the soul from the body in the future glorification of the saints.

Jesus is a primary example of one who balanced the caring for the soul and the body. Jesus led himself and the disciples to times of bodily rest. He managed himself and his energies for the sake of the mission from the Father. He emptied himself, but maintained resilience to carry the cross to Calvary. Oswald writes, “Jesus chose kenosis rather than burnout, and because he did we are free to focus energy on primary issues in our parishes. We do not need to be reduced to us through burnout.”\textsuperscript{310} The church, and its leaders, should follow the example of the Hebrew people and of Jesus in forming their body theology. However, the church often neglects the importance of stewarding the body to glorify God and serve others. David Murray writes, “The church, has often emphasized the soul to the exclusion of, or the minimizing of, the

\textsuperscript{308} Murray, \textit{Reset}, 73.
\textsuperscript{309} Oswald, \textit{Clergy Self-Care}, 16.
\textsuperscript{310} Ibid., 18.
body…such error can be defeated only with the truth, with the Bible’s theology of the body.”

Murray further supports this theological emphasis from I Corinthians 6:9-20. He explains that the Bible teaches the body is damaged by sin (vv.9-10), saved by God (v. 11), vulnerable (v.12), for the Lord (vv.13-14), a member of Christ (vv.15-17), a temple of the Holy Spirit (vv.18-19), bought with a price (vs. 20), and an instrument by which a believer is to glory God along with their spirit (vs. 21). Finally, Murray offers three practical physical actions a person can take to apply this bodily theology. First, a person can stand up more than sit throughout the day. He explains that men who spend more than 23 hours per week sitting have a 64% greater chance of dying from heart disease than those who sit for eleven. He encourages pastors to get up and move instead of sitting for 8 hours a day. Second, he encourages pastors to apply body theology through exercise. He encourages leaders to exercise moderately by walking daily. This simple step can benefit cognately and provide added energy. He writes, “Research has shown that walking just two miles a day reduces the risk of cognitive decline and dementia by 60%...exercise and proper rest patterns generate about 20% of energy increase in an average day.”

Finally, Murray offers manual labor as another way to implement body theology. This can be observed in house projects, lawn care, woodworking, or gardening. It is any physical activity done every week if possible. Another practical exercise formula to enhance bodily health is William Cutre’s “4 x 30 x Comfortable x Large”. In his article, “A Call to Wellness Lifestyle: Some Practical Suggestions”, he explains each of these components. The first “4” represents and exercise routine which is scheduled four times in any given week. The “30” is indicative of 30 minute intervals during the four times a week of exercise. A thirty-minute

311 Murray, Reset: Living a Grace-Paced Life in a Burnout Culture, 74.
312 Ibid., 78.
routine elevates the heart, strengthens cardiac muscle, increases metabolism, and burns calories. The “comfortable” in the formula refers to the pace during the “30” minute intervals. The intensity of the workout should be strenuous but not dangerous. Cutre offers the talk test as an indicator that the workout is too much. He writes, “You should be working harder than you are at rest, but not so hard that you cannot talk to someone next to you.” The final word in the formula is “Large”. This refers to working the large muscle in your fitness program. Such muscles include the abdomen, legs, hips, and lower back. Once a good exercise routine is established the pastor should consider his diet and nutrition.

In I Corinthians 9:27 and later in 10:31 The Apostle Paul emphasizes the importance of the physical health for spiritual leaders. In 9:27 he writes, “I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.” Paul indicates in this verse that body care and health is essential to living as a qualified and effective minister of the gospel. Later, in 10:31 he writes that the diet of the Christian is to honor God. He writes, “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” Earlier Paul wrote concerning a balanced diet. In I Cor. 6:12-15 he writes the following:

“12 You say, “I am allowed to do anything”—but not everything is good for you. And even though “I am allowed to do anything,” I must not become a slave to anything. 13 You say, “Food was made for the stomach, and the stomach for food.” (This is true, though someday God will do away with both of them.) But you can’t say that our bodies were made for sexual immorality. They were made for the Lord, and the Lord cares about our bodies.”

314 1 Cor 9:27 (New Living Translation)
315 1 Cor 6:12–13 (New Living Translation)
It is clear from this passage that God cares what we do with our bodies. He also does not want us to become a slave to our appetites. The apostle Paul reinforced this teaching in I Thessalonians 4:4 when he writes, “For this is the will of God, your sanctification…that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor…” In The New American Commentary: I, II Thessalonians, D. Michael Martin, explains sanctification and what it means to be sanctified in this text. He writes, “The term sanctification means living in a manner consistent with the character and commands of God…In this context three aspects of sanctification are highlighted: one who is sanctified “should avoid sexual immorality” (v. 3), should know how “to control his own body” (vv. 4-5), and should not “wrong his brother or take advantage of him” (v. 6).”

The control of the body is not only what a person does or does not do with their body, but also what they take into their body. Dr. Richard Swenson offers “Recipes of Nutrition” as a guide for pastors and spiritual leaders in his book Margin. He encourages pastors to decrease their intake of fat, sugars and overall excess of calories. Fat should be avoided because of its calorie density and too many sugar calories is damaging to the body. Practically he suggests that processed snacks can be replaced with fruit with no financial added cost. Next he suggests that people should avoid overeating. He writes, “Put smaller portions on the table. Use a smaller plate. Chew food longer. Set your fork down between every bite.” Swenson advises the avoidance of processed foods by encouraging people to plant a garden or buy direct from a farm.

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316 1 Thess 4:3–4 (NASB)


318 Swenson, Margin, 103.
stand or grocer. He warns that processed foods often add chemicals, excessive salt, and sugar.
The fourth prescription is to regain healthy eating habits is to drink a lot of water. The rule of
thumb is 6-8 glasses of water a day. In his book, Clergy Killers, G. Lloyd Rediger, warns
against using thirst as a guide for when a person should drink or not drink. He also emphasizes
the big impact that simple hydrating can have upon clergy. He writes, “This is one of the
simplest and most beneficial changes most of us can in our lives; in enhances alertness,
empowers the immune system, and raises energy levels.”319 The fifth prescription Swenson gives
in recipes for nutrition is using exercise as an appetite suppressant and weight reducer. He
asserts the combination of diet and exercise as it relates to maintaining a good weight is
essential. He writes, “The sensible approach combines both calorie restriction and calorie
incineration in a weight-reduction program.”320 A healthy exercise routine and balanced diet can
be accompanied with regular rest periods of sleep to ensure the greatest possible health and to
develop a burnout resistant lifestyle.

Rest-taking practices and Sabbath as spiritual disciplines have already been addressed in
the second chapter of this project. However, sleep as it pertains to the body in self-care has not
been addressed. The emphasis on sleep for the pastor is very important. David Murray stresses
this by writing, “Show me your sleep pattern and I’ll show you your theology, because we all
preach a sermon in and by our sleep.”321 He explains that a lack or proper sleep can indicate
pride, ignorance of the human limitation, and a poor theology of soul and body. A poor sleep
rhythm affects the physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of a person’s life. Physically, a poor

320 Swenson, Margin, 104.
321 Murray, Reset, 54.
sleep schedule can transform symptoms consistent with diabetes, hypertension, obesity, depression, and memory loss into a more permanent condition over the long term. The function of the brain is hindered when not enough time is given for sleep. In their book, *Preventing Ministry Failure*, Michael Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffman describe what takes place within the brain when sleep occurs. The brain reorganizes, files away needed information, and disregards unimportant matters. They write, “Sleep deprivation reduces the time available for this important organizing function, making us less efficient in our mental office.” Wilson encourages spiritual leaders to keep a journal of their sleep schedule. He explains the importance of going to bed early, rising in the morning when natural waking occurs, and recording the hours. As journal entries are considered over a period of time, a person can understand their natural and routine sleep schedule. The more a person can go to bed and wake at consistent times, the more effective and productive they will become. In addition to application offered by Wilson, Dr. Archibald Heart offers several rules for sleeping better in his book, *Adrenaline and Stress: The Exciting New Breakthrough That Helps You Overcome Stress Damage*. He writes, “Since the quality of sleep is as important as its duration, attention should be given to every aspect of the sleeping environment: A comfortable bed, quiet atmosphere, and adequate time allowed for sleep are absolute essentials.” He draws attention to several rules for better sleep. Several of them are as follows: Rule 2—Do not do work that causes the adrenaline system to be aroused. Rule 3—Reduce the level of illumination to increase melatonin in the brain. Rule 4—Avoid alcohol, caffeine, chocolates, and spicy or greasy foods late in the evening. Rule 6—Find a quiet place to

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sleep. Rule 8—Learn relaxation techniques to still the mind and prepare the body for sleep.\textsuperscript{324} In another book, \textit{The Anxiety Cure}, Hart asserts: “There is not greater God-given gift that can help us maintain a tranquil, non-anxious existence than sleep. Sleep is one of the most powerful healing mechanisms given to us, and the inability to sleep creates a high state of distress.”\textsuperscript{325} Overall, proper sleep management can reduce the harmful affects of stress on the body and is an essential aspect of implementing a theology of self-care. A good night sleep is what prompted the Psalmist to declare, “I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the \textsc{Lord} sustained me.”\textsuperscript{326} This is the hope for every pastor dealing with burnout; to awaken sustained by God for a new day of serving, leading, and loving. The pastor who is consumed with his work will exemplify the words of Psalm 127:2. The Psalmists writes, “In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat, for he grants sleep to those he loves.” In commenting on this verse, Christopher Ash writes, “…the rebuke of Psalm 127 is to those whose sleeplessness is caused by ‘anxious toil’: burning the candle at both ends because we will not trust God for the work.”\textsuperscript{327} It is clear from these passages that there is a time to work and not to work, but trusting God must be constant in work and rest.

\textsuperscript{324} Archibald Hart, \textit{Adrenaline and Stress} 153-154.

\textsuperscript{325} Archibald Hart, \textit{The Anxiety Cure} (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999), 192.

\textsuperscript{326} Ps 3:5 (King James Version)

\textsuperscript{327} Ash, \textit{Zeal without Burnout}, 48.
Chapter Five
Conclusions

The author’s research and other studies by national organizations and denominational entities show that burnout is a widespread issue for most pastors. It is complex in that there are multiple causes and symptoms. The stress caused by burnout affects every system of the person. The body is affected negatively through fatigue, poor health. The emotional is affected by strained relationships and mental weariness. The spiritual is affected by a dampening relationship with God. Thus burnout is a problem with vertical and horizontal implications. Although burnout affects the whole being, the solution begins with nurturing life back into the spiritual heart of a person. There is connection between spiritual vibrancy and a burnout resistant life. The pastor who can regularly engage God through spiritual disciplines and cultivates key relationships built on intimacy can effectively increase his ability to resist burnout.

Many pastors do spend time seeking God each week in prayer and study.\textsuperscript{328} Pastors who can develop a balanced Christian living by engaging in disciplines were much more likely to resist burnout and recover from its effects at a much faster rate. It is for this reason, staying near to the healing presence of God is essential for pastors facing burnout. The discipline of prayer, meditation, and Sabbath were selected based on personal research and other research from national agencies.\textsuperscript{329} The discipline of prayer is one of three activities a pastor can harness to fight anxiety and the effects of stress. Prayer can include elements of adoration, thanksgiving, petition, and confession. The Psalms are an effective guide and pattern to follow when a pastor

\textsuperscript{328} Richard J. Krejcir, “Statistics on Pastors” (Pasadena: Francis A. Schaeffer Institute, 2016), 2.

\textsuperscript{329} Interviews with senior pastors, Dec. 2010, 21-22.
needs to lament. Many pastors are praying regularly for themselves and their congregants.\textsuperscript{330} The Discipline of Scripture Meditation should not be separated from the former discipline of prayer. Pastors are encouraged to come to the word slowly and with anticipation that God can heal and strengthen through his Word. They need to allow the Word of God to shape their expectations of who God is and who he says they are in Christ on a regular basis. Martin Luther and Donald Whitney are utilized as examples of how scriptural meditation can bring about spiritual refreshment.\textsuperscript{331} The Discipline of the Sabbath addresses the difficulty pastors face when trying to unplug while being on call 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. Congregants can sometimes place an unhealthy expectation on the pastor to be “on” all the time. Many pastors do take a day off, but many struggle to find times of rest on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. The author explains the scriptural mandate and benefit for taking a Sabbath and entering into rest-taking practices. Practical application is given for taking time out and creating “speed bumps” to slow down, disengage, and reignite the flame that burns down through ministering.\textsuperscript{332} The importance of embracing limitations and creating boundaries is also addressed as imperative to the leader’s health. The project demonstrates pastor is responsible for engaging in disciplines, but in order to maintain them properly he needs to include others in his life that can encourage and support him.

Chapter three explains the importance of engaging key relationships with a focus on intimacy. Intimacy is defined in the context of self-disclosure to key people. The pastor is limited in what he can understand about himself and needs others to speak into him to address

\textsuperscript{330} McGinness, “Learning to Pray as a Shepherd,” 33.

\textsuperscript{331} Whitney, \textit{Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life}, 48.

\textsuperscript{332} Murray, \textit{Reset}, 99-100.
the good and bad qualities in him. The Johari Window is used to describe this limited self-
knowledge. Pastors who refuse to engage others intimately feel isolated and lonely. Jesus and
his relationship with the Father emphasize the perfect example of intimacy. This kind of
intimacy should be the aspiration of a pastor with God and those closest to him. Three key
relationships a pastor needs this kind of intimacy with are his spouse, certain friendships, and
other pastors. Other than a pastor’s relationship God, his primary relationship of concern is his
spouse. There is a direct correlation between a pastor’s intimacy with God and that of his wife.
Pastor cannot nurture this kind of intimacy with a wife apart from intimacy with God. Research
reveals that most pastors’ wives are satisfied in their marriage, but there is a great amount of
stress the relationship must endure. The busyness of the ministry and stress from conflict within
the church does not leave a ministry marriage without challenges. Perhaps that is why ¼ have
experienced marital problems. Pastors who pursue a special friendship, also known as a soul
friendship, with their wife will have increased success through the stress and strife. There seems
tension with pastors when it comes to friendship in general. Personal Research reveals that 87%
report being satisfied with friendship and 60% said they struggle with loneliness. However,
the Barna research indicates that 34% of pastors have a high level of satisfaction in their
friendships, but 56% did not have that kind of satisfaction. The study further indicates that 14%
felt lonely. Several types of friendships are described within the chapter, but it is the
friendship based on virtue that is necessary for pastors. The model of Jesus in relation to the
trinity is used as an example of perfect friendship. Friendship imagery in the Old Testament

334 Barna Group, The State of Pastors: How Today’s Faith Leaders are Navigating Life and Leadership in
336 Barna Group, The State of Pastors, 40.
shows that friendship with God is possible. Moses and Abraham are examples. The wealth of wisdom from Proverbs shows at least four qualities of friendship: Constancy, Candor, Counsel, and Tact. In each of these there is an emphasis on intimacy, honesty, and the reminder that all human relationships fall short when compared to their vertical relationship with Jesus, their one true and perfect friend. He is the one “who sticks closer than a brother.” (Prov. 18:24) The example of David and Jonathon demonstrates the power that a covenant relationship with another can have to strengthen and support another through the difficulties of life. In the New Testament Jesus transforms the idea of friendship by combining the words of friendship and followers into the word disciple. Jesus tells the disciples, “You are my friends if you do what I command.” (John 15:14) The pastor is a disciple too and can be considered a friend of Christ’s if he is willing to obey. The example of Jesus and the disciples is a beautiful picture of friendship in the New Testament. Jesus activities with the disciples demonstrated a deep enriching friendship, especially with Peter, James, and John. Pastors can develop the power of friendship, like Jesus did, to make disciples in a relational way and to be disciple too. There are many friendships a pastor can have with others. However, intimacy with other pastors is an essential connection in the context of special friendships. Research reveals that 7 out of 10 pastors to meet with other pastors each month to share struggles and 68% meet with a mentor in ministry. Some pastors have difficulty being intimate with other pastors. These pastors state doctrinal reasons and others are too busy caring for their congregants and family. Two convincing friendships between ministry leaders in the Old and New Testament demonstrate the importance of life-giving relationships between covenant community faith leaders. Elijah and Elisha is offered as a picture of one burned out and lonely leader in need of encouragement and

the hope that the work of God would continue in Israel. Both men needed each other and God put them together for such time. The New Testament picture of friendship is between Paul and Timothy. Paul nurtured Timothy as a young man and he eventually became both mentor and friend to him. Paul and Timothy shared similar callings to minister to the Lord’s people during a time of intense persecution. Their friendship with Christ-centered and gospel driven and this was the glue that held them and the fire that warmed them. Pastors need friendships based on mutuality, but also one of mentor to mentoree. Practical advice is given to pastors seeking such connections with other pastors.

Chapter four begins by introducing the need for developing a theology of self-care by demonstrating, through research, that pastors are overall healthy, but work is needed for them to maintain health. In order to value self-care a pastor must understand what the “self” is in relation to who God is. The scope of self-care is not one-dimensional, but includes the spirit, emotion, intellect, and body. The soul in self-care is the key to understanding how to care for oneself. The soul integrates and synchronizes the whole person. Growth of the Soul is the growth of the whole person. Proper soul care is necessary for a soul to thrive and resist burnout. A brief word study of the term “soul” is given from the Old and New Testament. Both words indicate the soul as more than just the spiritual aspect of a pastor, but the entire make up of his being. Three aspects, which flow from the whole self, are defined and practical examples for how a pastor can engage these areas of self-care are given. The intellect in Self-Care is addressed in terms of what the mind is how a pastor can sharpen the mind by feeding on truth (Phil. 4:8). The battle in the mind is addressed and the war between the spirit and the flesh is made evident. Several practical measures are given which can help a pastor strengthen his intellect in informal, non-formal, and formal education.
The emotions in self-care are addressed next. A deep emphasis is placed on self-awareness and several helpful assessment tools are suggested. Pastors are encouraged to work through a life-map and genogram to help them understand how their past is affecting their present emotional state. Pastors are encouraged to also take two burnout assessments, which reveal where they are out on the scale of burnout. Personality profiling is also suggested to give the pastor an added awareness of his strength, weaknesses, and the way he relates to his world. When a pastor begins to understand his temperament in relation to others, he is able to assess the state of his current emotional health. He begins to understand how he should lead and why he follows others as he does. Following the personality profiling is a spiritual gift inventory in which a pastor can begin to understand his God-given shape in light of God’s special bestowment. In all of this, the pastor is to understand that the revelation these assessments offer in past and present self-knowledge are to be used for the building of the church. (Eph. 4:11-12)

The final aspect of self-care addressed is the body. It is this area that pastors are the weakest. Pastors seem to put less emphasis on this area versus the spiritual, emotional, and intellectual care. The author explains a proper body theology in this chapter. Jesus is given as an example of one who cared for his body and soul. He ate, drank, rested, and denied his flesh and mind when appropriate. The apostle Paul emphasizes the discipline of the body for the purpose of increase ministry output (I Cor. 9:27). Following the biblical references is some practical suggestion for what a pastor should eat and how they can apply a healthy exercise routine to their life to experience physical energy. In addition to eating and exercising is the importance of sleep management. A brief theology of sleep is given in this chapter. The physical and emotional benefits of sleep are offered and warnings are given for what happens if
the counsel is rejected. Dr. Archibald Hart offers several practical “rules” pastors can follow, while emphasizing the fact that sleep is a gift for the renewal of the whole man.  

**Solutions**

Burnout is a spiritual problem that negatively affects every part of the person. I am convinced that the terminology used for burnout is not accurate. Pastors can never burnout; there is always a spark of faith not matter the cold storm raging around him. He may need to fan the flame within him, or have another fan it for him. Richard Sibbes writes of this spark. He writes, “…in the covenant of grace, God requires the truth of grace, not any certain measure; and a spark of fire is fire as well as the whole element. Therefore we must look to grace in the spark as well as in the flame. All have not the like strong, yet the like precious faith (2 Pet. 1:1), whereby they lay hold, and put on, the perfect righteousness of Christ.”

It is for this reason that spiritual renewal is to be prioritized when a pastor is facing the effects of burnout. The disciplines the author selected were chosen based on their ability to leverage the pastor’s heart toward the healing presence of God. God is the one who rekindles the spark in the heart into a flame. In addition, research confirms that pastors are already praying often and reading regularly. Prayer and Scriptures work hand in hand to reveal the nature of God and his expectations for disciples. Pastors do pray, but their prayers must be fueled by a proper expectation of who God is and how he works. Prayer, in relation to Scripture reading and meditation, also reveals the lies the pastor believes about his life. The condition of burnout can cause a pastor to despair and lose focus of the goodness of God in the midst of trials. Prayer and Scripture are essential to revealing truth and cannot be fully separated as disciplines. The discipline of Sabbath and Rest are also vital for

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a pastor to engage. The discipline of prayer and reading as solutions to burnout are both active, but the discipline of rest means is not. It is an acknowledgement that there is an aspect of recovery and renewal that is simply a God at work in a quiet and submissive soul at rest. God works subversively and mightily while a pastor rests and sleeps and relaxes. Ultimately, it is the Spirit of God that is the great healer of the Pastor. The intimacy the pastor experiences with God should give him boldness to trust others with his pain. However, it can be difficult letting others into the pain and confusion. Emotional support systems are essential when facing burnout. The key relationships of spouse, friendships, and pastors are essential connections for a pastor that is fatigued. Pastors who reject these kinds of relationships, based on intimacy, have a high rate of burnout and do not recover well or at reasonable rate. Developing intimate relationships with other healthy souls provides assurance and guidance for the ailing pastor. Pastors also need to understand the struggle of their spouse more fully. They need to make sure their wife has the resources and time to make and sustain friendships.

Overall, it seems to me that there is a lack of friendships based on covenant between most friends. David and Jonathon made a covenant in their friendship and Paul and Timothy were bonded by the blood-covenant of Jesus Christ and the call as ministers of the gospel. These kinds of friendships seem to lacking in many pastors lives. Many pastors indicate they have friendships, and yet they also indicate they feel great loneliness. The apparent contradiction between these two factors of friendships is alarming. In many ways I believe that Satan can wield burnout in the life of a pastor to make him feel alone. Spiritual warfare is certainly an aspect of burnout and the enemy loves to separate sheep from the flock for sifting. The lie many pastors seem to believe is that they are alone, unlovable, unlikable, and despised. The research
shows that pastors have much in common with other pastors. They face common struggles and share similar joys in life and ministry.

The consideration of a development of a theology of self-care, which is inclusive of every aspect of the pastor’s life, is essential if he is to lead a resilient and effective life. Pastors seem to be primarily concerned with the spiritual area of self-care. Secondarily, the emotional and relational aspects seem to be important, but not as important. Finally, the physical care of the pastor is the least of all priorities to them. The positive conclusion is that many pastors are “fanning the flame” (II Tim. 1:6) through spiritual disciplines. However, less positive is the isolation that many face when dealing with burnout. Marriage and friendships can be difficult to maintain due to busyness or conflict within the church. Pastors who seek to deal with burnout alone will struggle much more than those who develop a strong support network. Also, pastors who stop growing intellectually will struggle to maintain a vibrant emotional health in sermons and spiritual conversations. The research revealing a pastor’s poor physical health is disturbing. Pastors, which are primarily concerned with the spiritual and emotional care of others, seem to ignore implementing healthy diets, hydration practices, proper exercise in moderation, and healthy sleep patterns. The result is added weight and pressure put on the spiritual and emotional systems of their lives. Another result is the lack of longevity and effectiveness in ministry. In neglecting the physical care of their being, they limit the energies that could be leveraged for sharing the gospel and making disciples over the span of a long life.

It is important to note that even though a pastor understands the importance of self-care, it does not mean he understands how to implement it. It is best for pastors to develop systems and routines in the context of accountability relationships. For example, the pastor who desires better health can keep a food and sleep journal, maintain a weekly exercise routine, and share
this regularly with a partner. The partner offers encouragement and accountability to the pastor.

The Apostle Paul knew the importance of taming the body for the sake of the ministry. In I Cor. 9:27 he writes the following:

“24 Don’t you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! 25 All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. 26 So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.”

Discipline for the purpose of winning the race is the goal of the athlete. Believers are to apply discipline to every area of life so that we may obtain and eternal prize. The discipline of the body is worthwhile so that the gospel may go out clearly and with longevity. Paul believed the body was to be brought under subjection for his own good and the spiritual development of others. In *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, David Lowery explains, “Paul would not let his body master him (cf. 1 Cor. 6:12); sometimes he denied even its demand for rightful privileges and pleasures (8:9) for a greater good (10:33).”

Further development of this project could begin by including more spiritual disciplines and studying their relationship to burnout. A person could discover how implementing these disciplines could push back the harmful effects of burnout. For example, intentional spiritual journaling could be considered. Certain historical and contemporary examples of journaling could be researched. Key Scripture texts dealing with burnout could be selected over a period of months for the pastor to read through and journal. Also, in the area of developing key

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340 1 Cor 9:24–27 (New Living Translation).

relationships for emotional support, the church and its leaders could be considered. I did not mention how deacons, elders, and church members can respond to a pastor in burnout. The author did not include this kind of research into this project. Certainly deacons, elders, and congregants play a part in the building up of a burnout pastor. For examples, these people can help a pastor remain faithful to taking a day off, maintain vacations, and give him a sabbatical when appropriate. In addition to the community of faith, the author believes that covenant friendships and mentor relationships can be further explored and better defined. Perhaps a solution would be for pastors to write down a commitment statement to a key friend or mentor giving them permission to speak into their life and to draw boundaries for these relationships.

There are three other areas of development that I have considered as I researched the project. First, I have thought much about the affect of spiritual warfare in the context of burnout. In Ephesians 6:12 Paul writes, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” This verse is a reminder that some of the wrestling and pain in burnout does not come from congregants or the pastors personal lacking and limits, but from an unseen Enemy. Matthew Henry explains, “The combat for which we are to be prepared is not against ordinary human enemies, not barely against men compounded of flesh and blood, nor against our own corrupt natures singly considered, but against the several ranks of devils, who have a government which they exercise in this world.” The verses that follow describe the believer’s defense as “the armor of God” (Eph. 6:13). It would be advantageous to discover how each part of the armor can be used to effectively combat burnout.

Second, I have given much thought to personal burnout and the sovereignty of God in the

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context of sanctification. Doug Mangum explains, “Sanctification is the concept of being set apart as sacred. It refers to the process of gradual purification from sin and progressive spiritual growth that should mark the life of the believer.” In this purification, it would seem that God could allow the difficulty of burnout, as he did with Elijah (I Kings 19), to disrupt the soul of a pastor so that in his exposed weakness he is made dependent on him. The pastor may plead for weakness to be driven out, but God in his sovereignty may reject the request for progressive spiritual growth to take place. Paul experienced this in I Cor. 9. He pleaded with God about a “thorn in the flesh” to be removed from his life some three times. He shares God’s response to his request and then his response to God. I Cor. 9:9-10 says, “The combat for which we are to be prepared is not against ordinary human enemies, not barely against men compounded of flesh and blood, nor against our own corrupt natures singly considered, but against the several ranks of devils, who have a government which they exercise in this world.” I believe more research and study could be given to the sovereignty of God in suffering in relation to burnout. In the Old Testament it was Job who was subject to suffering and burnout. God, in is sovereignty, allowed Satan to afflict his servant Job (Job 1:6-12). Job could not hear the celestial conversations happening in the heavens between God and Satan. He only knew his life full of suffering and his God was good. His responses to God during and after the suffering mark his great faith in God through burnout. His initial response to God captures the response a pastor should have when dealing with burnout. In Job 1:20-21, he says, “Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. And he said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The L ORD gave, and the L ORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the L ORD.” Job reminds us that person who can maintain the goodness of God through

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worship and obedience, in the midst of suffering, will be the recipient of great eternal blessing. Carl Schultz’s asserts, “Job’s words are indeed noble. He sees only the hand of God in his tragedies; he does not curse God but renders praise. Job does not charge God with wrongdoing.” The response of Job to sorrow and suffering is related to the subject burnout. I believe a study of Job in the context of burnout and in relation to a proper response to the sovereignty of a benevolent God could be very beneficial.

The third and final consideration is the recovery of burnout as a result of moral failure or acute mental illness. An approach to this kind of burnout and measures for intervention and restoration would be beneficial. Pastors dealing with a broken marriage or an addiction can benefit from the three principles the author shared, but an approach, including outside specialized counseling, would be necessary for this kind of soul renewal.

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Appendix A

Pastor Interview Questions

1. How long have you served as the pastor of your church?
2. Has ministry seemed to get easier or harder as you age?
3. How many hours, on average, do you work per week?
4. Do you feel overworked?
5. If so, why do you work as much as you do?
6. How would you describe burnout?
7. What are the causes of burnout?
8. Have you personally experienced burnout? If so, to what degree?
9. How do you handle stress in your life?
10. Do you experience regular spiritual renewal?
11. How would you define a balanced Christian life?
12. Do you take a regular day off?
13. If so, what do you do on your day off?
14. On average, how many times a week do you have a quiet time?
15. If so, what does it consist of?
16. How many close friends do you have?
17. Do you feel you have enough fellowship with other pastors?
18. Do you struggle with loneliness or feeling isolated?
19. Do your friendships provide support in your ministry?
20. If so, how do these benefit your life and help you overcome stress and burnout?
21. What relationship does burnout have in ministry marriages?
22. Do you have an established system of accountability?
23. What is the Purpose of this Accountability?
Appendix B

CONSENT FORM

Pastoral Self-Care: A Manual with Key Principles for Maintaining a Healthy Lifestyle and Pastoral Ministry.

James D. McClanahan
Liberty University
School of Divinity

You are invited to be in a research study of how pastors can develop a burnout resistant life and ministry. You were selected as a possible participant because you have pastored a church of over 50 for more than two years. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

James D. McClanahan, a doctoral candidate in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to answer the question of how a pastor can minimize the likelihood of burnout by living a balanced Christian life, developing intimate relationships, and implementing a theology of self-care.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1.) Respond to the letter of invitation to participate in a 30-minute recorded interview.
2.) Respond with awareness that the data collection will be confidential.
3.) Be prepared to answer 23 questions related to ministry burnout and prevention of burnout during the 30-minute, recorded interview.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:
The risks are no more than participants would expect to experience when going about their everyday activities. The participants of the study will not receive any direct benefits.

Compensation:
You will receive no payment/reimbursement/incentives for taking part in this study.

Confidentiality:
The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records. We may share the data we collect from you for use in future research studies or with other researchers; if we share the data that we collect about you, we will remove any information that could identify you before we share it.
Appendix C
Categorical List of Spiritual Disciplines

I. The Inward Disciplines
   a. Meditation
   b. Prayer
   c. Fasting
   d. Study

II. The Outward Disciplines
   a. Simplicity
   b. Solitude
   c. Submission
   d. Service

III. The Corporate Disciplines
   a. Confession
   b. Worship
   c. Guidance
   d. Celebration

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Appendix D
Johari Window

Self-Understanding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Self</th>
<th>Blind Self</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Known to self and others</td>
<td>Unknown to self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Known to others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hidden Self</th>
<th>Unknown Self</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Known to self</td>
<td>Unknown to self and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown to others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mentor and/or Accountability Group

Accountability partner or group

Spouse

Counselor

Dr. Mark Searby
Beeson Divinity School

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346 Mark A. Searby, The Resilient Pastor, 162.
Appendix E
Sample Mentoring Agreement

EXHIBIT 4.3: Sample Mentoring Partnership Agreement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>We have agreed on the following goals and objectives as the focus of this relationship:</th>
<th>Our measures for successful accomplishment of each of these objectives will be:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TO ENSURE THAT OUR RELATIONSHIP IS A MUTUALLY REWARDING AND SATISFYING EXPERIENCE, WE AGREE TO:**

1. **Meet regularly.**
   Our specific schedule of contact is as follows:

2. **Look for multiple opportunities and experiences to enhance the mentee's learning.**
   We have identified the following opportunities for learning (e.g., projects, task forces, client teams, conferences):

3. **Maintain confidentiality of our relationship.**
   Confidentiality for us means …

4. **Honor the ground rules we develop for the relationship.**
   Our ground rules are …

5. **Provide regular feedback to each other and evaluate our progress.**
   We will do this by …

At least once during the course of the next year, and again at the conclusion of the mentoring cycle, we agree to review this agreement and evaluate our progress and our learning. If we choose to continue our mentoring partnership, we may elect to do so, as long as we have discussed and agreed to the basis for that continuation. Should we decide to conclude the relationship earlier than we anticipate, we agree to do so with appropriate closure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


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Appendix F
Sample Questions to Ask in Constructing Your Genogram

Instructions: The following questions are ones we ask to help people get beneath the surface and identify how the past might be impacting the present. As you read through the questions, try to consider them especially from the perspective you had as a child between the ages of eight to twelve.

1. Describe each family member in your household with three adjectives and identify their relationship to you (parent, caregiver, grandparent, sibling, etc.).

2. Describe your parents’ (or caretakers’) marriage(s) as well as your grandparents’ marriage(s).

3. How were conflict, anger, and tensions handled in your extended family over two or three generations?

4. Were there any family “secrets” (such as an unwed pregnancy, incest, mental illness, or financial scandal, etc.)?

5. What was considered “success” in your family?

6. How did ethnicity or race shape you and your family?

7. How would you describe the relationships between family members (conflicted, detached, enmeshed, abusive)?

8. Were there any heroes/heroines in the family? Any villains or favorites? Why were these individuals singled out in this way?

9. What generational patterns or themes do you recognize (addictions, affairs, abuse, divorce, mental illness, abortions, children born out of wedlock, etc.)?

10. What traumatic losses has your family experienced? (For example, sudden death, prolonged illness, stillbirth/miscarriage, bankruptcy, divorce?)

11. What insights (one or two) are you becoming aware of that help you to make sense of how your family of origin, or others, impacted who you are today?

12 What are one or two specific ways this may be impacting your leadership?

When you explore your past with a genogram, you expose your shadow to the light of Jesus. Then by God’s grace, you can break its power over you and integrate its hidden treasures into your leadership.

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348 Peter Scazzero, The Emotionally Healthy Leader, 74-75.
Appendix G

Spiritual Gift Lists

In 1 Corinthians 12:8–10, 28:

• Word of wisdom
• Word of knowledge
• Faith
• Healing
• Prophecy and prophets
• Tongues
• Interpretation of tongues
• Apostles
• Teachers
• Deeds of power
• Forms of assistance
• Forms of leadership

In Romans 12:6–8:

• Prophecy,
• Ministry
• Teaching
• Exhortation
• Giving
• Leading
• Showing mercy

In Ephesians 4:11:

• Apostles
• Prophets
• Evangelists
• Pastors
• Teachers.

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April 12, 2016

James D. McClanahan IRB Approval 2456.041216: Pastoral Self-Care: A Manual with Key Principles for Maintaining a Healthy Lifestyle and Pastoral Ministry

Dear Jamie,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
The Graduate School
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