LIBERTY UNIVERSITY


SCHOOL OF MUSIC


**Modern-Day Korahites in Crisis: Causes and Consequences of Moral Failure in Worship**

**Leaders**


A Thesis Submitted to
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by


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**THESIS DEFENSE**

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**ABSTRACT**

In the Bible and throughout the history of Christianity, examples of moral failure in ministry leadership demonstrate a negative impact on the leader's family, congregations, faith traditions, and ministry efficacy. This qualitative study examines the causes and consequences of moral failure in worship leadership by considering the biblical account of Old Testament leaders who morally failed and apply psychological principles to assess moral fragility that may be faced by some worship leaders. Finally, this study offers biblical principles and practical strategies that target the potential pitfalls of leadership in an effort to hinder moral failure among worship leaders.

Finally, I would like to thank Jesus Christ, my Lord, and Savior, for the gift of new life in Him, which has made this journey possible. I thank Him for the strength, guidance, and illumination of His Spirit in me as a witness for His renown. May the labor of this educational enrichment bring forth fruits for His Kingdom as I continue to minister in The Salvation Army.

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**CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

In the twenty-first century, the church leadership is facing a continual experience amongst its worship leaders and pastors that took place in biblical times thousands of years ago. King Solomon, in his old age, said it best, "History merely repeats itself. It has all been done before. Nothing under the sun is truly new."[1] Within the past 30-40 years, there has been an influx in worship leadership of those who have failed to uphold the sanctity and integrity of leading God's covenant people in biblical worship within their ecclesial communities and the secular public sphere. The media has been sharing one breaking news after the other of worship leaders and pastors who have morally failed.

Author Ed Stetzer summarizes the plague of moral failure in worship leadership by revealing the following,

> In the Bible, we see the moral failure of many leaders, and they act as a reminder to us that even those near to God are tempted to turn away. The carnality of all of us ought to bring us to our knees daily as we seek strength to fight against so many temptations to sin. This is magnified for those in leadership. Moral failure is but one expression of the problem of sin. And for many in our churches today, it's the expression that is causing real questions that need answers.[2]

Barna Group's qualitative research findings on *The State of Pastors* asked the crowning question, which obliges a thorough answer within worship leadership, "How are pastors coping with the stresses of their ministry?"[3]

From the very moment, Adam and Eve rebelled against God (Genesis 3), humanity has inherited a propensity toward sinful living. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of

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[1] Ecclesiastes 1:9 (NLT)

[2] Ed Stetzer, "A Letter to the Church On Moral Failure and Misconduct," *Christianity Today*, September 4, 2018, https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2018/september/letter-to-church-problem-of-moral-failure-is-real.html.

[3] Barna Group, *The State of Pastors: How Today's Faith Leaders Are Navigating Life and Leadership in an Age of Complexity* (Ventura, CA: Barna Group, 2017), 6.

God."[4] These stresses (or sin-side effects) have caused numerous of God's chosen leaders to fall into temptation and obtain its consequences that have destructively affected their family, congregation, faith tradition, and ministry efficacy.  A.W. Tozer gives an excellent description of this exact sin problem, "When God made the human soul in his own image, He did so that we might act according to that Divine nature. He never intended the virus of sin to infect that sacred place within man. Sin, therefore, is the unnatural thing. It is a foreign substance defiling man's heart and life, repelling God's gaze. Because of this condition in man, sin is natural, worship is unnatural, and so few people do it."[5]

Scripture gave a stern warning of the controlling nature of sin to Cain that worship leaders should carefully observe, "But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master."[6] This sin-induced experience has crippled the personal and vocational development of worship leaders within the protestant church in the United States of America. Diane J. Chandler agrees and cites, "Pastors, once a viable group of leaders, encounter leadership and spirituality issues as part of their ongoing personal development and vocational calling. Research has shown that the average pastor works between fifty and sixty hours per week, spends limited time in personal spiritual formation activity, and lacks a close personal friend or support-accountability network."[7]

As a result, the pursuit of biblical principles and practical strategies to circumvent this sin-induced experience is crucial. The stigma of moral failure is an unceasing problem in the

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[4] Romans 3:23 (NIV)

[5] A W. Tozer, *The Purpose of Man: Designed to Worship*, ed. James L. Snyder (Ventura, Calif.: Regal, 2009), 53.

[6] Genesis 4:7 (NLT)

[7] Diane J. Chandler, "The Impact of Pastors' Spiritual Practices on Burnout," *Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling* 64, no. 2 (June 2010): 1, https://doi.org/10.1177/154230501006400206.

worship leadership of God's people amongst its leaders in the United States. The following qualitative study considers, vis-à-vis the review of scholarly literature, the causes and consequences of moral failure in worship leaders.

<center>Background of the Problem</center>

Aforementioned, Christian authors have witnessed the moral failure of prominent worship leaders in the United States. McIntosh and Rima address this thought by noting, "The proliferation of significant leadership failures within the Christian church and various other Christian organizations during the final two decades of the twentieth century has been without a doubt one of the most serious threats to the continued credibility and viability of Christianity in an increasingly secular and skeptical American culture."[8] "The truth is we need to have a true desperation and dependence upon God and the Holy Spirit to guide us and be our vision."[9] Although this issue has been escalating in recent history, this problem dates back to the story of ancient Israel in the wilderness with a man named Korah.

The story of Korah, son of Izhar, exemplifies a biblical narrative that exhibits how one called to lead others in worship can succumb to moral failure due to sin. His responsibility included and was not limited to the guardianship of the affairs of the tabernacle (Numbers 3:37-32), yet that was not enough. Korah desired the priestly privileges the likes of what Aaron had. Thus, not satisfied with his assignment as a Levite, he became jealous and resentful, leading him to begin a rebellion against Moses and Aaron (Numbers 16). His disobedient act caused his associates and himself to die a tragic death (Numbers 16:21-25) and the demise of 14,700 from

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[8] Gary McIntosh and Samuel D. Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership: How to Become an Effective Leader by Confronting Potential Failures*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 8.

[9] Jerry Leonard Newman, "Worship Pastor's Need for Pastoral Leadership Development" (DWS diss., Liberty University, 2019), 76-77, in Liberty University Scholars Crossing, https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3165&context=doctoral.

his tribe (Numbers 16:48). Korah's moral failure fatally affected his family, tribe, ministry efficacy, and faith tradition. The worship leaders known as the Korahites have their lineage from him.

According to Easton's Bible dictionary, Korahites were "that portion of the Kohathites that descended from Korah. They were an important branch of the singers of the Kohathite division (2 Chronicles 20:19)."[10] These Old Testament worship leaders were in charge of doing the work at the Lord's tabernacle and to stand before the community and minister to them[11]. Although their forefather morally failed, God graciously allowed them to continue ministering as temple singers and gatekeepers. Their psalms testify to the holy work they were graciously assigned and their allegiance in return to God (e.g., Psalms 42-49, 84, 85, 87, and 88).

Unlike the Korahites, today's twenty-first-century worship leaders are not just preparing and leading songs for corporate worship on Sundays with their worship teams; they are also asked to take on pastoral responsibilities (e.g., mentoring, discipling, shepherding); they are asked to administer a ministerial position, not just present and lead music in worship. John D. Witvliet's insight on the matter is worth sharing as he states, "This worship stuff is a lot more complicated than it used to be."[12] Pastoral duties have become a pre-requisite for worship leaders in the twenty-first century.

Zac M. Hicks adds the following speaking on the changing nature of worship leading that we are experiencing,

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[10] *Easton Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed., s.v. "Korahites," https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/korahites/.
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[11] Numbers 16:9

[12] John D. Witvliet, "Planning and Leading Worship as a Pastoral Task," Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, February 24, 2005, https://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/planning-and-leading-worship-as-a-pastoral-task/.

You have an extraordinary job with high stakes and grand opportunities. You aren't *just* a song leader. You aren't *just* a lead musician. Your set lists aren't *just* inspiring medleys of well-glued songs. You aren't merely on stage, and those people out there aren't merely the audience. They are Christ's bride, God's beloved, gathered from the four corners of the world that they might be reclaimed by and reaimed toward the Author and Perfector of their faith. They are disciples, followers. What you do and how you lead have a direct and formative impact on their journey of faith. Whether you know it or not, you are *pastoring* them.[13]

Constance M. Cherry gives an even better description of the nature of worship leaders today that she defines as a 'pastoral musician,' "The title 'pastoral musician' reflects a multidimensional type of leadership that combines both being *and* doing – a leader who is being conformed to the image of Christ and, as a result, is able to do God-focused ministry with others."[14] This added responsibility to this ministry position can bring anxiety, stress, personal dysfunctions, and ministry burnout if not well balanced.

McIntosh and Rima give the historical background to this dysfunction in this excerpt,

With the emergence of the Baby Boomer generation, and its member's ascendance to positions of leadership during the late 1970s and 1980s, America and the church discovered a generation plagued by a plethora of personal dysfunctions. Whether it was the dysfunction of codependence, addictive behaviors, obsessive-compulsive disorder, narcissistic personality disorder, adult children of alcoholics (ACOA), or anyone of a host of others, personal dysfunctions became the badge of the boomer generation and a focal point of church ministries.[15]

This is one of the backgrounds to the problem for today's twenty-first-century worship leader related to the problem of moral failure. Ed Stetzer brings the severity of this issue to light by

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[13] Zac Hicks, *The Worship Pastor: A Call to Ministry for Worship Leaders and Teams* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2016), 13.

[14] Constance M. Cherry, *The Music Architect: Blueprints for Engaging Worshipers in Song* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 2.

[15] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 10.

advising, "One is too many, but there have been far too many moral failures in a world where Christians often claim to be guardians of morality."[16] Indeed!

## Statement of the Problem

"So much of our pristine, modern Christianity is literally hell-bent on telling us that ministry must start with success."[17] In today's society, the desire to achieve success in ministry has developed many tempting and stressful circumstances that have caused worship leaders to fail. The ambition to succeed in and of itself is not wrong; however, the heart's motivation that fuels it is where the hammer meets the nail. Mike Fehlauer explains this spiritual imbroglio,

> Ambition's seduction is that it is easily interpreted as a holy desire to build the kingdom of God or the pursuit of God's destiny for our lives. In fact, ambition is an attempt to add significance to our lives at the expense of others. It is blinding ambition that rationalizes an 'end justifies the means' approach to life. We begin to define who we are by our accomplishments. We find ourselves not just in pursuit of our destiny, but in pursuit of the honor of men.[18]

Integrity and humility in worship leadership have seen a decline for the sake of achieving self-centered objectives and pleasing the 21st-century 'consumerist' congregation that sits in our pews.

There is a current era of worship leaders being elevated to the stature of celebrities; some have embraced the seductive glow of the spotlight, which in turn has inflated their ego, sidelining their real God-driven purpose – leading God's people to worship God, and God alone (Luke 4:8). Ed Stetzer brings clarity to this issue by noting, "Worship leaders are not rock stars.

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[16] Ed Stetzer, "The Moral of Moral Failings of Christian Leaders." *Christianity Today- The Exchange with Ed Stetzer, April 21, 2018. https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2018/april/moral-of-story-about-moral-failings.html.*

[17] Hicks, *The Worship Pastor*, 195.

[18] Mike Fehlauer, "The Seduction of Success," *Charisma Magazine*, 4/30/2000, https://ministrytodaymag.com/leadership/ethics/217-the-seduction-of-success.

Nor are they the center of attention. Their role is to inspire others to make Jesus the center of attention and the only One who is worthy of our praise and adoration."[19]

According to Hein van Wyck, "When the church becomes less about the Father's heart and more about ourselves, we lose the very essence of a kingdom-focused, purpose-driven life. If it's truly no longer I that live, but Christ that lives in me, should my words, actions, outlook, behavior, outreach, and existence not be 100 percent biblically based? Should I not hate what God hates and love what God loves?"[20]

Dr. Richard J. Krejcir, from his report entitled "What is Going on with the Pastors in America?", shares the following frightful statistics, "*Focus on the Family* has reported (http:www.parsonage.org/) that we in the United States lose a pastor a day because he seeks an immoral path instead of God's, seeking intimacy where it must not be found. FOF statistics state that 70% of pastors do not have close personal friends and no one in whom to confide. They also said that 35% of pastors personally deal with sexual sin. In addition, 25% of pastors are divorced."[21] This is a severe problem!

Again, McIntosh and Rima grasp the core of this drive for success by sharing the following insight,

> At the core of the problem is personal ambition and the insidious desire to have or possess something that is not able to be possessed – namely, success. We live in a culture obsessed with both *having* and *success*. And this desire has infiltrated the ranks of Christian leaders as it has every other strata of American culture. The

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[19] Ed Stetzer, "Worship Leaders Are Not Rock Stars," *Christianity Today*, March 31, 2015, https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2015/march/worship-leaders-are-not-rock-stars.html.

[20] Hein van Wyck, "When We Worship Without Integrity," *Worship Leader*, July 12, 2016, https://worshipleader.com/magazine/when-we-worship-without-integrity/.

[21] Richard J. Krejcir, "Statistics on Pastors: What Is Going on with the Pastors in America?" www.lifechristiancounseling.com, accessed September 9, 2019, http://www.lifechristiancounseling.com/pastors/Statistics%20on%20Pastors.pdf.

problem arises from the fact that success is not something one can have or possess. True success is a state of *being* not *having*.[22]

This yearning for success has driven worship leaders to be motivated by the wrong, sinful desire – one that is self-seeking rather than God-honoring. "People may be pure in their own eyes, but the Lord examines their motives."[23] Stahnke adds, "Success can pull us into an endless maze of our own achievement. We can end up living in a make-believe world of self."[24] This delusional reality has caused worship leaders' families to suffer; "pastors face more conflict, more anger, and more expectations than ever before. At the same time, they work long hours and have little pay, little reward, and produce their own dysfunctional families because of their absence."[25]

According to Ortberg et al., "When we elevate the priority of what pastors accomplish or achieve over how Christ is being formed in them and whom they are becoming, our system is deeply flawed. When pedestal and image are pursued rather than faithfulness and humility, the effects are damaging."[26] The Bible is clear, "Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need."[27] The lack of consistent, righteous living in worship leaders is a problem, and its causes need to be studied for Christ-centered leadership enrichment. Fehlauer said it best, "The bottom line: Whenever a leader feels they have achieved success, that is the time they are most vulnerable to the seductive influences of power."[28]

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[22] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 19.

[23] Proverbs 16:2 (NLT)

[24] Gene Roncone, Susan Schmidt, and George Stahnke, *Isolation in Ministry: Understanding the Cause, Consequence, and Cure for a Modern Epidemic* (Independently Published, 2019), Amazon Kindle.

[25] Krejcir, "Statistics on Pastors."

[26] John Ortberg et al., "When One of Us Falls," *Christianity Today*, June 25, 2015, https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2015/june-web-exclusives/when-one-of-us-falls.html.

[27] Matthew 6:33 (NLT)

"And you yourself must be an example to them by doing good works of every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching."[29] Paul's great advice to his mentee Titus that worship leaders ought to take to heart when leading God's people in corporate worship in the twenty-first century.

## Purpose of the Study

This study aims to explore the causes and consequences of moral failure in worship leaders in the twenty-first century. "With increasing organizational demands and complexity, organizational leaders are apt to struggle with work overload and burnout. However, little research has been conducted that examines spirituality and its relationship to burnout and the specific practices contributing to leaders' emotional and psychological health, sense of well-being, and organizational effectiveness."[30] Bruce C. Birch adds, "Every moment of our lives, while blessed with the presence of God and the goodness of the world and the life that God has given, is subject to monumental forces that betray God's love and tempt human beings to serve other gods – be they gods of wealth, reputation, power, addiction, comfort, self-denigration, or other."[31]

This study examines the literature concerning moral failure, its causes, consequences, and preventative steps to avert its potential pitfalls. This study also considers the biblical accounts of Old Testament leaders (e.g., Moses, Saul, David, Solomon, Samson, Jonah) who fell into temptation as a result of behavioral and psychological dysfunctions and gather from their

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[28] Fehlauer, "The Seduction of Success," https://ministrytodaymag.com/leadership/ethics/217-the-seduction-of-success.

[29] Titus 2:7 (NLT)

[30] Chandler, "The Impact of Pastors' Spiritual Practices on Burnout," 1.

[31] Bruce C. Birch et al., *Bible and Ethics in the Christian Life*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2018), 110, htttp://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1w6tbwn.11.

narratives biblical and practical strategies to avoid this experience. Finally, this study seeks to provide psychological assessments for dysfunctional personality traits in worship leaders.

<div align="center">Research Questions</div>

There has been an unfortunate regularity to the experience of moral failure in worship leaders in the twenty-first century within the church in the United States. It has produced the urgent need for lead pastors to consider the necessary preventive steps to be taken to help incoming worship leaders avoid this fate shared by as much as 37% of worship pastors. "The average (median) number of former pastors known to have left because of stress is two, but one in three current leaders reports they personally know three or more (37%) and one in seven say they know five or more (14%)."[32] Ministry stress is a definite factor that leads to the causes and consequences of moral failure. As a result, the two primary research questions assisting in discovering the causes and consequences of moral failure relating to ministry stress are:

**RQ 1**: What conditions increase the most negative impact on the moral uprightness of 21st-century worship leaders?

*H1: The drive for personal success, the lack of accountability, and the psychological dysfunctions present in worship leaders are the leading causes of ministry stress that result in moral failure.*

**RQ 2**: What are the long-term consequences of a worship leader's moral failure in their family, congregation, and faith tradition?

*H2: The long-term consequences of a worship leader's moral failure will result in the demise of their family structure through divorce/separation, the misrepresentation of their faith within the*

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[32] Barna Group, *The State of Pastors*, 26.

*Christian community they serve, and the credibility of their faith tradition mistrusted within*

*secular society.*

Answering these questions is crucial to understanding the various risks and effects that worship leaders/pastors face, leading to moral failure.

## Significance of the Study

Diane J. Chandler gives us a synopsis of the problem, "Pastors, once a viable group of leaders, encounter leadership and spirituality issues as part of their ongoing personal development and vocational calling. Research has shown that the average pastor works between fifty and sixty hours per week, spends limited time in personal spiritual formation activity, and lacks a close personal friend or support-accountability network."[33] This statement by Diane brings emphasis to the importance of this thesis.

This study is meaningful because it seeks to understand the human problem of moral failure in worship leaders. Ed Stetzer is worth a reiteration, "One is too many, but there have been far too many moral failures in a world where Christians often claim to be guardians of morality."[34] By reviewing other relevant works of literature on the topics of moral failure, coping with ministry, burnout, family-related stress, the 'dark side' of leadership, accountability, and the need for a support group as a worship leader, this problem is on its path to transparency and lucidity.

Additionally, this thesis study evaluates moral failure causes by observing behavior such as personal stress, isolation in ministry, pride, laziness, and comfort in worship leadership. The Barna Group report *The State of Pastors* and Drs. McIntosh and Rima's book *Overcoming the*

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[33] Chandler, "The Impact of Pastors' Spiritual Practices on Burnout," 1.

[34] Stetzer, "The Moral of Moral Failings of Christian Leaders."

*Dark Side of Leadership* are significant sources to observe the emotional and psychological

impact of a worship pastor's leadership in ministry. Scripture admonishes us about the enemy,

"Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion,

looking for someone to devour."[35] Lastly, this study provides practical, biblical principles to

assist with reducing moral failure in worship leaders.

Method/Design

For this study, the application of two investigative research methods on moral failure in

worship leaders is in use. The first is a biblical/historical/psychological research method,

whereas the study of Old Testament leaders determines the psychological dysfunctions that have

led to the behavioral patterns susceptible to potential moral failure. The study begins with

Moses' story – the compulsive leader whose formative years developed his dark side that caused

his moral failure (Exodus 2:15).

> Abandonment by his parents as an infant, adoption by the enemies of his own
> people, an upbringing in the rigid environment of a royal family with the
> accompanying high expectations, a significant failure, and the ultimate rejection
> by his adoptive grandfather comprised Moses' formative years. It no doubt was
> the combination of the unmet needs stemming from his childhood that created
> Moses' dark side and resulted in his becoming a compulsive leader.[36]

 Subsequently, there is Solomon – the narcissistic leader (1 Chronicles 29:1, Ecclesiastes 2:4-8,

9-10),

> Solomon was quite young and inexperienced in political matters (1 Chron. 29:1).
> It is probably safe to assume that Solomon's contrived route to the throne, his
> youthfulness and inexperience, the legendary success of his father, as well as his
> probable awareness of the circumstances of his own birth that followed the death
> of David and Bathsheba's child born of adultery all combined to provide a sense
> of inferiority and a powerful drive within the young king to make a name for
> himself. Because of the legacy of his father, David, Solomon would always be

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[35] 1 Peter 5:8 (NLT)

[36] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 104.

looking over his shoulder; simply succeeding would never be enough for an insecure king. Making a name for himself would require doing something grand.[37]

 After that, there is Saul – the paranoid leader (1 Samuel 12:11-13; 14:24-30, 31-45; 18:7-8), who exhibited these negative signs as a leader: suspicion, hostility, fear, and jealousy. In the twentieth century, "unfortunately, contemporary Sauls are sprinkled throughout the ranks of spiritual leadership."[38]

Next, there is Samson – the codependent leader (Judges 14:1-4; 16:1-20; 15:1-8), who "worried about the feelings of others, often to the point of becoming emotionally and physically ill"[39] – he desired to please people rather than God; a disposition that led to his untimely death. Jonah is another biblical character – the passive-aggressive leader (Jonah 4:1, 3, 6, 8), who demonstrated a stubborn, forgetful, and complaining spirit. Today, "modern-day Jonahs are perennial complainers whose very presence demoralizes those whom they lead or with whom they interact. Though they perform the tasks that are expected of them, it is with little or no enthusiasm, and they harbor anger and bitterness for being forced (so they think) to do so."[40] Lastly, there is King David (Psalm 32:1-5, 51) – the depressed leader. Lane Severson mentions, "King David is a common biblical example of (usually) great leadership. But if we read the Psalms it is clear that David spent a lot of time in despair. Or, more poetically, 'the pit.'"[41]

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[37] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 113.

[38] Ibid., 123.

[39] Ibid., 135.

[40] Ibid., 141.

[41]Lane Severson, "Leading from the Pit (Of Depression)(," *Christianity Today*, December 30, 2013, https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2013/december-online-only/leading-from-pit-of-depression.html.

The second research method is qualitative, "an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem"[42] – in our context, causes, and consequences of moral failure in worship leaders. Through the comprehensive scholarly literature researched, this study considers the need for worship leaders to apply biblical principles and practical strategies such as the resurgence of their personal relationship with Jesus Christ through consistent, private worship. Garrett Kell shared a survey by Professor Howard Hendricks that observed the lack of personal, private devotion in fallen pastors' lives as a cause for potential moral failure. He cited, "Each of the men had all but ceased having a daily time of personal prayer, Bible reading, and worship."[43] Byron L. Spradlin adds, "Proper worship emerges from a growing knowledge of God."[44]

Secondly, the importance of the practice of the spiritual discipline of self-examination is necessary. Self-examination is a process "whereby the Holy Spirit opens my heart to what is true about me. This is not the same as a neurotic shame-inducing inventory. Instead, it is a way of opening myself to God."[45] Also, the practice of the spiritual discipline of the sabbath, in short resting, is needed. "Sadly, everything about us works against slowing down. Our compulsion to produce and not waste time invades the space God gave us for rest…Sabbath is God's way of saying, 'Stop. Notice your limits. Don't burn out."[46] Diane J. Chandler reemphasizes that

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[42] John W. Creswell and J David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, fifth ed. (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2018), 4.

[43] Garrett Kell, "The Pattern Among Fallen Pastors," www.thegospelcoalition.org, May 26, 2015, https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-pattern-among-fallen-pastors/.

[44] Byron L. Spradlin, "Discipling Worship Leadership: Biblical and Theological Rationale for Discipling Worship Leaders" (diss., Liberty University, 2012), 47.

[45] Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2005), 91.

[46] Ibid., 41-42.

burnouts are caused by "pastors and ministry leaders consistently experiencing high demands on their time."[47]

Thirdly, an accountability partner or covenant group's urgent need to walk with worship leaders in ministry is paramount. Garrett Kell shares this compelling finding from Hendrick's survey, "None of the men was involved in any kind of real personal accountability."[48] James William Taylor provides a preventative step to this pitfall by noting, "A key component to managing anguish associated with ministry is developing a strong support group and avoiding unsupportive help."[49] Barna Group asks the pivotal question that worship pastors need to contemplate, "who speaks truth into your life and how regularly transparent are you with them?"[50]

There is also a need for spirit-guided relationships – spiritual friendships for worship leaders. David G. Benner explains the importance of spiritual friendships that worship leaders should consider for their ministry journey,

> Spiritual friends nurture the development of each other's souls. Their love for each other translates into a desire that the other settle for nothing less than becoming all that he or she was intended to be…spiritual friends are soul friends. This means that they care for each other as whole people, not simply as spiritual beings. Soul friends become spiritual friends when they seek to help each other attend and respond to God.[51]

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[47] Chandler, "The Impact of Pastor's Spiritual Practices on Burnout," 2.

[48] Kell, "The Pattern Among Fallen Pastors."

[49] William James Taylor, "Biblical Leaders: Key Principles and Concepts in Overcoming and Managing Stress, Distress, and Anguish" (diss., Liberty University, 2013), 55.

[50] Barna Group, *The State of Pastors*, 157.

[51] David G. Benner, *Sacred Companions: The Gift of Spiritual Friendships* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2002), 16.

Lastly, there is a need for spiritual mentors. Pat McHugh shares why spiritual mentorship (which he calls spiritual supervision) is crucial in the life of worship leaders, "Pastoral supervision seeks to assist the vocational and professional progress of the minister through reflection on life and ministry. This happens in the context of the gospel, which guides ministry, contemplating, deliberating, and considering the issues, events, and relational matters which the minister chooses to bring to supervision."[52]

## Research Plan

This study's research plan considers the following elements: First, comprehensive literature on moral failure issues such as ministry stress, pressure for ministry success, lack of accountability, isolation in ministry, and pride. Second, Biblical accounts of Old Testament leaders who exhibited psychological dysfunctions that led to moral failure. Lastly, a recent report from Barna Group on *The State of Pastors*. These elements contribute to providing considerable evidence regarding the causes and consequences of the potential pitfalls of worship leaders.

## Definition of Terms

**Burnout**: "Exhaustion of physical or emotional strength or motivation usually as a result of prolonged stress or frustration."[53]

**Consumerist congregation**: The congregation that desires an "I want it my way" worship experience where spectating rather than participating is enjoyed.

**Dark side**: "The inner urges, compulsions, and dysfunctions of our personality that often go unexamined or remain unknown to us until we experience an emotional explosion."[54]

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[52] Pat McHugh, "Pastoral Supervision: A Support in Ministry," *The Furrow* 59, no. 1 (2008): 35, http://www.jstor.org/stable/27665669.

[53] *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, s.v. "Burnout," https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/burnout.

[54] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 18.

**Integrity**: Moral uprightness of an individual.

**Moral failure**: The human condition in which an individual fails to keep moral uprightness due to unrepented sin(s).

**Worship leader/Worship pastor**: these two terms are interchangeable in their definition of the individual whose ministry of music educates, leads, disciples, and mentors God's community of worshippers to glorify God.

## Limitations

This thesis project is not covering all possible contributions toward the moral failure of worship leaders.

## Assumptions

The researcher's personal experience as a worship leader has provided a place of prominence on stage; thus, worship leaders having a similar platform experience is assumed. Secondly, the researcher assumes that the Bible is true, and therefore every person is faced with temptations due to man's sinful rebellion in the biblical account found in Genesis chapter three. Giving in to sin is the cause of moral failure.

## CHAPTER II: Literature Review

Biblical history is the eyewitness to the great triumphs and failures of God's chosen leaders as they shepherded His people toward the set-apart life of worship they were designed for – a life free from bondage and dedicated solely to Yahweh. From the Old Testament era until our modern-day, God has sought the willful obedience of those He has called out of an undirected life to a divine collaboration for the propagation of His Kingdom's good news of salvation. Wayne Cordeiro states,

> The Bible brims with such accounts – the raw, unedited stories of men and women who have already traversed the valleys you and I are yet to experience. They have found the passageways on this journey called life, and they bid us to follow. Now, they don't give us shortcuts around the obstacles we have been bid to traverse. These mentors of old are more like scouts, men and women walking the trails that lie in front of us, showing us the routes and openings – the paths we might not have seen otherwise. They post signs along the way, warning us of the pitfalls. They leave behind clutch holds in the rock where fatal choices have claimed the lives of others – those who have attempted to scale the snowcapped mountains without the aid of Sherpas. They give us right answers before we make wrong conclusions. These life navigators have been assigned by God. They guide us through seasons in which one misstep can alter our future and diminish our legacy.[55]

The story of Korah, as are others, is an excellent reminder of the possibility of moral failure in the unguarded hearts of God's worship leaders (Proverbs 4:23).

The following chapter focuses on the literature review of scholarly resources that evidence the causes of moral failure in worship leaders beginning with Old Testament biblical leaders' lives. This qualitative study commences with the foundational, biblical theology of personality, which explains the root cause of one's dark side of leadership. The latter contributes significantly to the decline of worship leadership's sanctity due to unchecked personality

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[55] Wayne Cordeiro, *Leading on Empty: Refilling Your Tank and Renewing Your Passion* (Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2009), 14.

dysfunctions originating from brokenness experienced during the formative years. Drs. McIntosh and Rima corroborate, "Without doubt, much of what determines how a leader's dark side will develop, as well as how he or she will deal with that dark side of leadership, stems from the family the person grew up in and his or her childhood years through adolescence. As we grow toward adulthood, our dark side begins to develop silently, only to emerge fully at some future date, often after leadership has been attained."[56]

The biblical theology of personal identity is the first foundational pillar to uncover in determining the nucleus of moral failure. Therein begins our investigation.

Section I: Biblical Theology of Personal Identity

One of the greatest quests of our current society revolves around a singular yet convoluted question 'who am I?' Authors Rosner and Lunde note,

> According to social researcher John Zogby, people today are hungry for authenticity because there is a 'deep-felt' need to reconnect with the truth of our lives and to disconnect from the illusions that everyone from advertisers to politicians try to make us believe are real. Many people, it seems, feel that they are surrounded by a mediated reality, by the shoddy, shallow, and superficial; that is, the inauthentic. The call to authenticity is a broad movement calling for congruity between our inner and outer selves.[57]

This ever-present subject of our identity's origin makes up a continuous debate in life and academia. Historians, philosophers, and intellects from various fields have made their maximum efforts to convey a 'definite' answer without opposing skepticism. One such philosopher is Michael Allen Fox (Adjunct Professor of Humanities at the University of New England), who concludes, "We live in an age of self-obsession. Everywhere we look, we encounter a

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[56] Gary McIntosh and Samuel D. Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership: How to Become an Effective Leader by Confronting Potential Failures*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 70.

[57] Brian S. Rosner and Jonathan Lunde, *Known by God: A Biblical Theology of Personal Identity*, Biblical Theology for Life (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2017), 24-25.

preoccupation with self-interest, self-development, self-image, self-satisfaction, self-love, self-expression, self-confidence, self-help, self-acceptance…the list goes on."[58] This accurate description of our postmodern society is a direct result of the fall of humanity that originates from the garden of Eden – what is theologically termed 'original sin.' "Original sin refers to an inborn or congenital state that precedes and is the condition of all actual sin (i.e., all particular instances of human resistance to God's will)."[59]

Sin caused man's allegiance to satisfy the 'self,' whereas God's original intent was intended for His worship and glory. Idolatry was birthed when Adam and Eve rebelliously and willingly chose to disobey God. "Idolatry in this sense refers to putting something in the place of God, trusting something instead of God, and loving something more than God. Idolatry is effectively a confusion of creation with the Creator or the attribution of ultimate value to anything other than God. Hence it is a danger whenever we forget that we are created beings."[60]

Rosner and Lunde describe the familiar feeling of angst we face as individuals with the broken pieces of life experiences that make us question our identity. They share, "With damaged memories, an uncertain destiny, and a troubled present, I had lost sense of self and was forced to revisit the question that you're supposed to settle for good in your childhood and adolescence. That most personal question of: *Who am I?* Being a Christian, I turned to God and the Bible for answers."[61] This broken identity experienced through one's formative years (within their

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[58] Michael Allen Fox, "We're Self-Obsessed - but Do We Understand the Nature of the Self?," www.theconversation.com, August 31, 2014, https://theconversation.com/were-self-obsessed-but-do-we-understand-the-nature-of-the-self-30912.

[59] Ian A. McFarland, *In Adam's Fall: A Meditation On the Christian Doctrine of Original Sin*, Challenges in Contemporary Theology (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 182.

[60] Rosner and Lunde, *Known by God*, 61-62.

[61] Ibid., 23.

families) causes moral failure due to inherited personality dysfunction(s). Rosner and Lunde further expound on the subject, "Who you are is substantially an inheritance from your family. This is the case to a lesser or greater extent whether you feel over-connected or disconnected from your parents, siblings, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. All of us can credit or blame our families for their part in forming our personal identity."[62]

Nevertheless, as worship leaders, our personal identity's biblical theology is in Jesus Christ – our soul's redeemer and lover, not our sinful selves. The church in Galatia reminds Christians today of our distinctive identity, "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there."[63] Brian S. Rosner and Jonathan Lunde add, "A biblical theology of personal identity, like all evangelical theology, should be 'gospel-driven theology.' In particular, the relevance of the Lord Jesus Christ, the last Adam, to the future of humanity is of vital importance."[64]

Knowing who God has made us be is vital to eliminating the personal dysfunctions innate within – our dark side. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's poem *Who Am I?* gives a stark insight into this troubling question. "Bonhoeffer points to the critical and comforting notion of belonging to and being known by God: 'Who I really am, you know me, I am yours, O God!'"[65] "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!"[66] It is this eternal promise that reverberates in the heart of God for His children. It is also

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[62] Rosner and Lunde, *Known by God*, 51.

[63] Galatians 5:24 (NLT)

[64] Rosner and Lunde, *Known by God*, 34.

[65] Ibid., 29.

[66] 1 John 3:1 (NIV)

why He desired individuals whose lives were dysfunctional to lead His chosen ones, not because of anything they could achieve on their own, but all through Yahweh's omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence. The apostle Paul again comes to the proper conclusion, "I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power."[67]

Our literary review's next segment examines the 'dark side' of leadership phenomenon that all image-bearers of God experience.

<div align="center">The Dark Side of Leadership</div>

Psalm 14, a psalm of David, reveals a stark truth regarding a fool's heart's tendency. "The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good. The Lord looks down from heaven on all mankind to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one."[68] Adam and Eve became fools when they deliberately chose to challenge God's parameters in their leadership of Eden to protect their perfect union. "Rather than remain content to exercise their considerable authority within God's established parameters, they chose to challenge those parameters."[69]

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[67] Ephesians 3:7 (NIV)

[68] Psalm 14:1-3 (NIV)

[69] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 58.

Therein lies the original cause of man's decline toward moral failure. Innate in man's heart is the propensity to sin and go against what God desires of us – His worship. McIntosh and Rima disclose the following on the matter,

> There comes a point in all leaders' lives – if they remain in leadership long enough – when they will begin to experience the relational friction, organizational blow-ups, and personal pain that result from unidentified and unresolved inner-life issues. When that time comes, they have a profound and pivotal choice to make: Will they allow that pain and chaos to serve as a catalyst that can take them deep into the recesses of their dark side and, as Annie Dillard has written, 'ride the monster all the way down,' allowing God to do his healing, restorative work in long-buried areas of personal pain and shame? Or will they put up their protective shield and refuse to take this journey? That critical decision will determine the future trajectory of not only their leadership but also their lives.[70]

As a result of the fall, men have inherited shame, guilt, and separation from God, resulting in what we recognize as the dark side. McIntosh and Rima describe this sinful remnant as "the inner urges, compulsions, and dysfunctions of our personality that often go unexamined or remain unknown to us until we experience an emotional explosion…or some other significant problem that causes us to search for a reason why. Because it is a part of us that we are unaware of to some degree, lurking in the shadows of our personality, we have labeled it the dark side of our personality."[71]

Peter Scazzero, in his book *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, defines the dark side of leadership as one's shadow. Here is his definition,

> Everyone as a shadow. So, what is it? Your shadow is the accumulation of untamed emotions, less-than-pure motives, and thoughts that, while largely unconscious, strongly influence and shape your behaviors. It is the damaged but mostly hidden version of who you are. The shadow may erupt in various forms. Sometimes it reveals itself in sinful behaviors such as judgmental perfectionism, outbursts of anger, jealousy, resentment, lust, greed, or bitterness. Or it may

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[70] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 23.

[71] Ibid., 28.

reveal itself more subtly through a need to stop working, a tendency toward isolation, or rigidity. Aspects of the shadow may be sinful, but they may also simply be weaknesses or wounds. They tend to appear in the ways we try to protect ourselves from feeling vulnerable or exposed. This means that the shadow is *not* simply another word for sin. If that makes you think the shadow is hard to pin down, you're right. 'The shadow, by nature, is difficult to grasp,' write psychologists Connie Zweig and Jeremiah Abrams. 'It is dangerous, disorderly, and forever hiding as if the light of consciousness would steal its very life.[72]

McIntosh and Rima also assign some main ingredients from our sinful nature that fuel our dark side's potency:

- pride (Psalm 10:4; 1 John 2:16)
- selfishness (Galatians 5:20; James 3:16)
- self-deception (1 Corinthians 3:18)
- wrong motives (1 Corinthians 4:5; James 4:3)

They evidence this fact, "Simply put, the first human leadership failure was the result of unrestrained pride and selfishness with a healthy dose of self-deception. With several variations and minor additions, these provide the raw material for our dark side."[73] These ingredients of the dark side of leadership are the symptoms shown in Old Testament leaders' lives. That is the focus of the next section.

**Section II: Biblical Leaders**

An overview of Old Testament history reveals heroes of the faith God chose to deliver and lead His people to a life of worship. Though their call was divinely appointed, their active leadership was not spared the calling's temptations and trials. God's shepherds were challenged by a people whose enslavement attitude (both physical and mental) made leading exigent, traumatic, and wearying. Roger Heuser and Norman Shawchuck speak of it, "When challenging what others value – their routines, loyalties, habits, and ways of thinking – leaders often meet

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[72] Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How transforming your inner life will deeply transform your church, team, and the world.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Reflective, 2015), 55.

[73] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 59.

strong resistance that is expressed through fear, anger, and anxiety."[74] Olu Brown agrees and states, "Being a leader can be difficult. We leaders, more than anyone, need direction and correction. We are often navigating unfamiliar territory, and it is quite easy to become caught up in the difficulty and pressures of our responsibilities."[75]

Old Testament history depicts many such leaders. Out of the many, the leadership of Moses, Saul, David, Solomon, Samson, and Jonah are our analytical guides for identifying the personality dysfunctions that caused their moral failure. McIntosh and Rima address the dark side anomaly that each image-bearer of God manifests from the fall's perilous and eternal outcome – including these leaders. "If we are going to understand the sources and effects of our dark side well enough to overcome it and keep it from destroying our ability to lead for God's glory, we must seriously consider God's original design for us and the corruption of that design, which resulted from the very first leadership failure."[76] Precisely, that of our first parents Adam and Eve (Genesis 3). "Everyone has heard the old adage, 'It's good to learn from our failures, but it's an even better thing to learn from someone else's failures."[77] That is the purpose of our investigation of these ancient biblical leaders. "To reflect on failure, look below the surface of behavior."[78]

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[74] Roger Heuser and Norman Shawchuck, *Leading the Congregation: Caring for Yourself While Serving Others*, rev. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010), 11.

[75] Olu Brown, *Leadership Directions from Moses: On the Way to a Promised Land* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2017), 7.

[76] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 57.

[77] Ralph K. Hawkins and Richard Leslie Parrott, *Leadership Lessons: Avoiding the Pitfalls of King Saul* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2013), 4.

[78] Ibid., 9.

Moses – The Compulsive Leader & Servant of Yahweh

Gary L. McIntosh and Samuel D. Rima's book *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership* analyzes Moses' life as a leader. An infant boy, born in captivity and given up by his mother – Jochebed – for his life's safety into the Egyptian oppressor's hands. That is the story of Moses – the servant of Yahweh. Moses' formative years in the royal household of Pharaoh led to a sinful, dysfunctional personality trait that affected His leading of God's people. McIntosh and Rima add, "Abandonment by his parents as an infant, adoption by the enemies of his own people, and upbringing in the rigid environment of a royal family with the accompanying high expectations, a significant failure, and the ultimate rejection by adoptive grandfather comprised Moses' formative years. It no doubt was the combination of the unmet needs stemming from this childhood that created Moses' dark side and resulted in his becoming a compulsive leader."[79]

Moses' compulsive behavior is demonstrated in his handling of the people's disputes in Exodus 18,

> In Exodus 18, we see that Moses alone would mediate disputes among the people and render authoritative judgments. In order to accomplish this task, the people with disputes would stand around Moses 'from morning until evening,' a period of at least twelve hours, so that Moses could settle their problems…one would think that a man with Moses' level of education and his exposure in Egypt to the most sophisticated form of government known to the world at that time would see the need for delegating authority. But it took his shepherd father-in-law, Jethro, to witness this inefficient practice and suggest organizational changes before Moses could see that his compulsive need to control was not healthy for him or the people (Exod. 18:17-19).[80]

Ed Stetzer continues this analysis of Moses' compulsive personality dysfunction with the following,

> In Exodus 18, systematic issues within Moses' leadership surface and reveal the need for a change…Moses is leading a group of millions literally by himself.

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[79] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 104.

[80] Ibid., 105.

Jethro comes right out and asks, 'What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?' (Ex. 18:14). Moses tries to explain his role as arbiter of millions, but his answer falls short. Jethro is quick to correct saying, 'What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone' (Ex. 18:17-19).[81]

Authors Borek, Lovett, and Towns elaborate on Moses' compulsive leadership through the lack of delegation. They note, "Leaders who do the work rather than enlist others to work with them as part of the team are leaders at high risk of burnout. In optimum conditions, a leader's span of control should be about one to six; that is, the leader has six people directly accountable to him with direct access to him. According to George and Logan, 'Moses'…span of control was 1 to about 2 million.'"[82]

While Moses answered God's call to lead His people (Exodus 3:4), he had several instances where his dark side remonstrated his divine destiny due to his dysfunctional family upbringing (i.e., Exodus 3:11, 13; 4:1, 10, 13).

Saul – The Paranoid Leader & First King of Israel (1 Samuel 9-31)

Saul, son of Kish the Benjamite, is described as "handsome a young man as could be found anywhere in Israel, and he was a head taller than anyone else."[83] McIntosh and Rima give a succinct description of this chosen leader, "When Saul made his entrance on the stage of national leadership he was equipped for success. He was attractive and exceptionally gifted. He was appointed by God, who supernaturally changed him so that he could be an effective

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[81] Ed Stetzer, "The Never-Ending Need of Multiplying Leaders," *The Exchange with Ed Stetzer* (blog), *Christianity Today*, February 18, 2014, https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2014/february/never-ending-need-of-multiplying-leaders.html.

[82] John Borek, Danny Lovett, and Elmer L. Towns, *The Good Book on Leadership: Case Studies from the Bible* (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2005), 68.

[83] 1 Samuel 9:2 (NIV)

leader."[84] Authors Hawkins, Leslie, and Parrot desire to make this critical affirmation about Saul, "There are important lessons to be learned from the story of Saul. One comes from the fact that Saul was indeed a good man. He wasn't doomed from the start; instead, he was a good or choice candidate for king, endowed with the Spirit and literally changed into another man...people tend to think of Saul as always having been corrupt; but Saul wasn't always corrupt. He was a good man, and Scripture teaches that good men can and do fall."[85]

Despite this candid introduction, authors Hawkins, Leslie, and Parrott illustrate some of the escapades this Benjamite King (chosen by God) experienced as he led Israel against the oppression of the Philistines,

> What kind of leader blows up and throws a spear at one of his most trusted commanders? What kind of leader attempts to kill his own son, his designated successor, in the middle of a conference? What kind of leader customarily sits with his back to the wall so that he cannot be taken by surprise? What kind of leader slaughters the inhabitants of an entire town because they have harbored someone whom he perceives to be threatening his leadership? What kind of leader would do these terrible things, and more? Believe it or not, the leader who did these things is a biblical character, and one anointed by the famous prophet Samuel as Israel's first king – Saul of Kish.[86]

Further examination of Saul's character reveals his inferior sense of self, which unveiled his paranoid behavior. In Scripture, we read his retort upon encountering Samuel, "But am I not a Benjamite, from the smallest tribe of Israel, and is not my clan the least of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why do you say such a thing to me?"[87] McIntosh and Rima continue, "All of this was quite surprising to Saul, as he possessed a very low view of himself and the family from

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[84] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 120.

[85] Ralph K. Hawkins and Richard Leslie Parrott, *Leadership Lessons: Avoiding the Pitfalls of King Saul* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2013), 19.

[86] Hawkins and Parrot, *Leadership Lessons*, 3.

[87] 1 Samuel 9:21 (NIV)

which he came. This sense of personal insecurity and low self-worth is evident in Samuel 15:17 when Samuel rebukes Saul by saying, 'Is it not true, though you were little in your own eyes, you were made the head of the tribes of Israel?'"[88]

Although Saul began leading well and trusted God, his obsessive paranoia resulted from his desire to lead outside of God's boundaries. "Like Saul, paranoid leaders are hypersensitive to the actions and reactions of those they lead, always fearful of potential rebellions. Because they are deeply insecure in their own abilities, paranoid leaders are pathologically jealous of other gifted people."[89] Hence, his sinful downfall.

David – The Depressed Leader & A Man After God's Own Heart

David, the beloved King of Israel, exhibits various characteristics of the dark side of leadership throughout his lifetime. In Acts 13:22, Paul gives the synagogue attendees a historical account of Israel and shares the following characteristic about King David, "After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'"[90] Nevertheless, we know from Scripture that his divine call includes various instances of moral failure.

McIntosh and Rima note some of David's run-in with his dark side that caused his leadership ineptitudes, "King David also periodically battled with his dark side, resulting in humiliating personal defeats and devastating national consequences. His pride as a leader caused him to take a census of his warriors in direct violation of God's command, leading to the needless death of many innocent people. His selfishness consumed him as he committed adultery

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[88] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 120.

[89] Ibid., 122.

[90] Acts 13:22 (NIV)

with Bathsheba, murdered her husband, and then deceived himself as he covered up his sin for

nearly a year until he was finally confronted by Nathan the prophet (2 Samuel 11:12-24)."[91] The

ingredients of the dark side of leadership are manifest in the beloved King of Israel.

Solomon – The Narcissistic Leader & World's Wisest King (1 Kings 1-11)

We now enter King Solomon's life, the wisest king to ever live (1 Kings 10:23).

Author Philip Graham Ryken in his book, *King Solomon: The Temptations of Money, Sex, and*

*Power*, describes the character of God's chosen servant to ascend King David's throne. He

states,

> The Bible describes him as a man after David's own heart: 'Solomon loved the
> Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father' (1 Kings 3:3). This is virtually
> the highest praise that any person could receive. In fact, Solomon is the only man
> in the entire Bible who is said to have 'loved the Lord,' in so many words. His
> heart was full of holy affections for the living God. He adored the divine being,
> responding to God emotionally. He felt a deep spiritual longing in his soul, a
> passionate yearning for a closer relationship to God.[92]

According to Ryken and Scripture, Solomon was a man devoted to serving Yahweh. However,

we find that his father's 'bigger than life' legacy haunts him throughout his life. McIntosh and

Rima present,

> It is never easy to follow a legend. Whenever a new leader is faced with the task
> of filling a beloved and successful leader's shoes, it is almost an uncomfortable
> fit. That is especially true when the new leader happens to be the son of a living
> legend being replaced. Such was the predicament of Solomon…Solomon was
> quite young and inexperienced in political matters (1 Chron. 29:1). It is probably
> safe to assume that Solomon's contrived route to the throne, his youthfulness and,
> inexperience, the legendary success of his father, as well as his probable
> awareness of the circumstances of his own birth that followed the death of David
> and Bathsheba's child born of adultery all combined to provide a sense of

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[91] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 65.

[92] Philip Graham Ryken, *King Solomon: The Temptations of Money, Sex, and Power* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2011), https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1140679&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

inferiority and a powerful drive within the young king to make a name for himself.[93]

The second chapter of Ecclesiastes symbolizes Solomon's folly of self-aggrandizement, birthed out of his narcissistic behavior.

> I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired male and female singers, and a harem as well-the delights of a man's heart. I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me. I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my labor, and this was the reward for all my toil. Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.[94]

Solomon's disregard of his divine mandates as God's servant led him to morally fail through his personality dysfunction fueled by the temptation of money, sex, and power.

Samson – The Codependent Leader & Nazirite (Judges 13-16)

The story of Samson (the Nazirite), son of Manoah from Dan's clan, displays his codependent characteristic as someone set apart by God from birth to deliver His people from the oppressive Philistines (Judges 13:1-5). McIntosh and Rima give a background of his upbringing,

> Samson grew up in an extremely restrictive environment with a secret he could not share with anyone – he could never get his hair cut. Because he was a Nazirite, Samson was subject to unusually strict rules of behavior; besides never cutting his hair, he was prohibited from drinking any fermented beverages, could not eat grapes in any form, had other specific dietary requirements, and was restricted from marrying outside of his people. The Nazirite vow entailed a right, separatist lifestyle. Though the vow was ordinarily voluntary, done out of joy and a desire to be set apart for God alone, this was not exactly the case for Samson. It was prophesied to his parents that their son would be a Nazirite from birth (Judg. 13:5). Thus, from the time he was born, he was expected to fulfill the vow of a Nazirite and violate it at his own risk. The reason for this separation to God was

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[93] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 112-13.

[94] Ecclesiastes 2:4-11 (NIV)

so that God could use Samson as his instrument of deliverance for Israel from the oppression of the Philistines. It was a heavy load under which he had to live and an environment well-suited for the development of codependency.[95]

Although Samson received his calling from birth, it did not guarantee his success. Authors Eynikel and Nicklas agree and note,

> Can a special birth and election by God guarantee good leadership? Samson shows us that it cannot. He does not live up to the expectations. Being chosen by God is not enough. Even being moved by the spirit of the Lord is not enough. During his life, the spirit of the Lord comes over Samson…however, the actions Samson takes under this influence are not at all good. They do not help to free Israel, they do not show trust in God, and they do not direct the people to the Lord…Samson brings himself into trouble time and again. He does not do what the Lord wants him to do but does what is right in his own eyes (Judg. 14:3).[96]

Authors Borek, Lovett, and Towns describe Samson's flawed character as the reason for his failure. They note, "Samson's flawed character is most evident in his failure to live up to his calling as a Nazirite. He was destined to be 'a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death' (Judg. 13:7), but ultimately, he failed to live up to each requirement of the vow…Samson's lack of clear communication with his parents suggests he had difficulties establishing the most basic relationships. This became evident when Samson violated his Nazirite vow by eating honey out of the hive in the carcass of a lion he had killed earlier."[97]

Samson's utter disobedience and desire to please others resulted in his moral failure as God's leader to liberate Israel from the Philistine's oppressive stronghold.

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[95] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 131-32.

[96] Erik Eynikel, ed., *Themes in Biblical Narrative: Jewish and Christian Traditions,* vol. 17, *Samson: Hero or Fool?* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 63-64.

[97] Borek, Lovett, and Towns, *The Good Book on Leadership*, 103.

Jonah – The Passive-Aggressive Leader & Envoy to Nineveh

Not much is known about Jonah's background apart from the fact that he is the son of Amittai and servant of the Lord from Gath-hepher, in Zebulon's territory (2 Kings 14:25). Mark Buchanan depicts Jonah's character as follows, "Jonah was a rebellious, petty, sullen man, self-serving and self-protecting. His sense of what matters was terribly skewed…Jonah is lord of the half-hearted, tribal chieftain of those who want God only on their own terms."[98]

Here is a prophet called by God and sent on a mission, but he decides not to go. Edith Schaeffer summarizes this scenario vividly,

> The sailors in the ship where Jonah was peacefully sleeping below did everything, they could to keep their boat afloat before they began their search for someone to blame for the storm. It was Jonah's fault, you remember, because he had turned from the word of God to him at that time to do an exactly opposite thing. His refusal to believe that God's word to him was of primary importance, and to act upon it in that moment of history, affected not only himself but other people – the sailors at that dramatic moment, and also the people of Nineveh. Jonah was the 'troubler,' responsible for a physical storm affecting other people, and responsible for spiritual ignorance on the part of a whole city.[99]

Through the lens of this personality, we encounter the passive-aggressive behavior that causes him to fail. McIntosh and Rima note, "In the life and ministry of Jonah we see a resistance to God's demand to perform an assigned task, bursts of sadness and anger, short-lived periods of contrition and sorrow for his actions, impulsive behavior, and a general negativity. Today Jonah would be classified as a passive-aggressive leader."[100]

Within the story of these biblical leaders exist a significant characteristic: their desire to please God by leading His people. Withal, they morally failed due to their deliberate choice to

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[98] Mark Buchanan, "Running with Jonah," *Christianity Today*, November 15, 1999, https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1999/november15/9td087.html.

[99] Edith Schaeffer, "Who Troubles Israel?" *Christianity Today (Volume 20, No. 21)*, July 16, 1976, 34, https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1976/july-16/witness-stand.html.

[100] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 140.

disobey and challenge God's parameters due to their psychological/personality dysfunction, pride, appetite for success, self-isolation, and lack of accountability. These same causal effects of moral failure are regrettably pervasive in our twenty-first century. "In light of this increase in failure among Christian leaders, or at least our increased awareness of them, something must be done to educate present and future leaders as the causes, results, and potential prevention of these failures."[101]

**Section III: Causes of Moral Failure**

Although numerous sinful ingredients cause moral failure in a worship leader's life (Galatians 5:19-21), the observation of pride (appetite for success), isolation (loneliness), ministry stress, and the lack of accountability are the focus of our attention in the following segment.

Pride & Seduction for Success

A major cause of moral failure in worship leadership is pride, which found its inauguration in the fall. According to Edward Edinger, "We live in a time of me, me, and more me. We are obsessed with ourselves and seek to acquire more of what we already are so as to defend against the increasingly crushing brutality of a world that is best callous and amoral. It certainly looks like the name of modern life is 'me versus the world'."[102] Former Pastor Steven J. Cole of Flagstaff Christian Fellowship illustrates this issue of pride through King Uzziah's life. He cites,

> Uzziah succeeded admirably, but his success seduced him into pride; his pride led
> to a sin that in a few moments nullified years of achievements. Though he reigned

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[101] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 11.

[102] Edward F. Edinger, *Ego and Self: The Old Testament Prophets*, ed. J Gary Sparks (Toronto: Inner City Books, 2000), 11.

for 52 years and had many outstanding accomplishments, he was remembered by the sad epitaph, 'He is a leper' (26:23). Uzziah's life teaches us that the seductive dance of success is pride…Uzziah started believing his own press clippings and his pride led to a fall. In one hour, he ruined a prosperous lifetime as a successful king…pride is the root sin, at the heart of all sin.[103]

Author J.R. Briggs "names 'the golden calf of success,' probably the leading contributor to failure among North American church pastors."[104] Psalm 10:4 reads, "In his pride the wicked man does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God."[105] Briggs further contends, "Many pastors feel lost. One of the most recurring desires we hear among pastors is a longing for a clear metric of success – and of failure – rooted not in cultural understandings but in gospel reality. They feel sky-high expectations and unbearable pressures, and believe that it is impossible to meet the demands so many place on them. The culture of success has become so pervasive in the church that the temptation to strive for 'success' is difficult to resist."[106]

Author James Emery White claims that we live in a society obsessed with self-serving, autonomous behaviors. He describes this worldview in which our society finds its independent root by stating, "The displacement of authority's role in culture flows from an increasing autonomous individualism. To be autonomous is to be independent. The value of autonomous individualism maintains that each person is independent in terms of destiny and accountability. Ultimate moral authority is *self*-generated. In the end, we answer to no one but ourselves, for we

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[103] Steven J. Cole, "Lesson 8: The Seduction of Success (2 Chronicles 26)," www.bible.org, September 6, 2013, https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-8-seduction-success-2-chronicles-26.

[104] J R. Briggs, *Fail: Finding Hope and Grace in the Midst of Ministry Failure* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 10.

[105] Psalm 10:4 (NIV)

[106] Briggs, *Fail,* 48.

are truly on our own. Our choices are solely ours, determined by our personal pleasure, not by

any higher moral authority."[107] Author Terry D. Cooper adds,

> Frequently our theological understanding of the dynamics of sin is greatly
> influenced by the Augustinian tradition with its accent on pride as the primary
> human problem. This tradition asserts that we refuse to trust God; we substitute
> ourselves as the center of our existence. Ignoring our Creator, we egocentrically
> attempt to control reality. We think more highly of ourselves than is warranted.
> From this angle, grandiosity is the self's nagging tendency. Conceit and arrogance
> are natural outgrowths of not realizing our limitations in relationship to our
> Source as well as others. Humility and care for others are the important qualities
> lacking in our self-preoccupations and self-elevations. Within the Judeo-Christian
> tradition, this self-centeredness is a form of idolatry identified as sin. This
> inevitably throws our lives out of balance. Various inordinate desires or
> addictions emerge because we have lost our center in God. Pride, or God-
> replacement, is our primary problem.[108]

Michael Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffman assert that pride in oneself adds an unhealthy need for

accomplishments in the lives of worship leaders that deviate their true calling as servants of the

Kingdom. They indicate, "It's deeply satisfying to accomplish goals consistent with our sense of

calling. Unfortunately, we sometimes allow the attainment of our goals to supersede our calling.

We begin pursuing accomplishments as an end unto themselves rather than pursuing the One for

whom such accomplishments were intended as an act of worship. Such idolatry requires greater

and greater accomplishments to feel good about ourselves – a condition that will almost certainly

lead to distress and eventually burnout."[109] David Tripp adds, "Proud people don't welcome

loving warning, rebuke, confrontation, question, criticism, or accountability, because they don't

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[107] James Emery White, *The Church in an Age of Crisis: 25 New Realities Facing Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012), 82.

[108] Terry D. Cooper, *Sin, Pride, and Self-acceptance: The Problem of Identity in Theology and Psychology* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 7.

[109] Michael Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure: A Shepherdcare Guide for Pastors, Ministers and Other Caregivers* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Books, 2007), 103.

feel the need for it. And when they do fail, they are good at erecting plausible reasons for what they said or did, given the stresses of the situation or relationship in which it was done."[110]

The mantra of 'what's in it for me?' is a common adage today, and it is this sinful characteristic that goes contrary to the life Jesus lived among His disciples. According to Jay Dennis, "Jesus made a priority of building relationships with people. He knew relationship was the key to their heart. He demonstrated multiple ways to build relationships. He taught us that the world can be changed by starting with our existing lines of relationships…to influence someone you must get up close."[111] Dennis also lists the enemies of the habit of relationship building, and pride found its way in, "Past hurts – I have been hurt in a relationship before. Pride – I'm not going to make the first move, or I don't need anyone.  Prejudice – I'm not going to build a relationship with that person. Guilt – I have said something or done something wrong against that person. Busyness – I don't have time to build a relationship. Selfishness – I will have to give up some things to build a relationship."[112]

Furthermore, "Stahnke has identified some warning signs that our own pride and successes may be isolating us. They include: Laziness in spiritual disciplines, disregard for the Scripture, resistance to, or resentment toward, meaningful accountability, becoming conceited or arrogant; having a sense of superiority, narcissism, or a sense of entitlement."[113]

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[110] Paul David Tripp, *Dangerous Calling: Confronting the Unique Challenges of Pastoral Ministry* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2012), 114.

[111] Jay Dennis, *The Jesus Habits* (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005), 28.

[112] Ibid., 32.

[113] Gene Roncome, Susan Schmidt, and George Stahnke, *Isolation in Ministry: Understanding the Cause, Consequence, and Cure for a Modern Epidemic* (Independently Published, 2019), Kindle.

Isolation & Loneliness

Another cause of moral failure, according to empirical research, is the problematic issue

of isolation in worship leadership. J.R. Briggs evaluates several factors that lead to loneliness,

> First, the astoundingly high expectations of what it means to be a pastor in our
> Western culture are oppressive, unattainable, and unsustainable…second, our
> loneliness deepens because of our fear of confession. Many of us have deep
> worries (some may well be founded) of revealing who we really are to those we
> serve and lead. Nouwen writes that pastors are the least confessing people in the
> church. It may be pride or fear – or both – but they keep us in hiding…third,
> sometimes our closest friends' and family member's words wound the most. We
> want those who know and love us most to rally around us in our time of failure.[114]

Zac M. Hicks declares that loneliness is an old foe that continues its rampage in God's people

today as it did in Eden; it is a direct result of sin. He develops this notion even more,

"Christianity insists that sin and alienation from God are at the root of all of our social and

psychological problems. The classic symptoms that cause people to seek care and counsel –

guilt, shame, loneliness, depression, relational dysfunction, fear…"[115] Hicks continues,

"Loneliness began in the Garden of Eden, when man and woman made a terrible choice. They

chose to turn from God. They went their own way…we all have the disease of sin, and it is a

fatal disease. Nobody ever escapes the judgment of the disease of sin. So, the roots of loneliness

were planted in the human soul and have been by every individual ever since."[116]

Sarah J. Bevinn's book *Psychology of Loneliness* notes, "Researchers have reported that

experiences of loneliness are characterized by feelings of sadness, boredom and, in some

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[114] Briggs, *Fail*, 87-89.

[115] Zac Hicks, *The Worship Pastor: A Call to Ministry for Worship Leaders and Teams* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2016), 126.

[116] Billy Graham, "Are You Lonely?" *Decision Magazine*, February 1, 2011, https://decisionmagazine.com/are-you-lonely/?_ga=2.212695644.971754220.1600396038-2096664414.1600396038.

instances, isolation from the wider social arena (Roberts & Quayle, 2001). This isolation, from the social world, can lead to reduced levels of self-esteem (Bullock, 2001) and reported difficulties in psychological adjustments (Rotenberg, Bartley, & Toivonen, 1997)."[117] It is this difficulty in psychological adjustments that Paul and Libby Whetham's research reveal as being the ever-present state of some leader's environment, "Church leaders have few, if any, close friends inside or outside the church."[118]

Authors Roncome, Schmidt, and Stahnke validate the reality of isolation in ministry with the following, "It's not until you dig down beneath the symptoms of burn out, loneliness and moral failure that you begin to see the real problem…isolation. For various reasons, ministers have allowed themselves to become separated from life-giving relationships, empathetic peers and health accountability."[119] As already examined, the pursuit of ministry success accompanied by pride is a poisonous recipe for worship leaders regarding the plague of moral failure prevalent in our churches today. Rick Lewis verifies that explanation,

> Isolation leadership contexts are particularly poisonous for leaders who are prone to individualism. In such systems, leaders become unaccountable for their personal lives and miss out on the advantages of friendship. In their loneliness, they may become either aloof, or paranoid, or both. At the very least, they lose perspective on what is happening to them and around them and more likely to make serious errors of judgment. If these aspects of vulnerability are not addressed, disconnection from the cause of Christ may result.[120]

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[117] Sarah J. Bevinn, *Psychology of Loneliness*, Psychology of emotions, motivations and actions. (New York: Nova/Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2011), 3.

[118] Rick Lewis, *Mentoring Matters: Building Strong Christian Leaders - Avoiding Burnout, Reaching the Finishing Line* (Grand Rapids, MI: Lion Hudson LTD, 2009), 54.

[119] Roncome, Schmidt, and Stahnke, *Isolation in Ministry*, Kindle.

[120] Rick Lewis, *Mentoring Matters*, 56.

Lewis carries on, "Isolation contributes to burnout and disempowerment has an impact on moral failure..."[121] Authors Roncome, Schmidt, and Stahnke hold that unless strategic steps are adopted to confront this sinful fallout, the cases of moral failure will, unfortunately, continue to increase because "isolated leaders are more susceptible to temptation…isolation increases the risk of acting upon our temptations because there is no one to help us cope, recover, nor keep us accountable."[122]

They further admit, "Isolation is the opposite of God's plan and a trap of the enemy; it walls us off from others. The lack friendship cuts us off from the emotional support we need to deal with the complexities of ministry life, our temptations and failures. Isolation hinders our ability to recover, ultimately leading us to burnout."[123] Paul David Tripp reinforces that sentiment, "An intentional culture of pastoral separation and isolation is neither biblical nor spiritually healthy."[124] J. R. Briggs illuminates the right conclusion, "There are different expressions, but the path is similar: fear leads to mask wearing. Mask wearing leads to loneliness and isolation. Isolation often leads to addictions."[125] Proverbs 18:1 clearly interprets, "A man who isolates himself pursues selfishness, and defies all sound judgment."[126]

Ministry Stress

H.B. Jr. London and Neil B. Wisemen state, "The prevailing crisis among pastors is crystal clear. Contemporary spiritual leaders are under a twofold assault – one within and on

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[121] Rick Lewis, *Mentoring Matters*, 57.

[122] Roncome, Schmidt, and Stahnke, *Isolation in Ministry*, Kindle.

[123] Ibid.

[124] David Tripp, *Dangerous Calling*, 46.

[125] Briggs, *Fail*, 94.

[126] Proverbs 18:1 (WEB)

without."[127] Zac Hicks identifies this internal drive for ministry success as one of those assaults, "So much of our pristine modern Christianity is literally hell-bent on telling us that ministry must start with success. A person could hear *The Worship Pastor's* call as, 'Just do these things, and you will be a successful worship leader.' But the Scriptures offer us a different starting path to success."[128]

Barna Group's *The State of the Pastor* asks follow up questions that worship leaders expect the answer regarding self-leadership, "How do they rate their overall well-being? How many are at risk of burnout, relational breakdown or spiritual problems? What spiritual disciplines help them pursue a deeper relationship with God? How hard is ministry on their families? Do they have close friends? How do they see their financial situation? How do they deal with mental illness or addiction Are they humble enough to change their minds? And how confident are they in their call to ministry?"[129] These are significant and relevant queries that modern-day worship leaders face as part of their ministry calling.

Michael Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffman also mention, "Stress is a reality of life in the modern world. We can't make it go away, nor would we really want to…unfortunately, many ministers have turned to a variety of substances and behaviors in attempts to cope with stress. Examples include unregulated prescription drugs, compulsive entertainment, workaholism (under the guide of 'serving Christ') and explosive anger. The presence of these or similar behaviors in our life serve as feedback that our coping with stress isn't going so well."[130]

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[127] H B. London, *Pastors at Greater Risk* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2014), 25.

[128] Hicks, *The Worship Pastor*, 195.

[129] Barna Group, *The State of Pastors: How Today's Faith Leaders Are Navigating Life and Leadership in an Age of Complexity* (Ventura, CA: Barna Group, 2017), 10.

[130] Wilson and Hoffman, *Preventing Ministry Failure*, 28.

James Emery White explains the secularist, stressful modern world worship pastors face today, "The heart of the secular religion is moral relativism, a *functional* atheism, if you will, that hold that how life is to be lived is dictated by a particular situation in light of particular culture or social location. Though there may be a higher power that higher power is not fleshed out in terms of authority. As a result, moral values become a matter of personal opinion or private judgment rather than something grounded on objective truth."[131] Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald C. Guthrie collaborate some data on issues that affect clergy in ministry, "Bob Wells reports, 'Although data is limited, research indicates that some of the most critical issues facing clergy appear to be in the areas of weight, mental health, heart diseases and stress."[132]

London and Wisemen follow-up and narrow the cause of ministry stress inside the Church with the following,

> Inside the Church, the snares of secularism entrap many believers. Daily, pastors deal with diluted dedication, family disintegration, superficial commitments, and an accepted churchly consumerism no longer interested in sacrifice, suffering, or servanthood. People still use the well-worn, friendly old words, but the new meanings refer to a Jesus who provides comfortable happiness and makes no demand on conduct or money. The enemy has secularized the Church without a shot being fired by anyone.[133]

According to the cooperative research of Maureen Miner, Sam Sterland, and Martin Dowson, the secularization of society has increased ministry stress exponentially in the lives of ministers. "Christian ministers face many challenges in their lives and work. They are called to personal holiness (Whetham and Whetham 2000), to provide leadership to a group of people having diverse psycho-spiritual needs, and to live in a community where pluralism of beliefs, behaviours

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[131] White, *The Church in an Age of Crisis*, 19.

[132] Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Books, 2013), 97.

[133] London, *Pastors at Greater Risk*, 25-26.

and values is the norm (Luckmann 1967). Each of these challenges represents a potentially significant cause of stress for ministers."[134] Henri J. M. Nouwen adds, "Many priests and ministers today increasingly perceive themselves as having very little impact. They are very busy, but they do not see much change. It seems that their efforts are fruitless…In this climate of secularization, Christian leaders feel less and less relevant and more and more marginal."[135]

In our postmodern, secularized society, the multi-faceted ministry of a worship pastor has encumbered the significance of personal spiritual formation for the immediate, performance-driven need of Christian congregations. Roger Heuser and Norman Shawchuck quote Jackson W. Carroll's recent study, which shows, "The median number of hours spent at work each week for all clergy regardless of denomination and whether full – or part time, is forty-eight…For those who work full-time (defined as thirty-five or more hours per week), the median is fifty-one. Part-timers average twenty-three hours a week…beyond this, clergy reported spending an average of seven hours each week in prayer and meditation and another four in reading that is not part of sermon preparation."[136] This discrepancy and imbalance in time management between ministry work and personal growth are critical components to a worship leader's ministry stress.

Lack of Accountability & Transparency

Our final cause for the investigation of moral failure in worship leadership in this segment is the lack of accountability from other leaders, mentors, and peers. According to Morris

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[134] Maureen Miner, Sam Sterland, and Martin Dowson, "Coping with Ministry: Development of a Multidimensional Measure of Internal Orientation to the Demands of Ministry," *Springer: Review of Religious Research* 48, no. 2 (December 2006): 212, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20058133.

[135] Henri J M. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership with Study Guide for Groups and Individuals* (New York: Crossroad Pub. Co., 2002), 20.

[136] Roger Heuser and Norman Shawchuck, *Leading the Congregation: Caring for Yourself While Serving Others*, rev. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010), 105.

Thompson, "Accountability is essential in spiritual leadership. Throughout the disciples' growth

as spiritual leaders, Jesus held them accountable. Although all spiritual leaders hold their

followers accountable, it is important for the spiritual leader to remember that they need to be

held accountable as well."[137] Sigve K. Tonstad corroborates, "Where there is transparency, there

is also accountability. These are reciprocal and mutually dependent values. Accountability is

impossible in the absence of transparency because the latter is the precondition for the former.

On the other hand, transparency is the stance of one who has nothing to hide and who, for that

reason, invites and solicits accountability."[138]

T. J. Addington explains the clarity of accountability necessary in ministry leaders (of

which worship leaders are included),

> All people of deep influence have learned to live under accountability. They are
> not free agents but individuals who have learned to follow, and who welcome the
> accountability under which they work and lead. Many would-be leaders have not
> learned to follow and, therefore do not deserve to be followed. Whether they are
> senior pastors who don't believe they need to listen to their board, staff to their
> supervisors, or missionaries to their team or mission leaders, there are too many
> people who believe they are free agents in the ministry world. For many, it would
> be a shock to actually work in the nonministry world, where standards of
> accountability are often far higher and where free agency is rarely tolerated.
> Accountability is a necessity. If we work under individuals to whom we are
> unwilling to answer, we need to find someone to whom we will be. Living with a
> lack of accountability is dangerous – for anyone.[139]

Addington continues his investigation of leadership transparency by offering the following

remarks, "There are a number of reasons that we chose not to be as self-disclosing as we could

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[137] Morris Thompson, "The Need for Spiritual Leadership," *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 11, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 80, https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jacl/vol11/iss2/7/.

[138] Sigve K. Tonstad, "Transparency in Leadership: The Divine Governance Challenge from the Apocalypse," *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 11, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 69, https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jacl/vol11/iss2/6/.

[139] T J. Addington, *Deep Influence: Unseen Practices That Will Revolutionize Your Leadership* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2014), 217-18.

be. Perhaps the most common reason is that our pride prevents us from sharing lessons or situations in which we have proven less than we should be or really messed up. It is pride that causes Christ-followers to wear false masks, pretending that all is well when in fact they are struggling with significant difficulties and failures."[140]

He rightly concludes, "…transparency in all areas of life is healthy; it models openness, it shuns dangerous secretiveness, and it supports a life of ongoing accountability. Transparency and accountability go hand in hand."[141] Whereas, "Pride is the antithesis of a transparent life."[142] These causes of moral failure in worship leadership need preventive steps in the lives of God's leaders.

## CHAPTER III: METHODS

This thesis' development comprises two research methods to understand better the causes and consequences of moral failure and the preventative strategies necessary to address this sin remnant amongst God's worship leaders today. Those two methods include biblical/historical/psychological research and qualitative research approaches.

Section I: Biblical/Historical/Psychological Research Method

A formal, empirical investigation of the causes and consequences of the worship leader's moral failure must begin with its root cause. Acquiring the biblical theology of personal identity is indispensable to decoding humanity's propensity to sin. "For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard."[143] Author T.J. Addington explains how Christian leaders all experience their shadow side as they develop. He states,

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[140] Addington, *Deep Influence*, 224-25.

[141] Ibid., 230.

[142] Ibid., 226.

[143] Romans 3:23 (NLT)

As Christian leaders, each of us as an ideal *me* that we want to project to others – and that we believe about ourselves. We believe in spiritual transformation and desire that transformation for our lives. We are often disciplined to a fault in our effort to become all that God wants us to become. But as in my childhood game, we will never lose our shadow side until we finally meet Christ face to face. In the meantime, we need to understand ourselves well, know where the shadow side lies, and manage it carefully. We must allow the Holy Spirit to sensitize us to the darker faces of our wiring and areas of personal temptations.[144]

Examining this foundational and biblical truth is necessary to unveil humanity's inclination toward self-centered ambition rather than righteous, kingdom living. Sin continually engenders every image-bearer of God's shadow side, which needs to be illuminated by Jesus Christ, the light of the world (see John 8:12, NLT). Scripture is clear in stating that we are to "Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need."[145]

**Old Testament Examples**

In his article *The Impact of Failure on Personal and Social Transformation*, author Jeff Boyd states an objective reality of leadership (whether secular or sacred), "Failure is not an option for leaders. Better said, failure is not optional; it is inevitable. We fail. In both character and competency, we do not live up to our own standards twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, let alone God's standards."[146] The historical investigation of six Old Testament leaders' lives (Moses, Saul, David, Solomon, Samson, and Jonah) reveal this truth; God's chosen vessels who led His people morally failed.

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[144] T J. Addington, *Deep Influence: Unseen Practices That Will Revolutionize Your Leadership* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2014), 8.

[145] Matthew 6:33 (NLT)

[146] Jeff Boyd, "The Impact of Failure on Personal and Social Transformation," *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 3, no. 1 (2009): 55, https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jacl/vol3/iss1/5.

A closer look at the family upbringing of these heroes of the faith shows areas where the dark side of leadership emerges, causing psychological dysfunctions. One of those psychological dysfunctions is Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder – Authors Reghunandanan, Fineberg, and Stein explicate the clinical definition of this disorder, "OCD is characterized by intrusive, unpleasant thoughts or images (obsessions), and by repetitive, unwanted actions (compulsions) that the individual feels driven to perform in response to obsessions or according to rigid rules."[147] Such is what we see in the life of Moses, the servant of Yahweh.

Another dysfunction gleaned is the Paranoid Personality Disorder – Author Duane L. Dobbert shares the American Psychiatric Association's essential feature emblematic of this behavior as, "the essential feature of the paranoid personality disorder is a pattern of pervasive distrust and suspiciousness of others such that their motives are interpreted as malevolent (DSM-IV-TR, 2000, p. 690)."[148] The case of Saul, the first King of Israel, is illustrative of this psychological dysfunction. T.J. Addington adds, "Saul believed that his leadership was about him, rather than about a stewardship given him by God to manage on God's behalf."[149]

Additionally, the psychological dysfunction of Major Depression is interpreted – The *Health Reference Series: Depression Source Book*, signifies the personality type that experiences major depression. "Personality style may also contribute to the onset of depression. People are at greater risk of becoming depressed if they have low self-esteem, tend to worry a lot, are overly

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[147] Samar Reghunandanan, Naomi Fineberg, and Dan J. Stein, *Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders*, second ed., Oxford Psychiatry Library (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 3.

[148] Duane L. Dobbert, *Understanding Personality Disorders: An Introduction* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 2007), 10.

[149] Addington, *Deep Influence*, 8.

dependent on others, are perfectionists, or expect too much from themselves and others."[150]

David, the man after God's own heart, exhibits such personality traits in his lifetime as king.

Furthermore, the Narcissistic Personality Disorder is verified – Author Duane L. Dobbert reveals the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*' feature for narcissism. He notes the salient feature as, "A pervasive pattern of grandiosity, need for admiration, and lack of empathy that begins by early adulthood and is present in a variety of contexts."[151] The exact personality traits manifest in the life of Solomon, the world's wisest king.

Moreover, the Dependency Personality Disorder is pointed out – Author Rainer Sachse describes the character traits of someone suffering from DPD in the following,

> DPD clients have a concept of their own helplessness and assume they must get support from others (Bornstein, 1995b, 1996, 1997; Overholser, 1996). They also, to a greater extent, resort to actually seeking help (Bernardin & Jessor, 1957; Fisher & Greenberg, 1985; Flanders et al., 1961; Shilkret & Masling, 1981; Sroufe et al., 1983), and they assume that it is better to comply and go along with the wishes and needs of those people who are giving that support (Main et al., 1985; Sroufe et al., 1983)…they show a strong orientation toward meeting expectations, by trying to comply with the wishes and expectations of their interaction partners to a high degree (Agrawal & Rai, 1988; Biaggio et al., 1984; Bornstein & Masling, 1985; Gorton, 1975; Griffith, 1991; Levitt et al., 1962; Masling et al., 1981; Weiss, 1969).[152]

Samson, the Nazirite, displays these character traits in Delilah's relationship, supplanting his Yahweh's obedience.

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[150] "Major Depression." In *Health Reference Series: Depression Source Book*, edited by Keith Jones. 4th ed. Omnigraphics, Inc., 2017. http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/ogidsb/major_depression/0?institutionId=5072

[151] Dobbert, *Understanding Personality Disorders*, 93.

[152] Rainer Sachse, *Personality Disorders: A Clarification-Oriented Psychotherapy Treatment Model* (Boston, MA: Hogrefe, 2019), 141.

Last but not least, the Passive-Aggressive Disorder is recognized – Sachse says, "PAPD is a distance disorder: Individuals with this disorder or personality style are rather distrustful and keep their distance from other people; it takes longer for them to trust others (Sachse & Sachse, 2017)."[153] That portrayal of distrust epitomizes Jonah's resistance to accomplishing God's directive to the people of Nineveh.

Author Jeff Boyd says it best, "Thankfully, as Christian leaders, we belong to a long tradition of honesty. God did not leave us with a whitewashed best-practices guide. Rather, He has given us the Bible with story after story of leaders and heroes who fell and yet got up again; stories of Abraham, Moses, David, the disciples and Paul. We find our lives in their stories, and we have the hope that even though 'a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again' (Proverbs 24:16, NIV)."[154]

**Section II: Qualitative Research Method**

Research Questions

The continuation of literary review on the topic of moral failure in worship leadership brings us to two significant questions: what conditions increase the most negative impact on the moral uprightness of 21st-century worship leaders followed by, what are the long-term consequences that such conditions create in a worship leader's family, congregation and faith tradition.

Research in the field of moral failure reveals that God's call is not for us to be successful in ministry but to be faithful. Pastor Fredrick Russell shares,

> Another complicating factor peculiar to ministry is the theology of the 'call.' Part
> of this theology is the belief that 'God has not called us to be successful, He has

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[153] Sachse, *Personality Disorders*, 167.

[154] Boyd, "The Impact of Failure on Personal and Social Transformation": 55, https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jacl/vol3/iss1/5.

called us to be faithful.' While that sounds well and good, it gets a bit messy when a much-anticipated church project has failed, and the blame is falling disproportionately on the pastor-leader…the truth is that the theology of the 'call,' as it is sometimes described, does not prepare one for failure. In our thinking, we don't associate the call to ministry with the inevitability of failure. I'm not suggesting that one should have an obsession with failure, but one should be able to recognize that even in God's work, it happens, and faithfulness to the call doesn't preclude it.[155]

Joshua Wilson concurs and adds, "Success must always be measured in terms of faithfulness to the task…Faithfulness to Jesus is what the Lord desires of us. This is true success."[156]

Joe E. Trull digs even more in-depth and shares the lack of teaching/training in the area of ethics in Christian ministry as a condition that increases moral failure. He notes, "More than ever, the minister in today's world must be prepared to grapple with intricate moral problems and community conflicts, as well as ethical dilemmas in his or her own church and personal life."[157] The increase in moral failure in worship leadership denotes the need to understand one's calling in ministry rather than consider it a paid profession.

John Piper offers this plea to God's ministers with this thought, "We pastors are being killed by the professionalizing of the pastoral ministry. The mentality of the professional is not the mentality of the prophet. It is not the mentality of the slave of Christ. Professionalism has nothing to do with the essence and heart of the Christian ministry. The more professional we long to be, the more spiritual death we will leave in our wake. For there is no professional

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[155] Fredrick Russell, "Failure: Getting through the Inevitable," *Ministry: International Journal for Pastors*, September 1998, 5-6, https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1998/09/failure.

[156] Joshua Wilson, "The Haunting of Ministry Failure," www.thegospelcoalition.org, July 6, 2015, https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-haunting-of-ministry-failure/.

[157] Joe E. Trull, *Ethics for Christian Ministry: Moral Formation for Twenty-first-century Leaders* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2017), ix.

childlikeness (Matt. 18:3); there is no professional tenderheartedness (Eph. 4:32); there is no

professional panting after God (Ps. 42:1)."[158]

Trull adds this insight regarding the multidimensionality of worship leadership in the 21st

century, "Today's minister walks an ethical tightrope. At one moment, she or he may serve as a

prophet, priest, or educator; in the next, a cleric may be an administrator, a counselor, or a

worship leader. Each of these roles raises ethical dilemmas and exposes moral vulnerability not

faced by doctors, lawyers, or other professionals."[159] Not as easy as just leading worship through

songs as was customary 50 years ago.

Coping with ministry stress is another critical condition that worship leaders in the 21st

century tend to fail morally. Trull once again notes,

> Politicians, scientists, physicians, business leaders, everyday citizens, and our
> clergy increasingly find themselves in situations where they really do not know
> what to do. As a result, ethics has become a boom industry, and moral failure a
> regular front-page phenomenon. Conventional wisdom seems glaringly
> inadequate in the face of our environmental, technological, political, economic,
> and social situations. Ministerial ethics can no longer be assumed if ever they
> were.[160]

John MacArthur explains the inconsistencies of coping with ministry by sharing, "We have many

activities and little worship. We are big on ministry and small on adoration. We are disastrously

pragmatic. All we want to know about is what works. We want formulas and gimmicks, and

somehow in the process, we leave out that which God has called us. We are too many Marthas

and too few Marys. We are so deeply entrenched in the doing that we miss the being."[161]

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[158] John Piper, *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals: A Plea to Pastors for Radical Ministry* (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2002), 1-2.

[159] Trull, *Ethics for Christian Ministry*, 2.

[160] Ibid., 1.

[161] John MacArthur, *Worship: The Ultimate Priority* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2012), 51.

The ongoing secularization of society has augmented worship leaders' ability to cope with ministry's multidimensional demands. Authors Miner, Sterland, and Dowson state,

> According to stress-coping theory (Lazarus and Folkman 1984), the balance of personal and environmental protective factors over risk factors determines whether a person maintains equilibrium, enhances functioning, or experiences a physical or psychological decline in the face of challenge. However, given the complex nature of ministry challenges, it is likely that no single set of protective factors will provide the specific positive coping strategies necessary for maintaining equilibrium and enhancing functioning in these situations.[162]

That is why the need for a combination of preventative, practical strategies are essential to curbing moral failure in worship leaders.

Ministry burnout is yet another by-product of a worship leader's inclination toward moral failure. Miner, Sterland, and Dowson identify some of the stress factors of worship leadership today in the following,

> Ministry as an occupation typically exhibits characteristics identified by Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001) as primary correlates of burnout: heavy workloads and time pressures, together constituting work overload; role conflict; role ambiguity; problems relating to autonomy; lack of social support; and conflicts concerning organizational values (see also Blaikie 1979; Rassieur 1982; Coate 1989; Willimon 1989). Other situational factors such as congregational support, autonomy, job security, professional growth opportunities, and the provision of grievance procedures are, conversely, associated with ministry job satisfaction (McDuff 2001), which is negatively related to burnout.[163]

Additionally, the mental state of anxiety is another condition worship leaders face in ministry that negatively impacts their calling due to a sense of internal insecurity. Barna Group's *The State of Pastors* gives the following statistics in regards to the issue of mental illness in ministry,

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[162] Maureen Miner, Sam Sterland, and Martin Dowson, "Coping with Ministry: Development of a Multidimensional Measure of Internal Orientation to the Demands of Ministry," *Springer: Review of Religious Research* 48, no. 2 (December 2006): 212, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20058133.

[163] Maureen Miner, Sam Sterland, and Martin Dowson, "Orientation to the Demands of Ministry: Construct Validity and Relationship with Burnout," *Springer: Review of Religious Research* 50, no. 4 (June 2009): 464, https://www.jstor.org/stable/25593758.

"Nearly half of pastors report struggling with depression at some point during their tenure in ministry (46%)."[164] Author Mario A. Russo corroborates,

> How we think affects how we act. When we change the way we think, we can change the way we act. Because the body and the mind are intricately connected; each affects the other. A person's emotional pain can have physical manifestations or symptoms that are called 'psychosomatic.' One of the most common examples is anxiety. Someone who is worried about certain events or outcomes can have nausea, shaking, sweats, and shortness of breath. Their mental state has an effect on their body. [165]

Lastly, family-related stress in ministry is a condition that negatively impacts worship leadership. The prolonged hours of work by worship leaders in pursuit of ministry 'success' has negatively impacted their families – relationships with their loved ones. Some are workaholics! Dr. Tim Clinton explains this issue, "A workaholic is uncontrollably addicted to work to the detriment of self and others. Workaholism has become an all-consuming obsession for too many modern workers, a sleep-depriving, health-robbing, greed-festering monster that may the most rewarded – and least challenged – addiction in America. While God created work as a meaningful part of this life, for some, work becomes the primary avenue by which they find approval, respect, and success."[166]

James W. Taylor, in his thesis "Biblical Leaders: Key Principles and Concepts in Overcoming and Managing Stress, Distress, and Anguish," shares some insight on family-related stress, "In a study through Fuller Theological Seminary, statistics demonstrated the following

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[164] Barna Group, *The State of Pastors: How Today's Faith Leaders Are Navigating Life and Leadership in an Age of Complexity* (Ventura, CA: Barna Group, 2017), 47.

[165] Mario A. Russo, Behavioral Science and Pastoral Care: Finding Wholeness at the Intersection, www.biologos.org, September 18, 2018, https://biologos.org/articles/behavioral-science-and-pastoral-care-finding-wholeness-at-the-instersection.

[166] Timothy E. Clinton and Ronald Hawkins, *The Quick-Reference Guide to Biblical Counseling: Personal and Emotional Issues* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2009), 266.

signs of trouble for clergy: 90 percent of pastors work more than 46 hours per week; 80 percent

believe that pastoral ministry is affecting their families negatively; 33 percent say, 'Being in

ministry is clearly a hazard to my family."[167] These negative factor's psychological

interconnectedness in worship leaders' lives must be mediated through biblical, practical, and

preventative strategies. Let us now examine the literary review, which shows indicators in

worship leaders' lives that cause moral failure.

Causes of Moral Failure

A literary review of scholarly resources shows the causes of moral failure in worship

leaders, of which four specific areas are examined. Beginning with the issue of pride, in addition

to the seduction for ministry success in worship leadership. Jay and Elaine Tombaugh explain

the fruits that pride produces in the ethical choices of business executives that spiritual leaders

face,

> Using in-depth case studies, they identified three specific factors, or 'temptations,'
> that likely contribute to the ethical downfall of an otherwise successful business
> executive. First, leaders may succumb to the temptation of hedonism. Hedonism
> refers to the 'pursuit of personal pleasure or self-satisfaction through the
> accumulation of material goods…or sensual pleasures' (p. 200). A second
> temptation is personal power. Power is a function of a leader's ability to influence
> and control people and events in his or her environment. Third, executives may
> become obsessed with the desire to establish a legacy through which they can
> maintain a presence, receive adoration, and continue to influence others long after
> they are no longer in official positions of power. The common denominator to all
> three temptations is the leader's obsessive self-interest, a personal factor often
> associated with failures in ethical leadership (Gini 2004; Micewski and Troy
> 2007).[168]

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[167] James William Taylor, "Biblical Leaders: Key Principles and Concepts in Overcoming and Managing Stress, Distress and Anguish" (diss., Liberty University, 2013), 1, in Liberty University Scholars Crossing, https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/749/.

[168] Jay R. Tombaugh and Elaine F. Tombaugh, "Can Spiritual Leadership Lead Us Not Into Temptation?" *Business and Professional Ethics Journal* 28, no. 1 (2009): 97, https://www.jstor.org/stable/27801430.

Roncone, Schmidt, and Stahnke summarize the danger that isolation in ministry causes to a worship leader. "Isolation is the opposite of God's plan and a trap of the enemy; it walls us off from others. The lack of friendship cuts us off from the emotional support we need to deal with the complexities of ministry life, our temptations and failures. Isolation hinders our ability to recover, ultimately leading to burnout."[169]

The ever-present problem of ministry stress and its effect on a worship leader needs to be addressed not only through consistent accountability but also through the occasional mental check-up with a licensed professional. "One of the ways we can do this is to acknowledge the difficult nature of modern ministry and take responsibility for our own emotional health. That's why I believe checking in with a Christian counselor at least every five years is a must. There are wonderful Christian people who are gifted, trained and skilled at helping us see weaknesses and helping us fight our own demons."[170] These moral failure causes have long-term consequences that negatively impact a worship leader's family, ministry, and faith tradition, which will be examined in our next chapter.

Consequences of Moral Failure

The causes of moral failure taken into consideration in this thesis reveal inevitable consequences that negatively impact a worship leader's family, ministry, and faith tradition. Particular attention to a worship leader's decline in humility is necessary. The denial of oneself as we lead others in a fruitful, Kingdom life where God's Spirit is transforming us into the likeness of Jesus Christ is easier said than done. The way of Jesus Christ is a humble path consumed with integrity. Joe Trull cites,

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[169] Gene Roncone, Susan Schmidt, and George Stahnke, *Isolation in Ministry: Understanding the Cause, Consequence, and Cure for a Modern Epidemic* (Independently Published, 2019), Amazon Kindle.

[170] Ibid.

Perhaps among the many who do the work of vocational ministry, a percentage of charlatans can be found who see this profession as a means to abuse or acquire money or power for themselves. The presence of such hypocrites, however, does not negate the sincerity and authenticity with which most pursue this calling…most clergy by far desire to live lives of moral and ethical integrity that are worthy of the calling to which they have responded. Men and women do not ordinarily enter this profession expecting to fail morally, damaging their reputation, their ministry, their congregations, and their families. Yet failures occur far too frequently…the work of ministry and the life of holiness require a kind of humility that knows we always remain vulnerable to moral failures ourselves. The apostle warns believers in Corinth who thought themselves above the fray of temptation, 'So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall' (1 Cor. 10:12).[171]

The burnout probability in a worship leader's life is elevated due to the additional pastoral responsibilities expected in today's worship leading. Drs. Tim Clinton and Ron Hawkins state, "Western culture continues to push the limits, has become increasingly obsessed with the 'pursuit of excellence,' and burnout has reached epidemic proportions, even within the church. Burnout is a stressful state characterized by physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion, chronic fatigue, and lethargy."[172]

It is this cultural pursuit towards personal, self-elevating excellence that leads worship leaders to fail morally. Other consequences of moral failure are the worship leader's absence in their family due to ministry responsibilities and immoral pursuits resulting from pride and personal ambition. These moral failure consequences need to be remedied through practical, preventative strategies found in Scripture and through the literary research of worship leaders' lived experiences.

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[171] Trull, *Ethics for Christian Ministry*, 50.

[172] Timothy E. Clinton and Ronald Hawkins, *The Quick-Reference Guide to Biblical Counseling: Personal and Emotional Issues* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2009), 54.

Practical & Preventive Strategies

As a result of the comprehensive literary research, this thesis considers the need for worship leaders to apply biblical principles and practical strategies to face this propensity of moral failure in ministry. Strategies such as the resurgence of worship leader's relationship with Jesus Christ through consistent, private worship. Worship leaders are involved in more than song-leading within their congregations in the 21st century. More pastoral responsibilities are required of them from their lead pastors and congregation in ministry. Constance Cherry summarizes it this way, "The title 'pastoral musician' reflects a multidimensional type of leadership that combines both being and doing – a leader who is being conformed to the image of Christ and, as a result, is able to do God-focused ministry with others."[173] She continues by offering the critical factor that will empower us to lead by God's Spirit, "The starting point for a true pastoral musician is that she or he is a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ. As a leader, one's relationship with Christ is the foundation of ministry."[174] This is a continually grown relationship through spiritual disciplines that draw us close to Jesus and transforms us into His likeness.

Of those spiritual disciplines, the importance of the intentional practice of confession/self-examination and the Sabbath in a worship leader's life is imminent if the prevention of moral failure is desired. Adele A. Calhoun describes the freedom and forgiveness found in the discipline of confession and self-examination,

> True repentance means we open the bad in our lives to God. We invite him to come right in and look at our sin with us. We don't hide by being good, moral people or in neurotic self-recriminations. We don't pretend to be other than we are. We don't disguise the truth by carting out all the disciplines we practice. We

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[173] Constance M. Cherry, *The Music Architect: Blueprints for Engaging Worshipers in Song* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 3.

[174] Ibid., 4.

tell it like it is – without rationalization, denial, or blame – to the only person in the universe who will unconditionally love us when we are bad. We hand over pretense, image management, manipulation, control, and self-obsession. In the presence of the holy One we give up appearing good and fixing our sin. We lay down our ability to change by the power of the self. We turn to Jesus and seek forgiveness.[175]

As it relates to the unrelenting stress brought upon by the multidimensional approach of ministry in the 21st century, worship leaders need to practice a balanced rhythm between work and rest. Calhoun shares concerning the spiritual discipline of Sabbath, "Rhythmically, the Sabbath reminds us that we belong to the worldwide family of God. We are citizens of another kingdom – a kingdom not ruled by the clock and the tyranny of the urgent. God's sabbath reality calls us to trust that the Creator can manage all that concerns us in this world as we settle in his rest."[176]

The urgent need for a worship leader to have an accountability partner in ministry is a matter of living a life of hidden sins, which leads to moral failure or the loving assistance of a brother or sister in Christ to live a Kingdom-purposed life. "For various reasons, ministers have allowed themselves to become separate from life-giving relationships, empathetic peers and healthy accountability."[177] Roncone, Schmidt, and Stahnke add, "Isolated leaders lack meaningful relationships that are not connected to their work or supervision structures. They separate themselves from support systems, accountability structures and peer communication. Care and encouragement from others can be hard to come by. With no authentic accountability system, despite all their gifts and strengths, their weaknesses can win over. We are reminded of

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[175] Adele A. Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 92.

[176] Ibid., 42.

[177] Gene Roncone, Susan Schmidt, and George Stahnke, *Isolation in Ministry: Understanding the Cause, Consequence, and Cure for a Modern Epidemic* (Independently Published, 2019), Amazon Kindle.

the dangers of this in Proverbs 15:22, 'Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed."[178] That is ultimately why there is a resounding need for spirit-guided relationships – spiritual friendships in ministry – and the need for a spiritual mentor for worship leaders today.

## CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH FINDINGS

Section I: Exploring the Biblical/Historical/Psychological Research Findings

Within the next few pages, a comprehensive extension of scholarly literary review on the various causes, consequences, and preventative solutions of moral failure in worship leadership are the subjects of our attention, beginning with the evasive dark side of leadership.

**Literary Review on the Dark Side of Leadership**

As a recapitulation of the definition of one's dark side, Peter Scazzero illustrates in detail this inner dysfunction caused by the fallenness of Adam and Eve in the garden,

> Your shadow is the accumulation of untamed emotions, less-than-pure motives, and thoughts that, while largely unconscious, strongly influence and shape your behaviors. It is the damaged but mostly hidden version of who you are. The shadow may erupt in various forms. Sometimes, it reveals itself in sinful behaviors such as judgmental perfectionism, outbursts of anger, jealousy, resentment, lust, greed, or bitterness. Or it may reveal itself more subtly through a need to rescue others and be liked by people, a need to be noticed, an inability to stop working, a tendency toward isolation, or rigidity.[179]

Authors Gary L. McIntosh and Samuel D. Rima put forward a central argument regarding one's dark side that is vital to its recognition,

> It is important to remember that though the term *dark side* may conjure up negative images, our dark side is not intrinsically evil. It is simply a part of being human. God can and does work through our dark side to accomplish his kingdom purposes and to elevate us to positions of leadership that we might not even have aspired to without the influence of our dark side. However, it is essential at some

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[178] Roncone, Schmidt and Stahnke, *Isolation in Ministry*, Amazon Kindle.

[179] Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and The World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Reflective, 2015), 55.

point that our dark side be redeemed to more adequately serve God's purposes and to be used less in satisfying our needs.[180]

In Scripture, King David is a memorable example of God accomplishing kingdom purposes despite his dark side's continuous bouts. McIntosh and Rima give this illustration of David's dark side,

> King David also periodically battled with his dark side, resulting in humiliating personal defeats and devastating national consequences. His pride as a leader caused him to take a census of his warriors in direct violation of God's commands, leading to the needless death of many innocent people. His selfishness consumed him as he committed adultery with Bathsheba, murdering her husband, and then deceived himself as he covered up his sin for nearly a year until he was finally confronted by Nathan the prophet (2 Samuel 11-12; 24). However, in spite of his frequent battles with the dark side, it seems that David was aware of his dark side and was willing to deal honestly with himself before God.[181]

Larry L. McSwain continues our literary analysis by making a critical assertion, which links the gravity of the redemptive necessity of our dark side involving church leadership, "No greater tragedy for the church exists than for those who claim the mantle of leadership but live out of the dark side of their character."[182]

One's dark side's universality is a subject matter that frequently remains in the shadows, disregarded, and unspoken by those in leadership due to the many undesirable conflicts it engenders. McIntosh and Rima highlight,

> The great majority of conflicts in leadership are the result of the leader's own sensibilities being offended, his ideas being rejected, his being outperformed by a staff member or not receiving the attention and respect he feels he deserves, and various other petty issues. These often-become areas of conflict because they tend

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[180] Gary McIntosh and Samuel D. Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership: How to Become an Effective Leader by Confronting Potential Failures*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 154.

[181] Ibid., 65.

[182] Larry L. McSwain, *The Calling of Congregational Leadership: Being, Knowing, Doing Ministry* (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2013), 22.

to touch some raw nerve within the leader's dark side. They reinforce the leader's feelings of inadequacy, insecurity, paranoia, or some other feeling.[183]

Author T. J. Addington contributes, "We all have a shadow side: It is the side of us that we like to forget and are reluctant to acknowledge. Because we neglect it, it often gets us into trouble with others and can severely compromise our influence, if not destroy it altogether."[184] Peter Scazzero synopsizes it this way,

> Most leaders search out books on leadership to discover new tools, ideas, or skills. We are charged with the task of knowing what to do next, knowing why it is important, and then bringing the necessary resources to bear to make it happen. Yet, the first and most difficult task we face as leaders is to lead ourselves. Why? Because it requires confronting parts of who we are that we prefer to neglect, forget, or deny.[185]

The shadow side of an individual, as Addington classifies it, is an issue the Holy Spirit's influence can redeem and manage. However, if it does not get acknowledged and surrendered, moral failure in leadership is imminent.

The redemption of one's shadow side must be the continuous desire of a worship leader, or "the self-protective part of us can be very creative in finding what appear to be legitimate and justifiable ways to avoid it."[186] Defense mechanisms that blockade worship leaders' innermost beings need to surrender to the Holy Spirit's power to transform them into the likeness of Jesus Christ. McIntosh and Rima further express, "Obviously, there is no quick and easy formula we can apply that will overcome the lifetime of experiences that have helped create our dark side. Walking out from under the shadow side of our personality will call for discipline and continual

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[183] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 152.

[184] T J. Addington, *Deep Influence: Unseen Practices That Will Revolutionize Your Leadership* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2014), 89.

[185] Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 51.

[186] Ibid., 61.

vigilance. It is a lifetime process."[187] This lifetime process is painful and requires intentional, consistent discipline – spiritual disciplines.

McIntosh and Rima reveal an unfortunate reality in the life of spiritual leaders that is problematic and a direct result of the influence of one's dark side. They describe, "One of the most troubling realities about spiritual leaders today is the increasing number of them who do not consistently devote time to personal spiritual disciplines. Too many leaders today do not regularly expose themselves to the scrutinizing probe of the Holy Spirit by looking into Scriptures."[188] Alarming, but there is hope! The author of Hebrews gives confidence to those seeking the redemption of their dark side, "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it."[189]

Authors Heuser and Shawchuck indicate this pursuit of righteousness and peace made possible by Jesus' invitation to learn from Him, as we seek to lead His Church, "The desire to be faithful in the demands of ministry brings us to an earlier invitation from Jesus to his disciples: 'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light' (Matt 11:28:30). This can also be true for us if and when we practice the disciplines as Jesus did."[190] This open invitation of

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[187] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 157.

[188] Ibid., 199-200.

[189] Hebrews 12:11 (NIV)

[190] Roger Heuser and Norman Shawchuck, *Leading the Congregation: Caring for Yourself While Serving Others*, rev. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010), 1.

intentional discipleship from Jesus Christ, our Savior, is the panacea to resist this ever-present sinful war within – the redemptive process made possible by God.

## A. Leadership's Dark Side Redemptive Process

The redemption of one's dark side begins with the recollection of events from one's formative years – the examination of one's past. "Every leader has run the gauntlet of embarrassing and humiliating childhood experiences that have left their indelible mark. These experiences are the very ones that must be explored and reflected on if we are to understand their full albeit subtle impact on our own leadership."[191]Moreover, the feelings those experiences leave within one's unbalanced identity need inquiry to deduce their impact on the individual life that seeks it. McIntosh and Rima continue, "The reason it is important to recall not only the events but also the feelings they generated is that it is very often those same feelings that are still driving our behavior as leaders today. They have likely created some of the unmet needs in our life that we may be attempting to meet as adults through the exercise of our leadership."[192]

Once the experiences from one's childhood receive a meticulous examination, and the ill-feelings resurrect, the second step towards redeeming one's dark side can proceed to the need for forgiveness. In Scripture, we read, "If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins."[193] For those whose experiences are very traumatic, it is one of the most challenging choices to make – to forgive those who have assisted in the shaping of one's dark side. McIntosh and Rima quote Neil Anderson, as he conveys the peril of unforgiveness some choose,

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[191] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 174.

[192] Ibid., 176.

[193] Matthew 6:14-15 (NLT)

"Forgiveness is necessary to avoid entrapment by Satan. I have discovered in my counseling that unforgiveness is the number one avenue Satan uses to gain entrance to believer's lives. Paul encouraged mutual forgiveness 'in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes' (2 Cor. 2:11). Unforgiveness is an open invitation to Satan's bondage in our lives."[194]

The next vital step to redeeming one's dark side is resisting the poison of expectations – impractical ones. Healthy expectations of a worship leader's duties, with boundaries, are necessary to hamper moral failure in their ministry. Trull & Creech explain, "A recent survey of graduates conducted by two seminary faculty members revealed that the major concern of the first-time ministers was coping with uncertainties regarding their roles in ministry. 'We found beginning clergypersons almost completely at the mercy of the expectations of their first parish without counterbalancing claims from denomination or profession."[195] McIntosh and Rima disclose the power and pain of expectations,

> You see, expectations can either propel people to achieve, or they can produce pain and failure. The same is true when it comes to the expectations, we place on ourselves as leaders and the expectations we allow others to place on us. Very often, the expectations – spoken or unspoken – placed on us by others serve as the driving force behind our achievement and aspirations to succeed…whether positive or negative, whether self-imposed or imposed on us by others, expectations can powerfully influence our lives. Unfortunately, they can also be very destructive.[196]

Unrealistic expectations are a severe issue in the lives of pastors and worship leaders today. "Pastors and other leaders have always faced unrealistic expectations. The difficulty today is that

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[194] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 178.

[195] Joe E. Trull, *Ethics for Christian Ministry: Moral Formation for Twenty-first-century Leaders* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2017), 13.

[196] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 185-186.

each individual has his or her own set of expectations; few are commonly agreed on. Thus, the intensity of expectations is multiplied, creating a burden rarely experienced in days gone by."[197] Praise God that this unrealistic approach is not the end, for Jesus Christ is a burden-bearer. Our Savior's yoke is easy to bear and what he gives in return is light.[198] When the fast engine of unhealthy expectations runs out of oil in a worship leader's life, God's sufficient grace is what they need. "More than anything else, a proper understanding and personal application of the grace of God can liberate us from the poison and pressure of unrealistic expectations. If anyone understood the pressure of unrealistic expectations, it was Jesus."[199]

According to a recent LifeWay Survey by Lisa Cannon Green, "30 percent have no document clearly stating what the church expects of its pastor."[200] When one compiles this statistic with the following, "84 percent say they're on call 24 hours a day…48 percent often feel the demands of ministry are more than they can handle…21 percent say their church has unrealistic expectations of them,"[201] we have an unpleasant problem. Nevertheless, thanks be to God for providing his means of grace (i.e., spiritual disciplines) to help worship leaders mature spiritually in the likeness of Jesus Christ.

## B. Biblical Means of Grace for One's Dark Side

As a result of the negative impacts of one's dark side previously investigated, the intentional keeping of one's private worship with Jesus as a consistent, nonnegotiable priority is

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[197] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 189.

[198] Matthew 11:30 (paraphrased)

[199] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 193.

[200] Lisa Cannon Green, "Despite Stresses, Few Pastors Give up On Ministry," LifeWayResearch.com, September 1, 2015, https://lifewayresearch.com/2015/09/01/despite-stresses-few-pastors-give-up-on-ministry/.

[201] Ibid.

indispensable. Heuser and Shawchuck once again bring purposeful awareness into the spirituality of Jesus, which we need to emulate as worship leaders. They state,

> If we hope to live within the reality envisioned by Jesus, then we must also learn the spirituality of Jesus – the discipline to be in solitary prayer, to be in community with others, and to be empowered for active ministry within intimate settings of homes and the gathering places of the larger crowds. As we consider the substance of Jesus' spirituality, let us ask ourselves this question: If Jesus, being the Son of God, felt he needed to adhere to the means of grace in order to sustain his ministry, can we possibly hope to respond fully to our call without living within these means?[202]

As worship leaders, the revival of our personal relationship with Jesus Christ in a busy and hurried ministry lifestyle must not be ignored or put off. Our desire to learn from our Lord must be unquestionable because "Being comfortable with who God made us to be removes the need to pretend we are something we are not or to try to become what God did not make us to be."[203] It gives freedom for, "…the Lord is Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."[204]

Author John Mark Comer discloses that "Both sin and busyness have the exact same effect – they cut off your connection to God, to other people, and even to your own soul."[205] Comer presses on and notes, "We are more busy than bad, more distracted than nonspiritual, and more interested in the movie theater, the sports stadium, and the shopping mall and the fantasy life they produce in us than we are in church. Pathological busyness, distraction, and restlessness are major blocks today with our spiritual lives."[206]

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[202] Heuser and Shawchuck, *Leading the Congregation*, 40.

[203] Addington, *Deep Influence*, 158-59.

[204] 2 Corinthians 3:17 (NIV)

[205] John Mark Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook, 2019), 20.

[206] Ibid., 26.

Barna group's report on *The State of Pastors* helps expose how the complexity of leading in ministry today causes pastors to neglect their communion with Jesus Christ – their soul care. "It is difficult, if not impossible, to lead people into a transformative relationship with God if leaders aren't engaged with the Spirit in their own transformation. Without the sense of connection with Christ that comes with regular practice, spirituality can become a job rather than a calling."[207] Therein is part of the downfall of worship leaders today. Pete Scazzero interpolates his observation to the significance of private worship in a leader's life,

> Being a leader for Christ without practicing spiritual disciplines that enable us to abide with him is a contradiction. How can we give what we do not possess? How can we offer the life-transforming message of Jesus if he is not continually transforming us? Regularly practicing prayer, silence, solitude, meditation on the Scriptures, worship, community, Sabbath, and simplicity is the door we open to receive Jesus and be transformed by his presence. Our first work as spiritual leaders is to live *congruently*, which means we are the same person on and off stage. Our roles and our souls must remain connected; this is our primary work and the greatest gift we can give to others. Without it, we have little, if anything, to offer the world in the name of Jesus. And so, the most loving thing we can do for those we lead is to say no to people's incessant demands in order to cultivate a deep personal relationship with Jesus.[208]

One of the biblical solutions that serve as a means of grace for worship leaders on their Christlikeness journey leading God's people is biblical meditation. Not the quick, 5-minute devotionals some speed through as ministry calls them out of the door to feel good about their spiritual checklists. Instead, the unhurried, set-apart time to submerge one's mind into the revealed truth of God for holy transformation. Robert J. Morgan elucidates this thought,

> Our fallen minds are futile. Without the insights that come from God and His Word, our thoughts never really get out of the basement of life. When we learn to meditate day and night on Scripture, God uses that practice to rewire our brains.

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[207] Barna Group, *The State of Pastors: How Today's Faith Leaders Are Navigating Life and Leadership in an Age of Complexity* (Ventura, CA: Barna Group, 2017), 32.

[208] Ibid., 33.

Meditation elevates our mood. It fills us with God's thoughts, which are always successful. We begin to see things as He does, and the inevitable result is success. But it's success as God defines it. A joyful life that bears fruit. Purpose, Perseverance, Pleasantness, Godliness, Cheerfulness, Holiness, Hopefulness, Everlasting Life, Friendship with God.[209]

Romans 12:2 is a familiar passage that admonishes God's children – especially those who lead them – to take the transformational discipline of 'renewing our minds' seriously because only "then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will."[210] Morgan adds,

Without Christ, our thoughts are as dark as midnight. Apart from God's grace in Christ, our minds are corrupt (Titus 1:15), depraved (2 Timothy 3:8), anxious (Deuteronomy 28:65), cunning (Psalm 64:6), closed (Isaiah 44:18), warped (Proverbs 12:8), 'puffed up with idle notions' (Colossians 2:18), and 'always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth' (2 Timothy 3:7).[211]

The spiritual discipline of biblical meditation is efficacious to purify the dark side of leadership in worship leaders through the digestion of God's transforming truth. Spiritual growth occurs when we allow God's light – His Word – to shine in our inner obscurity. "The process of spiritual growth involves increasing the wattage of the light that shines in our hearts and minds – and that light comes only from our Lord."[212]

Heuser and Shawchuck continue our investigation of one's dark side by alerting worship leaders of an essential aspect regarding spiritual disciplines,

The spiritual disciplines have no intrinsic value in themselves; there is no merit in simply doing disciplines for their own sake – though we eventually learn to practice them 'with no strings attached.' The spiritual life is not a quest for the right technique or regiment for the proper spiritual disciplines that would live up to the promise of spiritual satisfaction. M. Robert Mulholland, Jr., observes,

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[209] Robert J. Morgan, *Reclaiming the Lost Art of Biblical Meditation: Find True Peace in Jesus* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2017), 104.

[210] Romans 12:2b (NIV)

[211] Morgan, *Reclaiming the Lost Art of Biblical Meditation*, 5.

[212] Ibid., 7.

'Somewhere between the extremes of avoidance of discipline and the imprisonment of discipline is the holistic practice of balanced spiritual disciplines which become a means of God's grace to shape us in the image of Christ for others.[213]

Worship leaders must beware of the pretense of spiritual growth and maturity through external piety. There must be growth in those who lead God's people so that they can teach them how to grow as well. Eric Liddell notes, "The Christian life should be a life of growth. I believe the secret of growth is to develop the devotional life. This involves setting aside each day a time of prayer and Bible study. The time need not be long, but it should be unhurried. We should come to it in an honest spirit, prepared to face the challenge of God's Word as it lays down a way of life, and prepared to face any inconsistencies in our live which make them un-Christlike."[214]

Worship leader's love for Jesus Christ needs to be the difference-maker, which draws them close because of a longing to be known and belong to Him. May worship leaders' souls' thirst after God as that of the sons of Korah who wrote, "A white-tailed deer drinks from the creek; I want to drink God, deep draughts of God. I'm thirsty for God-alive."[215] As disciples of Jesus Christ, worship leaders must engage their fallen minds (marred by our dark side) with God's truth daily; the souls of those we lead in worship depend on it. Drew Dyck states,

> I'm convinced that the vast majority of leaders whose ministries implode because of a moral failing started on their path by neglecting their relationship with God. Estranged from God's Spirit, the fruit of self-control eventually withered in their lives. One of the cruel ironies of ministry is that it's easy to nurture other people's souls while neglecting your own. If you're not careful, you can get to the place where you only talk to God when you're praying in public and only open God's Word to prepare to teach. Don't be that leader. Make intimacy with the Father your number-one concern. Your life—and the lives of those you lead—depends

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[213] Heuser and Shawchuck, *Leading the Congregation*, 222.

[214] Eric Liddell, *The Disciplines of the Christian Life* (Escondido, CA: eChristianBooks, 2011), 21.

[215] Psalm 42:1 (MSG)

on it.[216]

Failure to meditate on God's Word brings up personality dysfunctions that do not reflect

Christ's likeness; the shadow side's fruits blossom from our sinful nature (see Ephesians 5:19-

21). Morgan points out,

> How easy it is to forget what kind of person we really are when we neglect the
> mirror of Scripture. The reason for our neglect is that our image, as reflected by
> the holy mirror, is not often flattering. It forces us to deal with the realities of our
> depravity and the dark side it has spawned. How much more comfortable it is to
> live in denial of our true nature? We must realize that consistent exposure to
> Scripture will provide us with the most accurate self-knowledge available to us.[217]

The diligent and intentional practice of the spiritual discipline of biblical meditation is significant

because it is "the habit that allows us to pause long enough to be still and to know that God is

God. It leads us to spiritual growth, emotional strength, deepening intimacy with the Lord, and

soul-steadying peace."[218]

Literary Review on Personality Dysfunctions

The issue of personality dysfunction in God's image-bearers is a by-product of man's

rebellion against our real purpose in being – worshiping God. The insecurity of man's identity is

a prime ingredient for the many personality dysfunctions that occur in ministry. Addington

mentions, "Insecure leaders are responsible for much leadership dysfunction, while personal

security – being comfortable with who we are and how God has made us – is the foundation for

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[216] Drew Dyck, "Self-Control, the Leader's Make-or-break Virtue: Is It Possible to Build Willpower Like a Muscle?" *Christianity Today - Pastors*, October 11, 2018, https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2018/fall-state-of-church-ministry/self-control-leaders-make-or-break-virtue.html.

[217] Morgan, *Reclaiming the Lost Art of Biblical Meditation*, 200.

[218] Ibid., x.

healthy leadership. When we lead out of personal insecurity, our own issues cloud our leadership and spill over on others."[219]

Donald W. Black and Janet Ramsey provide the essential, clinical definition of personality disorders, "According to the DSM-IV TR, personality disorders (PDs) represent an enduring pattern of inner experience and behavior that 'deviates markedly from the expectations of the individual's culture, is pervasive and inflexible, has an onset in adulthood, is stable over time, and leads to distress or impairment' (DSM-IV TR, 686)."[220]

Authors Trull and Creech introduce the vulnerability of pastors who deal with personality disorders, which can lead to moral failure if left unchecked,

> The power, influence, affection, and devotion that often accompany an effective pastoral ministry can be a temptation to forget that we, too, are mere mortals. Speaking for God from God's Word does not make our voice the voice of God. Representing Christ in pastoral ministry, fulfilling our priestly role does not make us anything other than fallen and redeemed human beings, just like those we serve. This confession is not an excuse but a recognition of our need to depend on Christ for our very lives. The failure to do so will inevitably result in our attempting to be a god or our moral collapse in some other area of vulnerability.[221]

The dark side of leadership's explanation in our previous section works hard at disfiguring, to a greater extent, the redemptive likeness of Christ graciously offered to all who believe and accept it.

Author Corey Seigel proposes one of the most common personality disorders found in worship leaders today – narcissism. He remarks,

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[219] Addington, *Deep Influence*, 119.

[220] Donald W. Black and Janet Ramsey, "Personality Disorders," in *Ministry with Persons with Mental Illnesses and Their Families*, ed. Robert H. Albers, William H. Meller, and Steven D. Thurber (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, 2012), 83-105, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt22nm9z4.8.

[221] Trull, *Ethics for Christian Ministry*, 50.

Every individual can be placed on a continuum from possessing very few to very many narcissistic traits. However, 'when these traits are inflexible, maladaptive, and persisting and cause significant functional impairment or subjective distress,' they may constitute Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). The development of this disorder is rooted in damage to the individual's self-image during his or her early formative years. The individual's inward insecurity leads him or her to adopt a 'false front,' an inflated self-image that may bear minimal resemblance to the actual person.[222]

This inward insecurity evident in image-bearers of God is yet another cause of moral failure in worship leaders. Pastor Fredrick A. Russell interprets it as such,

To deal with failure is difficult for anyone, and more so for pastors. The very thought of it plays havoc with what might be an already embattled sense of self-worth and confidence. Most pastors struggle regularly with feelings of inadequacy and personal value. The very nature of their work promotes these feelings. Much of what we do relates to people, and the job is laborious, tiring, very public, and uniquely frustrating. People's lives can't be fixed in a 9:00-to-5:00 workday. Consequently, for the pastor, there is rarely a sense of completion, the feeling of a job well done. Couple with this is the fact that people can project onto pastors their own issues. Thus, the daunting task of ministry can seem overwhelming, heightening the feelings of personal inadequacy. This prompts the inner questions: Am I making a difference? What did I really accomplish? So, before any particular act of failure occurs, pastors already exist in an environment in which failure on an emotional level is never far removed.[223]

J.R. Kerr, in his article "Pastoral Narcissism," shares the tendency that some worship leaders erroneously allow to consume them as a result of their insecurity, "T.S. Eliot wrote, 'Half the harm that is done in this world is due to people who want to feel important. They don't mean to do harm, but the harm does not interest them…or they do not see it or justify it…because they are absorbed in the endless struggle to think well of themselves."[224]

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[222] Corey Seibel, "It's All About Me, Jesus: The Narcissistic Worship Leader," *Direction Journal* 38, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 246-53, https://directionjournal.org/38/2/its-all-about-me-jesus-narcissistic.html.

[223] Fredrick A. Russell, "Failure: Getting through the Inevitable," *Ministry: International Journal for Pastors* 71, no. 9 (September 1998): 5-7, https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1998/09/failure.

[224] J.R. Kerr, "Pastoral Narcissism: The Shadow Side of Ambition," *Christianity Today*, October 18, 2010, https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2010/fall/pastoralnarcissism.html.

King Solomon is a quintessential example in Scripture of the narcissistic dark side of leadership. McIntosh and Rima comment,

> It would seem that Solomon, the tentative young king who got off to a troubled start, had more than just a healthy self-image. He had become bigger than life in his own mind. But this world-class greatness was not without significant cost. To fund his desires, Solomon taxed the people to the point of economic exhaustion. When image is everything, no price is too high – especially when it's being paid by others. In addition to the misappropriation of national financial resources, Solomon was willing to tarnish the integrity of his office by violating divine mandates in an effort to advance himself.[225]

According to Larry L. McSwain, understanding one's identity (i.e., the self) is greatly influenced by one's formative years. He states, "The self is rooted in family. Until I understand the shaping influence of the generations of my family, I cannot know myself."[226] The assessment process known as a genogram is an instrumental tool. Dr. Ili Rivera Walter describes it in her article "Family of Origin Exploration for the Therapist: How to Create Your Genogram," "A genogram is a visual representation of a family system, incorporating at least three generations of the system. Its purpose it to help the member of the system (in this case, you) see their context in visual form, so that pivotal moments and notable patterns can be acknowledged and recorded (Kerr & Bowen, 1988)."[227]

McSwain further corroborates the essentiality of a genogram in uncovering dysfunctional traits that can affect someone's identity. He notes,

> Each of us is shaped in our relationship to others by the quality of relationships in our family system. Patterns can be understood more clearly by constructing a three-generational analysis of the family relations in a genogram. Some families

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[225] Morgan, *Reclaiming the Lost Art of Biblical Meditation*, 114.

[226] McSwain, *The Calling of Congregational Leadership*, 26.

[227] Ili Rivera Walter, "Family of Origin Exploration for the Therapist: How to Create Your Genogram," *Family Therapy Basics* (blog), November 29, 2016, https://familytherapybasics.com/blog/2016/11/26/family-of-origin-exploration-for-the-therapist-create-your-genogram.

have strong and healthy relational bonds and others highly dysfunctional ones. A review of a personal genogram may reveal repeated forms of illnesses, addictions, cut-offs in relationships, or healthy interactions that shaped personal identities. You are not determined by these patterns, but you are certainly influenced by them. Understanding that is a key step in self-knowing."[228]

Finally, a worship leader needs to use all the tools made available to identify the origin of our dark side. "The more knowledge we gain about ourselves, the better able we are to overcome our dark side. As long as we choose to live in ignorance of our unique weaknesses and dysfunctions, we will continue to be victimized by them. With increased knowledge will come the increased power to live a life of balance, free from the destructive effects of our dark side."[229] We now identify psychological assessors urgent for worship leaders' surrender of their dark side that causes moral failure.

<div align="center">Literary Review on Psychological Assessors</div>

The need for psychological assessments of worship leaders before and amid their ministry journey by a licensed psychologist is vital to overcoming moral failure. Although the musical skill set is fundamental to a worship leader's résumé, greater importance is his or her character as an individual. John C. Maxwell adds the following, "As Nobel prize-winning author Alexander Solzhenitsyn noted, 'The meaning of earthly existing lies, not as we have grown used to thinking, in prospering, but in the development of the soul.' The development of character is at the center of our development not just as leaders, but as human beings."[230]

Worship leaders are to be people of deep influence, and such a process has to do with the holistic, inner transformation by the Holy Spirit's power. T. J. Addington mentions, "Deep

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[228] McSwain, *The Calling of Congregational Leadership*, 26.

[229] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 210.

[230] John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader: Becoming the Person Others Will Want to Follow* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1999), 4.

influence has everything to do with our inner lives. Our influence is not so much about *how* we lead as from what *source* we choose to lead. At its core is our desire to embrace the spiritual transformation Christ wants to bring. The deepest influence is the influence of Christ living in us…spiritual transformation leads to changes in our character, lifestyle habits, and practices."[231] It is the by-products of this spiritual transformation before hiring a potential worship leader that necessitates assessment.

The complex demands of the ministry of worship leading can and is causing psychological and emotional distress, which has led to untimely deaths in leadership. An unfortunate example of this mental struggle is the recent death by suicide of well-known pastor Jarrid Wilson of Harvest Christian Fellowship in Riverside, California. His demise took the evangelical community by surprise, and yet it displays a harsh reality faced by many pastors (including worship pastors). Ed Stetzer notes,

> The reality is that pastors struggle psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually. They struggle sometimes with physiological realities in and around depression and becoming a follower of Jesus and becoming a pastor does not necessarily make those things disappear…this is, in part, because pastors are often seen as those who do not need help. They're the ones who provide the help, not the ones who need it. Yet the harsh reality is that behind that curtain are pastors who are struggling and don't know where to turn.[232]

Alexander Jack and Daniel T. Wilcox's journal article on the psychological assessment for clerics is a significant literary work that is a steppingstone in the remedial direction toward minimizing moral failure in ministry. Their journal abstract attest,

> The psychological assessment of novice and experienced clerics is an important component of ordination, suitability, and risk evaluation to ensure that

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[231] Addington, *Deep Influence*, 67-68.

[232] Ed Stetzer, "A Pastor Dies by Suicide: Three Things We All Need to Know," *Christianity Today*, September 10, 2019, https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2019/september/pastor-dies-by-suicide-three-things-we-all-need-to-know.html.

representatives of religious organizations are equipped, motivated, and safe for a life commitment to a faith vocation…a thorough psychological assessment should incorporate a multimodal approach to information gathering, which includes a comprehensive review of background information and medical records, a personal history interview, a mental status examination, and administration or relevant psychometric measures and assessment tools.[233]

The authors share a multi-faceted approach that executive pastors and search committees need to consider when hiring a vocationally suitable cleric (in our case, a worship leader). The psychological assessment is as follows, "We recommend an approach that incorporates a review of pertinent background documentation, a series of interviews, the implementation of carefully considered psychometric assessment tools, and if appropriate, when greater levels of dissimulation seem apparent – as with sexual risk assessment (Wilcox 2009, 2013) – the polygraph may be helpful to augment and enhance the evaluation process."[234] (A pyramid of the psychological assessment process is available in Appendix B).

Business journalist writer Shuchita Dua Dullu speaks of the psychometric tests that are useful to recruit the best candidate in the secular business world, which is also vital in ministry, "The word psychometric basically refers to the measurement of the mind. Psychometric testing allows the company to gather a comprehensive understanding of an individual's personality and abilities. Employers who choose to use psychometric testing during recruitment process gain a better overall evaluation of the candidate and hopefully in the process secure the best fit for the role."[235]

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[233] Alexander Jack and Daniel T. Wilcox, "The Psychological Assessment of Clerics," *Pastoral Psychology* 67 (July 14, 2017): 55-64, https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11089-017-0784-y.

[234] Jack and Wilcox, "The Psychological Assessment of Clerics," https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11089-017-0784-y.

[235] Shuchita Dua Dullu, "The Top Five Psychometric Tests Used in Recruitment," www.indvstrvs.com, June 9, 2017, https://indvstrvs.com/psychometric-tests/.

As it relates to a potential worship leader's personality assessment, there are tools

available to diagnose their personality types. Dullu speaks of the DISC personality assessment

tool, "DISC as a behavior assessment tool was developed by Industrial psychologist Walter

Vernon Clarke and is based on the theory of psychologist William Moulton Marston. As an

assessment tool it focuses on identifying four different behavioral traits: dominance, inducement,

submission and compliance. Based on the behavior traits the individuals may be categorized as

either task-oriented or people-oriented."[236]

McSwain also advises the use of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) personality

assessment test in the local church for ministry teams. He cites,

> A second helpful resource for understanding identity is an assessment of your
> personality type. The Myers-Brigg Type Indicator (MBTI) is a standard
> instrument for exploring self-understanding for personality characteristics. The
> McAfee School of Theology requires each student in the first-year course in
> spiritual formation to complete the indicator and interpret it with the guidance of a
> specialist. Congregational staff and key laity would enhance their abilities to
> understand each other and work more effectively as teams if such a resource were
> used in the local church.[237]

Another assessment tool for analyzing a worship leader's personality type is the Enneagram (see

Appendix C for the nine personality types). McSwain adds,

> A third resource for self-knowing is the Enneagram. It is an instrument designed
> to measure the strength of nine personality types…Don Rico and Russ Hudson of
> the Enneagram Institute developed the most useful form of the enneagram, a
> symbol of nine interrelated personality types…The Rico-Hudson instrument
> provides a numerical score of the strength of each of the nine personality types.
> Each of us, according to the theory, possesses characteristics of each type. What is
> important is to develop an awareness of the primary strengths among them.[238]

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[236] Dullu, "The Top Five Psychometric Tests Used in Recruitment," https://indvstrvs.com/psychometric-tests/.

[237] McSwain, *The Calling of Congregational Leadership*, 27.

[238] Ibid., 30-33.

McIntosh and Rima offer additional personality profiles and tests that are available for the

psychological assessment of leaders. Here are three that provide further assistance in deciphering

personality types,

> *The Gallup Strengths Finder*. This tool assesses your top five personality
> strengths, indicating how God hardwired you. *Taylor Johnson Temperament
> Analysis* (TJTA). This is primarily a personality profile that plots your personality
> on a continuum in relation to eight different personality traits…*Minnesota
> Multiphasic Personality Inventory* (MMPI). Unlike the previous tools, which can
> be self-administered, the MMPI must be administered by a professional.
> However, it can be helpful in pointing out aspects of mental and emotional
> functioning that could be serious impairments.[239]

A combination of any number of these assessment tools is a crucial step in preventing the

propensity toward moral failure possible in every worship leader's life. Peter Scazzero sums it

up, "If our desire is to lead and serve others, we have to come to grips with this plain, hard fact:

the degree to which we ignore our shadow is the degree to which our loving service to others is

limited."[240]

**Section II: Exploring the Qualitative Research Findings**

In this section of our literature review of scholarly sources, the causes and consequences

of moral failure, including pride, desire for ministry success, burnout, ministry stress, family-

related stress, the need for accountability, and mentorship, suscitate our inspection. We begin

with the topic of pride in worship leading.

Literary Review on Pride in Worship Leading

One of the most significant effects of our fallenness as image-bearers of God is our

inclination toward self-centeredness. "We are born with a natural bent toward gratifying

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[239] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 204-05.

[240] Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 64.

ourselves, and beginning with our hungry, demanding cries during infancy, that bent is to some degree reinforced throughout our early years of life. We learn as babies that all we must do to go gratify our needs is to cry and someone will be there to satisfy us and stop the crying. Unfortunately, it is a habit that is hard to break as we grow older."[241]

Sin continually makes the idolization of the 'self' keep us separated from our Heavenly Father, who hates such an evil disposition. Author Terry D. Cooper mentions, "Humility and care for others are the important qualities lacking in our self-preoccupations and self-elevations. Within the Judeo-Christian tradition, this self-centeredness is a form of idolatry identified as sin. This inevitably throws our lives out of balance. Various inordinate desires or addictions emerge because we have lost our center in god. Pride, or God-replacement, is our primary problem."[242]

The biblical narrative is apparent on the danger that those chosen by God face when leading His image-bearers toward Kingdom values rather than earthly values. Lucifer, the angel of light, created by God to worship Him and reflect His radiance, is the primogenitor of it all. His self-generated pride began this desire for ascendency to what was meant only for God His Creator. We find its evidence in the passages of Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14. Author Ron Rhodes contributes the following regarding his rebellious act,

> Lucifer apparently becomes so impressed with his own beauty, intelligence, power, and position that he began to desire for himself the honor and glory that belonged to God alone. The sin that corrupted Lucifer was self-generated pride. Apparently, this represents the actual beginning of sin in the universe – preceding the fall of the human Adam by an indeterminate time. Sin originated in the free will of Lucifer in which – with full understanding of the issues involved – he chose to rebel against the Creator."[243]

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[241] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 60.

[242] Terry D. Cooper, *Sin, Pride, and Self-acceptance: The Problem of Identity in Theology and Psychology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 74.

[243] Ron Rhodes, "How Did Lucifer Fall and Become Satan?," www.Christianity.com, October 22, 2007, https://www.christianity.com/theology/theological-faq/how-did-lucifer-fall-and-become-satan-11557519.html.

Stanley E. Patterson, in his journal article *Up the Down Path: Power, Ambition, and Spiritual Leadership*, agrees and further corroborates Lucifer's fall,

> The ontology of spiritual leadership is revealed in this depiction of his coveting the throne of God or at least a place of parity at the throne with God. Note the ascendant language in Isaiah's descriptive text: 'For you have said in your heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation, On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' (Isa. 14:13-14, NKJV). This egocentric upward focus is revealed in the use of the first-person singular by the speaker, Lucifer (v.12). His goals are not authorized, nor has he been ordained to such lofty achievements; rather, he personally covets a position and a role to which he was never called. Lucifer journeyed counter to the direction established by the kingdom of God by climbing up the ladder of his dreams.[244]

This ascendency to a place of honor only belongs to our Heavenly Father alone. The pursuit of the latter causes worship leaders today to fail morally.

Throughout Scripture, occurrences of man's pride dishonor the glory due to Almighty God. The Tower of Babel's story in the Old Testament illustrates men's folly in their demonstration of self-worship – unacceptable to Yahweh. Daniel J. Lewis, in his commentary of Bible history and culture, notes, "Babel, by contrast, was driven by human concerns: *let us build ourselves a city…so that we may make a name for ourselves* (Ge. 11:4). Babel, in the end, represents self-chosen worship – worship designed to appeal to human desires, human concerns, and human exaltation. As Paul would say about some worshipers in his own era, '…these regulations look wise with their self-

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[244] Stanley E. Patterson, "Up the Down Path: Power, Ambition, and Spiritual Leadership," *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 7, no. 1 (2013): 1, https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jacl/vol7/iss1/2.

inspired efforts at worship…but in actual practice, they do honor, not God, but man's own pride"

(Col. 2:23, Phillips)."[245]

John McArthur shares Uzzah's story as an example of self-styled worship (from Second

Samuel 6:3, 6:7) present in today's 'celebrity' culture.

> Uzzah was well-intentioned. It may seem as if he were only trying to do his job
> by protecting the Ark, but he was malfunctioning. He was endeavoring to carry
> out a responsibility before God in a way that was not in accord with the revelation
> God had given. He may have seen his act as one of worship, an attempt to
> preserve the holiness of God, but he defiled the Ark by the touch of his hand, and
> it cost him his life…The Bible clearly teaches that those who offer self-styled
> worship are unacceptable to God, regardless of their good intentions.[246]

The celebrity culture of the 21st-century has spawned the phenomenon coined 'celebrity' worship

that some worship leaders fall for. Author Pete Ward explains,

> Celebrity culture is quite simply foundational for understanding media because
> people are at the heart of media. This observation brings a distinctive perspective
> to the developing conversation concerning Religion, Media, and Culture.
> Celebrity focuses attention on the central role that mediated individuals play in
> various layers and complexities of relationships that have been traced between
> religion and media. Where religion has been represented in media, people are
> always central; and where religions pick up and use media technologies and forms
> of communication, the individual is generally the emotional heart of the
> communication, and these individuals function as a means of identification and
> connection. These are the dynamics of Celebrity Worship, i.e., a culture where
> individuals are mediated and actively consumed by audiences.[247]

Stanley E. Patterson, in a separate journal article on the foundations of biblical leadership,

cautions Christian leaders,

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[245] Daniel J. Lewis, "Origin and Development of Christian Worship," (Troy, MI: Diakonos, Inc., 2005), 5, https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjBxLHZ-Z3tAhWHjVkKHbRMCxMQFjAAegQIBRAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fsbsinternational.org%2Fresource-material%2Fhistory-and-culture%2F%3Fwpdmdl%3D1097%26ind%3D7&usg=AOvVaw3LQ6AMpDE6Na16TvQECnyr.

[246] John McArthur, *Worship: The Ultimate Priority*. (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2012), 20.

[247] Pete Ward, *Celebrity Worship: Media, Religion, and Culture*. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2020), 9.

We must recognize that the forces that motivate the man of sin in II Thessalonians 2 – self ascendence and the desire to dominate – remain a constant threat to godly, biblical leadership. Lucifer's legacy is never far removed from those God has called to lead. Thus, it is essential that we carefully and consistently walk in the Spirit of God. The regenerated heart must be maintained by an ongoing conversation with God that reminds us that the glory is his, the gifts are his, and even the fruit of a righteous character is his.[248]

Further research shows that the worship leader's penchant for significance and success has robbed God of the glory due to His name alone. Author Hannah Anderson cites, "So often, anxiety and restlessness stem from a heart desperate to prove our worth – to prove it to ourselves, to others, and yes, even to God. Sometimes this weight feels like a wooden beam, a burden lashed to our shoulders. Sometimes it is literally the weight of the world as we try to establish our significance in and through it."[249] Various verses in Scripture illustrate the consequences of pride, such as "First pride, then the crash – the bigger the ego, the harder the fall."[250] Additionally, we read, "Arrogance and pride – distinguishing marks in the wicked – are just plain sin."[251]

Pride causes an insatiable appetite in worship leadership for ministry success, which leads to moral failure. "Self-centeredness is everywhere. And even though it seems worse today, it's an age-old problem. Pride is our number one enemy, the first and greatest sin. Both Judaism

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[248] Stanley E. Patterson, "Biblical Foundations of Christian Leadership, Part 2," *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 11, no. 1 (2017): 13-14, https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jacl/vol11/iss1/6

[249] Hannah Anderson, "Rest from Pride," www.Christianitytoday.com, September 4, 2017, https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2017/september-web-only/rest-from-pride.html.

[250] Proverbs 16:18 (MSG)

[251] Proverbs 21:4 (MSG)

and Christianity have always taught this."[252] Simply put, "Pride is a rejection of God's place in our lives and an elevation of ourselves,"[253] which produces moral failure.

Literary Review on Desire for Ministry Success in Worship Leading

The subsequent most common cause for moral failure in worship leading is the insatiable appetite for ministry success in our post-modern, celebrity-crazed society within ecclesiology. Writer Hannah Gronowski shares the shifting trend in worship leadership today that needs to make us pause for concern, "As strange as it seems, there is a culture of 'success' permeating the sacred walls of ministry. At what point did we buy into the lie that successful ministry is calculated by how 'liked' we are by the masses?"[254]

John Mark Comer quotes Wayne Muller and supports this appetite for success, "A 'successful' life has become a violent enterprise. We make war on our own bodies, pushing them beyond their limits…war on our spirit, because we are too preoccupied to listen to the quiet voices that nourish and refresh us."[255] Once again, the dark's side ambition for self-elevation and gratification permeates evangelical worship leading.

Author Jared Pickney enlightens worship leadership on the criteria that the West uses to determine success. He says,

> When it comes to the church in the West, we often measure success through the ABCs: attendance, budgets, and conversions. Is this what God considers to be the win? When we look at Jesus' life, I believe we see something different. We see that success in ministry does not mean never losing followers, everyone understanding and liking us, getting great – quick results every time, building a church the world is impressed with, compiling lots of cash, leading a group of

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[252] Cooper, *Sin, Pride and Self-Acceptance*, 1.

[253] Addington, *Deep Influence*, 110.

[254] Hannah Gronowski, "Modeling the Ministry Success of Jesus," *The Exchange with Ed Stetzer* (blog), April 20, 2017, https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2017/april/modeling-ministry-success-of-jesus.html.

[255] Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, 53.

people who 'get it,' things turn out exactly the way we planned, eliminating messes. As great as all of these things are, they didn't mark the life of Christ. Therefore, we can conclude that despite what the world may say, it is not necessary for our lives to be marked by these things if we are going to be considered a success. *If this is true, how then do we define success in ministry?*[256]

That is the million-dollar question that worship leaders need to assess from God's perspective so that His kingdom can grow here on earth. Peter Scazzero adds, "Most of us have been taught to measure success by external markers. In the context of the church, we typically measure things like attendance, baptisms, memberships, people serving, number of small groups, and financial giving. And let's be clear – numbers aren't all bad…but let's be clear: There is a wrong way to deal with numbers. When we use numbers to compare ourselves to others or to boast of our size, we cross a line."[257]

T.J. Addington relays a profound statement for worship leaders today, "God is more concerned about the depth of our leadership than about the outward success of our leadership."[258] Such depth is gained through the unhurried, consistent fellowship with Jesus Christ through spiritual disciplines. John Dickerson shares the right model that worship leaders should pursue in kingdom progress rather than success, "In Jesus' unhurried pace and unity with the Father, we find the true definition of success. I believe that God's calling for you will be fulfilled if you obey in these three matters: 1. Love God (Luke 10:27), 2. Love God's People (Luke 10:27), 3. Love God's Word (2 Timothy 4:2)."[259] Dickerson continues,

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[256] Jared Pickney, "Success in Ministry - Not! Letting Jesus Define The," *Saturate the World* (blog), April 20, 2017, https://saturatetheworld.com/2017/04/20/success-ministry-not/.

[257] Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 36.

[258] Addington, *Deep Influence*, 13.

[259] John Dickerson, "Rethinking Success: What Happens When God Doesn't Share Your Definition of Ministry Success?" *Christianity Today*, October 28, 2013, https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2013/october-online-only/rethinking-success.html.

The secret to success is not one more thing to do. (And that, I've found, is what most pastors want at a conference, another thing to heave onto the suffocating pile of To-Do's.) The secret to true and lasting success is actually to abandon anything you must in order to reclaim purity of heart in those 'big three.' To love God, who alone can infill you with love for his people. And to love his Word, which 'prospers.' Do this, and you will 'be like a tree planted by streams of water.' You will 'bear fruit in season.' When other expectations tug at your ego, remind yourself that the tree does not get to pick what fruit it produces. The tree does not even get to pick *when* it produces. That is all up to the Creator.[260]

Today, worship leaders need to be spiritual leaders whose main objective is to bring others into a closer, loving relationship with Jesus Christ. Morris Thompson notes, "A spiritual leader is someone who leads others to a closer walk with Christ. This is why spiritual leaders are so important for the spiritual growth of others. Without other people helping us to grow in a closer walk with Christ, we will never find true healing."[261]

The danger of leading God's people without Jesus Christ is an ever-present consequence possible in every worship leader's life. "Remember, Jesus doesn't say we can't lead or build a church without him. What he does say is that our efforts are worth nothing unless they flow out of a relationship of loving union with him (John 15:5). In other words, although what we do matters, who we are matters much more."[262] Ministry success burgeons when a worship leader leads out of the loving union they have with Jesus Christ.

Loving union – is to *lovingly allow God to have full access to your life*. These are Jesus's words to the Christians in Laodicea and to us: *'Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me'* (Revelation 3:20). In loving union, we keep that door wide open. We allow the will of God to have full access to every area of our lives, including every aspect of our leadership – from difficult conversations and decision-making to managing our emotional triggers.

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[260] Dickerson, "Rethinking Success," https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2013/october-online-only/rethinking-success.html.

[261] Morris Thompson, "The Need for Spiritual Leadership," *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 11, no. 2 (September 2017): 78-82, https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jacl/vol11/iss2/7.

[262] Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 118.

> Cultivating this kind of relationship with God can't be hurried or rushed. We must slow down and build into our lives a structure and rhythm that make this kind of loving surrender routinely possible.[263]

Failure at being consistent with our loving union (see Appendix E 'Loving Union Health Check Survey') with Jesus Christ by seeking external success as a worship leader in ministry leads to burnout.

<p style="text-align:center">Literary Review on Burnout in Worship Leading</p>

Burnout is the much-dreaded consequence of worship leaders whose insecurity, impractical expectations (from their leaders and themselves), and desire for success meet with the ministry's reality. According to Barna Group's "The State of Pastors" report, leaders speak of the reality of burnout, "…three out of four who say they know at least one fellow pastor whose ministry has ended due to burnout (76%)."[264]  Reasonable cause of concern for worship leaders today. D. G. Kehl, from his 1981 article "Burnout: The Risk of Reaching Too High," shares an insight that is still viable for today's 21st-century worship leaders. He notes, "Whenever the expectation level is dramatically opposed to reality, and the person persists in trying to reach that expectation, trouble is on the way. Deep inside, friction is building up, the inevitable result of which will be a depletion of the individual's resources, an attrition of his vitality, energy, and ability to function" (*Burn-Out*), p.13."[265]

Drs. Clinton and Hawkins share their understanding of burnout that worship leaders need to grasp (see Appendix F for Burnout Personal Assessment Questions),

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[263] Ibid. 120.

[264] Barna Group, "The State of Pastors," 26.

[265] D.G. Kehl, "Burnout: The Risk of Reaching Too High," *Christianity Today*, November 20, 1981, https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1981/november-20/burnout-risk-of-reaching-too-high.html.

Western culture continues to push the limits, has become increasingly obsessed with the 'pursuit of excellence,' and burnout has reached *epidemic proportions* even within the church. Burnout is a stressful state characterized by *physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion, chronic fatigue, and lethargy*…burnout is often experienced by those in the *helping professions*, such as clergy, doctors, teachers, police officers, social workers, and others who work extensively with people. It is thought to result from the excessive demands that others place on their energy, time, and resources.[266]

The additional responsibilities/demands (i.e., mentoring, discipling, teaching, administrative duties, etc.), unrealistic expectations, and the desire for success that some worship leaders seek today – apart from leading in songs in worship – make the prospect of burnout palpable. Ed Stetzer states,

The work of a pastor is truly varied, demanding, wonderful, and at times, very stressful. This work places demands upon physical, cognitive, emotional, spiritual, and relational resources, which can result in significant distress. Distress is associated with a number of very obvious and well documents *negative health outcomes* related to sleep, blood pressure, heart disease, and cerebrovascular disease. Additionally, there are well-documented effects upon *mood* and *relationships*, with stress-related to burnout resulting in increased avoidance and isolation, which may further exacerbate the original distress.[267]

Nathan Foster of Renovaré reinforces the distress worship leaders in Western culture minister in with the following,

In the last fifty years, the way in which life is lived in American society has dramatically changed, and many are not adapting well. We are potentially on the cusp of a new human evolution as our brain circuitry is being rewired to acclimate to the new pace and clutter of how we do life. As a result, many of us are finding it nearly impossible to thrive in the noise and fullness of the modern world. When we ask people how they are doing, we hear the worn cliché of "busy, stressed, overwhelmed, and tired.[268]

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[266] Timothy E. Clinton and Ronald Hawkins, *The Quick-Reference Guide to Biblical Counseling: Personal and Emotional Issues* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2009), 54-55.

[267] David J. Van Dyke and Ben Pyykkonen, "Being a Pastor: A Perilous Profession, Part 1," *The Exchange with Ed Stetzer* (blog), December 10, 2009, https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2019/november/being-pastor-perilous-profession-part-1.html.

[268] Nathan Foster, "Selfish Care, Self-Care, and Soul-Care - What's the Difference?," www.renovare.org, February 28, 2018, https://renovare.org/articles/selfish-care-vs-soul-care.

Worship leaders today, through the means of grace Jesus epitomized, have an exemplary lifestyle to follow to resist ministry burnout (see Appendix G for Action Steps to Overcome Burnout). "Even our Savior, being God, was aware of His human limitations. He never seemed to be in a hurry; He didn't work twenty-four-hour days. Even as more and more people crowded to Him to hear His words and be healed. He would often withdraw into the wilderness and pray (Luke 5:15-16)."[269]

Literary reviews on the topic of burnout reveal two specific spiritual disciplines worship leaders need to intentionally practice in resisting it: Sabbath and Self-Examination. Adele Ahlberg Calhoun defines the Sabbath as "God's gift of repetitive and regular rest. It is given for our delight and communion with God. Time for *being* in the midst of a life of *doing* particularly characterizes the sabbath."[270] With the busy pace of ministry for worship leaders today, the command to rest in God is sacrosanct.

John Mark Comer conveys, "There's something about the human condition that makes us want to hurry our way through life as fast as we possibly can, to rebel against the limitations of time itself. Due to our immaturity, dysfunction, and addiction, God has to command his people to do something deeply life giving – rest."[271] This incessant drive to accomplish and produce is what Jesus Christ desires worship leaders to rest from to delight in Him. Marva J. Dawn states, "One of the ugliest things about our culture is that we usually assess a person's worth on the basis of his or her productivity and accomplishments."

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[269] Clinton and Hawkins, *The Quick-Reference Guide to Biblical Counseling*, 58.

[270] Calhoun, *Spiritual Discipline Handbook*, 40.

[271] Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, 159.

Marva continues by submitting what the discipline of Sabbath encompasses that can rid us of this secular pursuit, "…to cease not only from work itself, but also form the need to accomplish and be productive, from the worry and tension that accompany our modern criterion of efficiency, from our efforts to be in control of our lives as if we were God, from our possessiveness and our enculturation, and, finally, from the humdrum and meaninglessness that result when life is pursued without the Lord at the center of it all."[272] Today's worship leaders need to embrace God's rest in our fast-paced society; the caring of worship leaders' souls through Sabbath-keeping needs revitalization.

T.J. Addington reminds leaders that "they cannot overestimate the value of their time and the importance of evaluating the choices they have, given their limited hours."[273] As a result, how worship leaders spend their time is vital to keeping a good ministry work rhythm and rest. Jesus appeals to worship leaders to release themselves from the enslaving power of seeking accomplishment by saying, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."[274]

Comer adds, "The Sabbath isn't just a twenty-four-hour times slot in your weekly schedule; it's a *spirit* of restfulness that goes with you throughout your week. A way of living with 'ease, gratitude, appreciation, peace and prayer.' A way of working from rest, not for rest, with nothing to prove. A way of bearing fruit from abiding, not ambition."[275] May worship

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[272] Marva J. Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly: Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, Feasting* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1989), 3.

[273] Addington, *Deep Influence*, 162.

[274] Matthew 11:28 (NIV)

[275] Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, 172.

leaders today echo with King David their delight in God, "Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him…Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him."[276]

The second spiritual discipline that helps resist ministry burnout is Self-Examination. Once again, King David expresses in Psalm 139 the sincere desire that needs to resound in the hearts of worship leaders, "Search me [thoroughly], O God, and know my heart; Test me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there is any wicked or hurtful way in me and lead me in the everlasting way."[277] Calhoun defines this means of grace, "Self-examination is a process whereby the Holy Spirit opens my heart to what is true about me."[278] Author Joe Carter adds,

> Christian self-examination is not a form of navel-gazing. We are not to be self-absorbed and looking inward to see how we feel about ourselves or how we compare to other people. Instead, we are to look inward to see how we measure against the plumb line of Jesus. As Megan K. McNally says, 'Self-examination should not be an introspective self-obsession, but a humble, clear-minded assessment of ourselves through the gospel. It means looking to Scripture and see God's commands at the Holy Spirit points out the sins we harbor that are contrary to the Truth.[279]

Worship leaders need to practice self-examination (see Appendix H for confession and self-examination guide) because true repentance is indispensable in keeping our loving union with Jesus. Self-examination also allows us to remember whose identity we bear witness to in a society full of idolatry.

> True repentance means we open the bad in our lives to God. We invite him to come right in and look at our sin with us. We don't hide by being good, moral people or in neurotic self-recriminations. We don't pretend to be other than we are. We don't disguise the truth by carting out all the disciplines we practice. We tell it like it is – without rationalization, denial, or blame – to the only person in

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[276] Psalm 62:1, 5 (NIV)

[277] Psalm 139:23-24 (AMP)

[278] Calhoun, *Spiritual Discipline Handbook*, 91.

[279] Joe Carter, "Using Self-Examination for Spiritual Formation," www.thegospelcoalition.org, December 31, 2016, https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/using-self-examination-for-spiritual-formation/.

the universe who will unconditionally love us when we are bad. We hand over pretense, image management, manipulation, control, and self-obsession. In the presence of the holy One we give up on appearing good and fixing our sin. We lay down our ability to change by the power of the self. We turn to Jesus and seek forgiveness.[280]

God's Word makes it clear, "But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness."[281] Addington sums it up genially,

> People of deep influence are self-aware and appropriately introspective so that they understand their motivations, their tendencies, areas where they are vulnerable to temptation, and how they deal with those vulnerabilities. Their self-knowledge includes an understanding of God's amazing grace in their lives. They are not overwhelmed by their sin, but by God's grace; they are not seeking to prove themselves to God, but simply to live in His presence, forgiveness, and grace on a daily basis.[282]

Some worship leaders get pompous about their skillset and quickly burn out when they do not receive praise for their technical competence. Bob Kauflin's following remark is an excellent reminder to those who are ministering as worship leaders, "God isn't looking for something brilliant; he's looking for something broken. We'll never impress God with our musical expertise or sophistication. What impresses God is a 'broken and contrite heart' (Psalm 51:17) that recognizes our weakness and puts our faith in the finished work of Christ."[283]

Literary Review on Family-Related Stress in Worship Leading

"The pastor of a large church remarked on his church's philosophy: 'family is not to be sacrificed on the altar of ministry.'"[284] A profound statement that worship leaders today need to

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[280] Calhoun, *Spiritual Discipline Handbook*, 92.

[281] 1 John 1:9 (NLT)

[282] Addington, *Deep Influence*, 110.

[283] Bob Kauflin, *Worship Matters: Leading Others to Encounter the Greatness of God* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2008), 38.

take heed of. According to a survey by Pastoral Care, Inc., "80% of pastors believing ministry has negatively affected their family, and 94% of ministry families sharing the stress of the pastor's work."[285] Barna Group's report states, "Roughly one-quarter of today's pastors has faced significant marital problems (26%) or parenting problems (27%) during their tenure."[286]

Matt Boswell remarks, "The great American Puritan Jonathan Edwards once said, 'Every Christian family ought to be as it were a little church, consecrated to Christ, and wholly influenced and governed by his rules.' We care tremendously about our churches worshipping in a biblically informed, theologically rich manner. We should be equally concerned about the worship in our homes. With this in mind: How is your little church?"[287] That is the question that needs an answer.

The qualifications for a church leader from the book of First Timothy show the importance of family ministry. In our case, a worship leader, "…must manage his own family well, having children who respect and obey him. For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church?"[288] Craig Thompson of LifeWay provides this observation about one's family, "Your wife and children should never feel that they have to compete to be your top priority. Your family should see you being as ready and willing to respond to their crises, as you are to respond to the crises of other church members. Your family

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[284] Scott M. Douglas, "Developing Leaders for Pastoral Ministry," *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 8, no. 2 (2014): 3, https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jacl/vol8/iss2/7.

[285] Douglas, "Developing Leaders for Pastoral Ministry," https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jacl/vol8/iss2/7.

[286] Barna Group, "The State of Pastors," 36.

[287] Matt Boswell, *Doxology and Theology: How the Gospel Forms the Worship* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2013), 154.

[288] 1 Timothy 3:4-5 (NLT)

should know that you are as willing to work long hours for them as you are to work long hours for others. Be as willing to say no to others for the sake of your family, as you are to say no to your family for the sake of others."[289]

Peter Scazzero shares valuable insight regarding the importance of family for both married and single leaders. For married leaders, "…the first item on your leadership job description is to conduct your life in such a way that your demeanor and choices consistently demonstrate to your spouse that he or she is loved and lovable. You make what is important to him or her important to you."[290]

Scazzero continues by offering this critical caution to married leaders, "When we think of marital love, we tend to emphasize things like commitment and loyalty. As a result, a Christian couple may go to church and serve together, but too often end up with only a vaguely detached sense of devotion to one another. This is a far cry from God's desire for the covenant marriage."[291]  Van Dyke and Pyykkonen verify, "Love family first. Our marriages should be a model of Christ's love and our parenting should focus on guiding our children in meeting their needs within the rules from Scripture, our family, and society. This first love models the gospel, and as we know people *LISTEN* to what we do more than/equal to what we say. If we are preaching relational health that we see in Christ, we should be living it out in the most important place – our families"[292] (see Appendix I for Intentional Steps to Keeping Family First).

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[289] Craig Thompson, "Don't Sacrifice Your Family for Your Ministry," https://factsandtrends.net, March 5, 2015, https://factsandtrends.net/2015/05/05/dont-sacrifice-your-family-for-your-ministry/.

[290] Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 92-93.

[291] Ibid*.,* 95.

[292] Craig Thompson, "Don't Sacrifice Your Family for Your Ministry," https://factsandtrends.net, March 5, 2015, https://factsandtrends.net/2015/05/05/dont-sacrifice-your-family-for-your-ministry/.

As it relates to single leaders, Scazzero notes, "…the first item in your leadership description as a single leader is to make clear choices to cultivate a healthy singleness. When you awake each day you ask yourself, *What do I need to do today to lead out of a healthy singleness for Christ?*"[293] The author shares three practical ways to develop healthy singleness. The first step is to "Devote yourself to excellent self-care…in order to be a good steward of the limited resources that is *you*, it is vital that you discern the kinds of people, places, and activities that bring you joy. Routinely ask yourself, *What restores and replenished my soul? What fills me with delight?"*[294]

The second practical step single worship leaders need to develop in their ministry journey is,

> Invest in community, cultivating at least one or two companions for the journey. Whether married or single, being a leader is often a lonely experience. But that loneliness can be amplified for single leaders, perhaps especially for those who live alone. As the Son of God, Jesus could have chosen to conduct his ministry on his own. Instead, he chose to surround himself with the Twelve. He also developed close friendships with the family of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.[295]

The third practical step single worship leaders need to develop in their ministry journey is hospitality. "Invite a wide range of people – male and female, married and single, of all ages – to your home for meals, or set up times to get together for coffee."[296] Ed Stetzer and Laurie Nichols speak of the importance of community during our Covid pandemic, "We were not meant to walk this alone, so don't. With God and his people, we can make it through this together."[297]

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[293] Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 106.

[294] Ibid. 107.

[295] Ibid., 108.

[296] Ibid., 109.

Professor of Bible Exposition, Dr. John Hutchison at Talbot, adds the following regarding the priority of good family life for leaders, "…place a priority on family activities together, including yearly vacations, completely separate from church or ministry…intentionally pursue friendships outside of our church….as a pastor...limit evening activities to two times per week, and to be home at least 4 evenings each week."[298] Unless we prioritize family ministry, the propensity to morally fail increases for the worship leader or his/her spouse – it is this fact that amplifies the indispensable need for accountability in a worship leader's life.

Literary Review on The Need for Accountability in Worship Leading

One of the critical preventative steps in helping worship leaders avoid moral failure is having an accountability group or partner. "Along with the necessary skill set, there needs to be a regular plan of communication, feedback, accountability, and expectations."[299] These words by Scott M. Douglas speak clearly to the need for accountability in leadership. Calhoun notes, "Having an accountability partner means that I appropriately and reciprocally disclose struggles, failures and temptations to a godly friend who is committed to asking the hard questions, willing to challenge, and given to encouragement and prayer."[300] Morris Thompson contributes the following, "Accountability is essential in spiritual leadership. Throughout the disciples' growth as spiritual leaders, Jesus held them accountable. Although all spiritual leaders hold their

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[297] Ed Stetzer and Laurie Nichols, "Lessons from Moses: Pastor, You Are Not Alone!," *The Exchange with Ed Stetzer*(blog), April 31, 2020, https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2020/april/lessons-from-moses-pastor-you-are-not-alone.html.

[298] John Hutchison, "Doing Ministry Together: Priorities of a Good Family Life," *The Good Book Blog*, n.d., https://www.biola.edu/blogs/good-book-blog/2017/doing-ministry-together-priorities-of-a-good-family-life.

[299] Douglas, "Developing Leaders for Pastoral Ministry," 89.

[300] Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, 122.

followers accountable, it is important for the spiritual leader to remember that they need to be held accountable as well."[301]

Accountability is part of God's intentional community for worship leaders. Worship leaders are held accountable by God Himself, but also to our peers in ministry. Jerry Leonard Newman shares the concept of accountability to God in his thesis,

> Spending time with God develops accountability to God as scripture is considered, journaling of the spiritual quest is written, and prayer for direction and revelation in life is pursued…God wants the spiritual leader to spend an ample amount of time with Him because it provides accountability from God. This heavenly accountability helps the leader to grow spiritually. Although this is important, God also stresses the need for the spiritual leader to find accountability in a group of trusted individuals."[302]

Thompson quotes Earl D. Radmacher, who explains the need for accountability, "Human leaders, even Christian ones, are sinners and they only accomplish God's will imperfectly. Multiple leaders, therefore, will serve as a 'check and balance' on each other and serve as a safeguard against the very human tendency to play God over the people."[303] James William Taylor, in his doctoral thesis, names nine factors that bring effectiveness to those in leadership, "(1) applied truth, (2) spiritual intimacy, (3) personal integrity, (4) biblical identity, (5) genuine accountability, (6) eternal significance, (7) healthy family life, (8) indispensable pain, and (9) a captivating call."[304]  It is evident

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[301] Thompson, "The Need for Spiritual Leadership," 80.

[302] Jerry Leonard Newman, "Worship Pastors Need for Pastoral Leadership Development" (diss., Liberty University, 2019), 20, in https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/2106/.

[303] Ibid.," 81.

[304] James William Taylor, "Biblical Leaders: Key Principles and Concepts in Overcoming and Managing Stress, Distress and Anguish" (diss., Liberty University, 2013), 10.

from this list the importance of accountability in leadership. Byron L. Spradlin, in his

thesis on the subject of discipleship, says,

> The third practice foundational to discipleship is daily and regularly connecting with supportive relationships with fellow believers. Healthy Christian friendships help us develop as mature disciples. All disciples, especially worship leadership disciples, must purpose to nurture a set of solid friends from which they find strength, encouragement, instruction, and correction (2 Tim 3:16) and accountability. Humans were created by God to live in community. It is difficult for a disciple – especially one with an artistic personality – to develop and mature spiritually outside a community of faithful, loving, God-seeking brothers and sisters in Christ.[305]

Accountability in a worship leader's life is paramount to resisting moral failure because he or she

needs to disciple and mentor believers in the faith.

Literary Review on The Need for Mentorship in Worship Leading

The gift of community is a blessing that the people of God have from Jesus Christ. His

ministry on earth expressed that relational community, which spread the gospel. "We belong

together, not apart. God is not a bachelor who lives alone. He is a holy community of three. And

we express his nature best when we are in a community committed to growing and being

transformed into Christlikeness."[306]

Scott M. Douglas states, "Moon (2009) describes the leadership development of Jesus

with the 12 disciples as an apprentice-master relationship in which the disciples learned from

their master while they experienced life with Him…Jesus makes it clear for those who would

come after Him that raising up leaders is about replicating oneself in the protégé and developing

the whole person rather than simply fulfilling a curricula."[307]

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[305] Byron L. Spradlin, "Discipling Worship Leadership: Biblical and Theological Rationale for Discipling Worship Leaders" (diss., Liberty University, 2012), 104, in https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/542/.

[306] Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, 130.

[307] Scott M. Douglas, "Developing Leaders for Pastoral Ministry," *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 8, no. 2 (2014): 2, https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jacl/vol8/iss2/7.

Worship pastors are not excluded from it, although as a result of their dark side, a desire to isolate may arise. Part of the leadership development of worship pastors needs to involve the intentional, consistent inclusion of a mentor-mentee relationship throughout their ministry to avoid moral failure. Kenley D. Hall notes, "Mentors…are in the business of helping [mentees] be formed more and more into the image of Jesus so that [her/his] lives match the ministry acts they perform, and so that the [mentee's] external ministry acts are deeply rooted in their persona relationship with the Creator (p.118)."[308] Scott M. Douglas adds, "Mentoring provides an opportunity to bring the younger and older ministers on a church staff together in a relationship designed to produce a mature disciple who can then replicate the process, thus creating a cycle of leadership development (McDonald, 2004)."[309] Mentors' critical role in the formation of worship leaders is a preventative step toward moral failure in their ministry journey.

Having an educational background in ministry is a great asset, yet that alone is not adequate for the many facets of ministry. Hall notes, "Denominational leaders view the M.Div. as the gold standard in preparing young men and women for ministry. It must be paired with mentoring, defined as the intentional relationship between an experienced pastoral mentor and a young pastoral mentee for the purpose of pastoral formation."[310]

In the New Testament, we witness the intentional mentor-mentee relationship of key individuals who spread the gospel. "There are several biblical examples of leadership development, perhaps the best of which are Paul's development of Timothy and Titus, and Jesus'

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[308] Kenley Hall, "The Critical Role of Mentoring for Pastoral Formation," *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 11, no. 1 (March 2017): 3, https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jacl/vol11/iss1/3.

[309] Douglas, "Developing Leaders for Pastoral Ministry," 84.

[310] Hall, "The Critical Role of Mentoring for Pastoral Formation," 1.

ministry with the Twelve."[311] Just as Timothy and the Twelve were not left alone to fend gospel propagation on their own, worship pastors today cannot be left on an island to assist in ministering. "Mentoring for young pastors is not optional, but a necessity. In fact…the absence of a mentor for a young pastor is not an oversight but rather an evil that must be remedied."[312]

## CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

### Summary of Study

This study has exposed the causes and consequences of moral failure in worship leaders of the past (i.e., biblical figures including Lucifer, Korah, David, Solomon, et al.) and present. Although the subject matter is not a new reality in worship leadership, its prominent manifestation in the 21st-century is cause for alarm, demanding a careful investigation. This research assesses the challenges lead pastors face when choosing a worship leader to assist in the gospel's promulgation. The high demand for an individual with an excellent skill set overshadows the significance of their calling and broken character.

It is noticeably clear that lead pastors desire the very best worship pastor to lead their congregation in singing songs and spiritual formation, which involves discipleship, mentoring, teaching, and a slew of other responsibilities (i.e., administration); that fact is applauded. However, the new obligations of worship leading combined with a worship leader's desire for success, unrealistic expectations (from both the leader and themselves), and a lack of private worship are the ingredients that assemble to cause the high potential for moral failure.

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[311] Douglas, "Developing Leaders for Pastoral Ministry," 84.

[312] Hall, "The Critical Role of Mentoring for Pastoral Formation," 2.

While lead pastors look for educated, theologically grounded, and skillful individual to join their ministry team as a worship pastor, much more emphasis needs to focus on assessing that person through personality tests that reveal areas of concern in leading (i.e., one's dark side that begets narcissistic, codependent, passive-aggressive, paranoid, and depressed characteristics). The establishment of a preventative system of support for a worship leader needs to include incorporating an assigned mentor, an accountability group/partner, the practice of spiritual disciplines (i.e., biblical meditation, Sabbath, Self-examination) for continual spiritual formation – these are fundamental.

Ministry concerns such as distress, isolation, pride, lack of accountability, and the pursuit of ministry success can all be alleviated, if not eliminated, with these intentional, precautionary steps. The lead pastor and their church's board have to prioritize this 'check and balance' safety net to reduce the potential of moral failure in worship leaders.

## Summary of Purpose

The ministry of worship leading is an attractive one, in which the individual called by God to serve has the susceptibility to fail due to innate sin generated by the Fall. Thus, this study's purpose was to explore the causes and consequences of moral failure in worship leaders in the twenty-first century by researching literary sources concerning moral failure, its causes, consequences, and preventative steps to fend off potential failures. Additionally, biblical leaders' historical analysis (e.g., Moses, Saul, David, Solomon, Samson, and Jonah) who failed due to personality dysfunctions were studied as relevant examples. Lastly, a psychological understanding of a leader's dark side was researched to present psychological assessors to identify dysfunctionality in a worship leader's personality.

**Summary of Procedure**

This literary research asked two detailed questions: First, what conditions increase the most negative impact on 21st-century worship leaders' moral uprightness? Second, what are the long-term consequences of a worship leader's moral failure in their family, congregation, and faith tradition? From these questions, two hypotheses were established. The first hypothesis resolved that the drive for personal success, the lack of accountability, and psychological dysfunctions present in worship leaders are the leading causes of ministry stress that result in moral failure. The second hypothesis settled that the long-term consequences of a worship leader's moral failure will result in the demise of their family structure through divorce/separation, the misrepresentation of their faith within the Christian community they serve, and the credibility of their faith tradition mistrusted within secular society.

**Summary of Findings and Prior Research**

Literary research of the causes and consequences of moral failure in worship leaders has revealed the following:

First, self-knowledge is essential in surrendering one's dark side. As McIntosh and Rima note, "Gaining any measure of control over our dark side will involve the ongoing process of gathering knowledge about ourselves through the practice of specific disciplines."[313] The more a worship leader knows about his/her past and the events that helped shape their insecure character, the better in dealing with areas that may produce moral failure. Several assessment tools are available to worship leaders to assist with the intentional The Holy Spirit, through the means of grace, is ready and willing to "make us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image."[314]

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[313] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 199.

Second, leadership is about influence, not control, nor the desire for personal success. The secularization of society has caused some worship leaders to rely on personal competence (i.e., skillset) to fulfill their ministry responsibilities. As a result, worship leaders need to live free from the things that bind them by the power of the Holy Spirit. "People of deep influence live remarkably free from anxiety and fear. In knowing what God has – and has *not* – called them to, in being comfortable in their own skin, in pursuing a passionate cause, and in living with little unfinished business, they are free to live with confidence, energy, and direction."[315] Richard Foster poignantly declares, "Superficiality is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a primary spiritual problem. The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people."[316] Paul's word to the Galatians is straightforward, "For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love."[317]

Third, in a world filled with busy and overworked individuals, worship leaders need to prioritize an intentional system of 'check and balance' to avoid burnout. A proper rhythm of ministry and rest must be established as commanded by our Heavenly Father. Sabbath taking is essential for the sanity of worship leaders in ministry.

Last and most important, success in ministry is defined in terms of our faithfulness and

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[314] 2 Corinthians 3:18b (NLT)

[315] Addington, *Deep Influence*, 219-20.

[316] Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Disciplines: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row Publishers, 1978), 1.

[317] Galatians 5:13 (NLT)

Fruitfulness to God's Kingdom call. How influential worship leaders are in sharing the Good News and making disciples consistently is the divine motivation. The Great Commission does not say that as worship leaders, we must work hard at having people like us and treat us as celebrities – it is quite the contrary! Our usefulness in God's Kingdom is based on our obedience to fulfilling His mission here on earth. "Now may the God of peace—who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, and ratified an eternal covenant with his blood—may he equip you with all you need for doing his will. May he produce in you, through the power of Jesus Christ, every good thing that is pleasing to him. All glory to him forever and ever! Amen."[318]

## Limitations

In this study, only a limited amount of the causes, consequences, and preventative steps to decrease moral failure in worship leaders were investigated. There are more issues within the subject of moral failure in worship leadership that were not examined. Nonetheless, the research conducted has proven practically beneficial for the future of the ministry of worship leading.

## Recommendations for Future Study

Though limited to the causes of consequences of moral failure, this research did not cover the process of restoration that worship leaders who have failed need to undergo. Brokenness is God's specialty, and an intentional, biblical process of restoration needs further analysis. Thus, a comprehensive study in ministry restoration for worship leaders (specifically) who have failed is recommended research for a future consult.

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[318] Hebrews 13:20-21 (NLT)

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# APPENDIX A:

## REDEEMING ONE'S DARK SIDE INTUITIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questionnaire by Gary L. McIntosh and Samuel D. Rima's book

*Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*[319], assists in identifying events, specific feelings, and

individuals from one's formative years that negatively impacts their leadership in the hope of

finding freedom through the forgiveness of such matters.

Question 1: What events from your past still come to mind after all these years? Briefly list them below.

Question 2: Describe in one-or two-word statements how you felt or feel about each incident.

Question 3: Reflect on each of the memories listed by answering the following questions.
- What really happened?
- Why did it happen?
- What did it do to me?
- What did it mean to me at the time?
- What unmet needs did it leave in my life?
- How has this experience surfaced in my adult life?
- Where do I see it in my life today?

Question 4: Based on your rethinking of each past experience, what is God leading you to do today?
- Is there someone you need to talk to?
- Is there a letter you need to write?
- Is there a phone call you need to make?
- Is there a person, group, or organization you need to forgive?
- Is there a prayer you need to offer to God?

Question 5: What will you do? See Matthew 6:14-15.

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[319] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 179-80.

## MULTI-FACETED PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT PYRAMID

The following pyramid displays four necessary psychological assessments that a candidate for worship leadership at a church should be subjected to (based on Alexander Jack and Daniel T. Wilcox's journal article "The Psychological Assessment of Clerics").
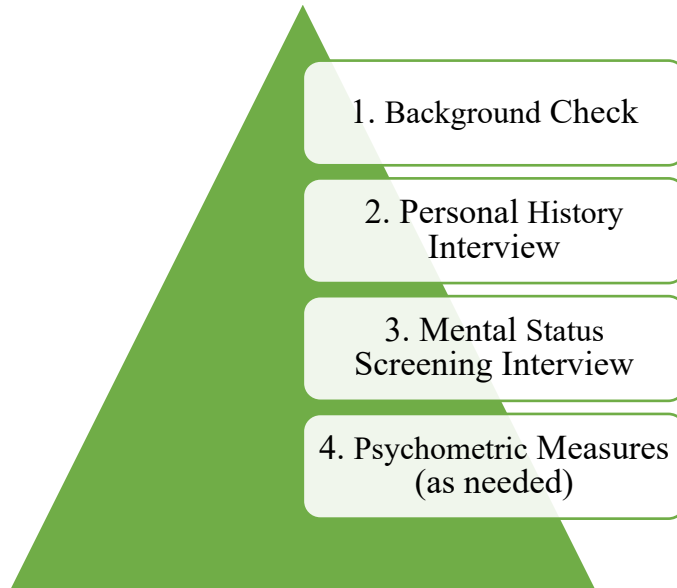


Step 1. Background Check

This is the H.R. assessed, required background check, which verifies that the person applying is who they claim to be.

Step 2. Personal History Interview

This interview addresses "the individual's background, including family history, important life events, and past involvements with authorities."[320]

Step 3. Mental Status Screening Interview

This screening involves an evaluating psychologist "to gain a greater understanding of the

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[320] Jack and Wilcox, "The Psychological Assessment of Clerics," https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11089-017-0784-y.

individual's current functioning and present 'state of mind.' Within the context of this interview, various features are examined, including the client's appearance and interpersonal style, hygiene and self-care, as well as employment maladaptive coping strategies including alcohol misuse, illegal substance use, heightened emotional reactivity, social withdrawal, etc."[321]

Step 4. Psychometric Measures

"The employment of psychometric testing, in addition to document review and clinical interviews, offers the best opportunity to produce a comprehensive psychological report (Wilcox 2000)."[322]

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[321] Jack and Wilcox, "The Psychological Assessment of Clerics," https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11089-017-0784-y.

[322] Ibid.

**APPENDIX C:**

**ENNEAGRAM NINE PERSONALITY TYPES DESCRIPTION**

The following appendix displays the nine personality types based on the Enneagram

assessment tool (based on Larry L. McSwain's book *The Calling of Congregational Leadership:*

*Being Known, Doing Ministry*).

Type 1: The Reformer possesses a high level of ethical consciousness, sensibility, idealism, and self-discipline with the goal to improve the world and self. Negative attributes include impatience, perfectionism, judgmentalism, and tendencies toward anger.

Type 2: The Helper is other-directed, cares for others, willingly sacrifices self, and is nurturing. Negatively, the helper can be possessive, manipulative, intrusive, and easily deceived.

Type 3: The Achiever is ambitious, seeks self-improvement, excellence in tasks, and self-distinction. The achiever can be perceived as arrogant, exploitative, calculating, and hostile toward the opposed to his or her drive to achieve.

Type 4: The Individualist has great potential for intuition, sensitivity, self-expression, and individualism. The negative side of the type is self-absorption, self-consciousness, self-doubt, and depression.

Type 5: The Investigator is curious, perceptive, and original. This type seeks knowledge and technical expertise. The negative side is emotional detachment, social isolation, speculative theorizing, and mental projections.

Type 6: The Loyalist bonds easily with others, is sociable, industrious, deeply committed to larger efforts, and is loyal to others. There is potential negatively for dependency, ambivalence, rebellion, anxiety, and inferiority feelings.

Type 7: The Enthusiast is seen as enthusiastic, productive, achievement-oriented, flexible, and as one who seeks change. Negative tendencies include hyperactivity, impulsiveness, excessiveness, and escapism.

Type 8: The Challenger is self-confident, a strong leader who is self-determined and aggressive. Challengers may become dominating, insensitive to others, combative, or ruthless.

Type 9: The Peacemaker seeks harmony with others, has emotional stability and endurance, and is not self-conscious. The peacemaker may become passive, disengaged, neglectful, and mentally dissociative.[323]

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[323] McSwain, *The Calling of Congregational Leadership*, 31-32.

**APPENDIX D:**

**SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK CONSTRUCTING A GENOGRAM**

The following set of questions, taken from Peter Scazzero's book *The Emotionally Healthy Leader,* help a worship leader construct his or her genogram in the hope it assists with the identification of family dysfunctionality that affects their ministry leadership.

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' (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 helps you to make sense of how your family of origin, or others, impacted who you are today?

12. What are one of two specific ways this may be impacting your leadership?[324]

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[324] Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 74-75.

## LOVING UNION HEALTH CHECK SURVEY

The following survey, taken from Peter Scazzero's book *The Emotionally Healthy*

*Leader*, assesses how healthy one's loving union with God is.

Use the list of statements that follow to do a brief assessment of your loving union with God. Next to each statement, write down the number that best describes your response. Use the following scale:

> 5= Always true to me
> 4= Frequently true to me
> 3= Occasionally true to me
> 2= Rarely true to me
> 1= Never true to me

_____ 1. My highest priority as a leader is to take time each day to remain in loving union with Jesus.

_____ 2. I offer God full access to my interior life as I make decisions, interact with my team members, and initiate new plans.

_____ 3. I wait to say yes or no to new opportunities until I have sufficient time to prayerfully and carefully discern God's will.

_____ 4. I routinely step away from leadership demands and make time to delight in God's gifts (lingering with friends over a meal, listening to a beautiful piece of music, enjoying a nature walk, watching a sunset, etc.).

_____ 5. I have a dedicated and regular practice of meditating on Scripture in order to commune with and be transformed by Jesus.

_____ 6. I regularly set aside time for experiences of solitude and silence that enable me to be still and undistracted in God's presence.

_____ 7. I am relaxed, comfortable with, and prayerful about my limits (my available gifts, time, energy, knowledge) as well as the limits of those around me.

_____ 8. When I become aware that I am anxious or feeling emotionally triggered in my leadership, I slow down to be with God, myself, and possibly spiritual companions.

_____ 9. I maintain intentional spiritual rhythms and practices (Sabbath, prayer, community, reading, etc.) that enable me to delight in God regardless of the expectations, needs, or opportunities around me.

_____ 10. I am routinely aware of and think about God during my waking hours – at work or at home and while doing routine tasks such as errands, exercising, eating, being with friends and family, etc.

Take a moment to briefly review your responses. What stands out most to you?[325]

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[325] Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 121-22.

***If you scored mostly ones and twos***, you are likely doing too much in your own power, perhaps more than God has asked you to do. You may be doing a number of leadership tasks without any thought of Jesus. Because you are overloaded and distracted, your prayer may feel like more of a duty than a delight. The fact that you took the assessment and are reading these words is a grace from God. God is bringing this to your awareness for a reason. Consider the invitation God may be extending to you to slow down. Ask God what he is saying to you through this assessment. Identify a wise mentor or friend who can support you as you take your next steps.

***If you scored mostly twos and threes***, you are making progress but likely are still out of balance, with insufficient *being with* God to sustain your *doing for* God. You understand that Christian leadership is about enjoying communion with God as well as serving God. As yourself: *Am I moving in the direction of a more loving union with God or less? What adjustments might God be inviting me to make this season?*

***If you scored mostly fours and fives***, you are in a good place of rest and centeredness in your relationship with God. Your *doing for* God is fed and sustained by your *being with* God in a rhythm that works for your present leadership responsibilities. Let me encourage you to take time to craft a Rule for Life (if you haven't already done so), putting on paper how you are living your life with Jesus. Then, after taking time to get greater clarity on the principles God has given you, offer them to your coworkers and/or to those looking to you for leadership. At the same time, ask yourself what might be one additional invitation God is extending to you to deepen your relationship with him…[326]

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[326] Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 141-42.

# APPENDIX F:

## BURNOUT PERSONAL ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

The following questions (taken from Drs. Tim Clinton and Ron Hawkins' book *The Quick-Reference Guide to Biblical Counseling*) serve as an assessment tool for worship leaders to detect if they are experiencing ministry burnout.

1. How are you feeling physically? (*If people are experiencing burnout, chances are they haven't been caring for themselves physically. If your client hasn't had a recent physical, recommend that he or she have one.*)
2. How are you feeling emotionally?
3. How long have you felt like this?
4. When did these feelings start?
5. What prompted you to seek help now?
6. What are the stressors in your life?
7. How large a part does each stressor play in your stress level?
8. What kind of support do you get – both with your responsibilities and for yourself personally?
9. How do you perceive yourself? *(For example, someone who feels that he or she must meet all the needs of an aging parent to be a 'good' child is going to experience failure.)*
10. What do you do for fun?
11. Are you able to relax?
12. What do you when you relax?
13. What are the activities you're currently involved in?
14. How would you prioritize these activities?
15. What can be taken out of your schedule?
16. What can be put into your schedule to help you have downtime and family time?
17. What would keep you from doing that?
18. What is the worst thing that will happen if you say no or pull out of certain responsibilities?
19. What will happen if you do nothing?[327]

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[327] Clinton and Hawkins, *The Quick-Reference Guide to Biblical Counseling*, 55.

**APPENDIX G:**

**ACTIONS STPES TO OVERCOME BURNOUT**

The following five action steps are preventative tools Drs. Tim Clinton and Ron Hawkins share to overcome burnout (taken from *The Quick-Reference Guide to Biblical Counseling*).

1. Take Control
   - Don't relinquish control of your schedule to the whim of everyone else.
   - Put a concrete plan in place to relieve yourself or some of your responsibilities. Enlist the aid of family members and friends. (*Name this as a crisis and help the counselee see his or her need for other's help and care.*)
   - For *the school student*: find the balance between what is essential and what is merely 'extra.'
   - Schedule days more sanely, humanely, and relationally.

2. Say No
   - *No* is a very helpful word – and often the overworked don't know how to say it.

3. Understand God's Will
   - God never guides you into an intolerable scramble of overwork – after all, Jesus didn't live that way.
   - Before you say yes to any new activity, pray about it. Even if it's a good activity, now may not be the time.

4. Slow Down
   - Consciously slow the pace of your life.
   - Take the tie you need to replenish your resources.

5. Set Priorities
   - You may get less done, but you'll be doing the right things.
   - When you think about what really matters, much of your frenzied activity will be seen for what it is.[328]

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[328] Clinton and Hawkins, *The Quick-Reference Guide to Biblical Counseling*, 56-57.

**APPENDIX H:**

**CONFESSION AND SELF-EXAMINATION GUIDE**

The following guide for the spiritual discipline of confession and self-examination is beneficial to worship leaders seeking to start practicing it (guide taken from Adele Ahlberg Calhoun's book *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*).

Confession and Self-examination practice includes:

- Admitting to God the natural propensity to rationalize, deny, blame and self-obsess.
- Examining the "sin network" in your life as evidenced in presumptuous sins, besetting weaknesses, self-centered habits and broken relationships.
- Replacing sinful habits with healthy ones.
- Seeking God's grace to change.
- Confessing sins by examining your life in light of (1) the seven deadly sins, (2) the Ten Commandments, (3) prayers of confession found in prayer books or Scripture (Psalm 51), (4) a life confession, journaling confessions and confessions made to others.

Reflection Questions:

1. Does your confession tend to be along the lines of "Forgive my sins, dear Lord" rather than specifically naming your sins one by one before the face of God?
   What does the lack of specific confession do to self-awareness?

2. What experiences have affected your ability to give and receive forgiveness?
   Talk to God about what this means.

3. When have you tasted the joy of forgiveness?
   What was that like for you?

4. What is it like for you to confess your sins before a friend or confession?

5. Which of your sins hurts those closes to you?

Spiritual exercises:

1. Turn to Psalm 32 or Psalm 51. Use the psalm as a way of bringing your own sins before God. How does God meet you in these confessions of David?

2. How in touch do you feel with your own sin? If you feel out of touch with your sin, honestly consider where some of the following sins show up in your life: envy, lust, greed, gluttony, deceit, lying, exaggerating, envy, anger, pretense, avoidance of responsibility. What do you see about yourself? How do you want to talk to God about these things? Confess where you have fallen short of God's expectations and receive his forgiveness.

3.  Enter into a covenant group or an accountability relationship where you cannot hide. Tell the truth about who you are and ask your partners to pray for you and help you change.[329]

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[329] Calhoun, *Spiritual Discipline Handbook*, 93-94.

## APPENDIX I:

## INTENTIONAL STEPS TO KEEPING FAMILY FIRST

The following intentional and practical steps need to be taken by married leaders for the safety of keep their family as their first priority (taken from Craig Thompson's article "Don't Sacrifice Your Family for Your Ministry).

1. **Make time to turn your phone off.** You can stand to eat dinner without the constant interruption of text messages and phone calls. By turning your phone off you communicate to your family that they have your undivided attention.

2. **Take time off.** Plan a vacation. It doesn't have to be expensive, but if at all possible get out of town and make arrangements for someone else to fulfill your ministerial duties. As a side note, this includes funerals. If you interrupt all of your vacations to run home and perform a funeral, your family is getting a message, and the message they are getting is not that you treasure them. If you do not have other staff members who can perform funerals, call a pastor friend at a neighboring church and ask him to be on call for you (and for those of you who really love your pastor buddies, call and offer to be on call for them when they are on vacation).

3. **Go on a field trip.** One of the great blessings of being a pastor is having a flexible schedule. You need to use that to your family's advantage. Chaperone field trips, go eat lunch with your wife and kids, or coach a ball team.

4. **Involve your family in ministry.** If you read my last article, you know that this is a repeat, but it's a repeat for a reason. If your family is with you in your ministry, you have the opportunity to put them first and still accomplish the necessary goals of ministry.

5. **Make time for your wife.** You listen to everyone's problems. You are a counselor and a confidant. Please do not neglect to be that for your spouse. Imagine the alienation and hurt she must feel if you are willing to give a patient and listening ear to everyone but her. Make time to date her and hear her. It is amazing how supportive your wife will be of your ministry when she knows she doesn't have to compete with your ministry to be #1.[330]

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[330] Craig Thompson, "Don't Sacrifice Your Family for Your Ministry," https://factsandtrends.net, March 5, 2015, https://factsandtrends.net/2015/05/05/dont-sacrifice-your-family-for-your-ministry/.