



# RESILIENCE:

FINDING WHOLENESS IN MINISTRY  
BY WAY OF THE CROSS

**STUDY:**

Preparing for Resilient Ministry

*Small Group Facilitator's Guide*

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# Preparing for Resilient Ministry

## OVERVIEW

The goal of this study is to equip participants for resilient ministry by helping them develop healthy expectations and create good habits during their training. Instructors could integrate this study into a ministry formation class or an established co-curricular program.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

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

### LESSONS

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

### MATERIALS NEEDED

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

# Being a Pastor

## LESSON OVERVIEW

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

Activity	Time (minutes)	Materials
Scripture Meditation	5:00	Bible
Individual Reflection	5:00	
Small Group Discussion	7:00	
Video	5:00	Computer, internet access, screen/projection equipment
Small Group Discussion	8:00	
Learning Log	10:00	
<b>Total</b>	<b>40:00</b>	

## NOTE

If you are not able to provide time in-class for participants to complete the Learning Log activities, consider assigning them as homework.

# Being a Pastor

## SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: EPHESIANS 4:11-12

*NOTE: Invite a participant to read aloud Ephesians 4:11-12. Consider concluding the scripture reading with a prayer for the participants.*

## INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

*NOTE: Ask the participants to begin with individual reflection on the question below. Encourage them to write their description of ministry in the study guide.*

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

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

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

*NOTE: Ask participants to divide into small groups of three to four individuals. Encourage them to share what they wrote about the work of a pastor and then respond to the questions that follow.*

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

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



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

## VIDEO

*NOTE: Invite the group to watch the video, “Being a Pastor” in which five pastors respond to the question, “How would you describe the work of a pastor?” You can access the video on the Talking Points website at [www.cornerstone.edu](http://www.cornerstone.edu).*

Watch the video, “Being a Pastor.”

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

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## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

*NOTE: Ask participants to reflect on what they heard in the video as it compares to what they wrote about the work of a pastor. Then, ask participants to gather again with their small groups to discuss the video.*

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

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



# Preparing for Resilient Ministry

## LEARNING LOG

*NOTE: Inform participants that the Learning Log will help them to process and apply what they have learned in the lesson. If you do not have time for participants to complete the learning log in class, consider assigning it as homework.*

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

+ In what ways does Ephesians 4:11-12 relate to being a pastor or ministry leader?

+ What questions about being a pastor or ministry leader emerged for you during this lesson?

+ What in this lesson encouraged you?

+ Why do you want to be a pastor or ministry leader?

# Joys and Challenges in Ministry

## LESSON OVERVIEW

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

Activity	Time (minutes)	Materials
Scripture Meditation	5:00	Bible
Large Group Activity	15:00	Whiteboard, poster board, or large sticky notes; markers
Watch Video	5:00	Computer, internet access, screen/projection equipment
Large Group Discussion	10:00	
Learning Log	10:00	
<b>Total</b>	<b>45:00</b>	



# Joys and Challenges in Ministry

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: 1 TIMOTHY 4:1-10

## LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

*NOTE: In this activity, you will facilitate large group idea generation and analysis. Either you can act as the scribe, or you can invite a participant to be the scribe. The scribe will list responses on a whiteboard, poster board, or large sticky note so that they are visible to the rest of the group.*

### Part 1

*NOTE: Invite participants to respond to the following questions.*

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

*NOTE: Ask participants to reflect on the responses. Ask them, "What common themes or categories do you observe?" Invite them to share their ideas with the group. Encourage the scribe to list common themes/categories or to group similar ideas.*

### Part 2

*NOTE: Invite participants to respond to the following questions.*

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

*NOTE: Ask participants to reflect on the responses. Ask them, “What common themes or categories do you observe?” Invite them to share their ideas with the group. Encourage the scribe to list common themes/categories or to group similar ideas.*

## VIDEO

*NOTE: Invite participants to watch the videos, “Joys of Ministry” and “Challenges of Ministry,” in which pastors describe what brings them joy and what zaps their energy. Encourage participants to take notes using the table provided in the study guide.*

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

Brings Joy	Zaps Energy



# Preparing for Resilient Ministry

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## LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

*NOTE: Ask participants to compare their notes from the video to the lists they made at the beginning of the lesson. Then, ask the following questions and invite participants to share their observations.*

+ What are the similarities?

+ What are the differences?



# Preparing for Resilient Ministry

## LEARNING LOG

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

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

# Time Management

## LESSON OVERVIEW

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

Activity	Time (minutes)	Materials
Scripture Meditation	5:00	Bible
Individual Activity	10:00	
Exploration	30:00	
Individual Reflection	10:00	
Small Group Discussion	20:00	
Learning Log	10:00	
<b>Total</b>	<b>85:00</b>	

## NOTE

In this lesson, participants will be asked to interview two pastors or ministry leaders about their weekly schedules and time management. You may want to assign the Individual Activity, Exploration, and Individual Reflection as out-of-class work or homework that students will complete prior to the small group discussion in-class.

# Time Management

## SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: PSALM 90

### INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY

*NOTE: Consider assigning this activity as homework for students to complete prior to the small group discussion.*

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

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

### INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

*NOTE: Consider assigning this activity as homework for students to complete prior to the small group discussion.*





# Preparing for Resilient Ministry

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

+ Values:

+ Priorities:

+ Preferences:

## EXPLORATION

*NOTE: Consider assigning this activity as homework for students to complete prior to the small group discussion.*

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

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

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

## INTERVIEW #1

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

Notes:

## INTERVIEW #2

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

Notes:



# Preparing for Resilient Ministry

## INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

*NOTE: Consider assigning this activity as homework for students to complete prior to the small group discussion.*

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

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

*NOTE: Ask participants to divide into small groups of three to four individuals. Then, invite them to respond to the following questions.*

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



# Preparing for Resilient Ministry

## LEARNING LOG

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

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

# Heart Management

## LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, participants will discover the importance of paying attention to their hearts as preparation for ministry.

Activity	Time (minutes)	Materials
Scripture Meditation	5:00	Bible
Large Group Activity	10:00	Whiteboard, poster board, or large sticky notes; markers
Small Group Activity	15:00	
Large Group Activity	10:00	
Video	3:00	Computer, internet access, screen/projection equipment
Small Group Discussion	15:00	
Learning Log	10:00	
<b>Total</b>	<b>68:00</b>	

# Heart Management

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

### LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

*NOTE: In this activity, you will facilitate large group idea generation and analysis. Either you can act as the scribe, or you can invite a participant to be the scribe. The scribe will list responses on a whiteboard, poster board, or large sticky note so that they are visible to the rest of the group.*

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

### SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

*NOTE: Invite participants to divide into small groups of three to four individuals. Ask them to work as a group come to a consensus about the three most important types of knowledge, three most important skills, and three most important attitudes needed for effective ministry. Inform them that they will share your rankings with the large group.*

	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
1			
2			
3			





# Preparing for Resilient Ministry

## LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

*NOTE: Invite one member from each small group to share their rankings. Listen for common themes or patterns as the groups share. Consider sharing your observations with the group. Then, pose the following question to the group and invite responses.*

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

## VIDEO

*NOTE: Invite participants to watch the video, “Discerning My Own Heart.” In this video, Pastor Mark Shaw offers advice for seminary students and describes the training he wishes he had in preparation for ministry.*

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

*NOTE: Invite participants to return to their small groups. Ask them to respond to what they heard in the video. They can use the following questions as a conversation guide.*

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



# Preparing for Resilient Ministry

## LEARNING LOG

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

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

# Resilient Ministry

## LESSON OVERVIEW

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

Activity	Time (minutes)	Materials
Scripture Meditation	5:00	Bible
Individual Reflection	2:00	
Discussion in Pairs	3:00	
Video	5:00	Computer, internet access, screen/projection equipment
Discussion in Pairs	5:00	
Scripture Meditation	10:00	
Discussion in Pairs	10:00	
Learning Log	10:00	
<b>Total</b>	<b>50:00</b>	

## NOTE

The second Scripture Meditation activity in this lesson is an extended time of reflection on Colossians 1:11-12. If you are familiar with *Lectio Divina* or other forms of sacred reading, you may want to prepare to facilitate a structured time of meditation for participants.

# Resilient Ministry

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

## INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

*NOTE: Invite participants to consider the following images. Ask them, “Which of the following images makes you think of resilience? Why?”*



## DISCUSSION IN PAIRS

*NOTE: Invite participants to turn to a neighbor. Ask them to share with their neighbor which picture they chose and why.*

## VIDEO

*NOTE: Invite participants to watch the video, “How Pastors Define Resilience” in which several pastors explain how they understand resilience.*

## DISCUSSION IN PAIRS

*NOTE: Invite participants to turn to their neighbor once again and share what the video added to their understanding of resilience and the importance of resilience in ministry.*

## SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

*NOTE: Remind participants that Pastor Joy Bonnema quoted Paul’s prayer from Colossians 1:11-12 when asked to describe resilience. Invite participants to spend a few minutes meditating on this passage. If you are familiar with particular forms of sacred reading such as Lectio Divina, you may wish to facilitate a guided meditation on the verses below.*

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



# Preparing for Resilient Ministry

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## DISCUSSION IN PAIRS

*NOTE: Invite students to turn to their neighbor one last time to engage the following questions.*

What were some of your thoughts or impressions as you meditated on Colossians 1:11-12?

+ How do you see Colossians 1:11-12 as relating to resilient ministry?





# Preparing for Resilient Ministry

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## LEARNING LOG

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

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

# Wholeness in Ministry

## LESSON OVERVIEW

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

Activity	Time (minutes)	Materials
Scripture Meditation	5:00	Bible
Large Group Discussion	10:00	Bible
Scripture Study	15:00	Bible
Video	5:00	Computer, internet access, screen/projection equipment
Large Group Discussion	15:00	
Learning Log	10:00	
<b>Total</b>	<b>60:00</b>	

## NOTE

The first Large Group Discussion could include a Scripture Study activity as well. Consider dividing students into small groups and having each group read one of the listed passages from Acts. If you choose to include Scripture Study, increase the time for the activity accordingly.

# Wholeness in Ministry

## SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: 2 CORINTHIANS 4

### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

*NOTE: Ask the participants to respond to the following questions. For the second question, you may wish to divide students into small groups for a brief Scripture study in preparation for responding.*

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

### SCRIPTURE STUDY

*NOTE: Invite participants to engage in careful study of 2 Corinthians 4. You may ask students to read the passage aloud from a few translations prior to a time of individual study. Encourage them to note any words or phrases that relate to resilience as well as any words or phrases that relate to threats to wellbeing.*

- + Resilience:

## + Threats to wellbeing:

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

## VIDEO

*NOTE: Invite participants to watch the video, “Pursuing Wholeness by Way of the Cross.” Encourage them to listen carefully as these pastors describe how they understand the connection between resilience and finding wholeness by way of the cross.*

## LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

*NOTE: Facilitate a large group discussion using the following questions.*

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

## LEARNING LOG

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

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

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



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