

RESILIENCE:

FINDING WHOLENESS IN MINISTRY
BY WAY OF THE CROSS

STUDY:

Self-Care in Ministry

Small Group Facilitator's Guide

@2020 by Grand Rapids Theological Seminary of Cornerstone University

This study guide may be downloaded, printed, and reproduced by churches, ministry organizations, and educational institutions.

Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

Scripture quotations marked MSG are taken from THE MESSAGE, copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by Eugene H. Peterson. Used by permission of NavPress. All rights reserved. Represented by Tyndale House Publishers, a Division of Tyndale House Ministries.

Curriculum Development: The GoodWorks Group, LLC

Videography: Eric Schrotenboer

Video Editing: Owen Longjohn and Joey Hidalgo

Graphic Design: Cornerstone University Marketing and Communications Office



Grand Rapids
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Cornerstone University

Self-Care in Ministry

OVERVIEW

The goal of this study is to help pastors and ministry leaders understand what wellbeing is, why it is important, and how to cultivate it. During this study, pastors and ministry leaders will reflect on their level of wellbeing and experiment with self-care practices.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

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

LESSONS

- + What Is Wellbeing?
- + Pursuing Wellbeing: Four Steps
- + Rest
- + Play
- + Storytelling
- + Prayer

MATERIALS NEEDED

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

What Is Wellbeing?

LESSON OVERVIEW

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

Activity	Time (minutes)	Materials
Scripture Meditation	5:00	Bible
Small Group Activity	15:00	Whiteboard, poster board, or large sticky notes; markers
Large Group Discussion	7:00	
Video	10:00	Computer, internet access, screen/projection equipment
Large Group Discussion	10:00	
Self-Assessment	8:00	
Individual Reflection	10:00	
Total	60:00	

NOTE

Many of the lessons in this study conclude with a Practice and/or Individual Reflection activity. If time allows, facilitate the practice at the end of the class session. Some participants may be uncomfortable with some of the Scripture meditation and prayer practices because they are new or from another tradition. Still, encourage them to experiment. If participants seem too resistant to these new practices, you can encourage them to enter into a simple rhythm of reading, journaling about, and praying in response to the assigned verses.

Concluding reflection activities may be assigned as homework.

What Is Wellbeing?

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: PROVERBS 2:1-11

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

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

NOTE: Ask participants to divide into small groups of three to four individuals. Then, ask them to work with their group members to develop a definition of 'wellbeing.' Ask each group to write their definition on a large sticky note or poster.

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

Wellbeing is _____
_____.

NOTE: Ask each group to share their definition. Then, ask the participants to identify common themes among the definitions. Make a list of the common themes on a whiteboard or poster board.

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

NOTE: Encourage participants to respond to the following question. Consider writing their responses on a whiteboard, poster, or large sticky note.

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

NOTE: Ask each group to share their list. Again, ask the participants to identify common themes among the lists.

A DEFINITION OF WELLBEING

NOTE: You will facilitate a large group discussion on the definition of ‘wellbeing.’ Ask participants to keep in mind the definitions they generated in their small groups as you read the following definition from Dr. Matt Bloom. Then, lead a group discussion using the questions that follow.

In his book, *Flourishing in Ministry: How to Cultivate Clergy Wellbeing*, University of Notre Dame professor Dr. Matt Bloom writes about wellbeing:

“Wellness is typically used for our physical health, while wellbeing is used for our psychological, social, and spiritual health. Wellness is about a healthy body and mind; wellbeing is about a flourishing life.”¹

- + What does Dr. Bloom’s definition add to what we’ve already discussed about wellbeing?
- + What comes to mind when you hear the phrase, “a flourishing life”?

VIDEO

NOTE: Invite participants to watch the video. Encourage them to take notes on the four components of wellbeing.

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

¹ Bloom, M. (2019). *Flourishing in ministry: How to cultivate clergy wellbeing*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, p. 2.

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

NOTE: Facilitate a discussion on the video using the following questions.

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

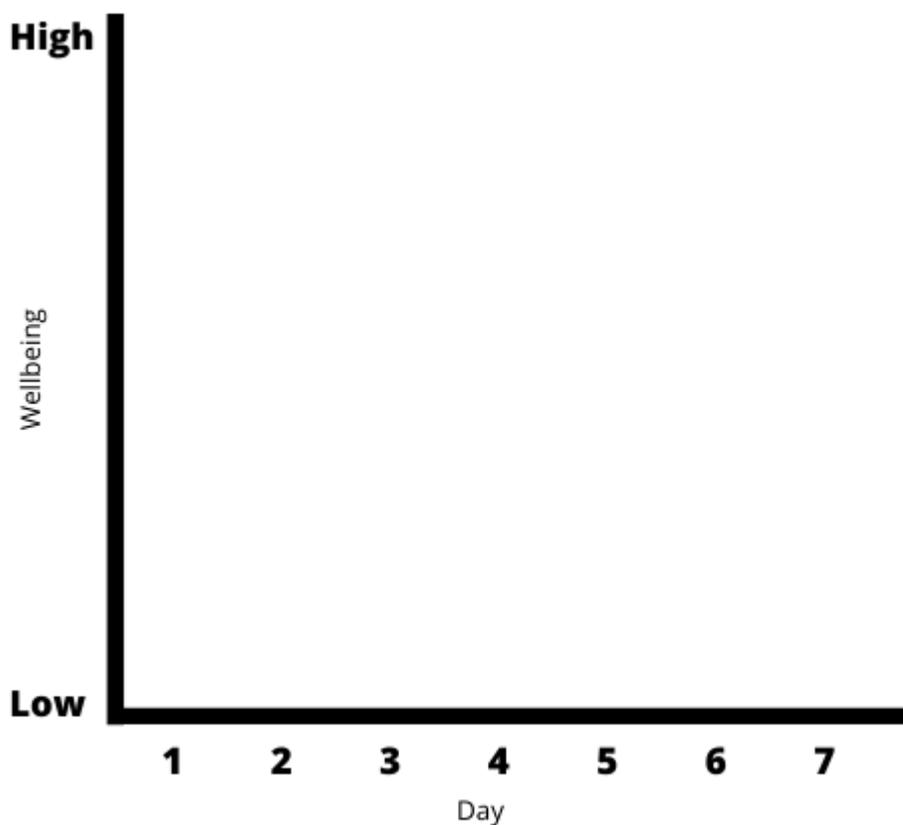


Self-Care in Ministry

SELF-ASSESSMENT

NOTE: Remind learners that one aspect of wellbeing is daily wellbeing. Encourage participants to use the chart below to assess their levels of daily wellbeing over the last week.

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



Pursuing Wellbeing

LESSON OVERVIEW

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

Activity	Time (minutes)	Materials
Scripture Meditation	5:00	Bible
Large Group Activity	10:00	
Video	8:00	Computer, internet access, screen/projection equipment
Individual Reflection	12:00	
Total	35:00	

Pursuing Wellbeing

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: PROVERBS 4:1-9

LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

NOTE: Facilitate the following activity. Invite several participants to share their response to the scenario below.

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

VIDEO

NOTE: Invite participants to watch the video. Encourage them to take notes in the space provided.

Watch the video, “Four Simple Steps” in which Dr. Matt Bloom describes four steps you can take to enhance your wellbeing. Take notes in the space provided below.

- + Step 1:

- + Step 2:

- + Step 3:

- + Step 4:

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

NOTE: Encourage participants to complete the following activity individually. If you do not have time in the session, you can assign this activity as homework.

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

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

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

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

Rest

LESSON OVERVIEW

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

Activity	Time (minutes)	Materials
Scripture Meditation	5:00	Bible
Individual Reflection	5:00	
Video	3:00	Computer, internet access, screen/projection equipment
Small Group Discussion	12:00	
Practice	10:00	
Total	35:00	



Rest

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: PSALM 91

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

NOTE: Ask participants to complete this reflection independently.

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

- + When do you tend to rest?

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

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

Inadequate-----Adequate

Not Restorative-----Restorative

VIDEO

NOTE: Invite participants to watch the video. Encourage them to take notes using the outline provided.

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

- + _____ daily,
- + _____ weekly,
- + _____ monthly, and
- + _____ annually.²

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

NOTE: Ask participants to divide into small groups of three to four individuals to discuss the video.

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

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

² On August 17, 2009, Rick Warren tweeted this framework as a strategy to avoid burnout. The strategy has been widely attributed to him.

PRACTICE

NOTE: Invite participants to engage in the practice below. If you do not have time to facilitate the practice in the session, encourage participants to complete it as homework. If participants express discomfort with this practice, encourage them to read the Scripture reflectively, journal about it, and then pray in response to what God might be saying to them through it.

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

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

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

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

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

Play

LESSON OVERVIEW

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

Activity	Time (minutes)	Materials
Scripture Meditation	5:00	Bible
Large Group Activity	10:00	
Discussion in Pairs	5:00	
Video	3:00	Computer, internet access, screen/projection equipment
Small Group Discussion	17:00	
Practice	30:00*	
Total	70:00	

NOTE

Participants should complete this lesson's practice as homework.

Play

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: ECCLESIASTES 11:7-10

LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

NOTE: Encourage participants to write down the first five words or phrases that come to mind when they hear the word 'play'. Then, facilitate a large group discussion using the following questions as a guide.

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

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

DISCUSSION IN PAIRS

NOTE: Invite participants to turn to a neighbor to respond to the following questions. (Groups of three are acceptable if you have an odd number of participants.)

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

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

VIDEO

NOTE: Invite participants to watch the video.

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

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

NOTE: Ask participants to divide into small groups of three to four individuals to discuss the video.

Divide into small groups of 3-4 individuals. Then, respond to the following questions.

- + How did Dr. Gibson define "play" in the video?
- + In what ways could that sort of play be beneficial to pastors?
- + In what ways do you engage in the sort of play Dr. Gibson described?
- + If you don't engage in this sort of play, what imaginative or creative activity would you like to incorporate into your wellbeing practices? What resources or support do you need to get started?

PRACTICE

NOTE: Invite participants to engage in the practice below as homework.

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

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

- + How did you feel while doing the activity?

- + How did you feel after the activity?

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

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

Storytelling

LESSON OVERVIEW

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

Activity	Time (minutes)	Materials
Scripture Meditation	5:00	Bible
Individual Reflection	5:00	
Video	2:00	Computer, internet access, screen/projection equipment
Small Group Discussion	5:00	
Video	15:00	
Individual Activity	15:00*	
Individual Reflection	10:00*	
Total	57:00	

NOTE

Both the Individual Activity and the Individual Reflection at the end of the lesson can be assigned for homework. However, consider allowing time in the session for participants to complete the Individual Activity so that they can potentially benefit from it regardless of whether or not they complete the Individual Reflection afterward.

Storytelling

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: ECCLESIASTES 12:13-14

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

NOTE: Invite participants to complete the following activity independently.

If you were to write your autobiography, what would you title it?

VIDEO

NOTE: Invite participants to watch the video.

In the last lesson, we learned that one of Frederick Douglass's resilience practices was play. In this video, "Telling Your Story," Dr. Danjuma Gibson explains another one of Douglass's practices.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

NOTE: Ask participants to divide into small groups of three to four individuals to discuss the video.

Divide into small groups of three or four individuals. Share your responses to the following questions.

- + Have you ever written down all or part your life story? If yes, when? Under what circumstances? If not, why not?
- + What do you think could be the benefit of writing down your story?



Self-Care in Ministry

VIDEO

NOTE: Invite participants to watch the video.

Watch the video, “Your Life Narrative,” in which Dr. Matt Bloom describes the relationship between our identity and our life narrative.

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY

NOTE: Encourage participants to complete this activity independently. Challenge them to consider reading what they wrote with a friend or family member prior to the next session.

Dr. Bloom shared that he and his team encourage pastors to tell the story of their call to ministry over and over again. Write down your call to ministry story in the space below. Then, consider reading what you wrote with a friend or family member.



Prayer

LESSON OVERVIEW

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

Activity	Time (minutes)	Materials
Scripture Meditation	5:00	Bible
Discussion in Pairs	5:00	
Large Group Activity	5:00	Whiteboard, large sticky notes, or poster board; markers
Video	2:00	Computer, internet access, screen/projection equipment
Discussion in Pairs	10:00	
Video	10:00	Computer, internet access, screen/projection equipment
Discussion in Pairs	5:00	
Practice	10:00*	
Total	52:00	

NOTE

The Practice at the end of the lesson could be assigned as homework. However, if participants are comfortable, lead them in 10 minutes of the practice at the conclusion of the session.

Prayer

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: PSALM 102:1-2

DISCUSSION IN PAIRS

NOTE: Invite participants to turn to a neighbor to respond to the following scenario. (Groups of three are acceptable if you have an odd number of participants.)

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

Turn to a neighbor and share your response.

LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

NOTE: Facilitate a brainstorming session around different types of prayer. Make a list on a whiteboard, poster, or large sticky note.

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

VIDEO

NOTE: Invite participants to watch the video.

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

DISCUSSION IN PAIRS

NOTE: Invite participants to turn to a neighbor to respond to the following questions about the video. (Groups of three are acceptable if you have an odd number of participants.)

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

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

VIDEO

NOTE: Invite participants to watch the video.

Watch the video, “Pastors’ Self-Care Practices.” As you watch the video, pay attention to how these pastors describe the role of prayer in their lives.

DISCUSSION IN PAIRS

NOTE: Invite participants to turn to a neighbor to respond to the following questions about the video. (Groups of three are acceptable if you have an odd number of participants.)

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

- + What resonated with you as you watch the video?



Self-Care in Ministry

- + What are some current self-care practices that help you anchor your identity and navigate ambiguity?
- + What practices might you like to integrate into your regular rhythms?

PRACTICE

NOTE: Invite participants to engage in the practice below. If you do not have time to facilitate the practice in the session, encourage participants to complete it as homework. For participants who are uncomfortable with this practice, encourage 20 minutes of daily Scripture reading.

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

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

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

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



NEXT STEPS

One of Dr. Matt Bloom's four small steps for enhancing wellbeing is "Step Together." You can learn about this small step in the *Wholeness in Community* study.