



RESILIENCE:

FINDING WHOLENESS IN MINISTRY
BY WAY OF THE CROSS

STUDY:

Wholeness by Way of the Cross

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



Wholeness by Way of the Cross

OVERVIEW

The goal of this study is to help ministry leaders and students in ministry preparation programs recognize threats to their wholeness and build resilience when confronted by those threats.

RECOMMENDATION

Consider completing the *Self-Care in Ministry* and *Wholeness in Community* studies prior to beginning this study.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

- + Identify threats to their wholeness
- + Evaluate their understanding of self-sacrifice and wholeness in light of Scripture
- + Reflect on portraits of wholeness

LESSONS

- + Suffering in Ministry
- + Self-Sacrifice in Ministry
- + Shame in Ministry
- + Trauma and Painful Circumstances in Ministry
- + Wholeness through Union with Christ
- + Wholeness through an Undivided Heart

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

Suffering in Ministry

LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, you will reflect on your experiences of suffering and hardship in light of a theological perspective.

Activity	Time (minutes)	Materials
Scripture Meditation	5:00	Bible
Individual Reflection	5:00	
Video	31:00	Computer, internet access, screen/projection equipment
Individual Reflection	5:00	
Small Group Discussion	10:00	
Individual Reflection	5:00	
Practice	10:00	
Learning Log	10:00	
Total	81:00	

NOTE

Many of the lessons in this study conclude with a Practice and/or Learning Log. 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.

Learning Logs may be assigned either in the class session or as homework.

Suffering in Ministry

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: JAMES 1:2-4

NOTE: Invite a participant to read aloud James 1:2-4. Consider concluding the scripture reading with a prayer for the participants.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

NOTE: Invite participants to complete the following independently.

Complete the following:

- + How often do you “consider it pure joy” when you experience suffering? (Circle one.)
Never Seldom Occasionally Often Always
- + Describe a time when you faced a trial in ministry that tested your faith.
- + In what ways did God use that trial to grow your faith or develop your perseverance?
- + What sorts of suffering have you experienced in the past few years? Make a list below.



Wholeness by Way of the Cross

VIDEO

NOTE: Invite participants to watch the video. This video is approximately 30 minutes long. Encourage participants to take notes using the table below.

Watch the video, “The Role of Suffering in Ministry” in which Dr. Ingrid Faro describes three different types of suffering. Take notes as you watch the video.

Type of Suffering	Notes

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

NOTE: Invite participants to reflect on the what they wrote at the beginning of the lesson in light of what they heard in the video.

Revisit your list of the types of suffering you have experienced in the past year. Try to categorize them according to the three types of suffering Dr. Faro described in her video.

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 people. As a group, respond to the following questions:

- + What were the three types of suffering Dr. Faro described?
- + What was your initial reaction to the three categories she presented?
- + Which of the three types of suffering have you experienced in the past year? How has that suffering affected your ministry? Your wellbeing?
- + What are some strategies Dr. Faro offered for maintaining resilience in the face of suffering?

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

NOTE: Invite participants to respond to the following questions.

Respond to the following questions:

- + To whom can you go to process the suffering that you have experienced? Do you have a counselor, spiritual director, mentor, or trusted friend? If so, list their name(s) below.

- + What concerns you about sharing your suffering story and processing it with a trusted individual?
- + What could be the benefit(s) of sharing your suffering story and processing it with a trusted individual?

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.

Meditate on John 16:33. Then, respond to the question that follows.

Jesus told his disciples, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33, NIV).

- + In what ways do Jesus’ words speak to you in your suffering?



Wholeness by Way of the Cross

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.

Based on what you learned in this lesson, what action will you take? Make a plan. An example has been provided for you.

Example: This week I will make an appointment with my spiritual director to share some of my suffering story. After I share, I will listen with curiosity and without defensiveness to their response.

Self-Sacrifice in Ministry

LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, you will consider the role of self-sacrifice in ministry and the effect of self-sacrifice on pastoral wellbeing.

Activity	Time (minutes)	Materials
Scripture Meditation	5:00	Bible
Small Group Discussion	10:00	
Video	5:00	Computer, internet access, screen/projection equipment
Small Group Discussion	10:00	
Scripture Study	10:00	Bible
Large Group Discussion	10:00	
Practice	10:00	
Learning Log	10:00	
Total	70:00	

Self-Sacrifice in Ministry

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: JOHN 10:18

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

NOTE: Ask participants to divide into small groups of three to four individuals. Encourage them to respond to the questions below.

Divide into small groups of 3-4 people. Share your responses to the following questions.

- + How would you define “self-sacrifice”?
- + In what ways do we tend to sacrifice ourselves in ministry?
- + What sorts of self-sacrifice are healthy?
- + When does self-sacrifice become unhealthy?
- + In the previous lesson, we learned about intentional suffering. What is the relationship between intentional suffering and self-sacrifice?



Wholeness by Way of the Cross

VIDEO

NOTE: Invite participants to watch the video.

Watch the video, “Self-Care and Self-Sacrifice in Ministry,” in which Dr. Matt Bloom shares about one question he has about the interplay between self-sacrifice and wellbeing.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

NOTE: Ask participants to return to their small groups to discuss the video using the questions provided.

Return to your small groups and discuss the video using the following questions.

- + In the video, Dr. Bloom describes what he believes to be a tipping point between self-sacrifice that enhances wellbeing and self-sacrifice that diminishes it. Have you experienced such a tipping point? If so, what do you think the tipping point is for you?
- + What events or circumstances seem to take you into unhealthy self-sacrifice?
- + Dr. Bloom also speculates that a person's theological orientation or framework affects how they think about self-sacrifice. How do you respond to that idea?

SCRIPTURE STUDY

NOTE: Invite participants to complete the Scripture study individually or with their small groups. Emphasize the importance of taking time to visualize or imagine the scene after reading the account in Scripture.

Complete the following Scripture study individually or as a group.

When we encounter Jesus in Matthew 14:13-21, he has just learned of John the Baptist's beheading.

Read Matthew 14:13a. Close your eyes and try to visualize the scene.

- + What emotions do you think Jesus felt?
- + Why do you think “he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place” (Matthew 14:13a, NIV)?

Read Matthew 13:13b-14.

- + How would you have felt upon seeing the crowd on the shore?
- + To what extent would your response have mirrored Jesus’?
- + How was he able to have compassion on them at that moment?

Read Matthew 14:15-21.

- + After a long day filled with grief, travel, and healing people, what did Jesus do?
- + How would you characterize the miracle that took place in this account?

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

NOTE: Facilitate a discussion on the Scripture study by asking participants to respond to the questions below.

Share what you learned from the Scripture study by responding to the following questions as a large group.

- + In what ways do you relate to what Jesus experienced in this passage?
- + What could be the connection between this passage and the concepts of self-care and self-sacrifice?
- + How might the miracle in this account be a source of encouragement for pastors on the verge of unhealthy self-sacrifice?

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.

Read John 10:1-18. Then, meditate on verse 18.

“No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father” (John 10:18, NIV).

- + Dr. Faro referenced this verse when describing intentional suffering. What might Jesus be saying to you about intentional suffering and self-sacrifice in this verse?

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 are you tempted toward unhealthy self-sacrifice?
- + What or who could help you develop and maintain good boundaries around self-sacrifice?
- + What is your major takeaway from this lesson?
- + What action or attitude might God be calling you to take based on what you have learned?

Shame in Ministry

LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, you will learn about shame and the ways it can manifest in ministry.

Activity	Time (minutes)	Materials
Scripture Meditation	5:00	Bible
Small Group Activity	10:00	Large sticky notes or poster board; markers
Large Group Discussion	10:00	Large sticky notes or poster board; markers
Video	5:00	Computer, internet access, screen/projection equipment
Small Group Discussion	15:00	
Practice	10:00	
Individual Activity	30:00*	
Total	85:00	

NOTE

* The individual activity at the conclusion of the lesson should be assigned as homework.

Shame in Ministry

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: JOHN 3:16-21

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

NOTE: Ask participants to divide into small groups of three to four individuals. Make sure that each group has a large sticky note or poster and some markers. Invite groups to complete the activity below.

Divide into small groups of 3-4 people.

How would you define 'shame'? As a small group, create a definition of shame. Write it on a poster or large sticky note. You will share your definition with the large group.

Shame is _____
_____.

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

NOTE: Invite each group to share its definition. Then, facilitate a time of comparing and contrasting the definitions. Next, ask the questions that follow. Consider listing the responses on a whiteboard, large sticky note, or poster.

Each group will share its definition of shame. Compare and contrast the definitions. Then, respond to the following questions. You may want to list the responses on a whiteboard or poster.

- + What sort of situations or experiences cause people to feel shame?
- + What sort of situations or experiences cause pastors to feel shame?



Wholeness by Way of the Cross

VIDEO

NOTE: Invite participants to watch the video.

In the video, “Defining Shame,” Dr. Chuck DeGroat defines shame and describes how it manifests in the hearts and minds of pastors. As you watch this video, listen for key words or phrases that resonate with you. Note them in the space below.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

NOTE: Invite participants to return to their small groups to discuss the video.

Return to your small groups. Discuss the video using the following questions.

- + In what ways did Dr. DeGroat’s description of shame resonate with you?
- + What are some of the questions or doubts that lie below the waterline in your heart and mind?
- + In what ways could shame be affecting your relationships and your ministry?
- + What do you think are some pathways out of shame?

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.

Read John 3:16-21. Then, meditate on the following verses 19-21. Finally, respond to the question below.

“This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not



Wholeness by Way of the Cross

come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God” (John 3:19-21, NIV).

- + In what ways might Jesus’ words be an invitation out of shame?

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY

NOTE: Encourage participants to complete the following activity as homework.

This week, as you go about your work, pay attention to feelings of shame. List the situations or experiences in which you feel shame and try to note the questions or doubts resounding in your mind.

Situation/Experience	Questions/Doubts

- + Review your list. What patterns or themes do you notice?
- + Revisit the words and phrases that resonated with you during Dr. DeGroat's video. Do you discern an invitation from God in the words or phrases? If so, what could it be?

Trauma and Painful Circumstances in Ministry

LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, you will learn how trauma and painful circumstances can affect wellbeing.

Activity	Time (minutes)	Materials
Scripture Meditation	5:00	Bible
Large Group Discussion	10:00	Bible
Video	5:00	Computer, internet access, screen/projection equipment
Small Group Discussion	10:00	
Scripture Study	15:00	Bible
Learning Log	10:00	
Total	55:00	

Trauma and Painful Circumstances 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. If you include the Scripture study, add approximately 10 minutes to the activity time.

- + 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?



Wholeness by Way of the Cross

VIDEO

NOTE: Invite participants to watch the video.

In the video, “Resilience in the Midst of Painful Circumstances,” Dr. Danjuma Gibson reflects on what he learned from Frederick Douglass’s life about how trauma and painful circumstances can affect a person’s wellbeing.

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. Discuss the video using the following questions.

- + Dr. Gibson believes that an individual can have a high level of faith and yet still experience trauma and painful circumstances. Do you agree with him? Why or why not?
- + To what extent have you ever denied your mental or emotional anguish in order to appear strong to others? What were the benefits? What were the costs?
- + In what ways can ignoring your trauma and pain impact your wellbeing? Your ministry?

SCRIPTURE STUDY

NOTE: Invite participants to complete the Scripture study individual or in small groups. You may want to encourage them to read 2 Corinthians 4 in a few different translations prior to answering the questions.

Complete this Scripture study individually or in small groups.

Read 2 Corinthians 4 and answer the following questions.

- + In what ways do Paul’s words connect with the concept of trauma and painful circumstances in ministry?



Wholeness by Way of the Cross

- + In what ways did Paul and his companions rely on their faith in the midst of trauma and painful circumstances?
- + How would you rewrite 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 to align with the pain and trauma you have experienced?
- + Under what circumstances are you tempted to “lose heart” (v. 16)?
- + What gives you hope in the midst of pain and trauma?



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.

- + What words or phrases most resonated with you during this lesson?
- + Why do you think that is?
- + What do you think God might be calling you to think, believe, say, or do as a result of this lesson?

Wholeness through Union with Christ

LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, you will learn about drawing strength for ministry through your union with Christ.

Activity	Time (minutes)	Materials
Scripture Meditation	5:00	Bible
Discussion in Pairs	10:00	
Video	5:00	Computer, internet access, screen/projection equipment
Small Group Discussion	15:00	
Learning Log	10:00	
Total	45:00	

Wholeness through Union with Christ

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: EPHESIANS 3:16-19

DISCUSSION IN PAIRS

NOTE: Invite participants to turn to a neighbor to share their responses to the following questions. If you have an odd number of participants, it's acceptable to have a group of three.

Turn to a neighbor. Share your responses to the following questions.

- + How would you define 'wholeness'?
- + What do you think it means to find wholeness by way of the cross?

VIDEO

NOTE: Invite participants to watch the video.

In the video, "Union with Christ," Pastor Karen Ingebretson and Dr. Chuck DeGroat describe how their union with Christ helps them pursue wholeness in ministry.



Wholeness by Way of the Cross

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, discuss the video by responding to the questions below.

- + What resonated most with you as you watched the video?
- + In what ways did the speakers relate wholeness to union with Christ?
- + Thomas Oden describes the believer's union with Christ this way: "Christ himself dwells in the justified soul born of God. The Son is present by the power of the Spirit, making known the love of the Father."¹ In what ways does "knowing the love of the Father" help us amidst the suffering, shame, and trauma we experience?

¹ Oden, T. C. (1992). *Life in the Spirit: Systematic theology volume three*. San Francisco: Harper, p. 207.



Wholeness by Way of the Cross

LEARNING LOG

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

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.

- + Union with Christ is a spiritual reality for the believer. Yet we can struggle to know this reality experientially. Why do you think that is?

- + What gets in the way of your experiencing union with Christ?

- + What can we do to cultivate a sense of our union of Christ?

- + Brother Lawrence once wrote, “We cannot avoid the dangers of life without God’s continual help, so we should ask Him for it ceaselessly. But how can we ask for help unless we are with Him? To be with Him, we must cultivate the holy habit of thinking of Him often.”² What practices help you think of God often?

² Brother Lawrence. (1982). *The practice of the presence of God*. New Kensington: Whitaker House, p. 49.

Wholeness through an Undivided Heart

LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, you will learn how having an undivided heart can be a pathway to wholeness.

Activity	Time (minutes)	Materials
Scripture Meditation	5:00	Bible
Video	3:00	Computer, internet access, screen/projection equipment
Small Group Discussion	20:00	
Practice	20:00	
Learning Log	10:00	
Total	40:00	

Wholeness through an Undivided Heart

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION: PSALM 86:11-12

VIDEO

NOTE: Invite participants to watch the video.

In the video, “An Undivided Heart,” Pastor Mark Shaw reflects on his understanding of wholeness in ministry.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

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

Divide into groups of 3-4 people. Discuss the video using the following questions.

- + What does it mean to have “an undivided heart”?
- + In the video, Pastor Mark Shaw comments that a divided heart can lead to great peril in ministry. What do you think he meant by that?
- + Can you give of an example of someone whose ministry suffered as a result of having a divided heart?
- + Pastor Mark Shaw describes wholeness as living with the whole of his inner life before God. What does that mean?



Wholeness by Way of the Cross

- + How does Pastor Mark Shaw differentiate his work and his ministry?
- + What does it look like to have an undivided heart in one's life, ministry, and work?
- + What are the obstacles or challenges to maintaining appropriate boundaries yet living with an undivided heart in all of one's spheres of influence?

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.

Practice *Lectio Divina*, a form of spiritual reading, using Psalm 139. You can complete this practice as a group or individually.

NOTE: If you facilitate Lectio Divina for the group, tell participants that you will read Psalm 139 aloud. Invite them to pay attention for a word or phrase that resonates with them. Read the psalm carefully and slowly. Then pause for about three minutes of silence.

- + Listen as Psalm 139 is read aloud. Pay attention for a word or phrase that resonates with you.

NOTE: Tell participants that you will read Psalm 139 aloud again. Invite them to listen for a truth or challenge that God has for them. Read the psalm carefully and slowly. Then pause for about three minutes of silence.

- + Listen as Psalm 139 is read again. Notice how your word or phrase fits within the psalm. Seek the truth or challenge God has for you.

NOTE: Tell participants that you will read Psalm 139 aloud one final time. Inform them that, at the conclusion of the reading, you will all spend time in silence to respond to the truth or challenge God has for you in the passage. Read the psalm carefully and slowly. Then pause for about ten minutes of silence.

- + Listen as Psalm 139 is read a third time. Turn the psalmist's prayer into your prayer. Respond to the truth or challenge he has for you in this passage.

NOTE: Consider closing the practice in prayer. Alternatively, you may wish to invite a few people to share their thoughts or impressions from the practice.

LEARNING LOG

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

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.

- + Write down the word or phrase from Psalm 139 that resonated with you.

- + In what ways could this word or phrase relate to pursuing wholeness in ministry?

- + What could God be inviting you to be, do, or think as a result of this lesson?