

LIFT

Ministry Group February Resource

Developing Resilience

Reject the 3 p's

Martin Seligman, a psychologist studying how to build resilience identified three things that make it difficult to navigate tough trials. He refers to them as the 3 p's: Personalization, Pervasiveness, and Permanence.⁽⁴⁾

1. **Personalization** is when you think everything is your fault.

Countermeasure: Repent where needed, but refuse to carry unnecessary blame or shame.

2. **Pervasiveness** is when the crisis becomes the only thing you think about.

Countermeasure: Carry on with your regular routine and be deliberate about doing what gives you life.

3. **Permanence** is thinking you will always be in this situation.

Countermeasure: Avoid the mental trap of overestimating how long negative events will last.

Discuss: Which of these pitfalls do you have a tendency of falling into?

(4) <https://pastormentor.com/resilient-pastor/>



Shop Talk:

Typically, when the topic of church hurt is discussed the focus is primarily on the parishioner. This is either due to hurt experienced from confrontation with a pastor or fellow church members.

In fact, one Barna study among unchurched adults shows that nearly four out of every ten non-churchgoing Americans (37%) said they avoid churches because of negative past experiences in churches or with church people.⁽¹⁾

However, parishioners are not the only people who suffer church hurt. Ministry leaders including pastors, missionaries and evangelists are on the frontlines each week being bombarded by accusations, unrealistic expectations, and unhealthy criticism.

As of March 2022, the percentage of pastors who have considered quitting full-time ministry within the past year sits at 42 percent.⁽²⁾ Church hurt is as real among pastors as it is parishioners.

(1) <https://www.barna.com/research/millions-of-unchurched-adults-are-christians-hurt-by-churches-but-can-be-healed-of-the-pain/>

(2) <https://www.barna.com/research/pastors-quitting-ministry/>

Resilience Requires Inward Renewal

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.”-2 Corinthians 4:16-17

When things seem to be crumbling around us, the Apostle Paul admonishes us to be inwardly renewed day by day. Resilience is our capacity to withstand or to recover quickly from difficulties. When facing strenuous circumstances we need to focus our attention on inwardly renewing our hearts and minds in several key areas:

- Renew the call of God on your life. When storms come we need to revisit that moment when God called us to lay down our lives to serve His mission and recapture our passion for reaching the lost.
- Renew your commitment to serve others. Some of the most difficult situations we will face will come from those we have been called to love and serve. We must rehearse and recapture what it means to be a servant leader.
- Renew friendships and relationships with trusted peers and mentors who can guide and give valuable counsel in stressful moments. Peer relationships remind us we are not alone. We can either allow adversity to drive us away from others or drive us to them.
- Renew your spiritual life. Often times, our spiritual lives and disciplines diminish when our routine has been disrupted by difficulties and trials.
- Renew Kingdom-minded thinking. It is easy to get pigeon-holed in our own ministry assignments and forget that we are a part of something greater. Perspective is everything.

Church hurt creates open wounds.

“Time does not always heal; sometimes, it deepens the wounds and hardens the heart.”

~Thomas E. McDaniels~

When we consider the percentages, just as many pastors are leaving the ministry as parishioners are leaving the church.

However, when we discuss church hurt, the discussion is often very one-sided. That 42% is just the number that are considering quitting the ministry, the reality is 100% of pastors experience some level of church hurt. Which means, nearly 60% are choosing to stay and work through their brokenness.

Discuss: How has church hurt affected your ministry? Have there been times that the strain has made you feel like giving up?

Philip Wagner in an article discussing “The Secret Pain of Pastors” lists a variety of unique problems that pastors face ⁽³⁾:

1. **Criticism-** People’s opinions and preferences can feel more like indictments than encouragement.
2. **Rejection-** The reality is people leave and it is hard not to take it personally.
3. **Betrayal-** Broken trusts and broken confidences can be crippling.
4. **Loneliness-** Building friendships around ministry is difficult, but necessary.
5. **Weariness-** Fatigue can cause you to question your ministry calling.
6. **Frustrations & Disappointments-** Good work and good effort don’t always guarantee success. Judging success in ministry is difficult. When we focus on attendance and finances as our indicators, it only adds to our frustrations.
7. **The Comparison trap-** Feelings of inadequacy can be overwhelming when we are being unfairly compared to other ministers and churches.

Discuss: In which of these areas are you most susceptible to experiencing church hurt? How do you battle these in your own life and ministry?

(3) <https://churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/167379-philip-wagner-secret-pain-of-pastors.html/5>