

Surviving the Spiritual Battle of Ministry

Have you ever had those times when you wanted to quit? Have you hit those long, dark valleys where you wonder if you can keep going on? Every year, thousands of church workers resign from the ministry because the spiritual battlefield is so terribly difficult. The speaker of this workshop understands. In Ed's fifty years of ministry, including thirty-seven years in pastoral ministry, he has been betrayed by his closest friends, slandered in the public square, rejected, criticized, and asked to resign. There have been numerous occasions he just wanted to throw up his hands and quit. But through it all, God has given him the strength to carry on in HIS work, and Ed has learned some very valuable lessons on not just surviving the spiritual battlefield, but thriving. He will share with you what he has learned that can bring you true joy, peace, and fulfillment in your ministry in the midst of the most challenging of circumstances.

Ed Doepel has served as a pastor for thirty-seven years. He has planted four churches and has led churches from eight people to three thousand in membership. He is a veteran of Operation Desert Storm where he served as a Chaplain in the US Army, planting two churches in the Persian Gulf region. He is the founder of Lap 7, an organization that coordinates multiple churches in a co-op, worshipping out of the same building and performing collateral ministries in a coordinated effort to further the Kingdom of God. He and his wife are residents of suburban Chicago.

Lesson #1: Don't be surprised by the attack...EXPECT it!

Revelation 12:9-12; Revelation 12:17

- The Devil's mission is simple...He is to steal, kill, and destroy. *John 8:43-44*
- The greater the threat you are, the greater the attack.

Lesson #2: I do not give myself a vote.

- It is only God who calls a person into ministry and only God can call a person out of the ministry.
2 Corinthians 4:1; 7-12

Lesson #3: Stay on Mission.

- Focusing on serving others, I got my eyes off myself and my pain...my hurts and my defeated spirit and God renewed my soul. *John 13:34-35*

Lesson #4: There is life outside of being a Pastor.

Exodus 20:1-6

- “Anything that governs your emotional state is an idol...a god in your life.”
 - Why did it have so much power over us?
 - I discovered I really wasn’t a Kingdom person in the truest sense of the word.
- My worth is that I am a redeemed, cherished child of God. *2 Corinthians 5:16-17*

Lesson #5: Measure SUCCESS as God measures success.

- Our measure of “success” does great harm to the emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being of pastors and church workers.
- God’s measurement of success is ONE. *Luke 15:3-7*

Lesson #6: Shut down.

- God commands us to take time off... *Exodus 20:8-11*
 - Every week, I have an entire day off.
 - Every three months, I schedule a break.

Lesson #7: God has a new day with an exciting vision.

- Lap 7 *1 Corinthians 12:12*

Lesson #8: Jesus is enough!

- If God never blessed my ministry again with another convert...another ministry success...another celebration, would I keep doing it?
- If He chose to leave me crushed, never to restore my work or my reputation, would I keep doing it just for Him?

Lesson #9: I want to see the people that hurt me like Jesus sees them.

- To love like Jesus loved is tough.

Soli Deo Gloria.

Suggested Readings:

Dr. Ed Murphy “*The Handbook for Spiritual Warfare*” Thomas Nelson Publishers –
Nashville, TN, 1992

Marshall Shelley “*Well-Intentioned Dragons*” Word Books Publisher – Waco, TX 1985

Kent Crockett “*Pastor Abusers*” kent@kentcrockett.com

Frank Peretti “*This Present Darkness*” (Novel) Crossway Books – Westchester, IL 1986