

Working Through Discouragement and Depression: Practical Help for the Struggling Leader

What do you do when ministry takes an emotional, physical and spiritual toll? Burn out, discouragement and exhaustion are real dangers, but there are ways to protect and preserve your calling. This session will give you real life survival tools that will encourage you and lengthen the life of your ministry.

Scott Poling has served as senior pastor for 29 years at Harvest New Beginnings Church located in the southwest suburbs of Chicago. He's seen first-hand God's work in the renewal of a dying church, and has gained a unique perspective, understanding the personal pressures and trials of ministry while navigating the many heartaches and challenges that come with leadership. He has a heart to see the souls of pastors and ministry leaders encouraged and renewed and looks forward to sharing many of the insights and wisdom he's gained through the years. He received his B.S. degree from Cedarville University and his ThM from Dallas Theological Seminary. Scott has 5 children with his wife of 33 years, Carla, and 3 grandchildren. His interests include trail running, visiting national parks and watching living off-the-grid survival shows.

I. REMEMBER THE MANY MOUNTAINTOPS OF ENCOURAGEMENT (1 Kings 17-18)

A. Exciting Days of Ministry

1. Spoke with prophetic authority (1 Kings 17:1)
2. Experienced miraculous provision (1 Kings 17:5b-6, 1 Kings 17:16)
3. Raised the dead to life (1 Kings 17:21-22)
4. Spirit-filled courage, confrontation & victory (1 Kings 18:18-19, 27)
5. Calls down fire from heaven (1 Kings 18:37-40)
6. Calls down water from heaven (1 Kings 18:41, 45a)
7. God answers his prayers (James 5:16b-18)
8. Supernatural ability to run & run & run (1 Kings 18:46)

II. PUT THE RELATIVELY FEW TIMES OF DISCOURAGEMENT IN PERSPECTIVE (1 Kings 19:1-2)

- A. People Talking About You Behind Your Back (1 Kings 19:1)
- B. Elijah Gets the Message (1 Kings 19:2; 1 Kings 18:3b-4, 13)
- C. Put This in Perspective --- Elijah

D. Put This in Perspective

E. Consider the One Person

III. IDENTIFY YOUR VALLEYS OF DISCOURAGEMENT (1 Kings 19:3-4)

A. Deep Dark Valley of FEAR (1 Kings 19:3a; 2 Timothy 1:7; Proverbs 29:25)

B. Valley of LONELINESS (1 Kings 18:22, 19:3b-4; Jeremiah 17:9; Proverbs 18:1)

C. Valley of DESPAIR (1 Kings 19:4)

1. Unlock the Rooms of Despair

a. Ministry Loneliness (Matthew 28:20b; Hebrews 13:5b-6)

b. Sorrow (Psalm 34:18; Psalm 147:3)

c. Worry (1 Peter 5:7)

d. Self Pity (Hebrews 6:10)

D. Valley of SELF PITY (1 Kings 19:4c; John 21:20-22; John 3:26-27;
2 Corinthians 10:12)

IV. WALK OUT OF YOUR VALLEY – ONE STEP AT A TIME

A. Take the PHYSICAL STEP (1 Kings 19:5-7)

1. Get your sleep (Psalm 127:2; Mark 6:31b-32)

2. Fill your stomach (1 Kings 19:5-7)

B. Take the MENTAL STEP (1 Kings 19:7-8)

1. Must Be Humble, Must Be Honest (Zechariah 4:6; John 15:5)

2. God's Strength Make All the Difference (1 Kings 19:8; Isaiah 40:28-31)

C. Take the TRUTHFUL STEP (1 Kings 19:9-10, 14)

1. Stop Exaggerating (1 Kings 18:22; 1 Kings 19:10, 14)

2. Be Truthful (1 Kings 18:13; 1 Kings 19:18)

3. Start Wearing Your Belt (Ephesians 6:13-14)

D. Take the SPIRITUAL STEP (1 Kings 19:8-9; 11-13)

1. Meet With Your God

2. Listen to Your God (1 Kings 19:9, 13)

3. Learn From Your God (1 Kings 19:11-13)

a. God is near (1 Kings 19:11; Psalm 34:18; Psalm 73:28a;
Psalm 145:18; Philippians 4:5-6a)

b. God is powerful (1 Kings 19:11-12; Zechariah 4:6)

E. Take the PRACTICAL STEP (1 Kings 19:15-17)

1. Reassurance-God still has plans for you (1 Kings 19:15-18; Philippians 1:6)

2. Time to get back at it

3. Immediate, pre-planned ministry (Ephesians 2:10)

4. Important ministry (1 Kings 19:15b-16)

5. You're not alone (1 Kings 19:17-18)