





WORKING THROUGH DISCOURAGEMENT & DEPRESSION

PRACTICAL HELP FOR THE STRUGGLING LEADER

WHAT TO DO WHEN WE'VE LOST OUR JOY IN LIFE & LEADING



The background is a dark blue gradient. In the corners, there are white, stylized circuit board traces. These traces consist of straight lines that turn at right angles, ending in small white circles, resembling electronic components or nodes on a board.

I. REMEMBER THE MANY MOUNTAINTOPS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

1 KINGS 17-18



SPOKE WITH PROPHETIC POWER AND AUTHORITY

1 KINGS 17:1

... said to Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel lives, in whose presence I stand, there will be no dew or rain during these years except by my command!"



EXPERIENCED CONSISTENT MIRACULOUS PROVISION

1 KINGS 17:4b, 6

“... I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there.” ...⁶ The ravens kept bringing him bread and meat in the morning and in the evening, and he would drink from the wadi.



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1 KINGS 17:16

The flour jar did not become empty, and the oil jug did not run dry, according to the word of the LORD he had spoken through Elijah.



RAISED THE DEAD TO LIFE

1 KINGS 17:21-22

21 Then he stretched himself out over the boy three times. He cried out to the LORD and said, "LORD my God, please let this boy's life come into him again!" 22 So the LORD listened to Elijah, and the boy's life came into him again, and he lived.



SPIRIT FILLED COURAGE, CONFRONTATION & VICTORY

1 KINGS 18:18-19

18 He replied, "I have not ruined Israel, but you and your father's family have, because you have abandoned the LORD's commands and followed the Baals. 19 Now summon all Israel to meet me at Mount Carmel, along with the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah who eat at Jezebel's table."



CALLS DOWN FIRE FROM HEAVEN

1 KINGS 18:37-40

37 Answer me, LORD! Answer me so that this people will know that you, the LORD, are God and that you have turned their hearts back.”

38 Then the LORD’s fire fell and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench.

CALLS DOWN FIRE FROM HEAVEN

39 When all the people saw it, they fell facedown and said, “The LORD, he is God! The LORD, he is God!”

40 Then Elijah ordered them, “Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let even one of them escape.” So they seized them, and Elijah brought them down to the Wadi Kishon and slaughtered them there.

1 KINGS 18:37-40



CALLS DOWN RAIN FROM HEAVEN

1 KINGS 18:41, 45a

⁴¹ Elijah said to Ahab, “Go up, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a rainstorm.” . . . ⁴⁵ In a little while, the sky grew dark with clouds and wind, and there was a downpour . . .



GOD ANSWERS HIS PRAYERS OVER & OVER & OVER

JAMES 5:17-18

¹⁷ Elijah was a human being as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the land. ¹⁸ Then he prayed again, and the sky gave rain and the land produced its fruit.



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SUPERNATURAL ABILITY TO RUN & RUN & RUN

1 KINGS 18:46

The power of the LORD was on Elijah, and he tucked his mantle under his belt and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.



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***“Mountaintops are for views and inspiration,
but fruit is grown in the valleys.”***

- - Billy Graham



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II. PUT THE RELATIVELY FEW TIMES OF DISCOURAGEMENT IN PERSPECTIVE

1 KINGS 19:1-2



1 KINGS 19:1-2

Ahab told Jezebel everything that Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ² So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “May the gods punish me and do so severely if I don’t make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow!”



1 KINGS 18:3b-4, 13

... Obadiah was a man who greatly feared the LORD⁴ and took a hundred prophets and hid them, fifty men to a cave, and provided them with food and water when Jezebel slaughtered the LORD's prophets. . . .¹³ "Wasn't it reported to my lord what I did when Jezebel slaughtered the LORD's prophets? I hid a hundred of the prophets of the LORD, fifty men to a cave, and I provided them with food and water."



The background is a solid dark blue color. In the four corners, there are decorative white line-art elements that resemble circuit traces or a stylized tree structure. These lines connect to small white circles, creating a network-like pattern.

III. IDENTIFY THE VALLEYS OF DISCOURAGEMENT

1 KINGS 19:3-4





FOUR VALLEYS



VALLEY OF FEAR

1 KINGS 19:3-4

*³ Then Elijah became afraid and immediately ran for his life. When he came to Beer-sheba that belonged to Judah, he left his servant there,
⁴ but he went on a day's journey into the wilderness. He sat down under a broom tree and prayed that he might die. He said, "I have had enough! LORD, take my life, for I'm no better than my ancestors."*



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2 TIMOTHY 1:7

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment.



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PROVERBS 29:25

The fear of mankind is a snare, but the one who trusts in the LORD is protected.



VALLEY OF LONELINESS

1 KINGS 18:22

Then Elijah said to the people, “I am the only remaining prophet of the LORD, but Baal’s prophets are 450 men.”



1 KINGS 19:3b-4a

... When he came to Beer-sheba that belonged to Judah, he left his servant there, ⁴ but he went on a day's journey into the wilderness.



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PROVERBS 18:1

*One who isolates himself pursues selfish desires;
he rebels against all sound wisdom.*



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VALLEY OF DESPAIR



BARNA RESEARCH

TOP 5 REASONS PASTORS CONSIDER QUITTING MINISTRY

56% IMMENSE STRESS

43% LONELY/ISOLATED

38% CURRENT POLITICAL DIVISIONS

29% NEGATIVE AFFECT ON FAMILY

29% NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE
CHURCH



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PROVERBS 18:14

A person's spirit can endure sickness, but who can survive a broken spirit?



MINISTRY LONELINESS

MATTHEW 28:20b

“... And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”



MINISTRY WEAKNESS

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9a, 10

⁹ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness.” . . .

¹⁰ So I take pleasure in weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and in difficulties, for the sake of Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.



MINISTRY ABANDONMENT

2 TIMOTHY 4:16-17a

¹⁶ At my first defense, no one stood by me, but everyone deserted me. May it not be counted against them. ¹⁷ But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me . . .



MINISTRY WORRY

1 PETER 5:7

... casting all your cares on him, because he cares about you.



MINISTRY SELF PITY

HEBREWS 6:10

For God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you demonstrated for his name by serving the saints—and by continuing to serve them.



MINISTRY SORROW

PSALM 34:18

The LORD is near the brokenhearted; he saves those crushed in spirit.

PSALM 147:3

He heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds.



VALLEY OF SELF PITY

1 KINGS 19:4c

*... and prayed that he might die. He said,
"I have had enough! LORD, take my life, for I'm
no better than my ancestors."*



JOHN 21:21-22

²¹ When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about him?” ²² “If I want him to remain until I come,” Jesus answered, “what is that to you? As for you, follow me.”



JOHN 3:26-27

²⁶ So they came to John and told him, “Rabbi, the one you testified about, and who was with you across the Jordan, is baptizing—and everyone is going to him.” ²⁷ John responded, “No one can receive anything unless it has been given to him from heaven.”



2 CORINTHIANS 10:12

For we don't dare classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. But in measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves to themselves, they lack understanding.



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IV. WALK OUT OF YOUR VALLEYS OF DISCOURAGEMENT ONE STEP AT A TIME

1 KINGS 19:5-18



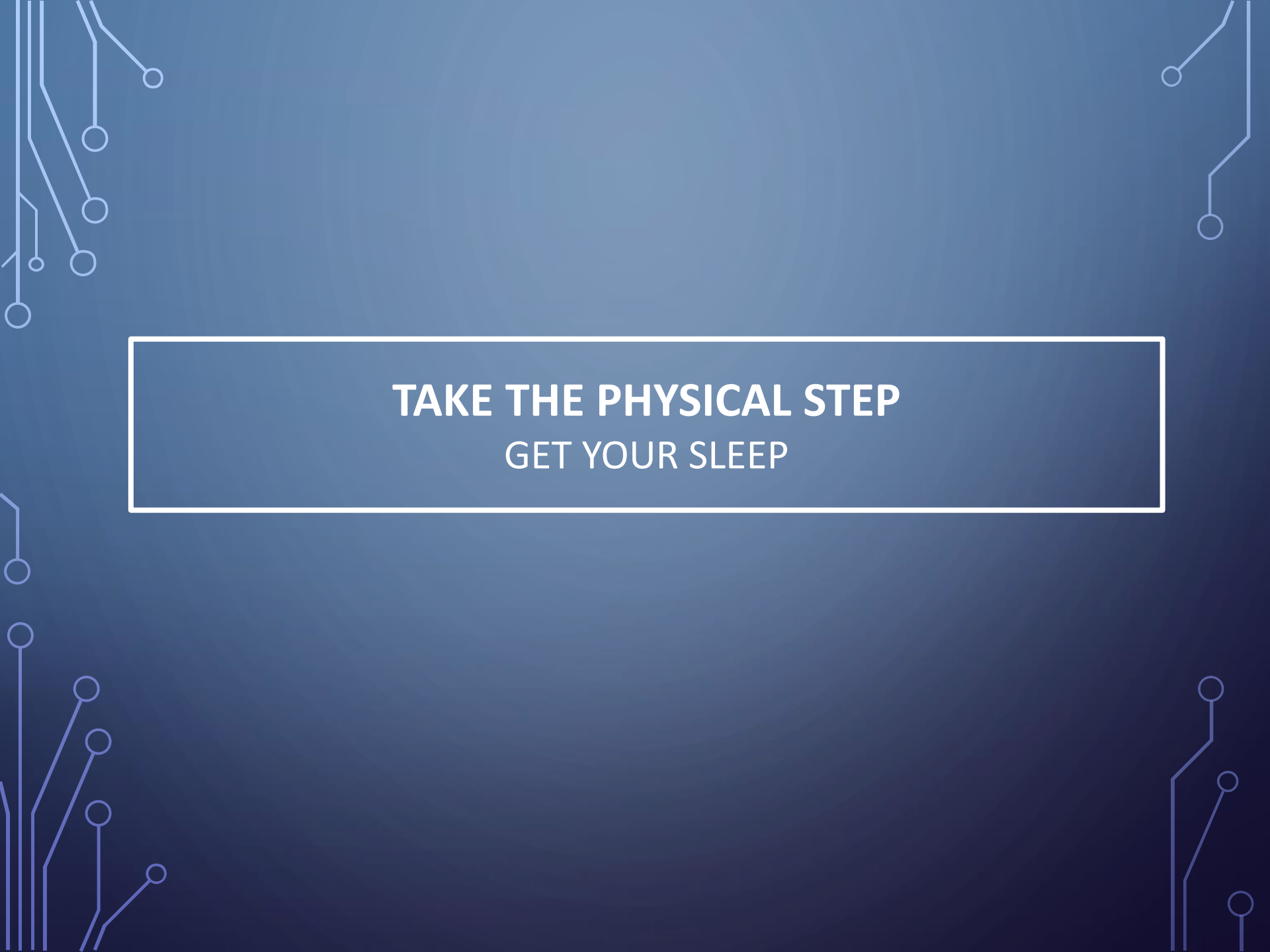
1 KINGS 19:5-8

⁵ Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree. Suddenly, an angel touched him. The angel told him, "Get up and eat." ⁶ Then he looked, and there at his head was a loaf of bread baked over hot stones, and a jug of water. So he ate and drank and lay down again. ⁷ Then the angel of the Lord returned for a second time and touched him. He said, "Get up and eat, or the journey will be too much for you." ⁸ So he got up, ate, and drank. Then on the strength from that food, he walked forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God.



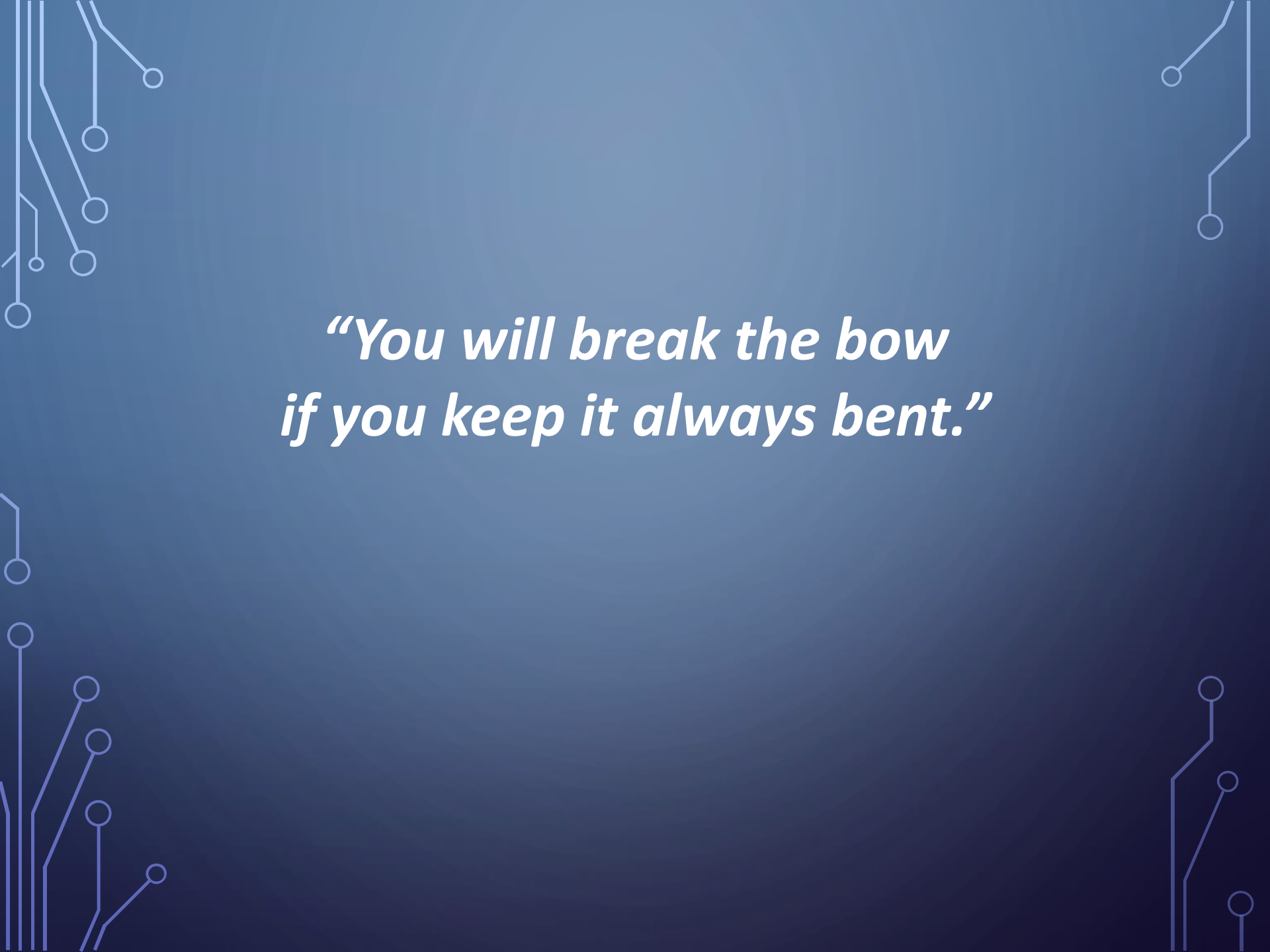
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TAKE THE PHYSICAL STEP

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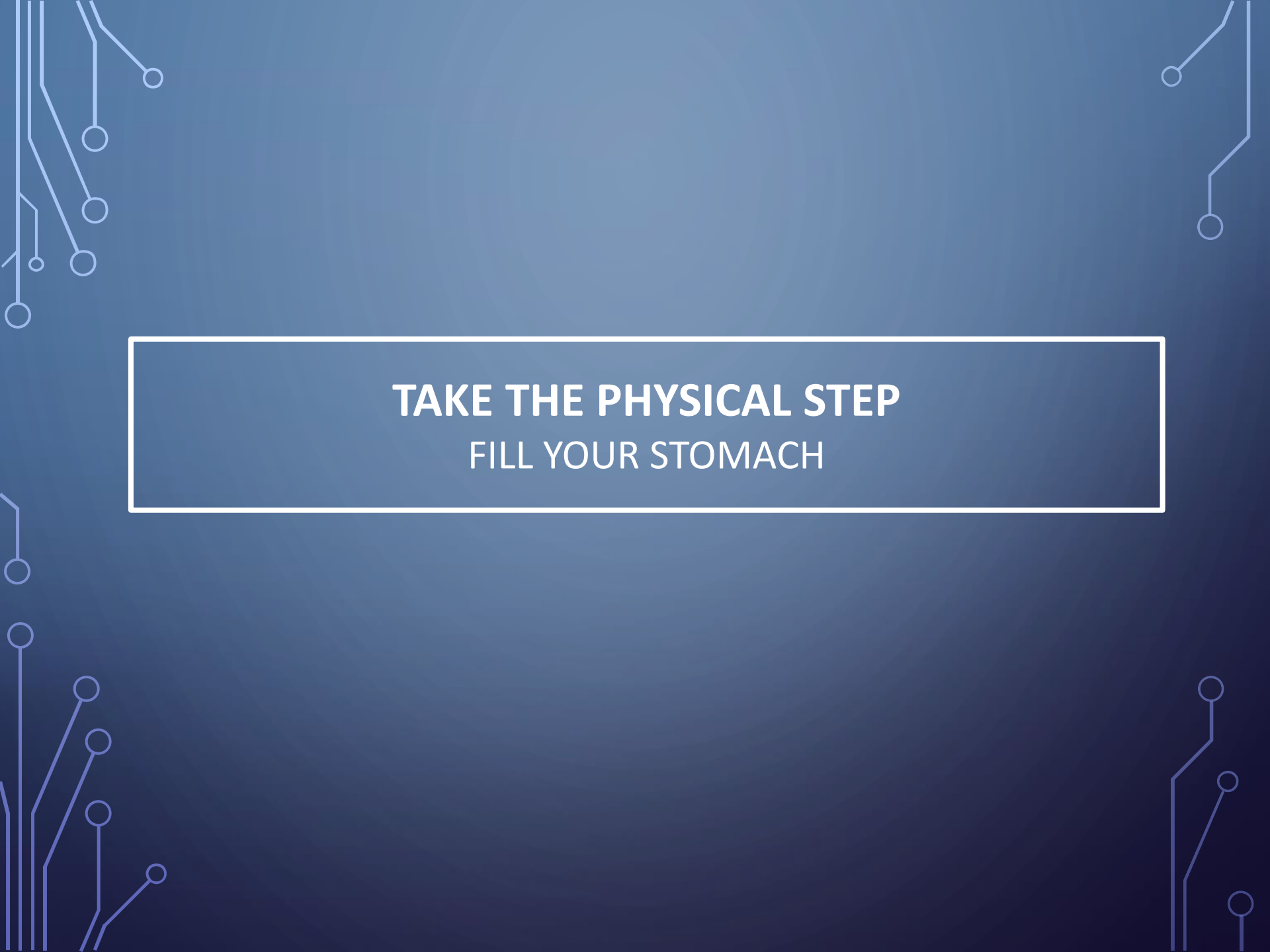
TAKE THE PHYSICAL STEP
GET YOUR SLEEP



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***“You will break the bow
if you keep it always bent.”***



The background is a dark blue gradient. In the corners, there are white line-art graphics resembling circuit boards or neural networks, with lines connecting to small circles.

TAKE THE PHYSICAL STEP
FILL YOUR STOMACH



TAKE THE HUMBLE STEP

1 KINGS 19:7-8

⁷ Then the angel of the Lord returned for a second time and touched him. He said, “Get up and eat, or the journey will be too much for you.” ⁸ So he got up, ate, and drank. Then on the strength from that food, he walked forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God.



TAKE THE TRUTHFUL STEP

1 KINGS 19:10, 14

¹⁰ He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of Armies, but the Israelites have abandoned your covenant, torn down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are looking for me to take my life."

TAKE THE TRUTHFUL STEP

1 KINGS 19:10, 14

¹⁴ “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of Armies,” he replied, “but the Israelites have abandoned your covenant, torn down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they’re looking for me to take my life.”



TAKE THE TRUTHFUL STEP

EPHESIANS 6:13-14a

¹³ For this reason take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand. ¹⁴ Stand, therefore, with truth like a belt around your waist . . .



TAKE THE SPIRITUAL STEP

1 KINGS 19:8-9, 11-13

⁸ So he got up, ate, and drank. Then on the strength from that food, he walked forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God. ⁹ He entered a cave there and spent the night. Suddenly, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” . . .

TAKE THE SPIRITUAL STEP

11 Then he said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the LORD’s presence.” At that moment, the LORD passed by. A great and mighty wind was tearing at the mountains and was shattering cliffs before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake.

1 KINGS 19:8-9, 11-13

TAKE THE SPIRITUAL STEP

¹² After the earthquake there was a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire there was a voice, a soft whisper. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Suddenly, a voice came to him and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

1 KINGS 19:8-9, 11-13



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PROVERBS 20:5

Counsel in a person's heart is deep water; but a person of understanding draws it out.



1 KINGS 19:11b, 11c, 12b

... but the LORD was not in the wind.

... but the LORD was not in the earthquake.

... but the LORD was not in the fire ...



TAKE THE TEAMWORK STEP

1 KINGS 19:15-18

¹⁵ Then the LORD said to him, “Go and return by the way you came to the Wilderness of Damascus. When you arrive, you are to anoint Hazael as king over Aram. ¹⁶ You are to anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel and Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel-meholah as prophet in your place.

TAKE THE TEAMWORK STEP

17 Then Jehu will put to death whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death whoever escapes the sword of Jehu. 18 But I will leave seven thousand in Israel—every knee that has not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him.”

1 KINGS 19:15-18



PHILIPPIANS 1:6

I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.



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Practical Help for the Struggling Leader

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OF ENCOURAGEMENT**

**PUT THE RELATIVELY FEW TIMES OF DISCOURAGEMENT
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2. Valley of LONELINESS
3. Valley of DESPAIR
4. Valley of SELF PITY

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1. Take the Physical Step
2. Take the Humble Step
3. Take the Truthful Step
4. Take the Spiritual Step
5. Take the Teamwork Step





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