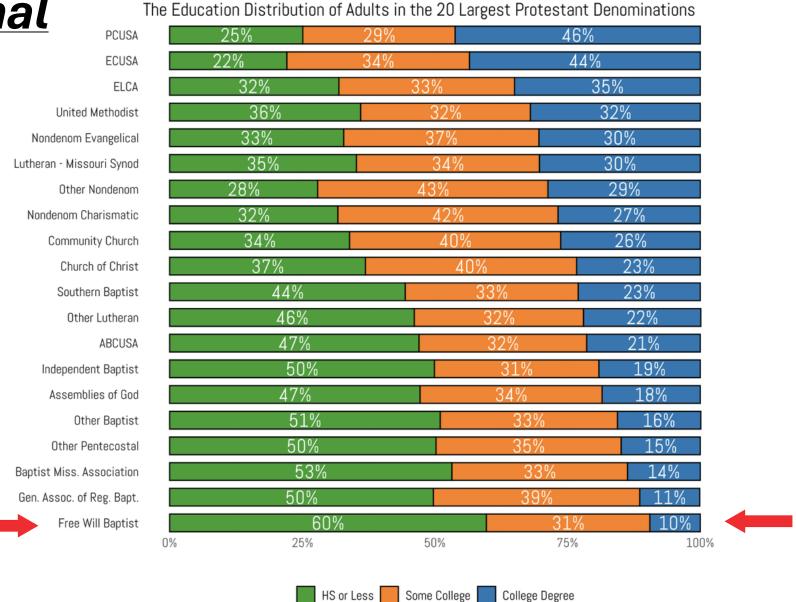
Being a Healthy (Free Will Baptist) Pastor in an Unhealthy World

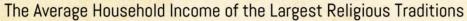
emoody@nafwb.org

What unique challenges do Free Will Baptist pastors face?

Educational



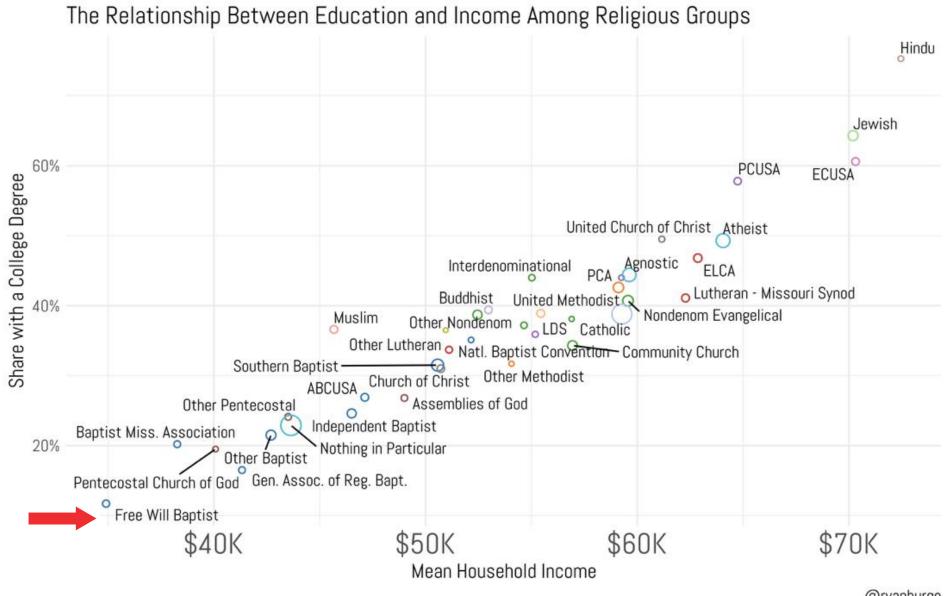
Economical







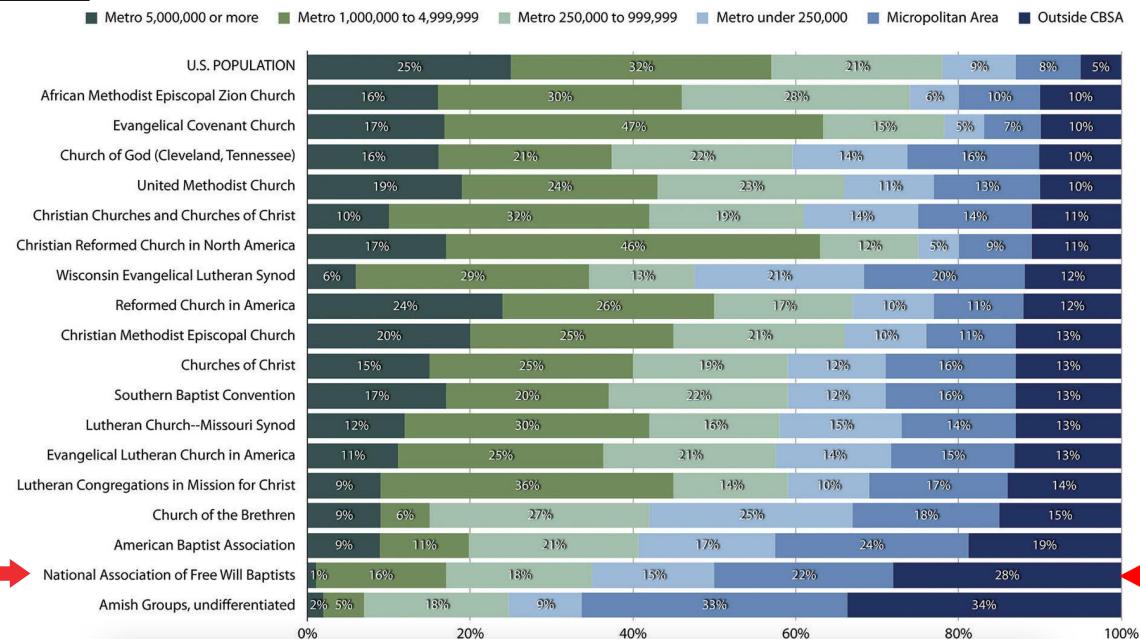
@ryanburge Data: Cooperative Election Study, 2022-2023



@ryanburge Data: Cooperative Election Study, 2022-2023

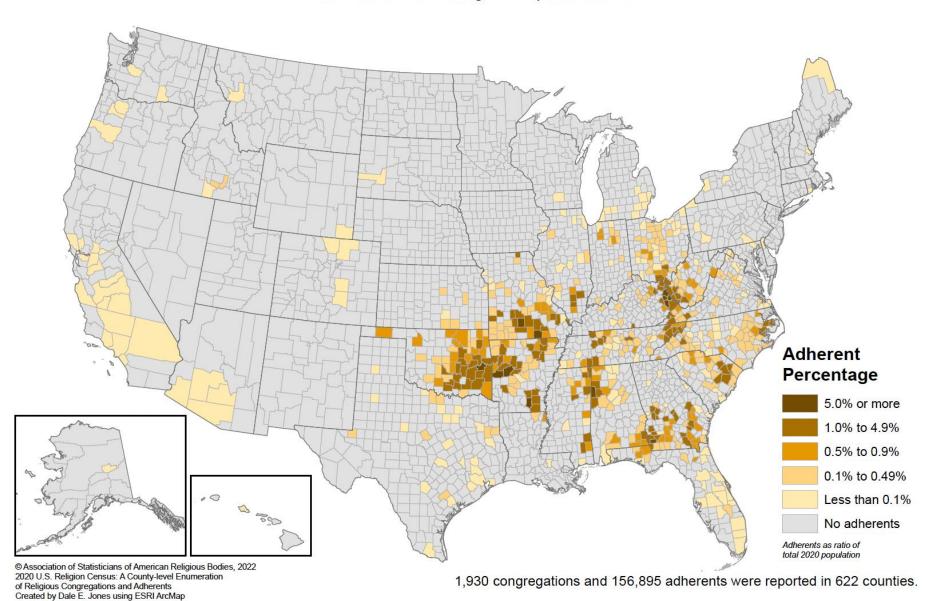


Figure 2: Religious Bodies of at Least 100,000 Adherents that are Concentrated in Rural Areas, 2020



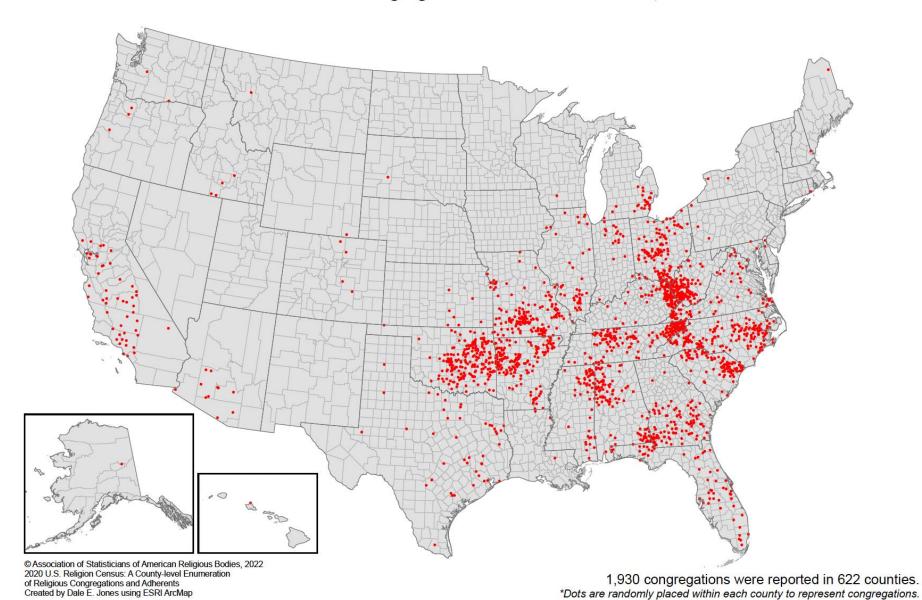
Needy communities

National Association of Free Will Baptists: Adherents as Percentage of Population, 2020



Isolation

National Association of Free Will Baptists: Location* of Congregations in the United States, 2020





Top Ten Challenges Faced by Free Will Baptist Pastors

Challenges ▼	FWB Rank	All Pastors Rank 🔻	FWB Mean 🔻	All Pastors Mean 🔻
Effectively Evangelizing People Who Have Never Visited the Church	1	1	3.37	3.3
Retaining Young Adults	2	3	3.32	3.18
Mobilizing for Evangelism	3	2	3.21	3.27
Finding High Quality Pastoral and Intern Candidates	4	8	3.19	2.94
Recruiting Lay Leaders	5	11	3.17	2.9
Increasing Small Group Participation	6	10	3.16	2.9
Getting Members to Put Their Faith Into Practice	7	4	3.15	2.98
Mobilizing Members for Ministry	8	7	3.11	2.94
Running High Quality Youth Programs	9	6	3.02	2.95
Running High Quality Children's Programs	10	8	3.02	2.91

Smaller churches

Church size: significantly more Free Will Baptist churches were between 51-100 versus 101-200 for other churches.

Shortage of pastors.

Significantly Greater Challenges for Free Will Baptist Pastors

Concern	FWB Pastor Rank	Mean ▼	Probability 🔻
Finding High Quality Pastoral and Intern Candidates	4	3.19	.005
Recruiting Lay Leaders	5	3.17	.000
Increasing Small Group Participation	6	3.16	.000
Getting Church Members to Put their Faith Into Practice	7	3.15	.010
Mobilizing Members for Ministry	8	3.11	.007
Reducing Member Indifference	11	2.98	.017
Meeting the Demands of My Schedule	15	2.89	.033
Managing My Time	17	2.86	.006
Developing Effective Strategy	19	2.80	.009
Promoting Active Participation in Worship	23	2.76	.013
Using Technology Effectively	24	2.76	.052
Creating High Quality Worship Services	28	2.72	.000
Casting a Clear Vision for the Church	31	2.67	.006
Creating Attractive Programs	35	2.61	.016
Resolving Personal Frustrations	43	2.51	.047
Combatting False Doctrine	47	2.46	.007
Staying Connected to God	55	2.35	.003
Maintaining My Mental Health	56	2.34	.043
Making the Gospel Attractive	67	2.15	.0012

What would happen if there were no pastors?

This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth **a good work**.

Pastors Matter

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

Isaiah 52:7

Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off.

Nahum 1:5

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

Romans 10:14-15

What do pastors and fighter pilots have in common?





What concerns do FWB pastors have?

Lessons From the NAFWB Counseling Program Edward E. Moody, Jr., Ph.D.

June 18, 2025



What follows is a synopsis of the counseling program offered through NAFWB. It is hoped that this report will provide clarity to the purpose and impact of the program and result in its continued funding.

Since its inception at the 2022 National Convention in Birmingham, we have surveyed participants once a year. The information that follows is derived from those surveyed as well as from providers of the program. You likely know that Tom Jones, a licensed professional counselor, has conducted most of these services. Other practitioners utilized include two more licensed professional counselors (master's level), a master's level psychologist, two doctoral level licensed professional counselors, a doctoral level biblical counselor, a certified professional mentor, and a psychiatrist.

Concerns	Percentage of Participants
Anxiety	49
Ministry issues	37
Depression	35
Marriage	32
Grief	29
Sexual issues (e.g., pornography, addiction)	8
Trauma	8
Family issues	7 ■ \$
Other	8

 Approximate Age of Participants	Percentage of Participants
Below 11	2
Teens	3
20s	12
30s	26
40s	21
50s	25
60 and above	11



Are Free Will
Baptist
pastors
unusual? *No!*1 Kings 19

Elias was a man subject to <u>like passions</u> as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

James 5:17

The Enemies of the Emotionally Healthy Pastor

Anxiety/Stress

And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there.

1 Kings 19:1-3

• There is too much to do.

"It's not the things in ministry that kill you, it's the things you don't get done. Every night you leave you know that there's another twelve people you should call, another three books you should read, another eight people you need to visit in the hospital."

- There is too much <u>to do</u>.
- There is no real break.

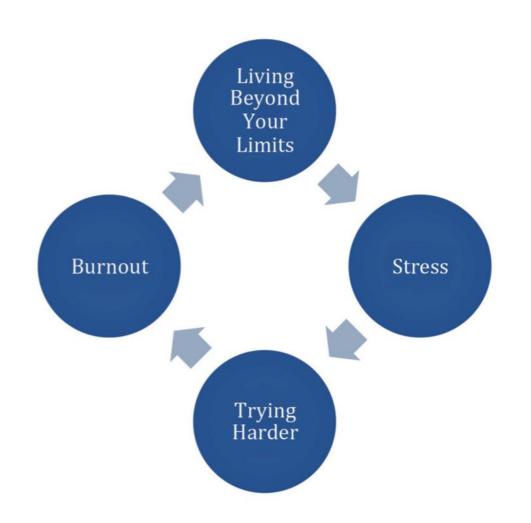
"He has a different schedule . . . he has no personal time. Any time he can be called—it's like he is on call . . . we have a plan to go somewhere then suddenly there's a need to adjust the schedule because there's a conflict ."

- There is too much to do.
- There is no real break.
- There is pressure on the *family*.

"Sometimes he has no more time for us . . . I say, 'Why is it that you don't have time for us? But when it comes to others, you immediately tend to them even if we need you?"

- There is too much to do.
- There is no real break.
- There is pressure on the *family*.
- There are unrealistic *expectations*.

"They have a standard that if you're a pastor's wife, you have to be there to participate in all of their activities."



The Enemies of the Emotionally Healthy Pastor

Anxiety/Stress

Burnout

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

1 Kings 19:4

Too much to do

Too few resources

Too tired to find a way out

The Enemies of the Emotionally Healthy Pastor

Anxiety/Stress Burnout Isolation/Loneliness And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and **left his servant there**.

1 Kings 19:1-3

The Enemies of the Emotionally Healthy Pastor

Anxiety/Stress Burnout Isolation/Loneliness Disappointment and Discouragement

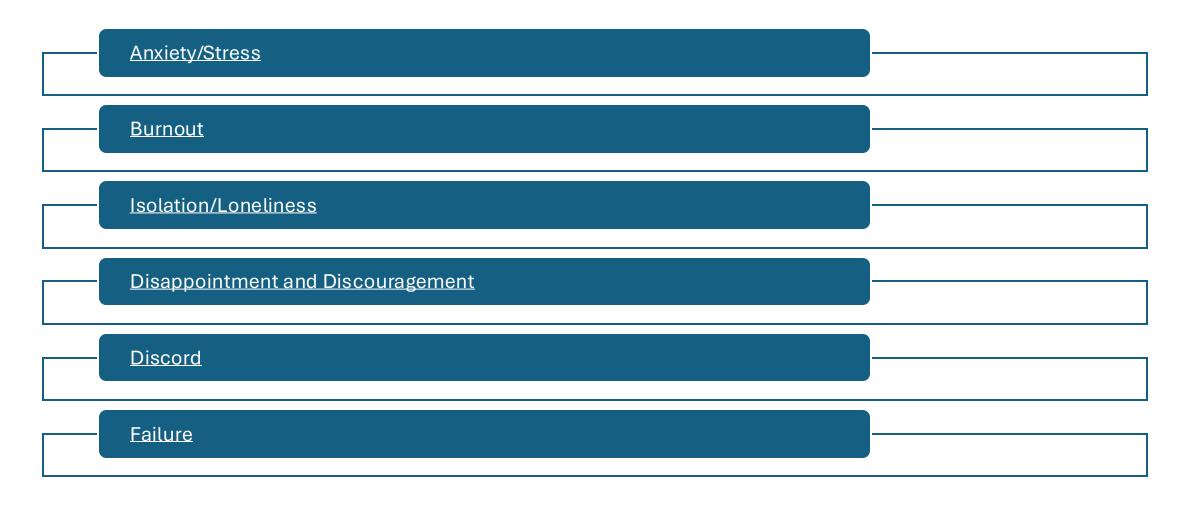
But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

1 Kings 19:4

The Enemies of the Emotionally Healthy Pastor

Anxiety/Stress	
Burnout	
<u>Isolation/Loneliness</u>	
Disappointment and Discouragement	
Discord	

The Enemies of the Emotionally Healthy Pastor



How do we get (or stay) healthy?

Be Intentional

"You got to take the long view with your ministry. You have to make priorities that are simply on top, like raising your own children and loving your own wife is more important than anything else you are doing. So you kind of set those priorities and don't make apologies for it."

Intentionally Take Time for *God*

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

John 15:5

Maintaining Personal Resiliency: Lessons Learned from Evangelical Protestant Clergy

Katheryn Rhoads Meek, Psy.D. ⋈, Mark R. Mcminn, [...], and Dennise D. Villa ↓ Siew all authors and affiliations

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□ Contents Get access Contents Information, rights and permissions

Abstract

Despite the prominence of clergy in providing human services, and the work-related stressors they experience, clergy health and coping responses have rarely been the focus of psychological research. We report two studies. In the first, we evaluated responses of 398 senior pastors to three open-ended questions regarding personal coping, structural support for their work, and remediation efforts in times of distress. In the second study, Christian mental health professionals and Christian education professionals identified Protestant Christian clergy who exemplify emotional and spiritual health. Twenty-six participated in individual 30-minute interviews. Respondents emphasized the importance of being intentional in maintaining balance in life and developing healthy relationships. They also value a vital spiritual life, emphasizing both their sense of calling into ministry the importance of spiritual disciplines, and an ongoing awareness of God's grace. We suggest ways that Christian mental health professionals can support pastors in preventive and remedial roles.

Elijah talked to God.

• 1 Kings 19:4, 10, 14



.....

Devotional Meditation³⁵

- 1. Sit quietly and pray. (2 minutes)
- 2. Read a Scripture passage. (2-5 minutes)
- 3. Answer these questions:
 - a. What is the meaning of this passage? (2 minutes)
 - b. What does this passage mean for me? (2 minutes)
 - c. What does this passage promise? (2 minutes)
 - d. How can I apply this passage to my life today? (2 minutes)
- 4. Pray. (5 minutes)
- 5. Sit quietly and reflect. (5 minutes)

When and where do you pray?

What do you need to be praying about?

Intentionally Take Time for Your Family

"I have a best friend wife . . . We laugh together, we play together, we pray together."

Spending Time With Your Wife Is Not Optional

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her... In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself... However, let each one of you love his wife as himself.

Ephesians 5:25, 28, 33a

Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.

Colossians 3:19

Spending Time With Your Children Is Not Optional

...and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination.

Titus 1:6b

Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

Colossians 3:21

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Ephesians 6:4

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

Proverbs 22:6

Marital and Parental Satisfaction

With Marriage 70% 46%

With Parenting 60% 46%

Intentionally Focus on <u>Others</u>

A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to **hospitality**, apt to teach;

1 Timothy 3:2

Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

John 4:6

So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee? And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.



2 Kings 2:1-12

Elijah Taken Up in a Chariot of Fire by Giuseppe Angeli, c. 1740 And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves.

Exodus 18:25-26

Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

Acts 6:3



Episode 7 of the Band of Brothers, The Breaking Point (at the 0:56:47 mark)

Intentionally Take Time for *Yourself*

When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities.

Matthew 14:13

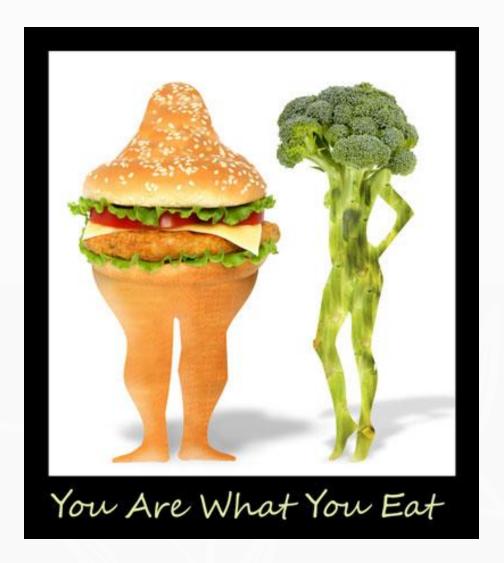
Intentionally focus on your health.

And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, **Arise and eat**.

1 Kings 19:5

And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.

Diet



Focus on Your Sleep

And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep.

Matthew 8:24

The emotionally healthy pastor intentionally focuses on his health.





The emotionally healthy pastor intentionally focuses on his health.







SLEEP



EXERCISE

What works for you?

Run outside	Run on the treadmill	
Bike	Golf	
Hunt	Fish	
Tennis	Garden	
Play a sport	Shoot pool	
Swim	Bowl	

Latin proverb: Solvitur ambulando = It is solved by walking

"When I stop I cease to think; my mind only works with my legs."

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1782, Confessions

Focus on your thinking.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

Philippians 4:8-9

Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

1 Kings 19:18



What percentage of this was my fault?
What can I learn from this situation?

When do I implement the Saul principle?

Why are pastors susceptible to depression?

Feeling Inadequate About Work			
	Frequently	Sometimes	Seldom/Never
Pastors	12%	45%	42%
General Population	08%	22%	70%

"I feel unfulfilled because of a lack of visible results." Disappointed Pastor

O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived; thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me.

Jeremiah 20:7





Doubt

And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

Disappointment



Depression

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

1 Kings 19:4

Focus Your Prayers, the Word, and Your Thinking

When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me.

Psalm 42:4a

"I take it to God in prayer. I don't quarrel with the members."

"What I know is that we're here because of
the Lord. There's nothing else."

And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord.

Isaiah 37:14

Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. Matthew 11:4-5

Ye are of your father **the devil**, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for **he** is a liar, and the father of it.

John 8:44

"Don't let the disappointment in a few sheep keep you from loving the many."

Jeana Floyd

A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

1 Timothy 3:2a

Also take no heed unto all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee.

Ecclesiastes 7:21

Focus on Your Call and Mission

Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

Jeremiah 1:5

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.

Mourn and Move On

And the Lord said unto Samuel, **How long wilt** thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons. 1 Samuel 16:1

Expect Complaining

And the people **murmured** against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? Exodus 15:24

And the people thirsted there for water; and the people **murmured** against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? Exodus 17:3

And the whole congregation of the children of Israel **murmured** against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:

Exodus 16:2

And all the children of Israel **murmured** against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!

Numbers 14:2

Notwithstanding ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God: And ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the Lord hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. Deuteronomy 1:26-27

Expect Opposition

For **Demas hath forsaken me**, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

2 Timothy 4:10

For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.

Proverbs 4:16

They also that seek after my life lay snares for me: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long.

Psalm 38:12

A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that **soweth discord** among brethren.

Proverbs 6:19

When criticized, ask yourself . . .

Is it warranted?

Is it legitimate?

Is it loyal?

Is it vindictive?

Does an action need to be taken?

Be on the Lookout for Clergy Killers

And **Saul eyed David** from that day and forward. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: and there was a javelin in Saul's hand. And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall with it. And David avoided out of his presence twice.

1 Samuel 18:9-11

"The only thing required for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

Edmund Burke

You know they crucified Jesus and He was perfect.

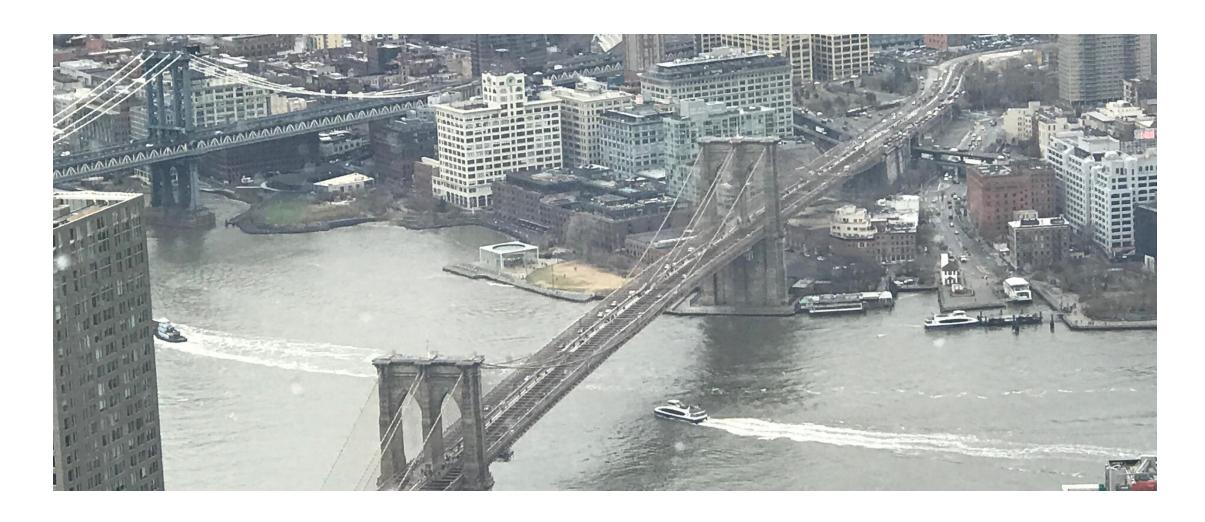
J. P. Seley

Don't Let Bitterness Overtake You

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

Proverbs 4:23-27

Anything worthwhile will face opposition.



When criticized, ask yourself . . .

Is it warranted?

Is it legitimate?

Is it loyal?

Is it vindictive?

Does an action need to be taken?

Confront and Deal with Sin

For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

Titus 1:10-11



Who can you talk to?

Friends	_ Your wife
---------	-------------

___ Other pastors ___ Deacons/Elders

___ Extended family ___ Counselor

___ Denominational official ___ Other

Findings from the Latest Survey

- 100% indicated the program had been helpful.
- 93% indicated the program had been very or extremely helpful.
- 94% said they were likely to refer the program to another pastor.
- 85% indicated they had referred another pastor to the program.
- 37% of the participants learned of the program from another pastor.

Retention

The Refresh Counseling Program has helped pastors, their wives, and staff members continue in the ministry who may have otherwise walked away.

This program has been **a life and ministry saver**. As a young minister, I believe I would have quit the ministry by now if it wasn't for someone to talk to....

Helped save my ministry. I thought my ministry was over.

God has used this ministry to bring victory in my life that otherwise I fear could have been the **demise of my pastoral ministry** or worse my marriage.

If it wasn't for this program, I very much doubt I would **still be in ministry** today.

I don't know where I would be, if I did not have this resource available to me.

When I believed the enemy had finally won in my life and ministry, this program showed me that the grace of God was so much deeper and so much more powerful.

Intentionally Stay on <u>Offense</u>

But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

Genesis 50:20

Focus on your actions.

Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

Philippians 4:9



Problem •1 Kings 19:2

Solution •1 Kings 19:15-18

Action •1 Kings 19:19

Intentionally Use Your <u>Time</u>

Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Ephesians 5:16

Continuing Educational Opportunities

NAFWB Convention Leadership Conference D6 Conference

Welch Forum

Local Associations

Boot Camps

The Shepherding Initiative

We first make our habits, and then our habits make us. John Dryden

"It is a sin to be good if God has called you to be great."

Thom Rainer

Energized by Work

Frequently Sometimes Seldom/Never

Pastors 60% 37% 4%

General Population 24% 38% 38%

"We pastors need to know that we are part of something bigger than ourselves and that we, together, are called to a great destiny—we need leaders who are themselves passionate about the mission of our church and then personally, enthusiastically communicate that mission to us."

Free Will Baptists are also among the youngest. This obviously has a tremendous impact on whether a congregation fills up its nursery every Sunday during worship.

In an era where many denominations are known for their controversies and in-fighting, here is a story of a denomination that quietly and methodically demonstrates obedience to the gospel in a positive light for the world to see.

Thom Rainer about the NAFWB

SETTER TOGETHER - NAFWB - GOOX

BLESS YOUR NEIGHBOR

DAY OF PRAYER 2025

NOV.4

NAFWB



THREE REACH FORTRAIN 30 GIVE

NAFWB.ORG/3FOR30



RESOURCES

SOCIAL MEDIA | PODCASTS
CHURCH TOOLS | PRINT RESOURCES



NAFWB.ORG/RESOURCES





NAFWB.ORG/ NEWS Sign up for the free bi-weekly email newsletter from the Executive Office.



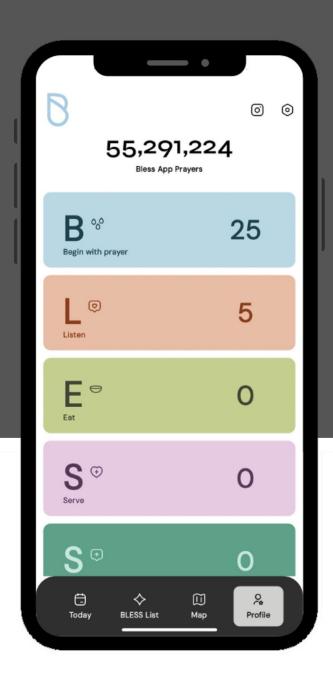
HOW WELL DO YOU REALLY KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS?





NAFWB.ORG/KNOW









NAFWB.ORG/ BLESS

PRAY | LISTEN | EAT | SERVE | STORY

HOPE INITIATIVE

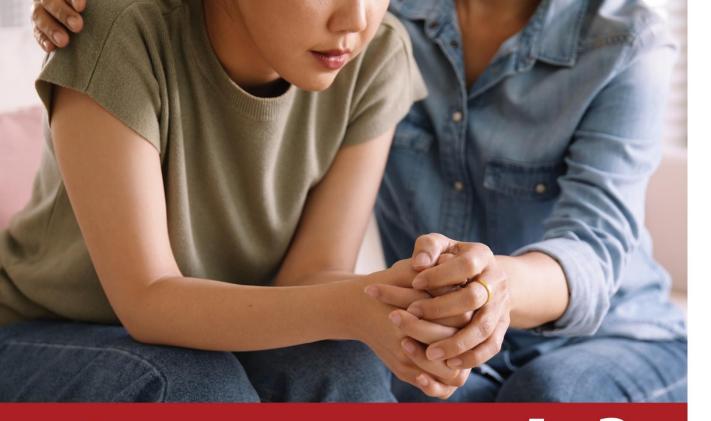
A SIMPLE, BUT NOT SIMPLISTIC, APPROACH TO IMPACTING YOUR COMMUNITY EFFECTIVELY WITH THE GOSPEL

partnering with CHURCH ANSWERS



NAFWB.ORG/

HOPE



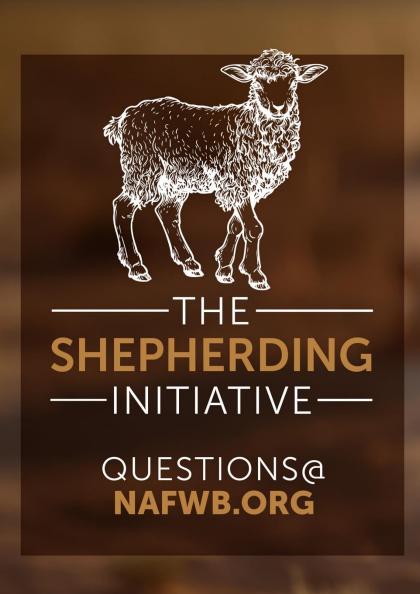
Are you ready?

Don't let your fear of not knowing what to do keep you from helping someone!





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FOR THE MOMENTS YOU NEED IT MOST QUESTIONS@NAFWB.ORG



DOING MORE TOGETHER

The Free Will Baptist Endowment

is designed to provide lasting financial resources to all denominational ministries and agencies. Learn more today:











2025 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE DECEMBER 8-9 | NASHVILLE, TN

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