

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and the Bible

***“Now that you’ve got it,
what do you do with it?”***

Bob Blouin

**POLISHING THE
PULPIT**

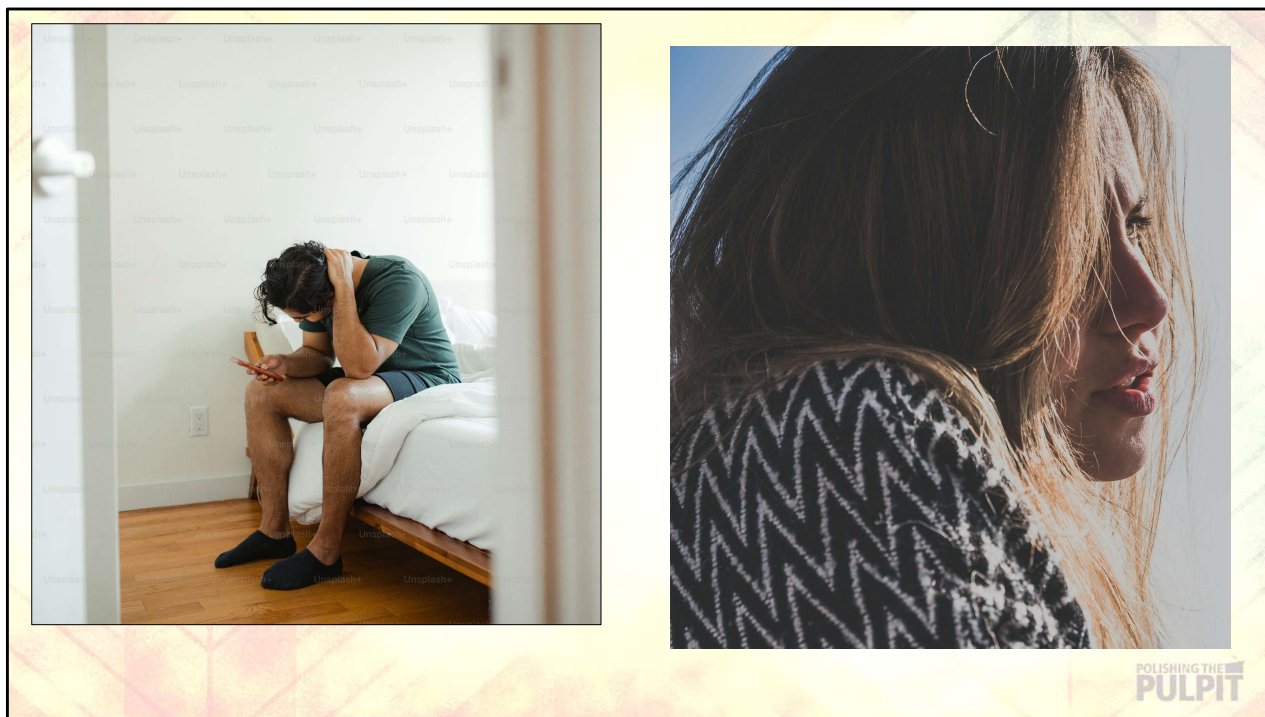
My name is Bob Blouin

I am an elder in the church at Tilton, NH

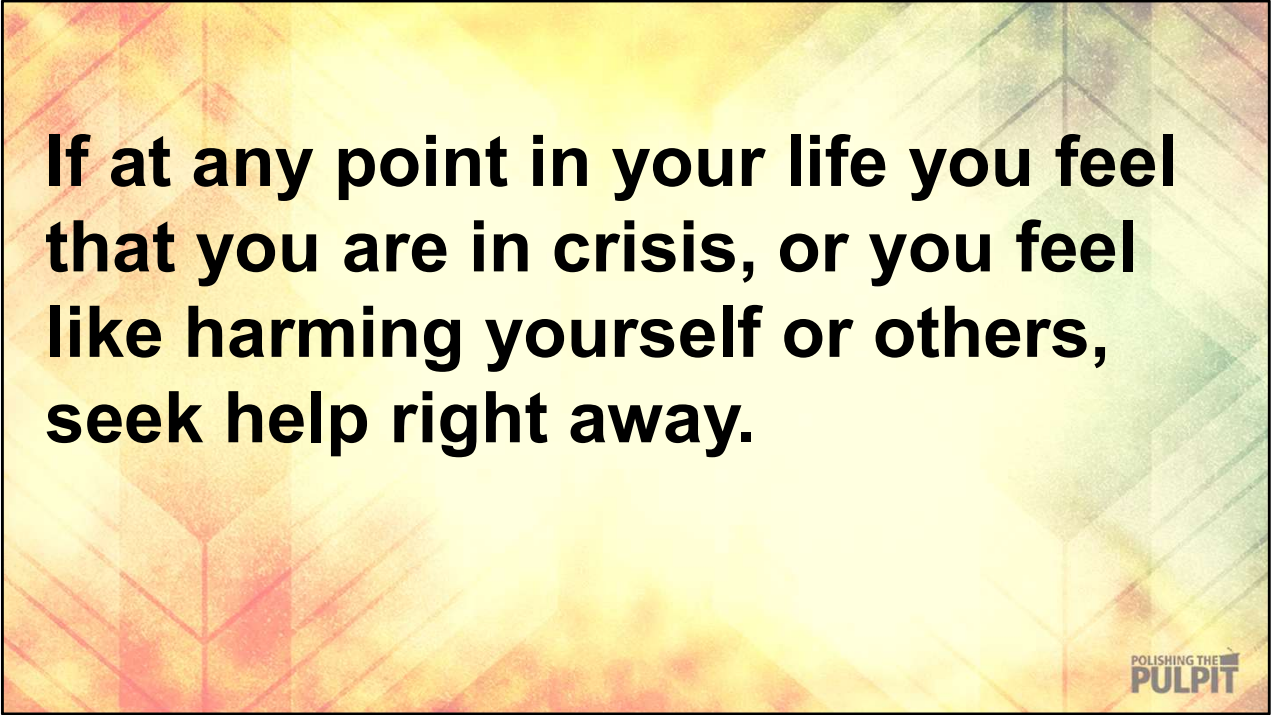
I am a retired SGM, having served 37 years in the Army

PTSD

Now that you’ve got it, what do you do with it?



I am neither a doctor nor a licensed professional.
But it doesn't take a degree to realize that PTSD is real.
Just as the sun rises and sets on the just and the unjust alike,
PTSD affects people of all walks of life.



If at any point in your life you feel that you are in crisis, or you feel like harming yourself or others, seek help right away.

Buddy Check

If at any point in your life you feel that you are in crisis,
or you feel like harming yourself or others,
Tell someone and seek help right away.

There's help out there

- **Christian Counselor**
- **Your elders**
- **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**
- **Crisis Text Line: "HOME" to 741-741**
- **911 (Crisis or emergency)**

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Resources for help:

- Pray
- Christian Counselor (Kee Ford, GBN Podcast "*MakeitPlainHab22@gmail.com*")
- Your elders
- National Suicide Prevention helpline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Crisis Text Line: Text "HOME" to 741-741
(National Alliance on Mental Illness)
- 911 if you are in crisis or emergency

To the one struggling with PTSD, let me say:

We're here for you.

Everyone in this room cares for you!

Take a moment

- **Pray**
- **Relax**
- **Stop clenching your jaw**
- **Let your shoulders down**
- **You're going to be just fine**
- **Breathe!**

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Let's take a moment for some relaxation methods

1. Again, pray.
2. Relax.
3. Stop clenching your jaw and take your tongue off the roof of your mouth.
4. Let your shoulders down.
5. You're going to be just fine. We're all family here.
6. Now BREATHE! (4x4) Think of your exhale as stress leaving the mind!

1. Now that you have it, what do you do with it?

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Now that you have it, what do you do with it?

You go to God in prayer, asking Him to stop the enemy at the gates of your mind.

Understand that God expects you to do your part towards betterment.

First of all, it's ok

It's OK if you fall apart sometimes.

Tacos fall apart all the time

And we still love them!

PTS is a normal reaction to an abnormal event

It's how our mind handles traumatic stress and anxiety.

Back to the Beginning

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

And God created man in His own image.

And behold, it was very good.

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Let's go back to the beginning: Genesis 1

v.1 Heavens & earth created by God

v.27 We are created by God.

v.31 And behold, it was very good.

Who are we to say that God no longer loves the one with PTS?

There is hope in Him who saves!

Identify Anniversaries & Triggers (Mil)

Calendar dates

Seasonal changes

Heavy rain, blowing sand/snow

Burning trash, newly laid tar

Fireworks

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Identify Anniversaries & Triggers (Military)

- A significant calendar date (The 9-11 attacks; 28 Mar; 1 May; etc.)
- Seasonal change (New winter is deployment season)
- Weather (Rain in Vietnam, sand/snow blowing across road in Iraq)
- Burning trash; hot bituminous smells like raw oil
- Fireworks = Firefight

Identify Anniversaries & Triggers (Civ)

Calendar dates

Heavy rain, blowing snow

Burnt toast / popcorn

Shots fired

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Identify Anniversaries & Triggers (Civilian)

- Just one year ago an attacker broke into your apartment
- It was a cold, rainy day.
- You burned the toast; your mom beat you senselessly and told you you're pathetic.
- A balloon pops near you and you remember the day your best friend was shot dead.



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Start with a new, blank page.
It's your story.
Write it the way you want it to come out.
Write it with your name in the Book of Life.

Let's try this again

Improvise: Take that lemon and make lemonade!

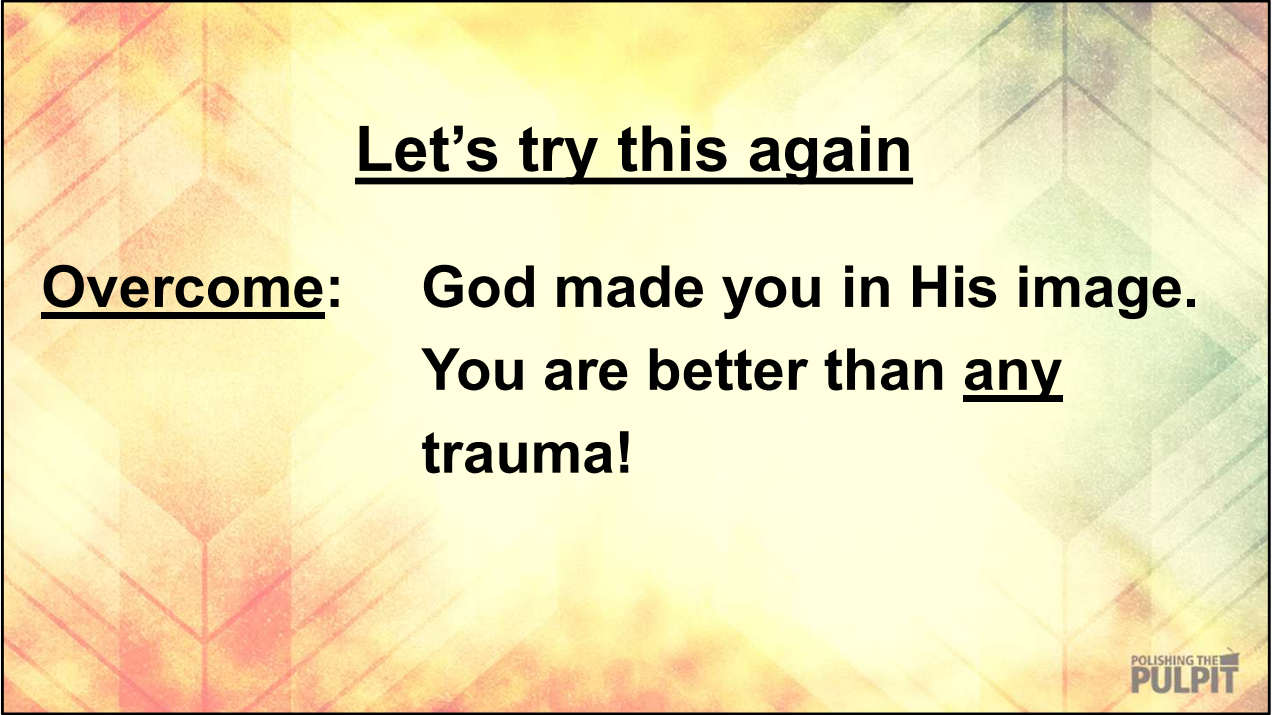
Adapt: Accept that these times come and go

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To quote Clint Eastwood's character (Gunny Highway) in the movie "Heartbreak Ridge"

Improvise: What can you do to react rationally to reminders of the traumatic events?

Adapt: Accept that these times come and go.
It becomes the new baseline, or the "New Normal."



Let's try this again

Overcome: God made you in His image.
You are better than any
trauma!

Overcome:

God made you in His image.

You are better than any trauma.

With God's guidance, you can work yourself through these times.

Let others help you.



How much junk do you think you can keep in the duffel bag of your mind before it explodes at the seams?

What do you have hiding in there that is fighting to get out?

Let's change our thinking.

Let's deal with our emotions.



Get off those depressing websites!

Get them out of your head!

News Media / Social Media

Fox / Breitbart

WSJ / Instagram

NYT / CNBC

Huffington Post / WaPo

NBC / X

New York Post / Facebook

MSNBC / LA Times

Yahoo / Al Jazeera

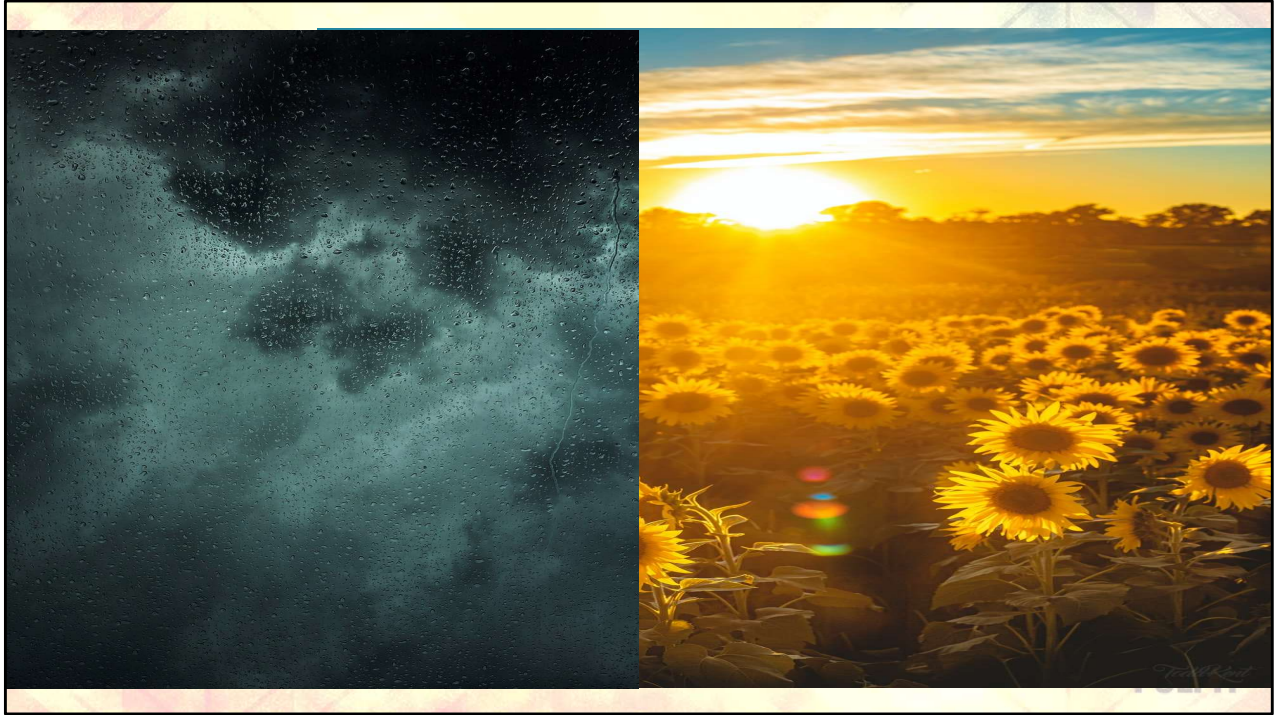
ABC / CNN

CBS



Get on some edifying websites!

1. PTP365 (Polishing the Pulpit 365)
2. House to House
3. GBN (Gospel Broadcasting Network)
4. Apologetics Press
5. World Video Bible School
6. Bible Land Passages



Is that all you see, a rain cloud?
Is not life more than that?
Consider that the rain falls on the just and the unjust!

So does the sunshine which is but temporarily blocked by the clouds.
When things look down, look up and smell the flowers.
They've been there the whole time!

2. TIME OUT



American football referee gestures "time out" silhouette stock photo – Image of American, football:41956546(dreamstime.com)

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1. Take a time out for yourself.
2. Consider ways to overcome this pressure of the PTS injury.

Put it in Proper Perspective

- a. Is it a mountain? (or just a mole hill)
- b. Poor perceptions and preconceptions
 - 1) Consider all the evidence
 - 2) Pause to let it sink in
 - 3) Does it make sense?
 - 4) Is it helpful or hurtful?

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a¹. Do you over or hyper-generalize? How's that working for you?

a². Are your worries and fears really a **mountain** of trouble?

a³. Or are they just a **mole hill** that can be easily eradicated?

b¹. Ill-informed perceptions and misguided preconceptions are little **Truth Thieves**.

b². Reacting to only bits of information can cause fear

- 1) Firstly, consider all the evidence
- 2) Secondly, pause to let it sink in
- 3) Thirdly, ask yourself: Does it make any sense?
- 4) If it does:
 - Is it helpful information?
 - Is it hurtful, only causing more fear?

Put it in Proper Perspective

If it does not make any sense

- **Let it go**
- **Move on to good things that you can control**

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If it does not make any sense:

- Let it go
- Move on to good things that you can control

Take time for self care

- a. Move to a safe, quiet space.**
 - b. Breathe deeply. Notice the in/exhale.**
 - c. Observe something in the room.**
 - d. Think on Isaiah 41:10, 2 Thess. 3:3**
- “He will strengthen and protect you”**

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Take time for self care

You are safe in the protection of Christ.

- a. Move to a safe, quiet space. (1 Cor 10:13)
- b. Breathe deeply. Notice your breath upon inhale and exhale.
- c. Look at something in the room. Observe it and “see it.”
- d. Think on this verse:

Isaiah 41:10

“Fear not, for I am with you;

Be not dismayed, for I am your God.

I will strengthen you,

Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”

2 Thess 3:3

“But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one.”

(NASB)

Memories of the tragedy are just that

- a. Plan daily meditation in God's word.
- b. Reflect on things that bring calming.
- c. Right now, it's just you and your Creator.
- d. Think on Philippians 4:6-7 "*Peace of God will guard your heart & mind*"

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Memories of the tragedy are just that: *Memories*.

Make time for Contemplation – Meditation – Reflection

1. Pray
2. Plan routine, daily meditation in God's word.
3. Reflect for 5 minutes on things that you find calming
4. Right now, in these 5 minutes, there is no trauma, just you and God

Think on this verse:

Philippians 4:6-7

"6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Get Moving!

- a. Get your doctor's OK.**
- b. Search out a Yoga class or Tai Chi session.**
- c. Get outside: Sit, walk, listen, see and smell.**
- d. You are of value to God (Luke 12:24-25)**

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Get Moving!

- a. See your doctor for clearance to participate in activities
- b. Search out a Yoga or Tai Chi class (even online and seated classes are available)
- c. Take ten minutes outside. There is so much to hear, see, and smell in creation!

Think on these verses:

Luke 12:24-25

24 Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them.

Of how much more value are you than the birds?

25 And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

(And which of you by worrying can add one single hour to his life's span? NASB)

Don't Worry (Be Happy)

Happy People

Happiness Hormones

Happy Soul

Happy Light

John 15:11-12

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Don't Worry, Be Happy (1988, Bobby McFerrin)

Surround yourself with goodness

Happiness Hormones: Dopamine, Serotonin, Endorphins and Oxytocin

- Hug a loved one
- Exercise
- Try light therapy (sunshine) or aromatherapy (diffuser)
- Listen to or sing your favorite hymns
- Watch PTP365 videos
- Meditate on God's Word
- Spend time outdoors
- Take a nap
- Watch a comedy (Family friendly, G-rated)

Think on these verses

John 15:11-12

11 "These things I have spoken to you, that My **joy** may remain in you, and that your **joy** may be full.

12 This is My commandment, that you **love** one another as I have **loved** you."



Do you leave space in your head for whatever intrusive thought comes along?

“Then (the unclean spirit) goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there.” (Luke 11:24-26)

Or do you reject the negative thoughts, focusing on the here and now.

“Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.” (Matt 6:34, ESV)



Instead, get out there!
Let's go to the ocean.
Listen to and observe the waves.



Go outside!

Walk along or drive along a forest path or road.

Go to a park.

Hear the birds and feel the breeze.

One of my favorite places for peace is the mountains

Perhaps reading an adventure novel is your happy place

Treat yourself to a warm drink, or maybe water with lemon.

Give yourself permission to be comforted by a dog; it releases oxytocin

3. What Does God Have To Say About All This?

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What does God have to say about all of this?

Anxiety and Depression

- **Old Testament**
- **New Testament**

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Let's look at just a few examples from the Old and New Testaments of brethren who endured (or didn't) their own conflicts.

Old Testament

Job: Endured sorrow Job 1 & 42

Saul: Doubt & jealousy 1 Samuel 13-18

David: In a mess 2 Samuel 11-12

Elijah: Despaired 1 Kings 19

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Job: Suffered physical, material, social and emotional depression

Saul: Hardened his heart so that God gave him over to a debased mind

David: Depressed (committed adultery, had a husband killed, and suffered the death of his baby).

Elijah: Ran for his life away from Jezebel, hiding out in the wilderness

New Testament

Jesus: Drops of blood Luke 22:39

Peter: Denied deity Luke 22:54-62

Judas: Dejected Matthew 27:1-5

Paul: Discouraged 2 Corinthians 11-12

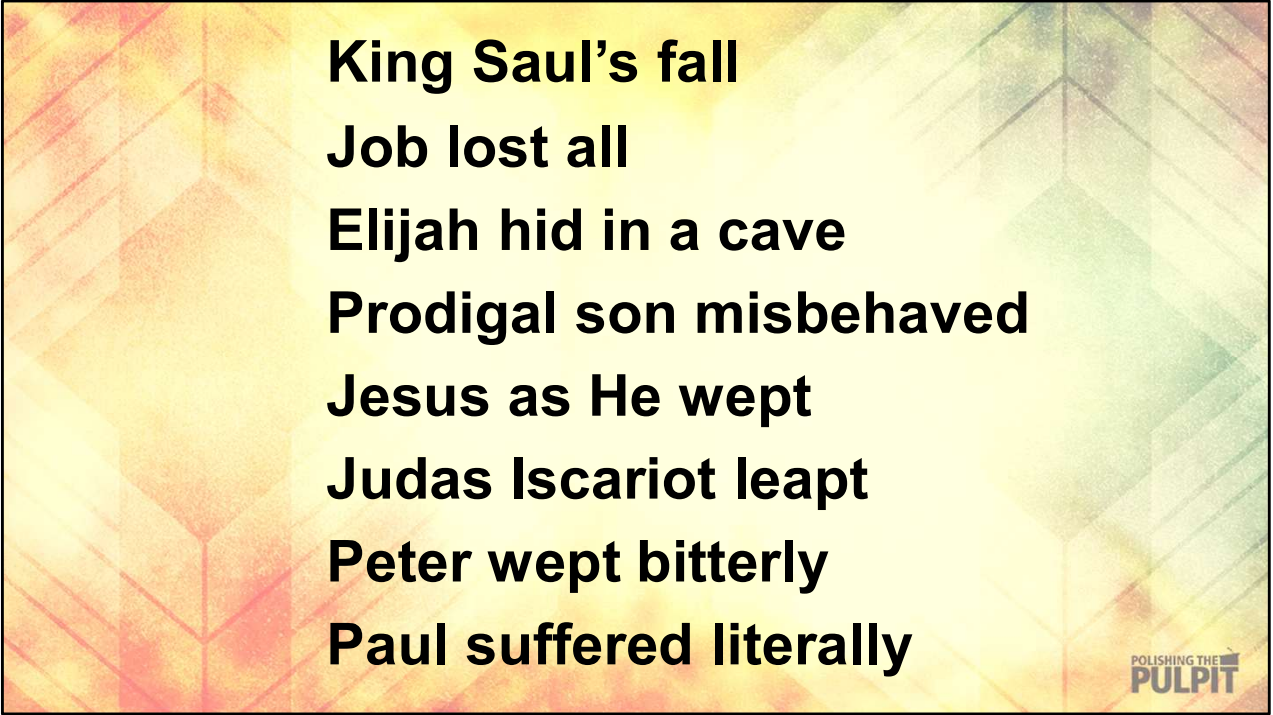
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Christ: So distressed that He sweat drops of blood

Peter: So disturbed because he had denied the Christ, that he wept bitterly

Judas: So distraught over his decision to “rat out” the Savior, that he hanged himself

Paul: So discouraged over the erring brethren, that he was compelled to tell them what real struggles are



**King Saul's fall
Job lost all
Elijah hid in a cave
Prodigal son misbehaved
Jesus as He wept
Judas Iscariot leapt
Peter wept bitterly
Paul suffered literally**

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Put it all together and you have:

King Saul's fall
Job lost all
Elijah hid in a cave
Prodigal son misbehaved
Jesus as He wept
Judas Iscariot leapt
Peter wept bitterly
Paul suffered literally

More than Conquerors

- 1. Focus on the facts**
- 2. Don't major in minors**
- 3. Don't commiserate or persevere**
- 4. It's not always about you**

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More than Conquerors

- 1. Focus on the facts:**
 - a. Rationalize truth and focus on the positive; count your blessings.
- 2. Don't major in minors:**
 - a. Don't sweat the small stuff.
 - b. Work on that which is within your control.
- 3. Don't commiserate or persevere**
 - a. Surround yourself with "**positive**" people. No pity parties, i.e.:
 - i. "I'm not good enough."
 - ii. "Everybody can see I'm always a wreck."
 - iii. I want to be better NOW!
- 4. It's not always about you**
 - a. Stop being "offended" by everything
 - b. You may not realize it, but someone else needs you

More than Conquerors

5. Please the Creator, not the creature

6. No magic pills, just honest effort

7. Be content where you are right now

Hebrews 4:14-16

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More than Conquerors (cont.)

5. Please the Creator, not the creature.

- a. You can please some always, all sometimes, but not everybody all the time, (still others, never).

6. No magic pills, just honest effort.

- a. Put determination into the recovery effort. You “can do all things through Christ! (Him)” (Phil 4:13)

7. Be content where you are right now.

- a. Enjoy your successes along the path towards peace and happiness.
 - 1. Celebrate the good times
 - 2. Pray during difficult times

Hebrews 4:14-16

14 We have Jesus, the Son of God, our High Priest.

15 Tempted and tried, yet without sin, He knows our every weakness.

16 We may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

More than Conquerors

**If God is for us, who can be against us?
Who shall separate us from the love of
Christ?**

Romans 8:31, 35

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**Think on these verses:*

More than Conquerors (cont.)

Romans 8:31

What shall we say then to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

Romans 8:35

v.35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

More than Conquerors

Yet in all these things, we are more than conquerors, (nothing) will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:37 thru 39

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More than Conquerors (cont.)

Romans 8:37-39 (ESV)

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,

³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Faith – Hope – Love

**“Greater love has no one than this,
Than to lay down one's life for his
friends.”**

John 15:13

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1 Corinthians 13:13

“But now abide faith, hope, love, these three;
But the greatest of these is love.”

John 15:13 (ASV)

“Greater love hath no man than this,
that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

We are in this together!

Comfort in the Word

God of all comfort

Comforts in our affliction

Comforted abundantly in Christ

2 Corinthians 1:3, 4, 5

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2 Corinthians 1:3-5 (ESV)

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,

4 who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

5 For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.

Peace will be with you

Whatever things are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things...these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

Philippians 4:8-9

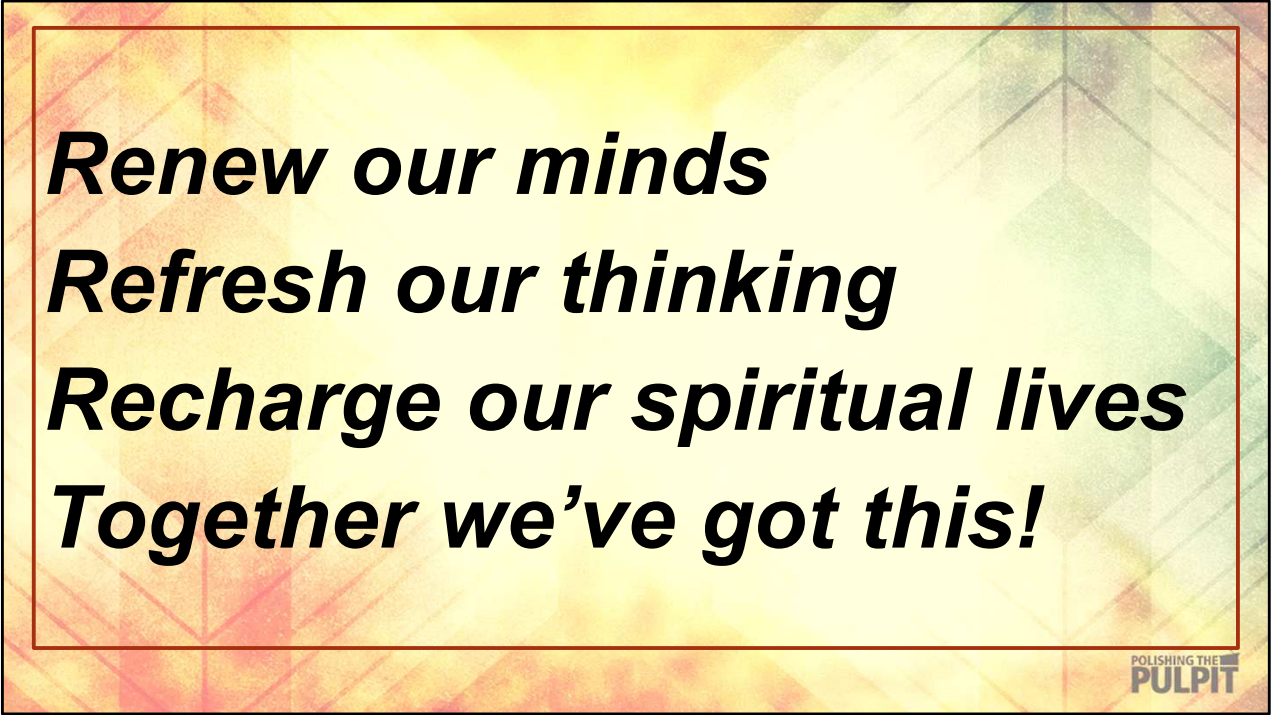
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Peace will be with you

Philippians 4:8-9

v.8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things.

v.9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.



Renew our minds
Refresh our thinking
Recharge our spiritual lives
Together we've got this!

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Now then let us:

Renew our minds

Refresh our thinking

Recharge our spiritual lives

Together we've got this!



(Garden of Gethsemane)

When you feel like you are all alone in the world,
If you feel like all your friends have abandoned you,
Consider the loneliness Christ must have felt in the Garden.
Then consider, He showed us how to overcome:

- 1) Our worries
- 2) Our fears
- 3) Our depressive mood
- 4) Our anxieties
- 5) Our PTSD

Genesis 3:15

But He (Christ) shall bruise (crush) your (Satan's) head!

To the PTSD sufferer:

Please reach out to let someone help

To all of us:

It is my prayer that you have a better understanding of the mind of the PTSD sufferer.
Please, let them know they are not alone.