

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and the Bible

Slaying the Dragons Within

Bob Blouin

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By way of reminder:

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

Today I would like to talk about
PTSD and the Bible

This session is intended to aid those who suffer with PTSD and those who may know one who suffers.

1. What is PTSD?

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| ○ Post | (Subsequent) |
| ○ Traumatic | (Painful, disturbing) |
| ○ Stress | (Intense tension) |
| ○ Disorder | (Injury, condition) |

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What is PTSD

Post: Subsequent, resulting from

Traumatic: Painful, extremely disturbing

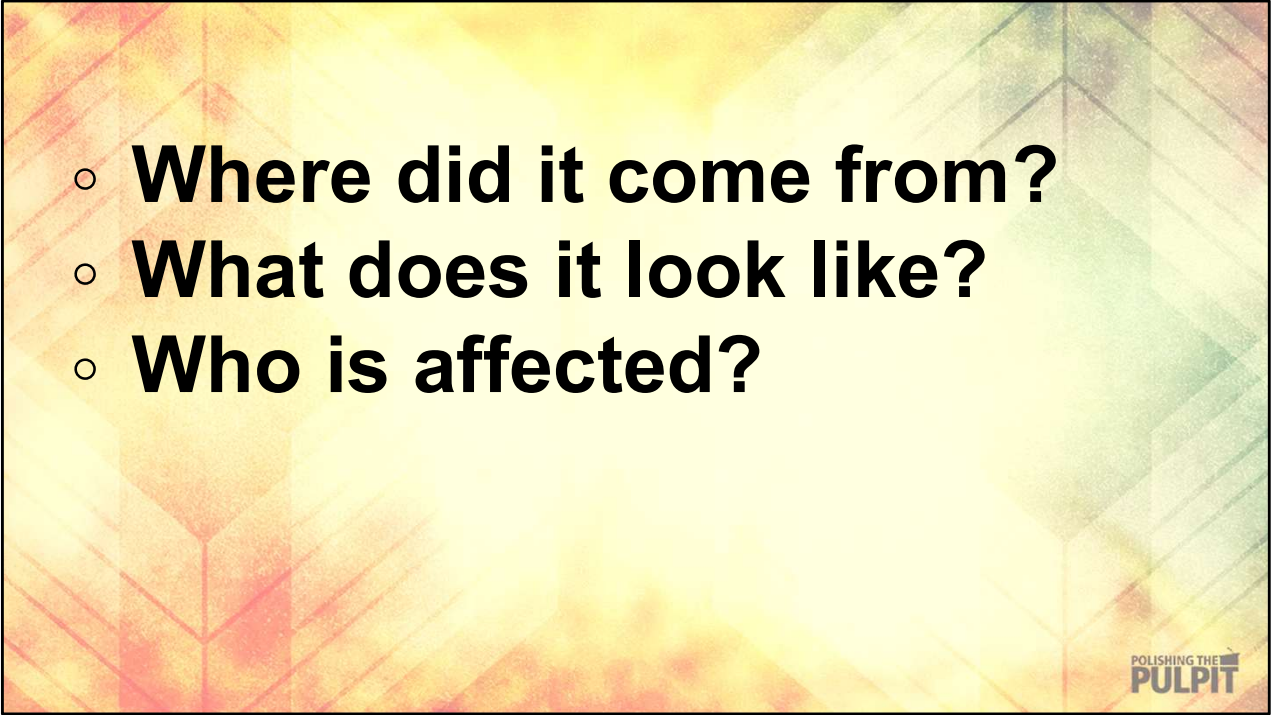
Stress: Intensely overwhelming tension

Disorder: Injury, condition

- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that's triggered by a terrifying event — either experiencing it or witnessing it.
- Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares, and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event.
- Most people who go through traumatic events may have temporary difficulty adjusting and coping, but with time and good self-care, they usually get better.
- If the symptoms get worse, last for months, or even years, and interfere with your day-to-day functioning, you may have PTSD.

([Post-traumatic stress disorder \(PTSD\) - Symptoms and causes - Mayo Clinic](https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20355967))

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- 
- **Where did it come from?**
 - **What does it look like?**
 - **Who is affected?**

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Events that may bring on PTSD

Violence of war:

Rice paddy in Vietnam
Al Sareen, Iraq

Tragedy in the workplace:

Fire in the stairwell
Police and Paramedics at crime scene

Manifestations of PTSD:

Anger & Frustration:

Brought on by childhood events, i.e.:
“You’re pathetic! You never do anything right!”

This is a normal reaction to an abnormal event.

Who are they?:

They sit in our assemblies or lead the congregation in prayer.
They’re our friends, a coworker, a relative.
They’re the kid next door or a waitress at the restaurant.

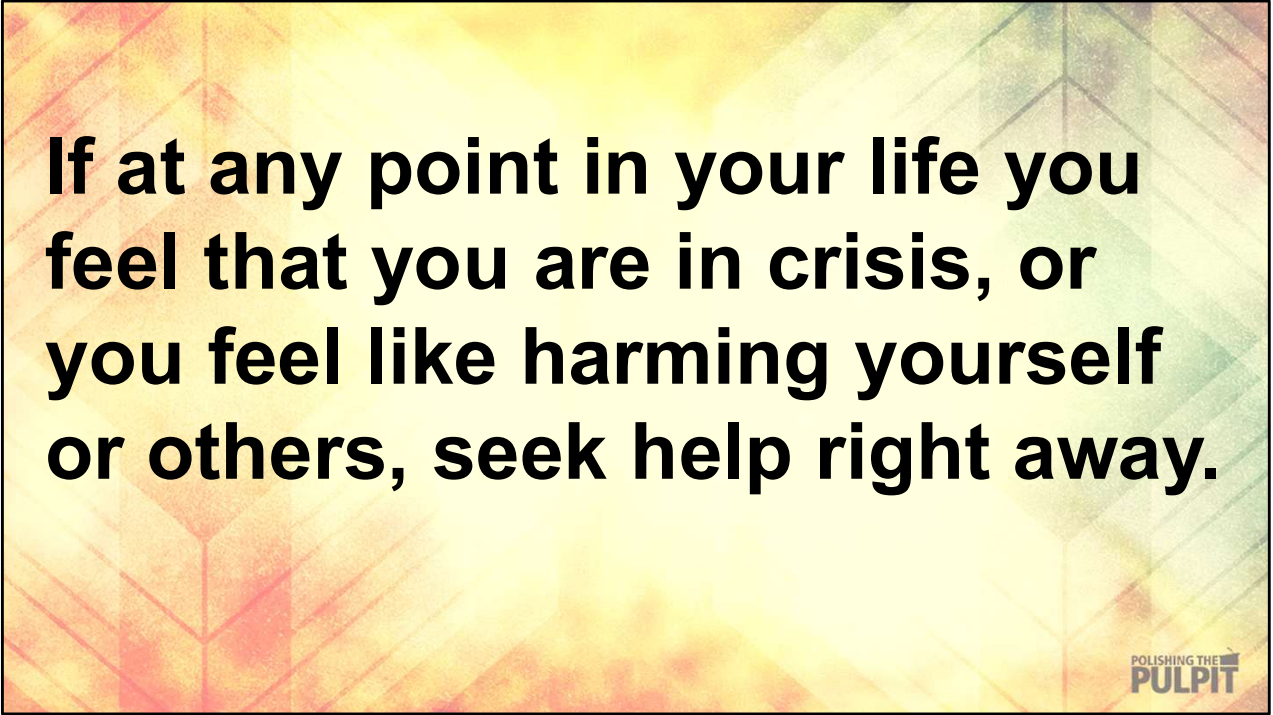
How to recognize PTSD and how to manage it is what I want to look at for the next few minutes.

Just so you know...

I am neither a doctor nor a therapist.

Nor do I play one on T.V.

I am just an elder in the church desiring to help others “*press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*” (Phil 3:14)



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.

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.

Perhaps professional counseling, or doctor prescribed medications would benefit you.
That's OK.

Resources for help

- **Christian Counselor**
- **Your elders**
- **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**
- **Crisis Text Line: “HOME” to 741741**
- **911 (Crisis or emergency)**

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To the one struggling with PTSD, let me say: **We're here for you.**
Everyone in this room cares for you!

Resources for help:

- Pray
- Christian Counselor (Kee Ford, GBN
Podcast "MakeitPlainHab22@gmail.com")
- Your elders
- National Suicide Prevention helpline:
1-800-273-TALK (8255); Text 988
- Crisis Text Line: Text "HOME" to 741741
- 911 if you are in crisis or emergency

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!
(also 4-7-8 or 4-8-8)

Think on this verse:

Psalm 73:26

*"My flesh and my heart faileth,
But God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever."*

My mind, and subsequently my body, are injured
God is the "rock", or strength in which I may recover
He is my "inheritance" or portion forever



One day, everything's fine.
The next day your world seems to come crushing down on you.
Ask yourself: "How are you, really?"

Statistics

***NIMH:**

19-21% (40 mill.) U.S. adults agonize with anxiety

8-10% (20 mill.) U.S. adults deal with depression

3.5-5% (13 mill.) U.S. adults affected by PTSD

***Veterans Administration**

15% of OIF/OEF veterans suffer PTSD

***SAMHSA.gov** (Substance Abuse & Mental Health Svs. Admin)

30% of First Responders suffer PTSD

***National Center for PTSD**

6% (20.5 mill.) of U.S. adults in any given year

In His Service

How many of us are First Responders, police, fire, medical, military?

Anyone can suffer a traumatic stress event:

Our members

Our teachers

Our preachers

Our deacons

Our elders

PTSD

Onset: Actual or threatened trauma

Impact: May occur directly or indirectly

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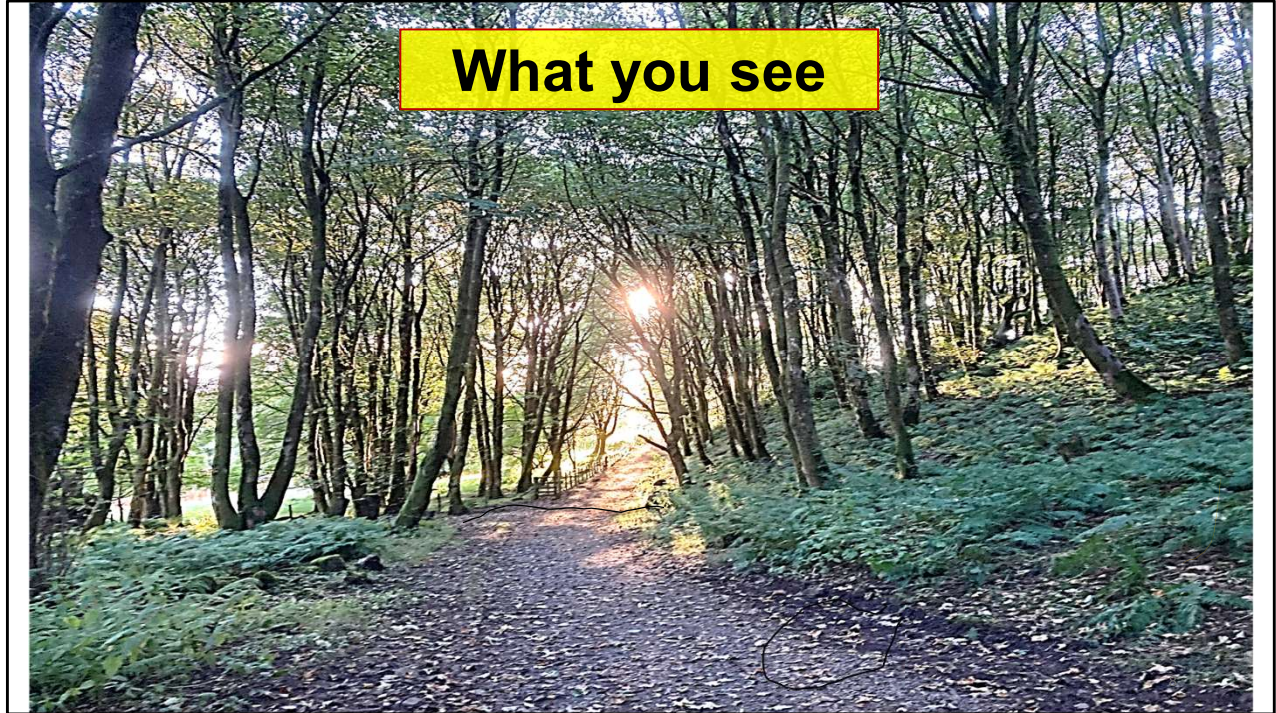
***The “Onset” of PTSD** may be triggered by **Actual** or **Threatened** events:

Exposure to death, or **threatened** death,
Actual, or **threatened**, serious injury, or
Actual, or **threatened**, sexual violence.

Common trauma experiences are combat, car accidents, natural disasters, abuse, rape, mass violence, etc.

***The “Impact” of PTSD** may occur **Directly** or **Indirectly**

- The sufferer may be **directly** exposed (Involved in the event).
- The PTSD sufferer may be **indirectly** exposed through a family member or close friend that has experienced the event.
- He or she may experience **extreme**, or **repeated**, **indirect** exposure through his or her work (such as first responders, police officers, military personnel, social workers, etc.).



It's not just the military (although more commonly mentioned)

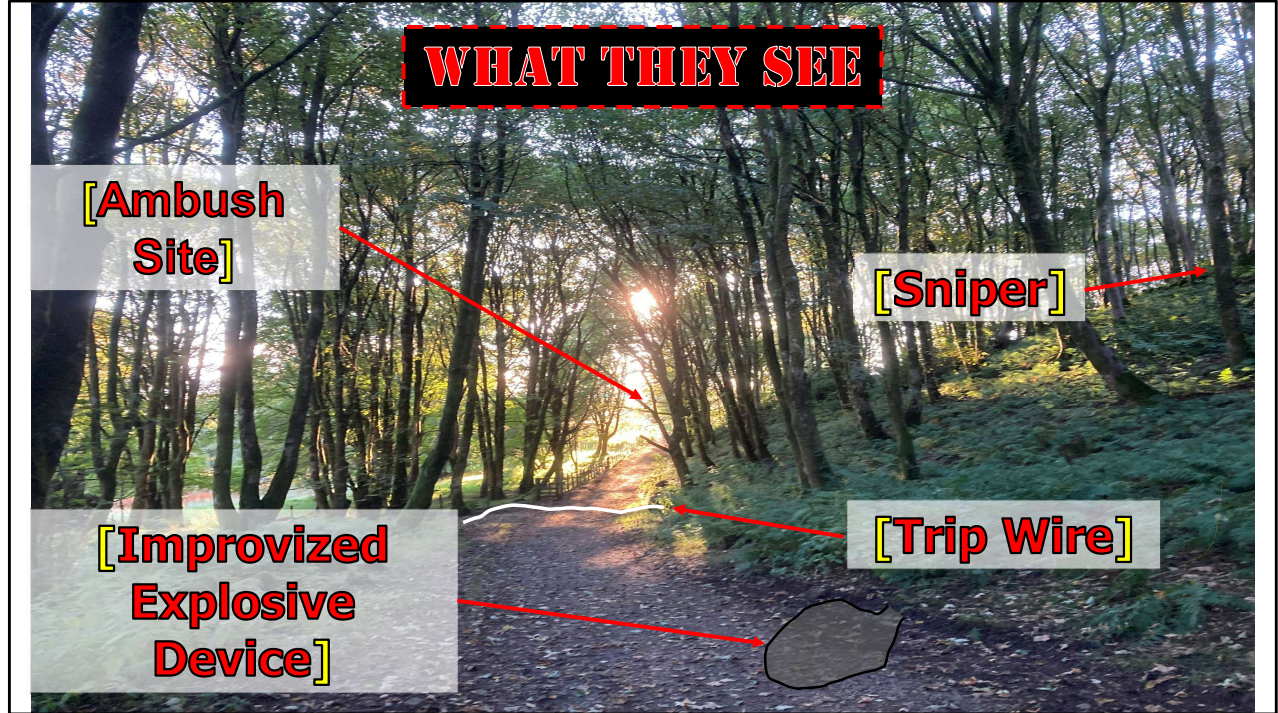
This next part is what we'll call:
"What you see / what they see"

Experience the perspective of the combat vet

What you see...

A casual walk through a peaceful forest...

Warm sun on your face
Gentle breeze blowing
Birds chirping



What they see!

...turns into a patrol against an unseen enemy.

Expected ambush site

IED emplaced on the path

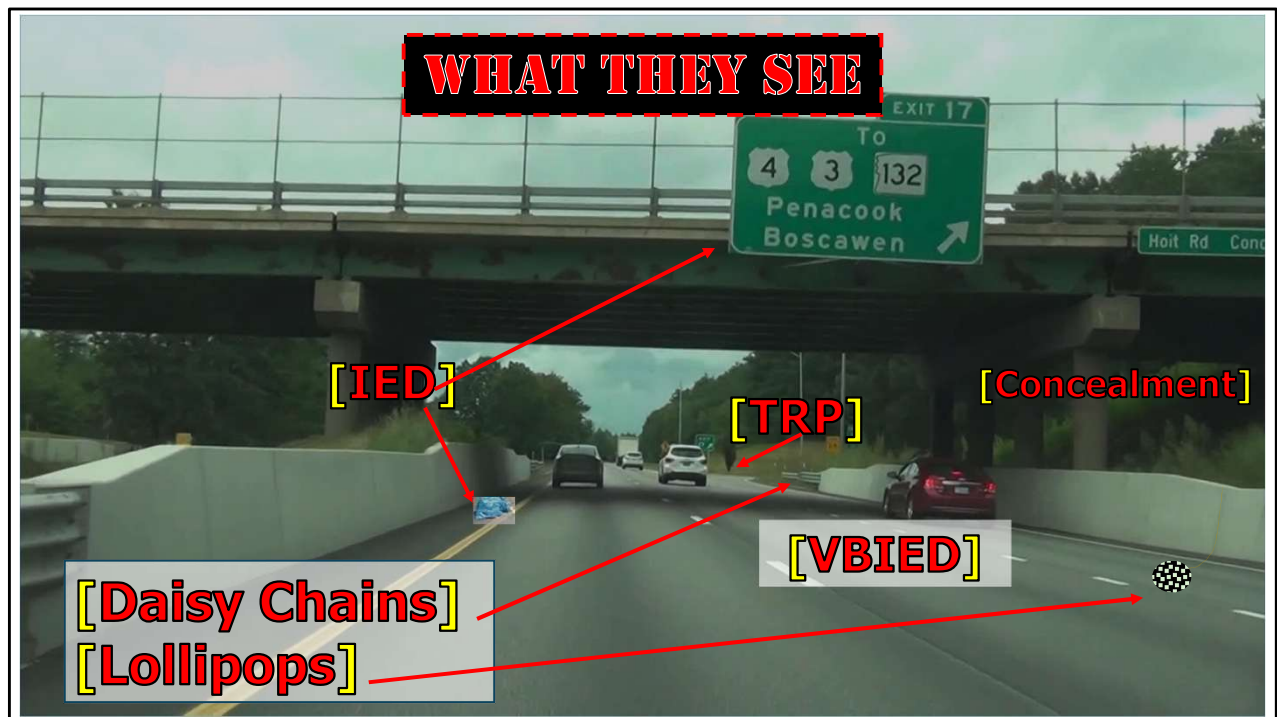
Trip wire

What you see



What you see...

Simply driving up the highway...



What they see!

...can turn into a fearful expectation of a roadside attack.

IED emplacements

Lollipop planted in the road

Vehicle borne IEDs

Daisy Chain (explosives linked together along the guard rail)



We all just want to blend in with our environment.
While at the same time, we want to be a contributing part of our society.
We want to be a help to our fellow man.



Understanding their emotions

They want feel validated; They wish for others to understand their emotions.

Survivors of an attack may feel like a freak.

Her thinking is different.

She responds to situations differently now.

He may struggle to understand his environment.

After a traumatic event, the victim's brain and mind may work differently.

The PTS sufferer may hear and see things differently than most others

2. There Seems to be Some Sort of Misunderstanding

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I invite you to enter the mind of the PTS survivor and his or her perspective in their new world.

This is called:

“There seems to be some sort of misunderstanding.”

Would you sweep the house, dear?



**LOW READY. STACK.
ENTER. CLEAR.**

Your mom asks you,

“Would you sweep the house, dear?”

Becomes something different in the mind of a combat vet.

The military mind might think:

Low Ready

Stack

Enter

Clear

Remove the threat

Would you mow the lawn?



Scene of the attack

Your dad asks you,

“Would you mow the lawn?”

A simple request.

The PTS sufferer thinks:

Floods the mind of an assault. You’re thinking:

“I was attacked by a stalker while jogging through a field.”

**The Jones' are coming
for dinner**



**They're coming to stare
at me**

Your wife says,

"The Jones' are coming for dinner."

The PTS sufferer thinks:

"The Jones' are just coming to judge me!"

"They're all going to stare at me!"

Feels like you'll be viewed as an outsider.

Let's go to the movies



**Conduct movement to
contact**

Your friends say,

"Let's go to the movies!"

Your pulse starts to race.

You remain hypervigilant, like you don't have control in such a crowd.

The combat vet's mind says:

"Conduct movement to contact."

"Watch your six."

3. A different Mindset

Be

Know

Do

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The PTS sufferer wants desperately to adjust his/her thinking.

It's this different mindset that I want us to explore further.

The military uses a business model called:

Be – Know – Do

The Christian might consider using this model to complete our own mission in our defense against Satan.

Be – Know – Do

**Be: Character (The high moral kind;
sets the example)**

**Know: Competence (Learn, and know that
we know Him)**

Do: Courage (The fruit of Be and Know)

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Be – Character:

The person of high moral character;
Sets the right example

**Think on these passages:*

Ephesians 4:32

Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you.

1 Peter 3:8-9

v.8 “Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;
v.9 not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.”

Know – Competence:

Know Him (1 Jn 2:3 if we keep His commandments);
Know your mission, your talents, and your limitations.

Allow the things that we know in Christ to change how we show Christ in our lives, and live our lives for Him

Do – Courage:

The fruit of Be and Know.
Doing gives us purpose in life.

Let us remember to take action in doing His will no matter what our lot in life is.

Let's live our lives as though our souls depend on it.

James 1:22 Be ye doers

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”

Joshua 1:9

Be strong and of good courage

Be not afraid or dismayed

For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

Applying the Be – Know – Do Model

- I. Controlling the chaos**
- II. Change the blame game**
- III. Be a part of your change**
- IV. Take charge of your change**

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Let's apply the Be-Know-Do model to each situation we encounter

- I. Controlling the Chaos
- II. Change the Blame Game
- III. Be a part of your change
- IV. Take charge of your change

I. Controlling the Chaos

- a. Failure to plan is planning to fail
- b. Always set the P.A.C.E.
- c. Understand the potential to fail
- d. Situation always fluid
- e. Don't do nothing (Do something!)

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The Christian tries to understand how to react to his/her environment. (a.k.a., herding cats)

- I. Controlling the chaos
 - a) Failure to plan is planning to fail
 - b) Having P.A.C.E. plans alleviates stress and helps see your way through the unknown
 - c) Understand potential failures, have COA's
 - d) Consider the various situations should everything become "*soup sandwich*"
 - e) Don't do nothing! Get out there and get to work
- II. "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against...spiritual forces of evil."
(Eph. 6:12)
- III. The sufferer of PTS may have difficulty doing this.

II. Change the Blame Game

Christians must understand how to manage their environment.

How are we to do it?

- a. You hold the plan in your hand
- b. Study, give due diligence
- c. Plan for the unexpected
- d. Be accepting of change

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As Christians, we must understand how to manage our environment.

How are we to do it?

- a) You hold the plan in your hand
- b) Study, give due diligence (2 Timothy 2:15)
- c) Plan for the unexpected
- d) Be accepting of change
- e) Don't just pass the buck

The Story of Four People

This is a story about four people:

Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody.

There was an important job to do, and Everybody was sure Somebody would do it.

Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did.

Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job.

Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it.

Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have.

Everybody should have done it.

Somebody would have done it.

Anybody could have.

It never got done.

The combat vet, the First Responder, does not understand this!

Let's all take a part in each other's spiritual health!

III. Be a part of your change

- a. A military element moves as one**
- b. The emergency room team works together**
- c. Fire and EMS share the same goal**
- d. Christians have all things in common**

(Philippians 2:1-4)

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- A military element moves as one
- The emergency room team works together
- Fire and EMS share the same goal
- Christians have all things in common

Each of us has a role to play in our change for the good.

Philippians 2:1-4

1 Therefore, if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy,

2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

IV. You're in charge now

It's their job.

It's your job.

What do you mean, *it's my job?!*

OK, let's get praying.

(Colossians 4:2; John 8:31-32)

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You can understand and control your environment.

Excuses, excuses!

"It's THEIR job!" (i.e., Evangelism)

"Well then, it's YOUR job!"

"What do you mean it's MY job?"

- a) Things change; accept that.
- b) Somebody will need to step up.
- c) That somebody may well be you
- d) Get prepared, get praying, get up, get to work)

Colossians 4:2

"Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;"

John 8:31

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Take responsibility!

Speaking of Responsibility...

- Responsibility can put great strain on the affected mind of the PTS sufferer.
- He may have greater difficulty responding to circumstances that others find routine.
- As hard as it is, she knows she still has a commitment to tend to her family, her job, her team.

4. How Did I Get Here?

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- Suddenly, what he understands has changed
- All that you once thought you knew and understood has changed as a result of a traumatic stress event.
- Your mind takes over in a different way.
- This is a normal reaction to an abnormal event.

Symptoms of PTS...

- a. **May occur or may not at all**
- b. **Mildly affected or more seriously**
- c. **May last a few weeks to a few months**

If it lasts six months or more, please seek help

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Symptoms of PTS:

- May occur or may not at all
- Mild cases typically fade with time
- Other events leave an impression on the mind, lasting weeks to a few months
- If intrusive thoughts, nightmares, etc. continue more than six months, the PTSD sufferer should seek help.

Found online by an anonymous contributor:

Too strong, too long, not weak

"Depression, anxiety and panic attacks are not a sign of weakness. They are signs of having tried to remain strong for too long."

Let those who struggle know they are not alone, and they are not weak.

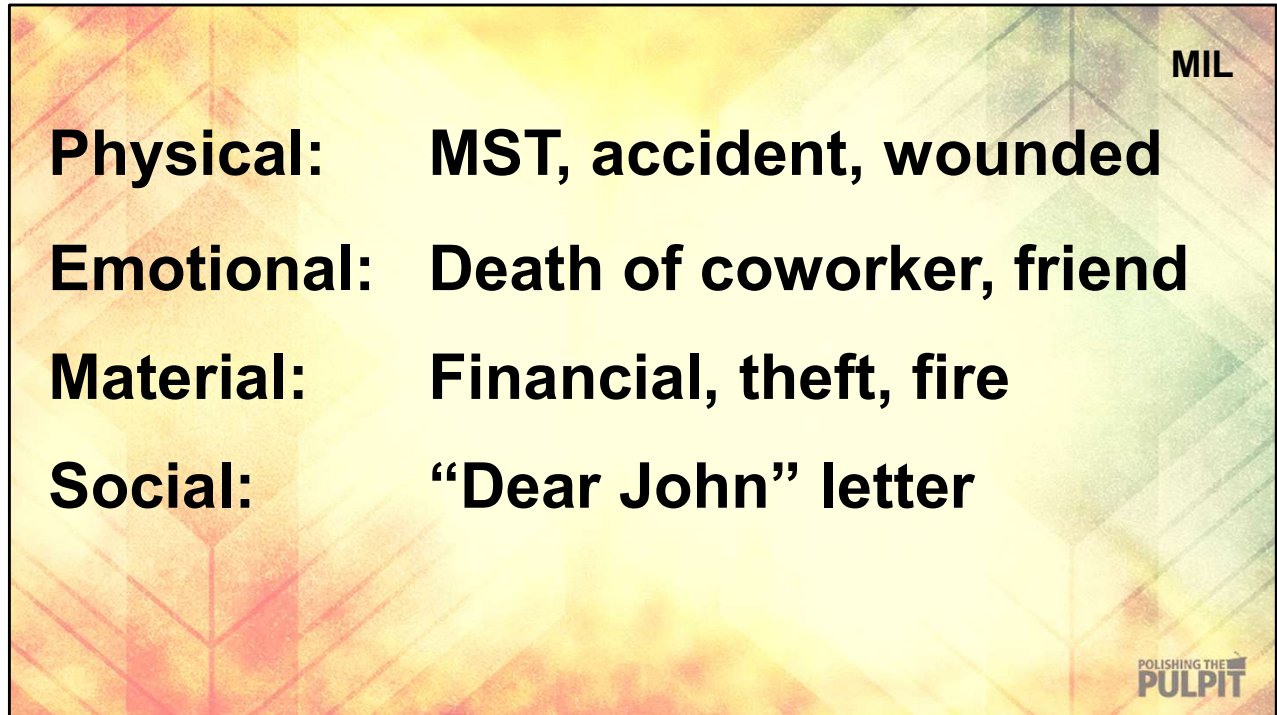
Aspects of our lives affected by trauma

**Physical
Emotional
Material
Social**

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Aspects of our lives affected by trauma

Physical, Emotional, Material and Social aspects



Physical, Emotional, Material and Social traumatic events

Military

Military Sexual Trauma

Wounded in a roadside attack

Loss of a teammate during a violent assault

Financial loss, loss by theft or loss by fire

"Dear John" letter received from home

Physical: Abuse, accident, etc.

Emotional: Death of spouse, child

Material: Financial, theft, fire

**Social: Broken love, rejected by
family, friends, work
(Job 1:13-2:13)**

Physical, Emotional, Material and Social traumatic events

Civilian

Suffered abuse or traumatic event in youth

Industrial accident

Death of a spouse or other loved one

House burned down

Lose your job

Bullied throughout school years

An engagement called off

Job suffered all four (Job 1:13 thru 2:13)

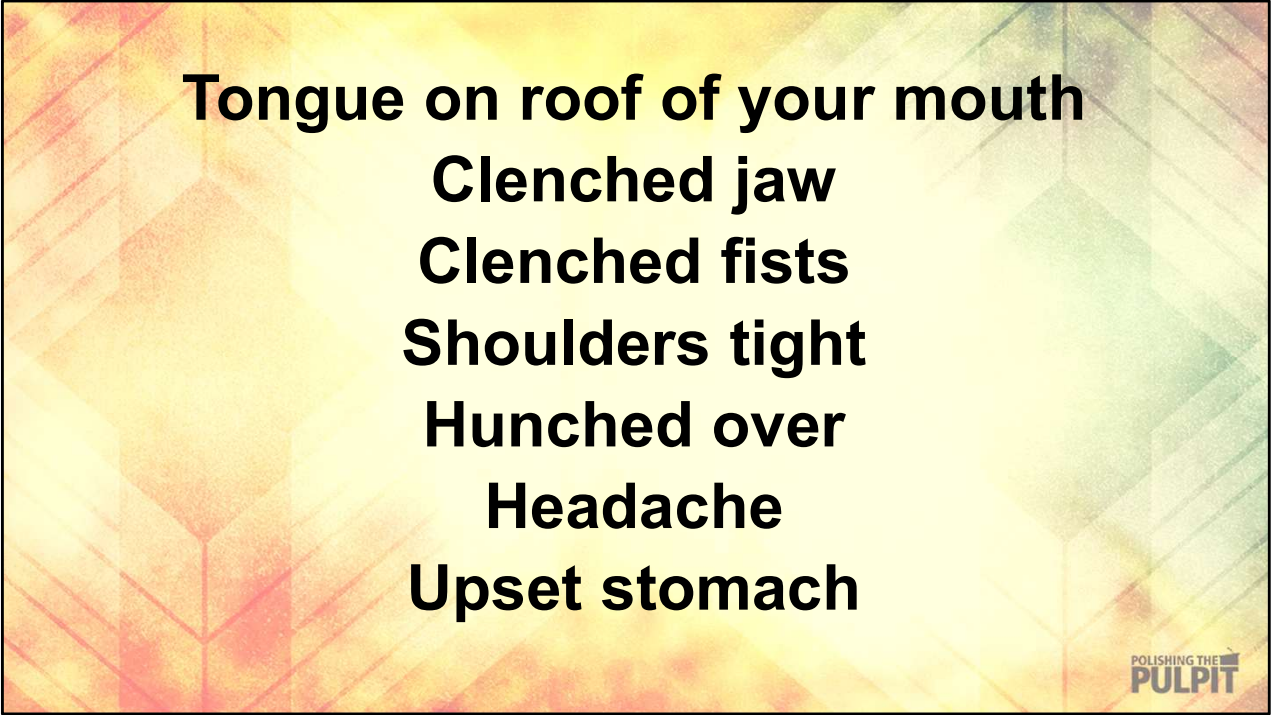
When it
5. Rears Its Ugly Head

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PTSD, anxiety or depression might manifest itself:

Internally

Externally



Tongue on roof of your mouth

Clenched jaw

Clenched fists

Shoulders tight

Hunched over

Headache

Upset stomach

Internally:

- Tongue on roof of your mouth
- Clenched jaw
- Clenched fists
- Shoulders tight
- Hunched over
- Headache
- Upset stomach



Exaggerated startle response
Looks for ways of egress
Always on point
Hypervigilant
Isolates
ANGER

Externally:

Exaggerated startle response

Reacts inappropriately to sudden loud noises

Ways of egress

Needs to know all of the ways out of an area

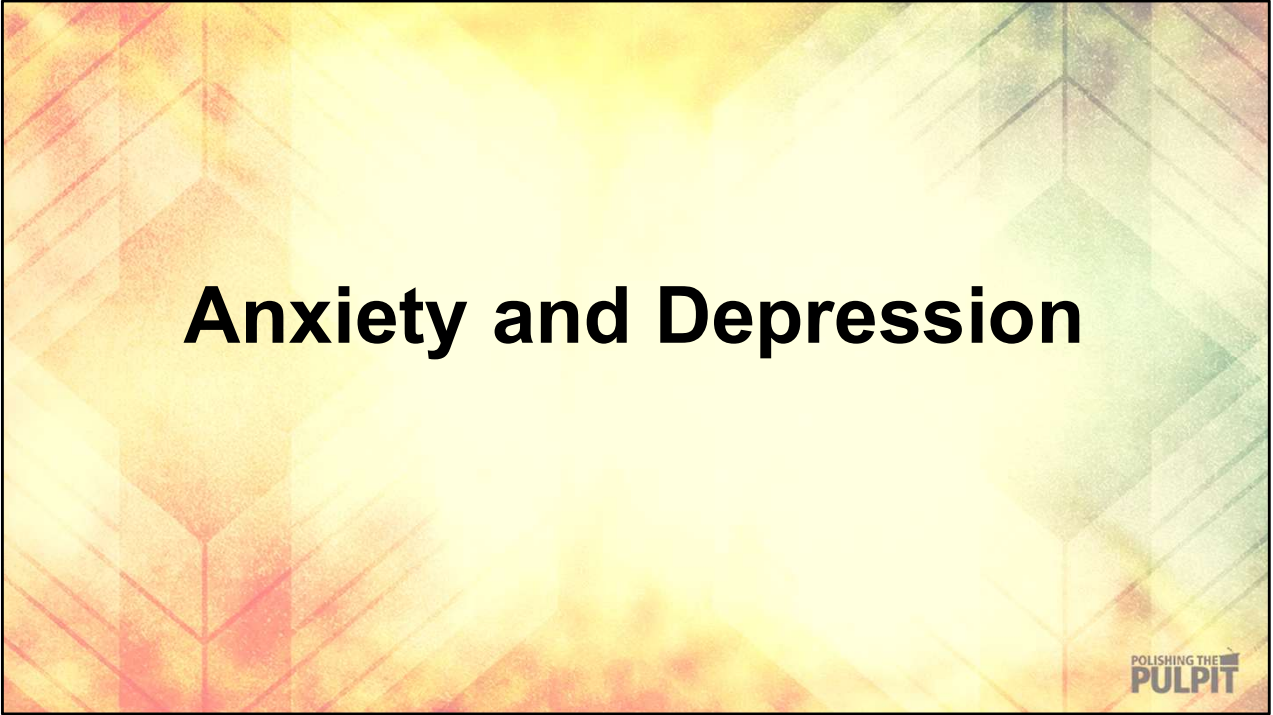
Always on point looking out for danger

Hypervigilant

Noise and confusion might “set him off” or create high anxiety

Isolates, doesn’t seem to “fit in” to a crowd

Anger, unexplained or inappropriate



Anxiety and Depression

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Two of the more prominent results of PTSD:
Anxiety and Depression

Let's look at these two

Anxiety

1. A feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease
2. A disorder characterized by a state of excessive uneasiness and apprehension

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Anxiety

1. **Dictionary** definition: A feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome.

2. **Psychiatry** definition: A nervous disorder characterized by a state of excessive uneasiness and apprehension, typically with compulsive behavior or panic attacks.

Think on these passages:

2 Corinthians 7:5

For indeed...our bodies had no rest,
but we were troubled on every side.
Outside were conflicts, inside were fears.

Mark 14:32-36

32 Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray."

33 And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed.

34 Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch."

35 He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him.

36 And He said, "Abba, Father, all things *are* possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You *will*."

Luke 22:44

And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground

Depression

1. A common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel
2. A mental health disorder characterized by persistently depressed mood

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Depression (major depressive disorder)

1. A common and **serious medical illness** that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think, and how you act.
2. A **mental health disorder** characterized by persistently depressed mood or loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed

Think on these passages:

Romans 7:15ff

For that which I will to do, that I do not.
That which I will not to do, that I do.
O wretched man that I am.

Proverbs 12:25 (Solomon)

Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression,
But a **good word** makes it glad.

Proverbs 15:13

A **merry heart** makes a cheerful countenance,
But by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

Proverbs 15:15

All the days of the afflicted are evil,
But he who is of a **merry heart** has a continual feast

Proverbs 17:22

A **merry heart** does good, like medicine,
But a broken spirit dries the bones.



More signs of PTS

1. On edge
2. Anxiety
3. Headaches
4. Intrusive thoughts
5. Survivor's guilt
6. Fear
7. Irritability
8. Flashbacks
9. Self blame
10. Difficulty sleeping
11. Detachment
12. Change in appetite
13. Depression
14. Sense of numbness
- 15. ADRENALINE!**

Let's shake it off and turn to God

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

Romans 5:3-5

2 Timothy 1:7

Hebrews 4:9-11

Revelation 14:13

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So, how do we manage this?

Think on these passages:

Romans 5:3-5

(We) also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; character; and hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

(Also James 1:2-4)

2 Timothy 1:7

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

Hebrews 4:9-11

There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.

For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.

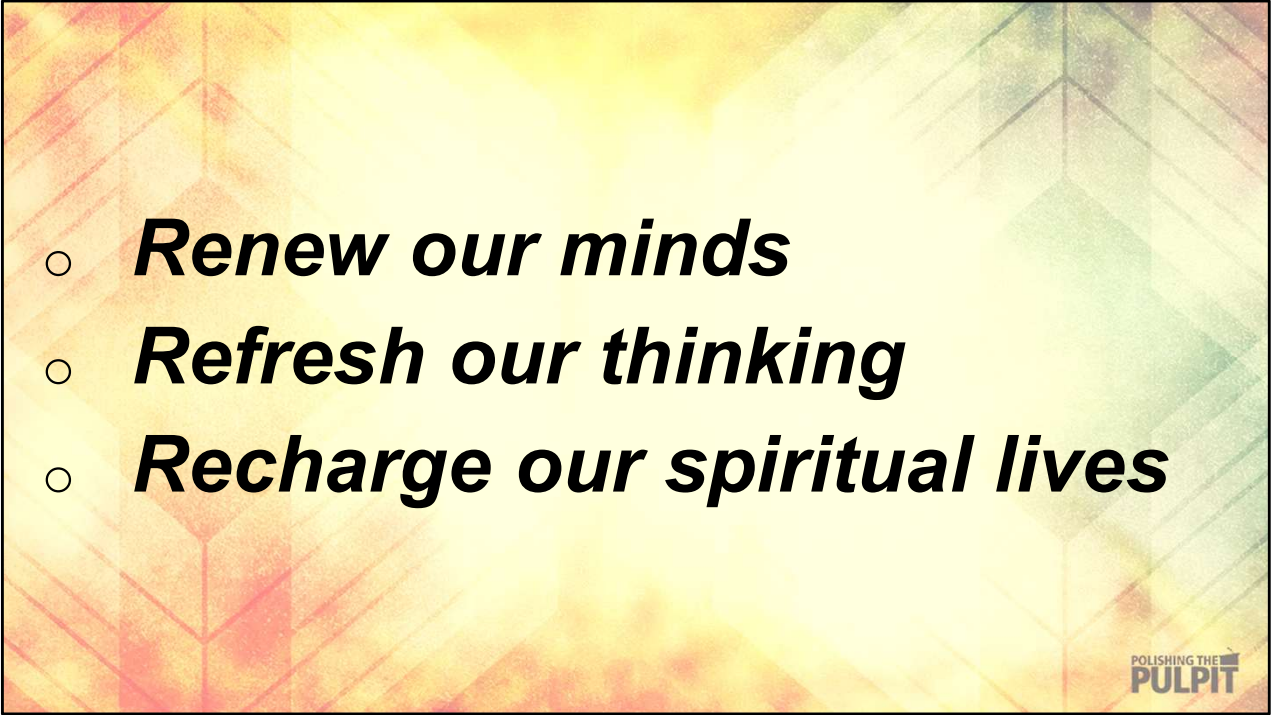
Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

Revelation 14:13

Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me,

“Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.”

“Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.”

- 
- ***Renew our minds***
 - ***Refresh our thinking***
 - ***Recharge our spiritual lives***

Let us then...

Renew our minds!

Refresh our thinking!

Recharge our spiritual lives!

Together we've got this!

Do yourself a favor:

1. Relax.
2. Stop clenching your jaw and take your tongue off the roof of your mouth.
3. Let your shoulders down.
4. BREATHE! (4x4)
5. And don't forget to pray.