

From Misery To Ministry

4 DAY SELF DEVELOPMENT
DEVOTIONAL



The
WAYMAKER
Team

Joel Eisinger

Day 1: Whoa is Me

When I lost my job training Child Welfare workers for the state of Michigan, I was flooded with anxiety, panic, and doubt. I had no idea what I was going to do.

I had just gotten married, moved to the city where my wife lived because my job allowed me to be mobile, and had a newborn baby and two stepdaughters to provide for. I had no connections in this town and felt like a failure to my family. How could I lose a job with so much on the line? How would I provide for my family? I was quickly going down a spiraling staircase of self-pity and doubt. I kept replaying the conversation I had with my boss about no longer having a job, which brought to mind other past failures. Hopefully, you are not like me, but if you are, you have a hard time letting go of past hurts, failures, and embarrassments. I was in full-blown, “whoa is me” mode. I was miserable.

Now that you have a glimpse into how I work, let me show you how my wife works.

Dana’s response to my job loss was another confirmation that I had married the perfect mate for me. With no sense of concern in her voice, she said, “It’s not a big deal; we will get through it.” Sure, that seems like an obvious thing a spouse should say, but she meant every word and I believed her. I immediately felt the anxiety lift from within me. As comforting as “It’s not a big deal” was, it pales in comparison to what she said next: “If you could do anything, what would it be?” I explained to her it would be transforming my side gig of group development into a full-time ministry/business. Dana responded, “Let’s do it.” It took me a second to reply, “Wow, really?” That was the beginning of The Waymaker Team. I am not illuminating you about the origins of our ministry to show you what a lucky man I am to be married to Dana, but rather, how easily your misery can turn into a ministry. FYI, I will use the words “ministry” and “testimony” interchangeably in this devotional because your triumph over misery is your testimony to share with others.

The Bible has so many stories that illustrate the process of moving from misery to ministry.

The first, and perhaps most relevant, is the story of Job. That man went through true misery: physical, mental, and spiritual, for an extended time. Yet, God eventually brought him through it. God restored his health and all his possessions, granting him twice as much as he had previously, more children, and a long, prosperous life.

My misery, in comparison to Job’s, was shorter and nowhere as extreme, but it was still a miserable time in my life. God wants to take your misery, no matter how big and long and turn it into a ministry. A ministry does not have to be a literal ministry such as The Waymaker Team; it may just be you being willing to share your story of past pain to others so they can overcome their current misery.

Day 1: Whoa is Me Continued

SCRIPTURE VERSE

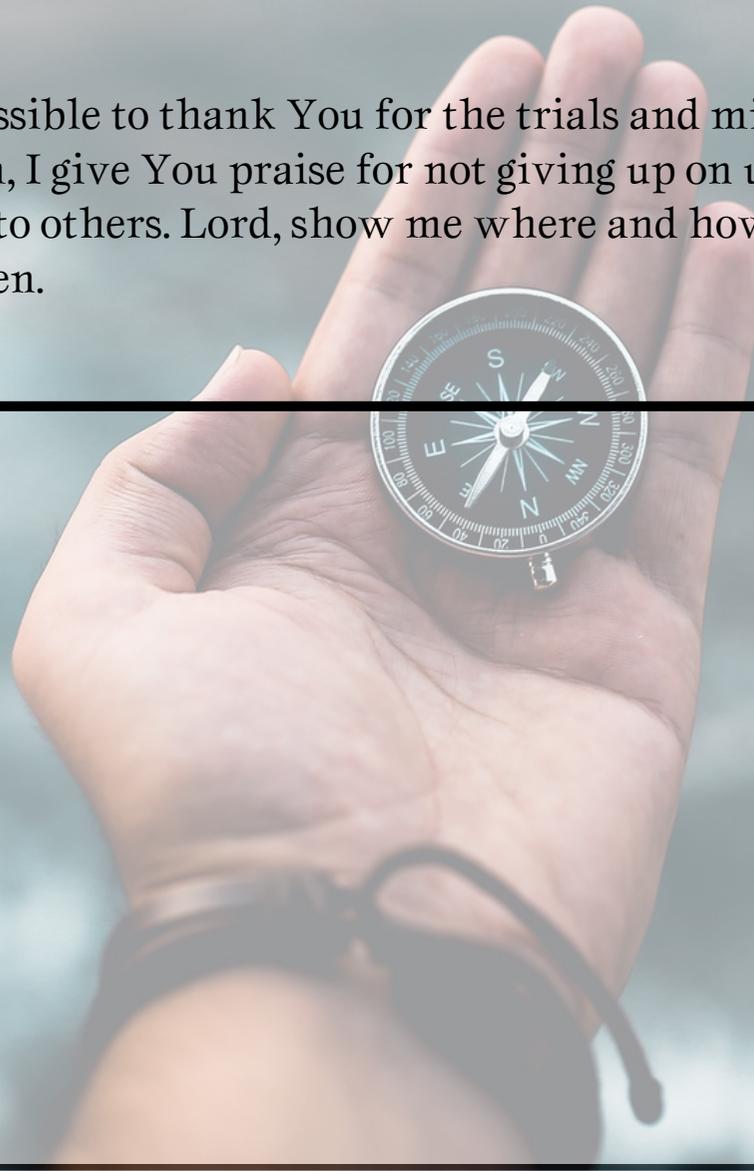
“Blessed indeed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For He wounds, but He also binds; He strikes, but His hands also heal” (Job 5:17-18).

REFLECTION

1. What is in your life currently that you need to give to God to make into a ministry?
2. What is in your past that you may have already gotten over, which God can use to minister to others?

PRAYER

Lord, though it seems nearly impossible to thank You for the trials and miserable moments in our lives at the time we are experiencing them, I give You praise for not giving up on us. Thank You for using our pain to bring comfort and healing to others. Lord, show me where and how to use my current and past miseries to minister to others. Amen.



Day 2: Proactive vs Reactive

David Goggins is marked as the toughest man on the earth. If you know who he is you will understand why. If you don't know who he is, I suggest you check out his books, videos, etc. Be forewarned: he loves expletives! I saw him in person, and he is the most in-your-face, unapologetic person. He will literally tell you to stop talking if you start making excuses.

David lost over 100 pounds in 3 months to get in shape, so he could join the Army. If that's not crazy enough, his current daily cardio routine is to run 6 miles and do 50 push-ups—then repeat that four times!

David will tell you he hates to run, but he knows by running he is being proactive to resist illness, and to feel and perform better at the races. He said it gives him the energy to get through his ridiculously busy schedule. We will likely never take being proactive to be fit to the level David does. However, as Christians, we must take being proactive in our faith just as seriously

A proactive choice is based on values and principles. Reactive choices are primarily based on emotions, environments, and desires. To be clear, a proactive choice can be made according to our emotions as long as the choice is aligned with our values. But when we reactively make decisions based only on feelings, we often sacrifice our values.

The word proactive doesn't appear in the Bible, but we are told to be prepared, which requires proactive behavior (1 Peter 1:13). We must prepare our minds to act the way God commands in a given situation. Therefore, we must be proactive—we must act in advance, to deal with whatever situation we find ourselves in.

Why should we be proactive? Well, if I was proactive in reading my Bible and spending more time in prayer, I would have been better equipped to deal with those times I experienced misery. When I lost my job, I reacted emotionally with immediate defensiveness and self-pity. How could I have been more proactive and avoided the “whoa is me” mentality? I know when I spend consistent time in the Word and in communion with the Spirit, I am much more equipped to deal with those obstacles that are inevitably going to come.

If you want to be proactive and equipped to deal with potentially misery-inducing obstacles, you can do two things:

1. Pray daily for the strength to get through struggles yet to come.
2. Read your Bible.

Day 2: Proactive vs Reactive Continued

SCRIPTURE VERSE

“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand” (Philippians 4:7).

REFLECTION

- 1.How prepared are you for that next potentially miserable experience?
- 2.Do you foresee an obstacle in your future that you can begin to pray about?

PRAYER

Lord, instill in me the Peace that surpasses all understanding and help me to rely on that truth when I experience future struggles. Amen.



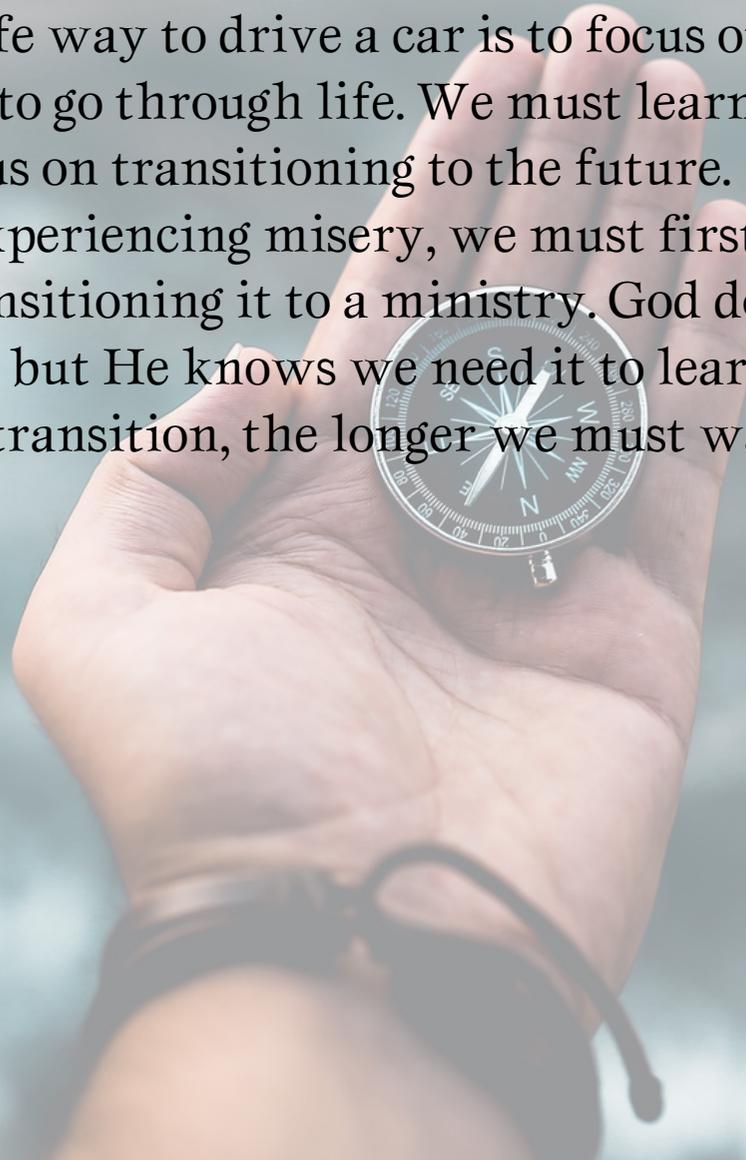
Day 3: Looking Forward

Transition is typically not easy, but it is impossible to go forward and turn misery into a ministry without it. We often hear people say, “I’m going through a time of transition,” and it typically is not said with a joyful and optimistic heart. Why is transition often looked at negatively? Why do we choose to stay in miserable situations, instead of transitioning? I think it’s because people are afraid of the unknown. That makes sense, but we know for a fact misery is no fun. Yet, we choose to remain in it because, at least, it is familiar.

Deep inside all of us, there is a tendency to cling to familiar ways of thinking and to look behind us for the solutions to our problems. This way of living will certainly lead to a life of complacency and misery. It’s like driving a car with your eyes constantly fixed on the rear-view mirror. The only safe way to drive a car is to focus on the road ahead.

That's also the only wise way to go through life. We must learn from the past without becoming its prisoner and focus on transitioning to the future.

As Christians, when we are experiencing misery, we must first give that misery to God and step immediately into transitioning it to a ministry. God does not want us to experience pain and suffering, but He knows we need it to learn, build faith, and serve Him. The longer we fight the transition, the longer we must wait for His blessings.



Day 3: Looking Forward Continued

SCRIPTURE VERSES

“Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13-14).

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jeremiah 29:11).

REFLECTION

1. Right now, think of one misery you know can be used as a ministry.
2. Minister to someone with it. It could be as simple as making a post on social media or sending a text to someone.

PRAYER

Lord, I commit to taking the next step in turning a personal misery into a ministry. I pray those people You need to hear my misery to ministry story will be open to transitioning to use their misery to minister to others. Amen



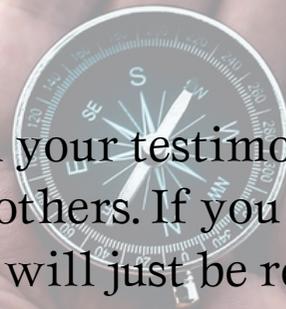
Day 4: What, So What, Now What

When I lead groups, I always look at it in three phases. First, we must look at the “what.” What is the issue? What problem are we trying to solve? What are we trying to accomplish? After defining the “what,” we must look at “so what” does that mean to you and what do we do with it? Lastly, we move into the life-changing step of “now what.” Now what are you going to do with what you have learned?

Now what are you going to do with turning your misery into ministry? This is where you need to focus almost all of your energy on proactively. If I asked you how you are ministering to others, what would you say? Typically, the response would be something like “Well, I work in the healthcare field so I serve my patients every day.” “I have volunteered at church as a missions’ team leader for 5 years.” Or “I try to help anyone who is in need.”

True, those are all ways of serving, but I see those as reactive service. Sure, when you first chose to be a nurse or join the missions’ team that was proactive. But afterward, it became a part of your life and reactive service. Again, I am not saying reactive service is a bad thing because it is not. It is just as important as proactive service. But when it comes to moving from misery to ministry, it takes proactive service.

God wants you to impact the lives of others with your testimony. It is absolutely vital to give your pain to God for Him to use it to minister to others. If you haven’t, every time you try to share your testimony of overcoming misery, you will just be reliving that pain with someone else. When you give your misery to God, you must choose to give Him the pain, guilt, and grudges that come with it. In doing so, God immediately turns your misery into your ministry. Subsequently, your ministry is no longer meant for you; it is meant for others.



Day 4: What, So What, Now What Continued

SCRIPTURE VERSES

“I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile. “Because you have said, “The Lord has raised up prophets for us in Babylon” (Jeremiah 29: 11-15).

REFLECTION

Here are three steps you can take right now to proactively use your ministry to serve others:

- Sit in a quiet place and give God one misery you have or are experiencing.
- Write down your testimony. Do not write down the story of how you were hurt, but rather, how you can share it in a way that others can be empowered through it. A sad story with no happy ending is just a sad story.
- Share that story with one person you trust who can help you be accountable for sharing your testimony of overcoming misery.

I hope through this brief devotional, you were able to see the importance of transitioning your misery to a ministry. Please continue to be proactive in your prayers, study, and look for opportunities to use your misery to minister to others.

PRAYER

Lord, I have given You the story, pain, guilt, and resentment of my misery in return for my ministry and I pray for opportunities to share my testimony to others and transform their lives as you have transformed mine.

Amen

The

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